

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rochester Nonprofits Unite to Launch Emergency "Hope at Home" Fund to Prevent Eviction Amidst Community Instability

ROCHESTER, MN – February 12, 2026 – In response to a period of disruption and financial uncertainty affecting vulnerable families across Southeast Minnesota, Family Promise Rochester, Channel One Regional Food Bank and the Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense (SMIILD) have joined forces to launch the **Hope at Home Fund**. This emergency coordinated response is designed to provide immediate stabilization to housing and food access to families facing sudden loss of income and isolation.

Over the past several weeks, local service providers have reported concerning trends of families avoiding routine activities, including school, medical appointments, and work out of concern for their safety. This withdrawal from the workforce has resulted in lost income, placing dozens of families at immediate risk of eviction and food insecurity.

"The message we want to share today is simple: Families should not be homeless, and kids should not go hungry," said Carrie Moscho, Executive Director of Family Promise Rochester. "We have seen that many households in our community are unable to pay February rent, and without timely support, March is expected to be even more challenging. This fund is about giving dignity to those who need help and giving our community a way to show up quickly."

The Hope at Home Fund is managed by Family Promise Rochester and is designed to bridge the gap for families with children who are currently housed but facing an immediate crisis. Information collected for the fund is minimal, used strictly to determine eligibility, and will not be shared beyond the scope of housing support.

The fund will provide:

- Short-term rental assistance.
- Utility support.
- Landlord mediation services.

In addition to housing stability, the coalition is addressing other urgent needs for legal support and food access. Channel One Regional Food Bank reaffirmed its commitment to operating as a safe, neutral space that does not require identification to access food.

"We are advocating to stabilize our community," said Virginia Witherspoon, Executive Director of Channel One Regional Food Bank. "It is our duty to feed families and children."

Our legal support initiative is to provide a more rapid response for those in need of immigration legal services, by partnering with firms to provide partial representation within a day or two of arrest.

"Our involvement is not intended to circumvent immigration law, but to ensure that it is applied equitably regardless of the income of the people affected," said Phil Wheeler, Board Chair of SMILD.

The nonprofit coalition is asking the Rochester community to assist in specific ways:

1. Donate financial contributions to cover rent and utility obligations for March. Donations can be made to the Hope at Home Fund via [Insert URL/Website].
2. Send out the attached flyer that outlines other resources to get help or give help, including volunteering at Channel One and donating to SMILD.

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About Family Promise Rochester Family Promise Rochester serves families experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Through community partnerships, they provide shelter, meals, and case management to help families achieve sustainable independence.

About Channel One Regional Food Bank Channel One Regional Food Bank's mission is to strengthen food access and build healthy communities. They serve people experiencing hunger in 14 counties in Southeast Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.

About Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense SMILD's mission is to ensure the availability of immigration legal services for those who live or work in the 11-county area of southeastern Minnesota.

Additional organizations who approve this message:

Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association

Pamoja

Families First