



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Human Services Department

Catherine L. Lester, Interim Director

### BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

Prepared for: Members of City Council  
Prepared by: Catherine Lester, Interim Director  
Subject: Seattle Financial Empowerment Center  
Date: March 31, 2014

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the status of the Seattle Financial Empowerment Center (FEC). The City of Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD) is managing the implementation of this initiative. With funding from the Paul G. Allen Foundation, HSD has entered into a contract with Neighborhood House to provide financial empowerment services. HSD is also working closely with numerous partners including but not limited to the Financial Empowerment Network – Seattle – King County, North Seattle Community College, Prosperity Agenda, United Way of King County, Express Credit Union, and Apprisen.

The last briefing for City Council was in July of 2013 and includes the following information:

- History of the City's work in the field of financial empowerment
- Evaluation process for integration of the FEC model with existing practices and programs in the City
- The procurement of funds and partners to secure the FEC model for the City

On April 7, 2014, a second briefing will be provided for City Council to share the following updates: 1) implementation status; 2) upcoming priorities; and 3) future policy considerations.

#### Implementation Status:

The implementation of the FEC initiative is being managed by HSD on behalf of the City, in partnership with Neighborhood House and the Paul G. Allen Foundation. The primary implementation structure includes a monthly operational workgroup and quarterly steering committee. The role of the operational workgroup is to develop and oversee implementation of strategy and service programs, while also ensuring alignment between the program design and evaluation. The role of the steering committee is to provide high level oversight and support, including alignment on key policy issues. The following are some of the key accomplishments to date during the start-up phase of the initiative:

- **Start Up Phase:** Staff hired by Neighborhood Housing in November 2013, including one FEC Manager and five Financial Coaches. Staff completed NSCC Personal Finance Course & Prosperity Agenda coaching certification which is core to their role in the FEC roll out.
- **Database System:** A database system has been purchased and customized for implementation in Seattle, and all staff has been trained on how to use the database.

- **Satellite Sites:** In the first quarter of 2014, the main HUB site and six satellite sites have been established. The “HUB” site is located at Rainier Vista and six satellite sites have been secured at the following locations: Greenbridge, NSCC Opportunity Center, YMCA Opportunity Place, Centerstone, Solid Ground, Lee House at New Holly. An additional pop up site located at South Seattle Community College is being explored for later in the calendar year.
- **Marketing and Outreach:** Marketing and outreach efforts have been accomplished using primarily the FEN – SKC and through the Neighborhood House website; new branding through FEN – SKC for linkage with the FEC
- **Soft Launch:** The FEC initiative had a “soft launch” on February 3, 2014. Over 50 clients have been served to date with 100% of these individuals requesting help with debt, in addition to receiving requested help with other FEC services.
- **Connection to Existing Programming** The FEC utilizes services and product offerings available through our partnership with Bank On Seattle.
- **Evaluation:** The Paul G. Allen Foundation is currently reviewing a proposal from the West Coast Poverty Center and Evans School of Public Affairs for a multi-year evaluation.
- **Service Integration:** Integration with other key services providers and partners has been designed as part of the FEC implementation plan. A matrix that provides an overview of the intended integration partners is included with this briefing.
- **Technical Assistance:** The City of Seattle received a non-monetary award from the Cities for Financial Empowerment for technical assistance. Additionally, the City will receive the same support as the Bloomberg Foundation funded replication sites to include help with evaluation and program development.

#### Upcoming Priorities:

Over the next quarter, the work will focus on continuing to support the startup phase of this initiative and beginning to shift from start up to steady state. The following are some immediate priorities for the second quarter of 2014:

- Finalize Seattle referral processes for Utility Discount Program
- Finalize referral process for Seattle Municipal Court for repayment plans
- Establish evaluation process for FEC satellite locations
- Launch broader marketing and outreach strategy to increase traffic to the FEC

#### Future Policy Considerations:

As the implementation of the FEC initiative continues, there are policy issues that should be noted for future discussion and consideration. It will be important to ensure clear alignment between the FEC initiative and the Affordability Initiative that Mayor Murray is launching as part of his administration. Noted below are some of the policy considerations for future discussion:

- Minimum wage policy – ensure that FEC is a resource to support efforts to increase minimum wage
- Affordable housing – impacts availability of affordable housing stock,
- Home Ownership – impacts issues of predatory lending practices and foreclosure prevention
- Utility Assistance – ensure alignment of the FEC with efforts to increase enrollment for utility assistance

ATTACHMENT:  
Referral Partners and Integration Programs

<b>Referral Partner</b>	<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Role with the FEC</b>
Asian Counseling & Referral Service	Employment, ESL Classes, Social Services	Refer program participants for services
Atlantic Street Center	Social Services	Refer program participants, host workshops for education
El Centro de la Raza	Foreclosure prevention, financial literacy classes, social services, ESL Classes	Reciprocal referrals between programs for financial services
Express Credit Union	Banking, Saving, Loans, Education	Banking services in the FEC
HomeSight	Housing Education, Loans, Foreclosure prevention	Reciprocal referrals between programs for financial services
Interim CDA		Refer program participants for services
Mercy Corps NW		Refer program participants for services
Port Jobs		Refer program participants for services
Seattle Jobs Initiative		
Solid Ground		Satellite site host and reciprocal referrals for services
United Way of King County		Tax preparation services
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle		Reciprocal referrals between programs for financial services
Village Spirit Center		Refer program participants for services
Washington Access Fund		Reciprocal referrals between programs for financial services
Washington CASH		Reciprocal referrals between programs for financial services
Within Reach		Refer program participants for services
YMCA		Refer program participants for services
YWCA		Refer program participants for services
<b>City of Seattle</b>		
Human Services Department	Homeless Programs New Citizenship Program Family Centers MO for Senior Citizens Programs Domestic Violence Prevention	Referral to FEC for services, workshops for education and fraud prevention, pop up sites for in-house services
OED	Seattle Jobs Initiative	Pop up sites for services
Public Health Seattle – King County	Outreach and Access Program WIC Food & Nutrition Program	Referral to FEC for services
Seattle Municipal Court	Tickets sent to collection Relicensing program participants Scofflaw/Car Campers	Referral for services, payment arrangements outside protocol, collection forgiveness
Seattle City Light Seattle Public Utilities	Utility Discount Program (UDP) Payment Arrangements Project SHARE	Referral for services, payment arrangements, potential incentives