

### Commitment to Health Equity

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. believes that to improve the wellness of the least served and fully live out its mission of “Serving Humanity to Honor God,” it must recognize the inequities inherent in its communities that contribute to poor health outcomes. **Health Equity is both the process and goal by which Methodist Healthcare Ministries seeks to carry out that purpose.** Health Equity is a framework of thought and action that strives to reduce racial and socio-economic disparities and create fair and just opportunities for every person to reach their full potential.

### Current State

- 8 out of 10 occupations in Texas pay less than a living wage
- Nearly 43% of Texan households – about 4.6 million of 10.7 million – struggle to afford essential expenses like housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, technology, taxes, and unexpected costs
- Of the 20 most common occupations in Texas, 14 paid less than \$20 per hour in 2023.
- 20% of adults ages 50+ have no retirement savings and 61% are worried about future financial wellbeing
- 13.4% of all Texans lived in poverty, and 6.4% lived in deep poverty in 2023



### Desired Future State

All people in MHM’s service area have equitable access to pathways, supports, and systems that promote economic mobility, wealth-building, and intergenerational prosperity.

### Vision

To be the leader for improving wellness of the least served



### Objective 1

Increase implementation of Mobility Mentoring and access to cash assistance and Ascend 2Gen Approach for the economic assets approach to achieve desired future state.

#### PRIORITIES

1. Establish or expand opportunities to implement Mobility Mentoring, a participant-directed economic coaching model.
2. Provide flexible or unrestricted cash assistance over a set timeframe to help individuals/families meet urgent basic needs (rent, food, healthcare) with economic coaching and goal setting.
3. Increase support to economic assets approaches for organizations in Ascend’s partner network within MHM’s service area.

### Objective 2

Identify, invest in, and support approaches that address root causes of poverty and financial outcomes for individuals and families living in poverty.

#### PRIORITIES

1. Provide unrestricted general operating support for organizations that address root causes of poverty and financial outcomes for individuals and families living in poverty.

MHM investments prioritize efforts serving economically disadvantaged, geographically underserved, and historically disenfranchised populations.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Increase implementation of Mobility Mentoring and access to cash assistance and Ascend 2Gen Approach for the economic assets approach to achieve desired future state.

Priority	<p><b>Establish or expand opportunities to implement Mobility Mentoring, a participant-directed economic coaching model</b></p> <p>Evidence-based mentoring and/or coaching to build skills and mindsets necessary for moving out of poverty, including efforts to strengthen decision-making, persistence, and resilience.</p>
Priority	<p><b>Provide flexible or unrestricted cash assistance over a set timeframe to help individuals/families meet urgent basic needs (rent, food, healthcare) with economic coaching and goal setting</b></p> <p>Programs that provide unconditional payments of at least \$500 monthly for 18-24 months, allowing households to prioritize expenses most relevant to their stability.</p>
Priority	<p><b>Increase support to economic assets approaches for organizations in Ascend’s partner network within MHM’s service area.</b></p> <p>Programs and services pairing supports for caretakers and children to achieve success in areas related to economic mobility drivers, such as social capital, economic assets, housing, early childhood education, and postsecondary or employment pathways.</p>
Metrics	<p># of individuals receiving mentoring or coaching over a specified time frame, # of individuals with self-identified goals across drivers, # of goals achieved (ex: participants open savings/checking accounts), improved stability indicators (employment, income progress, savings milestones), % of participants reporting improved well-being (lower stress, sense of security, improved mental health), # of households receiving cash assistance, reduction in financial hardship indicators (stable rent and utilities, food security, medical care, able to absorb minor unexpected expenses), # of households using cash assistance to support employment/education/training, multi-generational stability indicators (overall family well-being, reduced household stress, consistent school attendance, meet basic family needs)</p>

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Identify, invest in, and support approaches that address root causes of poverty and financial outcomes for individuals and families living in poverty.

Priority	<p><b>Provide unrestricted general operating support for organizations that address root causes of poverty and financial outcomes for individuals and families living in poverty.</b></p> <p>Financial Independence focuses on strengthening low-income people’s financial inclusion, knowledge, behaviors and opportunities through financial information, education and coaching opportunities, along with capital and asset building to develop financial capability and security.</p>
Metrics	<p># of individuals receiving mentoring or coaching over a specified time frame, # of individuals with self-identified goals across drivers, # of goals achieved (ex: participants open savings/checking accounts), improved stability indicators (employment, income progress, savings milestones), % of participants reporting improved well-being (lower stress, sense of security, improved mental health), # of households receiving cash assistance, reduction in financial hardship indicators (stable rent and utilities, food security, medical care, able to absorb minor unexpected expenses), # of households using cash assistance to support employment/education/training, multi-generational stability indicators (overall family well-being, reduced household stress, consistent school attendance, meet basic family needs)</p>