



**Your Turn**  
Gregory M. Duckett  
Guest columnist

## Helping Memphis meet basic needs

When you need a reliable community partner, you can count on MIFA.

When I was a member of the City of Memphis government leadership team in the 1990s, MIFA was frequently pointed to as an exemplary brand for cross-sector partnerships.

Today, like nearly 40 years ago, community leaders know MIFA as an innovative nonprofit with strong organizational acumen and accountability.

MIFA is a visionary leader in the city's social services safety net with a staff of experts and on-the-ground implementers, not to mention its corps of highly dedicated volunteers.

In 1983, MIFA and the City of Memphis formally partnered to launch the Memphis Emergency Assistance Program (MEAP), which continues today to meet the basic needs of our neighbors by leveraging city human service dollars with public and private funding.

Three years ago, at the request of the city, MIFA assumed management of a 24-hour, seven days a week Homeless Hotline for families. And, MIFA is a key partner in the city's Community Alliance for the Homeless, assisting with rapid rehousing for homeless families and emergency shelter placement.

Thirty-six years ago, MIFA and MLGW launched the Plus-1 utility assistance program to help those who've experienced a temporary crisis. Last year they joined forces for the new Share the Pennies home weatherization program for low-income homeowners.

These collaborative initiatives demonstrate a real economic and human impact for our city. They are part of MIFA's family programs, which provide basic services to prevent homelessness, stabilize families, and encourage independence.

Data verifies the importance of these critical programs. During the organization's last fiscal year ending June 30, MIFA screened 9,587 requests for emergency assistance, and helped 3,573 eligible families with rent, mortgage or utility assistance, shelter, and long-term housing. The homeless hotline screened 7,270 calls – a 25 percent increase over last year.

Fifty years ago, MIFA was created from collaboration. Today, MIFA continues to seek better ways to serve our community through new ideas, best practices and smart partnerships. MIFA is a trusted partner in serving our city. It's a trusted place where thousands of vulnerable seniors and families in crisis receive hope and help.

I can't imagine what our city would be like without MIFA.

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