

# Newark First Lady Linda Baraka Partners with Dfree Financial Freedom Movement to Empower 1,000 City Women

*The Newark Women Moving Forward Financial Initiative Offers Free Education and Solutions for Personal, Business Finances, Home Ownership, and Estate Planning*

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, USA, March 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mayor Ras J. Baraka announced that Newark First Lady Linda Baraka will lead the [Newark Women Forward Financial Initiative \(NWFMI\)](#) to empower 1,000 city women with comprehensive financial education and tools to achieve personal independence. The program will consist of financial education, virtual and live events to offer free solutions such issues, and access to licensed professionals through Prudential Financial.

NWFMI is rooted in the interests and needs of Newark's women as defined through monthly discussions initiated a year ago by First Lady Baraka. Among the many themes that emerged, the subject of financial health and empowerment resonated deeply and sparked this new city-wide program to empower and uplift women across Newark.

In partnership with the [nationally-recognized dfree® program](#), and a wide coalition of supporters, the program is provided without charge and available through churches, community organizations, and women's groups in the City of Newark. In addition to the City of Newark and Prudential Financial, partners include RWJBarnabas Health, PSEG Foundation, The MCJ Amelior Foundation, Audible, and Industrial Bank; their collaboration makes possible a sustainable financial education program that enables participants to pay off debt, cultivate savings, and access various financial services.



Mayor Ras Baraka and First Lady Linda Baraka and DFree Movement Partners

“Since the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey residents have faced elevated levels of inflation. According to a report by Rutgers published in collaboration with the Rutgers New Jersey State Policy Lab and the Center for Women and Work, “women, in general, faced a higher burden from inflation than men. Compared to men, women had lower average earnings and employment and were more likely to report difficulty paying for usual household expenses and food insufficiency.” We must begin to close this gap to support women who are the fabrics of our community. I

wholeheartedly support the First Lady’s

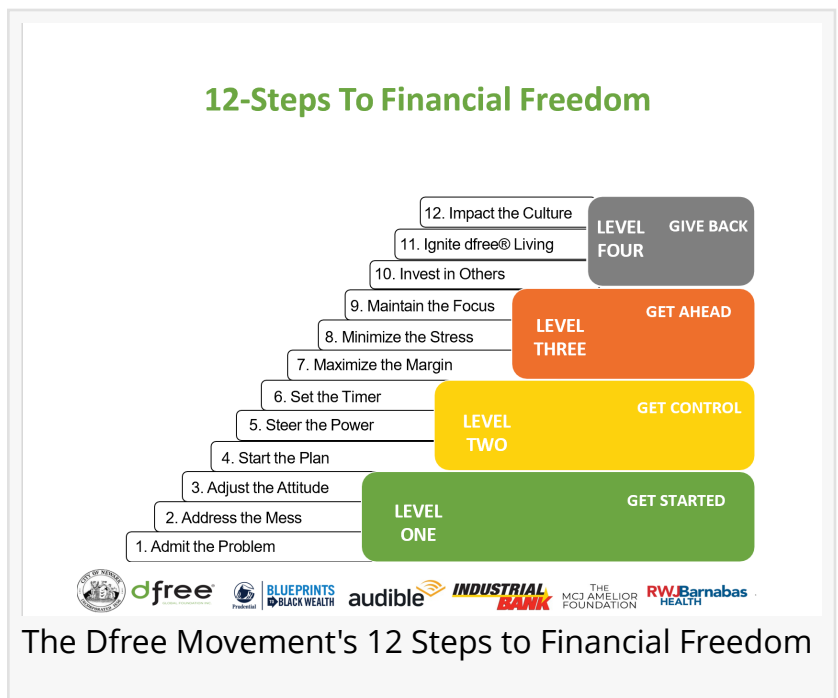
Newark Women Moving Forward Financial Initiative and her vision to empower and support women. This effort will equip Newark women with the knowledge and tools to achieve financial independence, success, and ultimately improve their quality of life. When women thrive

financially, our city thrives. We must continue to invest in the empowerment of women for a brighter and more prosperous Newark.” – Mayor Ras J. Baraka

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The Newark Women Moving Forward initiative is not just a program; it’s a catalyst for change, and a catapult to economic success for Newark residents who want to unlock their financial potential.”

*Newark First Lady Linda Baraka*



The Dfree Movement's 12 Steps to Financial Freedom

How it Works:

Participants can join a 12-week class, either instructor-led or self-paced, through the dfree® Online Academy. The program includes the dfree® 12 Steps to Financial Freedom course, offering books, resources, and support for successful completion. It will culminate in a graduation ceremony.

Partnering with dfree® allows community organizations and institutions to bring financial freedom tools to benefit entire families. Women residents of Newark, ages 18 and over are eligible and can sign up [HERE](#) to begin their journey.

Participants will receive:

- Financial education through the dfree® Online Academy & Billion Dollar Challenge tools.
- All necessary materials are free.
- Access to licensed financial professionals through Prudential Financial.

Virtual and live events that will offer free solutions for credit repair, student loans, small business financing, homeownership, estate planning, and more.

“The Newark Women Moving Forward initiative is not just a program; it’s a catalyst for change, and a catapult to economic success for Newark residents who want to unlock their financial potential,” said First Lady Baraka. “I’m grateful to our partners for the resources, both technical and tangible, and to our community for being open and eager to embark on exciting new paths. To the women of Newark: this is your invitation to join a movement that is all about you – your financial well-being, your dreams, and your future.”

### After Completion of Course Our Participants Experienced





- Confidence and discipline
- Time spent on financial affairs
- Awareness of bills and financial goals
- Savings and budgeting
- Investments, wealth building, estate planning and use of financial professionals
- Donations to church and other charities

- Use of credit cards and consumer debt
- Late payment fees
- Emotional spending
- Spending beyond their means
- Alternative financial services such as payday loans, check cashing stores, pawn shops, etc.
- Stress related to finance



#### Historically, What Participants Experienced after Completion of Dfree 12 Step Course

“Prudential is excited to offer our professional financial expertise to the Newark Women Moving Forward initiative. Financial education and planning is a critical part of economic mobility and we’re excited to continue our work with Dr. Soaries and the dfree® movement in this area with the residents of our home city This initiative is a strong example how the public, private and nonprofit sectors can come together to benefit the residents of their local community, said Shané Harris, Head of Social Responsibility, Prudential Financial.

“RWJBarnabas Health is incredibly proud to partner with the Newark Women Moving Forward Initiative on the dfree® Financial Freedom Movement to help women in Newark achieve and sustain financial stability,” said Mark E. Manigan, President and Chief Executive Officer for RWJBarnabas Health. “This partnership is an extension of our love and commitment to the folks of Newark and our long-held belief that, together, we can address the social, economic and environmental factors that impact health outcomes.”

“Audible believes deeply in all fundamentals of literacy and in supporting efforts to strengthen and advance Newark. Focusing on Newark allows us to create a more impactful and targeted program that considers the local context, economic landscape, and the specific needs of the women in this city” said Aisha Glover, Head of Urban Innovation at Audible, “we are honored to play a part in helping to advance this initiative and support economic empowerment.”

Free for Newark participants, the dfree® Financial Freedom Movement, created by Dr. DeForest Soaries Jr., Chairman and CEO of the dfree® Global Foundation and Corporate Community Connections Inc., is nationally recognized for guiding individuals from negative financial

situations to positive outcomes.

"I am extremely grateful to our partners for their unwavering support of the Newark Women Moving Forward initiative. Their contributions underscore their dedication to bringing strength to our community. To the women of Newark, I extend a heartfelt invitation to join us in this transformative journey towards financial freedom," said Dr. Soaries.

The dfree® Financial Freedom Movement has successfully helped more than 100,000 people reach financial freedom. The philosophy of the movement is to transition from debt, delinquencies, and deficits to deposits, dividends, and deeds. The initiative's mission is to provide people with full control of their finances. Participants will have an opportunity to become part of a larger national commitment, the Billion Dollar Challenge (BDC), which aims to save and pay back \$1 billion dollars' worth of debt in the Black and Brown community. To date, the BDC has helped to eliminate more than \$36 million in debt.

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