

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: [press@robinhood.org](mailto:press@robinhood.org)

# **Major Donors Launch Groundbreaking \$25 Million National Initiative to Increase Mobility from Poverty**

**Cutting-edge collaboration is first-ever partnership among Robin Hood, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Tipping Point Community and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

## **Mobility LABs to change national conversation on sustainably lifting families out of poverty**

---

NEW YORK (February 4, 2019) – A pioneering \$25 million, four-year initiative to spur the development of new solutions to sustainably lift families out of poverty, and to promote dynamic leaders who will aim to change the national conversation around social and economic mobility, is the focus of a new partnership of major donors, including Robin Hood, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and Tipping Point Community, with additional support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The effort, known as Mobility Learning and Action Bets, or Mobility LABs, and announced during Robin Hood's conference – No City Limits: Reimagining the Poverty Fight 2019 – will be built around part of Robin Hood's work to identify and invest in effective models developed in New York City that can be exported and replicated in other communities. In addition, the work will identify innovative new models from other communities that can be replicated in New York City and beyond.

"Robin Hood is New York born, bred, and focused, but we know that poverty is not a New York-alone issue," said Robin Hood CEO Wes Moore. "Under Nisha Patel's leadership, Mobility LABs will allow us to partner with impactful funders in diverse geographies across the country to work with communities to test and drive solutions lifting families from poverty."

New data clearly underscore the need to prioritize investments in mobility from poverty. Nationally, the work of Harvard University's Raj Chetty shows that the American Dream — rising up from poverty to economic opportunity — is now less likely to happen in the United States than it is in Canada, Denmark, or the United Kingdom. Local New York City data from Robin Hood's Poverty Tracker reveals a similar story: from year to year, more New Yorkers move in and out of poverty than remain persistently poor. Mobility LABs will explore these dynamics and others in a bold effort to find and test models that address this challenge.

The Mobility LABs initiative was announced during a panel moderated by Nisha Patel, Managing Director for Narrative Change & National Initiatives at Robin Hood, and including Wes Moore, Robin Hood's CEO, Daniel Lurie, CEO and founder of Tipping Point Community and Rachel Garbow Monroe, President and CEO of The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.

"Robin Hood has built a powerful approach to tackling poverty in New York City. We were pleased to make an investment in their efforts to collaborate with others committed to doing the same around the U.S. We're excited to see these partnerships take shape and begin to generate momentum to increase economic mobility and opportunity in America," said Sue Desmond-Hellmann, Chief Executive Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

During the panel, participants underscored the need to support action at the community level, recognizing that, though data-driven, the initiative will embark on a new area of work and will need to make bets in order to learn. Risk will be mitigated by working with national and local anchor partners who bring solid track records and significant expertise. Learning from these investments will inform and influence Robin Hood's work, as well as the philanthropic partners' efforts, going forward.

"The Bay Area is known for its progressive ideals, booming tech sector, and cultural innovation. But in the midst of this opportunity, there are 1.3 million people who are too poor to make ends meet," said Daniel Lurie, CEO and founder of Tipping Point Community. "Mobility LABs will support those who are being left behind by enabling us to better predict, invest in, and improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our community."

The Mobility LABs initiative is led by Nisha Patel, Managing Director for Narrative Change & National Initiatives at Robin Hood. Patel is a nationally renowned expert in helping families move sustainably out of poverty. She served as the director of President Obama's Office of Family Assistance at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services where she led the investment strategy for a \$17 billion portfolio of federal grants. Patel also served as the Executive Director of the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, where she partnered with other experts to identify ideas for investment to dramatically increase mobility from poverty.

"The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation is excited to participate in this partnership that combines action and learning to increase impact in our priority communities," said Rachel Garbow Monroe, Foundation President and CEO. "The Foundation is committed to more proactive and strategic grantmaking rooted in partnerships with other funders and service providers. Given our mission of supporting low-income and vulnerable populations, our hope through this partnership is to build knowledge and capacity that will help us move people from poverty, not just serve people in poverty."

In the end of the four-year initiative, Mobility LABs and its partners hope to:

- Increase learning about effective short-term predictors of mobility from poverty – and identify new metrics to help guide future investments.
- Measurably increase short-term predictors of mobility from poverty in diverse demonstration communities.
- Create an active cohort of leaders who understand, embrace, and promote new narratives about mobility from poverty.

###