

In partnership with the Minneapolis City Attorney's office, Minneapolis City Council Member Jason Chavez, and GreenLight Fund Twin Cities, Let Everyone Advance With Dignity (LEAD) held its first annual LEAD Summit in January of this year. The summit brought together senior government officials from both the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County not only to discuss LEAD's successes and challenges but to also create a shared vision for LEAD's growth and impact in 2024.

I'm thrilled to announce that the new [LEAD Minneapolis website](#) is now live, and I encourage you to explore it! With over 60 active clients currently enrolled in the LEAD program, we are just a few steps away from reaching our goal of serving 100 clients by the end of 2024. I am confident that we will achieve this milestone in the coming months. The needs within our community remain significant, and our commitment to addressing them is unwavering.

Through LEAD's new data tracking system, the team can monitor the progress of our clients while gaining insight into the broader impact we are making in the community. One of the most common goals identified by LEAD clients is access to stable housing. This underscores the critical importance of our work and reaffirms our dedication to supporting individuals on their journey toward stability and self-sufficiency.

LEAD Funding Updates: I am thrilled to announce that the Let Everyone Advance With Dignity (LEAD) Program surpassed expectations by raising over half a million dollars in funding, primarily sourced from the public sector, including the MN Department of Health, Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis. This significant increase in funding not only exceeds our initial projections but also marks a remarkable milestone in their journey. With this support, LEAD is poised for substantial growth, enabling them to expand their team by four additional staff members, including multiple case managers and community engagement coordinator. This expansion not only enhances LEAD's capacity to serve our community but also positions them to extend their reach and with an eye towards scale and growth.

LEAD Partnerships: At the core of the LEAD program lies a fundamental commitment to recognizing and honoring the humanity of each individual, treating them with dignity and respect. Central to their mission is not only supporting clients on their personal journeys but also identifying opportunities to collaborate with community-based organizations to

address the diverse needs of those we serve. Late last year, the LEAD Minneapolis team forged a partnership with St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store to establish a voucher program. This initiative enables LEAD clients to access essential items and services, further empowering them on their path towards stability and self-sufficiency. By providing the opportunity to shop at the thrift store and select clothing and other items, LEAD is not only supporting their client's journey towards self-sufficiency but also affirming their dignity.

One Client's LEAD Experience: On January 17, 2024, we received a referral from a parent concerning a young individual grappling with mental health issues, alcohol dependency, and homelessness. The loss of all belongings the day before served as a tipping point, prompting the referral. Initially, the focus was on securing treatment for alcohol use, but unfortunately, the initial attempt did not yield the desired results, and the individual reverted to previous behavior patterns. However, after a brief period, they returned to their LEAD case manager and expressed a willingness to try again. This time, with the guidance and support of their LEAD case manager, they successfully completed treatment and found stability through housing and employment in the Lake Street Corridor, the same area where they had experienced homelessness. While this journey unfolded more rapidly than expected, it underscores the profound challenges posed by addiction. It highlights the importance of perseverance, as multiple attempts are often necessary. Failure to succeed initially does not equate to overall failure; rather, it is a valuable learning experience that fosters personal growth. This journey serves as a testament to the resilience of the individual and offers insights that can benefit others facing similar challenges. The client continues to receive support from their LEAD case manager as they navigate their newfound stability and embark on a journey toward a brighter future.