

LEVL: Lived Experience Voices & Leaders

Participant Information

Missoula Food Bank envisions a community that works together in building a hunger-free Missoula where those most impacted are a leading voice in the solutions to poverty and hunger.

LEVL is a platform for families with children to engage in story-sharing, esteem-building, and community growing activities to increase human capital, resilience, and positive family outcomes. LEVL is built around a story-sharing model, where participants are supported in sharing their experiences to inform processes and decisions to improve safety-net programs that aim to facilitate upward mobility for families, but often fall short. In short, we hope to empower women who are the true experts on food insecurity and the challenges that families face. We hope that LEVL participants will feel supported in sharing their stories, using their voices and power to influence decision makers, and to take on other leadership roles.

Applications:

LEVL accepts applications four times per year. 2018 due dates are:

July 30, 2018

October 31, 2018

December 31, 2018

Paper applications must be returned to Missoula Food Bank & Community Center to the attention of Jess Allred by the end of business on the due dates for each application cycle. All late applications will be saved and considered in the next application cycle. Online applications are available at .

Participant Focus: EmPower Place Families

Women with children disproportionately experience poverty. LEVL focuses its recruitment in EmPower Place, our onsite child learning center. Similar programs have shown success in bringing together people who are in similar life situations to foster a stronger community and support network. LEVL will organize a group of mothers and female caregivers to empower and amplify the voices of women and families.

If selected, LEVL participants must commit to four hours per month of program activities, including at least one group meeting. Hours are flexible, and group meetings are offered at two different times each month. Participants receive \$50 per month for full participation.

Between ten and fifteen hours of LEVL activities are offered each month; members may attend as many hours as they like, but must attend a minimum of four.

- One two-hour monthly group meeting is required for participation – two are offered each month.
- EmPower Place is open during all meetings at Missoula Food Bank & Community Center.
- Meals are provided (or prepared) at every meeting at MFB&CC.
- Participants graduate after 10 months of full participation. Upon completion, graduates receive:
 - Certificate of Completion
 - Graduation Party for Families
 - Alum invited to monthly group meetings
 - Future Speaking Opportunities and Trainings

Reimbursement:

Missoula Food Bank & Community Center provides volunteer participants a nominal reimbursement for time spent implementing this important program, up to \$50 per month for up to 10 months. Incentives are provided in the form of VISA Gift Cards, and are the sole responsibility of the participant. MFB is not responsible for lost or stolen cards, and cannot replace incentive reimbursements. Participants are neither employees nor contractors of Missoula Food Bank, and therefore, MFB holds no responsibility in reporting incentive compensation the IRS or others.

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Support:

While supported by MFB&CC staff, this program is designed to be led from within. Participants will engage in sustaining activities like peer support, record keeping, and other such work. As the program graduates participants, it is expected that further leadership opportunities will emerge.

The group is facilitated by Jess Allred. Jess is a member of MFB&CC's leadership team and has personally experienced poverty and hunger. Jess is a single mom and is motivated by her own experiences to facilitate this group. She trained with the Harvard Kennedy School in organizing and the story of self.

This program will provide diverse opportunities in a range of concentrations including:

- Story of Self Development
- Skill/Strength Building with Partner Orgs
- Financial Literacy and Planning Education
- Civic and Democratic Process Engagement
- Group Strategic Meetings
- Speaking Engagements
- Self Care and Mindfulness

Example Monthly Offerings:

Monthly Strategy Meetings: First Friday at 11am-1pm – Lunch Served
ONE REQUIRED: First Thursday 5-7pm – Dinner Served

Story of Self Workshops 1 & 2: Third Thursday from 5-7 – Dinner Served
REQUIRED IN FIRST 3 MONTHS Third Monday from 11-1pm – Lunch Served

Up to Three Additional Monthly Options: Examples -

Know More About Poverty:	Daisy Rooks
Overcoming Fears About Public Speaking	Jess Allred
Photovoice Training	Jess Allred
Democratic Process:	Montana Women Vote
Financial Fitness:	Homeward
Yoga & Meditation:	Guest Presenters
Adverse Childhood Experiences S Training:	Parenting Place
Meal Planning Budget Cooking:	MFB &CC

Program Support Opportunities:

- Reminder Calls for Meetings
- Application Review Team
- Graduation Planning Committee
- Other planning and organizing as group determines
- Peer story collection