Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund Launches Free Legacy Planning Program to Increase Asset Protection and Intergenerational Wealth

Residents in dozens of localities will receive free one-on-one counseling services from Financial Empowerment Centers in an effort to encourage wealth preservation

October 28, 2025 **–** Today, the national nonprofit Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund) announced the launch of free legacy planning services as a core component of the nationwide Financial Empowerment Centers (FECs) initiative; residents in 30 cities and counties can now access this new service, with more to come. This one-on-one financial counseling program offers residents access to help with legacy planning and taking steps to protect their assets at no cost.

Research shows that the vast majority of Americans own at least one asset – a bank account, a 401K, or a home – that is valuable today and likely to appreciate, but few have taken the steps necessary to secure those assets. Nearly 70 percent of Americans do not have a will or a broader legacy or estate plan. By increasing access to information about topics like adding beneficiaries to accounts and creating essential documents such as wills and powers of attorney, this program will help people in America protect their assets for the future.

"Our municipal Financial Empowerment Center partners work hard with their clients to help them build assets – and now these financial counselors also can help residents to protect and preserve these assets for the next generation," said **Jonathan Mintz, President and CEO of the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund.** "By adding these new legacy planning services to our national program model, everyone can access free support with planning for your family's next generation."

At the FECs, professionally trained counselors deliver free public services to help individuals and families with low and moderate incomes manage their finances, pay down debt, increase savings, establish and build credit, access safe and affordable mainstream banking products – and now, protect and preserve their assets. As part of the new legacy planning service, FEC counselors can provide clients with resources that can help with organizing assets, reviewing insurance and titles, updating account beneficiaries, and connecting clients to free resources that will help them prepare estate planning documents, like wills or guardianship plans.

FECs have served more than 200,000 clients nationwide. Collectively, they have helped residents reduce over $344 million in debt and grow their families' savings by nearly $70 million. Independent evaluation by the CFE Fund showed that this program works even for residents with very low incomes and other complex financial challenges. At the heart of the FEC model is integration of counseling into other social services, such as housing and foreclosure prevention, workforce development, justice-involved programming, benefits access, domestic violence services, and more.

"Families of low and moderate income and wealth often have been unable to access critical estate and legacy planning services to help them preserve the assets they have, which has contributed to substantial wealth gaps," said **Professor Thomas W. Mitchell, Robert Drinan, S.J. Professor of Law at Boston College and Founding Director, Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights**. "The CFE Fund's legacy planning initiative is coming on line at an important moment, and it has the potential to help large number of disadvantaged families across this country increase their ability to preserve their generational wealth."

"Providing free and accessible legacy planning tools aligns with our Center's mission to bring diverse ideas and people together to advance public good," **said Caitlin Coyle, PhD, Director, Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston**, part of an inter-collegiate research team including economists from Boston College and social gerontologists from University of Massachusetts Boston partnering with the CFE Fund on learning and evaluation. "Working with cities and towns across the country to see how this model supports financial security, peace of mind, and care for loved ones is a meaningful opportunity for us as researchers."

Cities and counties participating in the new program include:

1. Akron, OH
2. Allegheny County, PA
3. Baltimore, MD
4. Columbus, OH
5. Detroit, MI
6. Gaithersburg, MD
7. Greenville, SC
8. Jackson, TN
9. Jefferson County, WI
10. Lansing, MI
11. Louisville, KY

12. Memphis, TN
13. Milwaukee, WI
14. Mount Vernon, NY
15. Nashville, TN
16. New Haven, CT
17. Orange County, FL
18. Paterson, NY
19. Pitkin County, CO
20. Polk County, IA
21. Pueblo, CO
22. Racine, WI
23. Rochester, NY
24. Sacramento, CA
25. San Antonio, TX
26. San Francisco, CA
27. Shreveport, LA
28. South Bend, IN
29. Tulsa, OK
30. Washtenaw County, MI

Information about FEC locations and scheduling an appointment for assistance is available on the FEC Public website: https://fecpublic.org/find-fec/.

About the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund)

The CFE Fund supports municipal efforts to improve the financial stability of households by leveraging opportunities unique to local government. By translating cutting edge experience with large scale programs, research, and policy in cities of all sizes, the CFE Fund assists mayors and other local leaders to identify, develop, fund, implement, and research pilots and programs that help families build assets and make the most of their financial resources. The CFE Fund is currently working in over 145 cities and counties, and has disbursed over $70 million to local governments and their partners to support these efforts. For more information, please visit www.cfefund.org or follow us on Bluesky at @cfefund.bsky.social; learn more about the FEC Public initiative at www.fecpublic.org.

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