

April 9, 2021



Greetings! Welcome to the 2021 Financial Empowerment Summit. April is recognized as National Financial Literacy Month in the United States. This summit is the first of its kind in Syracuse, and will now pivot virtually due to the repercussions of the ongoing pandemic along with the vaccination roll-out.

A few years ago, Syracuse was ranked one of the top cities in our nation with a high rate of concentrated poverty, and the pandemic exacerbated the problem. Among our middle-class citizens, Syracuse is in alignment with national statistics citing that 69% of Americans have less than \$1,000 in their savings accounts, thereby making them particularly vulnerable in the event of a job loss. Syracusans mirror the rest of America wherein nearly one-half of our city's residents have no money in their retirement account at all.

The goal of the summit is to provide you with knowledge canvassing a full array of financial literacy topics including budgeting, credit, debt management, homeownership, student loans, asset accumulation and wealth-building, and a plethora of other related topics.

The summit encompasses 4 Tracks: Financial Literacy, Professional Development, Entrepreneurship, and Institutional; 100 Panelists, 12 Affinity Groups, and 30 sessions spotlighting financial literacy education. The Summit will premiere virtually later in 2021. You will have the ability to access these sessions on-demand in order to prevent Zoom fatigue.

The summit aims to be intentionally diverse and bring together cross-sectional community collaborators engaged in anti-poverty programs. Collaborators include municipal, county and state government; nonprofit organizations; the for-profit business sector; community foundations; academia; grass-roots community organizations; prospective attendees; and individuals and organizations already engaged in asset-building initiatives.

It is an honor and privilege to fuse my experience and expertise in conference planning with my passion for financial literacy education by making a long-time dream a reality.

The definition of poverty is lack of resources. Information and knowledge is power. This conference is designed to empower you with financial literacy education so you will be prepared to harness information in a way that will help you achieve upward socioeconomic mobility.

Many thanks to Presenting Sponsor M&T Bank and a host of other contributors for supporting this inaugural vision in Syracuse and Central New York.

Thoughtfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Me'Shae Rolling'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Me'Shae Rolling, CEPF  
Certified Educator in Personal Finance  
and Executive Producer  
2021 Financial Empowerment Summit