



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Adam Falzarano
The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland
afalzarano@thellf.org
410-733-0911

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland Receives Trademark for “The Decision Project®” Initiative to Continue Fighting Health Inequity

Outreach program to increase organ donation and combat systemic health inequality in marginalized communities continues to expand

BALTIMORE (June 15, 2022) – [The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland](https://www.thellf.org/) (The LLF), the state’s organ procurement organization (OPO) in charge of coordination, advocacy, family support, and public and professional education for organ, eye and tissue donation, has officially trademarked the name “The Decision Project®” through the United States Patent and Trademark Office. This trademark, which is good for 5 years with the option to renew for “greater incontestability,” will provide the organization the opportunity to continue to use the name and branding to do the important work of providing resources and education to communities in need.

The Decision Project® was created by The LLF to make meaningful connections with and to support the communities they serve. The initiative dispels myths and misconceptions about organ, eye and tissue donation and enhances trust of the organization and donation process through education, as well as empowers individuals to make an educated and inspired decision about organ, eye and tissue donation.

“The primary goal of The Decision Project® is to build trust in our communities, and we’ve worked really hard at that so far,” said Ieesha Johnson, director of community outreach at The LLF and founder of The Decision Project®. “With this trademark, we can continue to grow the initiative, build on this trust and position The Decision Project® name and brand as a symbol of health equity and saving and healing lives.”

[The Decision Project®](https://www.thedecisionproject.org/) is a grassroots initiative created by The LLF that empowers people in underserved communities to designate themselves as organ donors. In 2016, The LLF recognized that only 9% of residents in zip code 21215 (a predominantly Black/African American neighborhood) were registering as organ donors; yet this same community had the highest number of people on the transplant waiting list compared to any zip code in the state of Maryland. Community engagement and research by The LLF suggested that the waitlist in this area was so much higher compared to others due to health inequity, access to healthy food and safe recreation spaces. In addition, organ donation myths, mistrust in medical institutions and socio-economic barriers impacted this community’s decision to register as donors.

While The LLF makes no claim that correlation means causation, donor designation increased dramatically by 500% within the priority zip code, 21215, since the implementation of The Decision Project from 2016-2019. The LLF continues to analyze these trends. Additionally, this initiative has linked services to those most in need in these communities, including fresh food accessibility, COVID-19 screenings and vaccines, accessibility of school supplies for children, and more. The initiative has continued in 21215 and has even expanded into several other zip codes across the state and been adopted by organizations across state lines in North Carolina.

For more information about The Decision Project®, please visit [thedecisionproject.org](https://www.thedecisionproject.org/).



ABOUT THE LIVING LEGACY FOUNDATION OF MARYLAND

As the organ procurement organization (OPO) for Maryland (with the exception of Montgomery, Prince George's, and Charles Counties), The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland (The LLF) facilitates donation and transplantation in area hospitals, provides donor family support, and educates hospitals and the general public about the life-saving power of organ, eye, and tissue donation.

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