

# Centering the Margins

A Framework and Practices for Person-Centered Financial Security Policy

## Aspen Institute Financial Security Program

- Originate design around the experiences and perspectives of participants.
- Interpret data from the perspective of participants.
- Establish metrics that offer a full assessment of the ways a policy is experienced.
- Establish metrics that align with the goals of the participants.

### Holistic Design & Evaluation

- Direct agendas according to participant decision making.
- Engage all stakeholders in the planning that will be involved in implementation.
- Evaluate *both* impact of specific design features across key performance metrics *and* policies across administrative platforms based on their intended goal.
- Develop an assessment tool for determining *both* policies that replicate or mitigate harms or privileges present in other systems *and* that exacerbate or mitigate historical harm or privilege.



### Power- Building Design & Evaluation

- Create a supportive infrastructure that fosters ongoing engagement.
- Invest in a design that allows participants to engage on their own terms.

### Systemic Design & Evaluation

- Assess policies based on the ability of the people they impact to hold them accountable for their performance.
- Create feedback loops within policies to make them responsive to participant experience.

## Person-Centered Financial Security Policy at DCHS

*In Multnomah County, every person – at every stage in life – has equitable opportunities to thrive:* The DCHS North Star guides the department to explore Person-Centered policy approaches, which “shift power and influence to the people excluded by our current economic and political systems within financial security policy.”

The **Economic Justice Project** (EJP) is one example of how the Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL) is utilizing frameworks and practices like this to inform its work. The success of the EJP Community Discussion in April 2023 is evidence for centering the voices and lived experiences of BIPOC communities across Multnomah County systems of care.

### Holistic Design & Evaluation

The EJP Discussion Guide was developed to support incorporating economic justice into the county’s programs, policies, and practices.

It is designed to provide the basis for a collaborative community design process to develop a blueprint for economic justice in Multnomah County.

### Systemic Design & Evaluation

DCHS hosted a full-day EJP community discussion to explore and identify potential strategies for Multnomah County action and investment.

The EJP aims to promote long-term systemic change and address the underlying issues at the roots of racially based economic disparities.

### Power- Building Design & Evaluation

Next steps for the EJP:

- Identify existing County services that could become a means to advancing economic justice
- Conduct an annual economic justice impact analysis of the County budget
- Engage BIPOC communities as partners in reviewing and providing feedback on budget and policy proposals

**How might** DCHS further center the experiences and perspectives of program participants?

**How might** DCHS develop an assessment tool for determining policies that exacerbate or mitigate historical harm or privilege?

**How might** DCHS create feedback loops within policies to make them responsive to participant experience?