

Hennepin County seeks community insight during preparation for north Minneapolis human services "hub"

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Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department will host a series of community conversations about a proposal to create a more convenient location for north Minneapolis residents to access services including medical, emergency, child care and food assistance, child support and homeless services.

The current proposal to refit a building on the southeast corner of Plymouth and Emerson avenues north is part of a larger plan to move access to services into "hubs," located in the communities where Hennepin County residents live and work. Others are planned for south and central Minneapolis. A Bloomington location is slated to open this fall, and another in Hopkins around the end of this year. The first hub, located at the Northwest Family Services Center in Brooklyn Center, opened in October 2012. A network of smaller "satellite" locations will offer other supports.

"Making county services accessible to residents in their communities will help them access the help they need earlier, and become self-sufficient, sooner," said Rex Holzemer, assistant county administrator for human services. "This is a major change in how the county addresses the needs and goals of individuals and communities."

For the past 20 years, residents from across the county have had to go downtown to the Century Plaza building to apply for assistance. In addition to being inconvenient to families located in all corners of the county, the 80-year-old building is in need of extensive repairs, inside and out. It is scheduled to be vacated at the end of 2014.

North Minneapolis residents have told us they want to be engaged in the process.

"It's important to hear from the residents of the area where the office is to be located," said Second District Commissioner Linda Higgins. "The community meetings are a chance to voice their thoughts, ask questions, and hear the information first-hand."

On May 14, 15 & 22, the county will host facilitated community engagement meetings. Representatives from county's developer and the building owner, The Ackerberg Group, will present the current plan. County representatives will talk more about what this means for residents.

The meetings will proceed as follows:

- **May 14: English and Spanish**
- **May 15: Hmong**
- **May 22: English and Somali**

All of the meetings will be held 6-9 p.m., at PICA Head Start, 700 Humboldt Ave. N., Minneapolis.

For more information, visit www.hennepin.us/northhub .