Board Workshop / Discussion Agenda

RAMSEY COUNTY

September 23, 2025 - 1:30 p.m.   **Courthouse Room 220**

WORKSHOP

1.   **Development of 2026 Ramsey County State and Federal Legislative Platforms**   **2025-367**

      Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Board Workshop / Discussion

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-367   **Meeting Date:** 9/23/2025

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title
Development of 2026 Ramsey County State and Federal Legislative Platforms

Attachment
1. Presentation

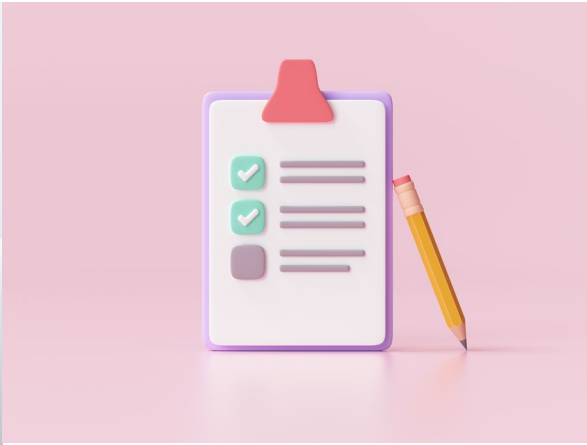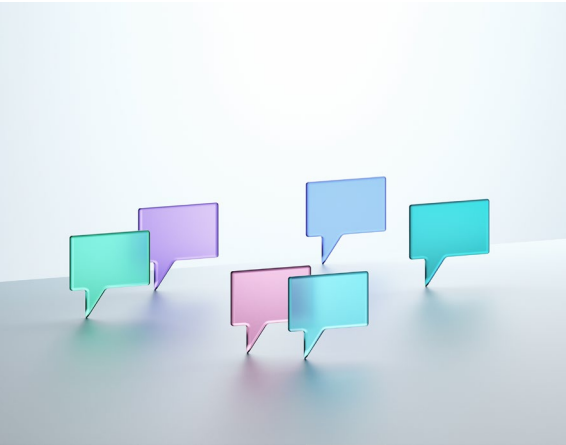# Development of 2026 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

September 23, 2025

Legislative Platform Development: Then and now

	Last time (2025 session)	This time (2026 session)
Session start	Jan 14, 2025	Feb 17, 2026
Biennium year	Budget year	Policy and bonding year
What to expect	State fiscal pressures, special elections, late start in House	State and federal fiscal pressures, positioning for mid-term elections
Starting point	Built off previous year's platform.	Started from scratch with full re-evaluation of old platform items; development of new items.
Development process	Departments completed proposal form; GR met with directors and SMEs to discuss proposals. Met with commissioners 1:1.	Cross-departmental Legislative Platform Advisory Teams (LPATs) developed platform items collaboratively. Met with commissioners 1:1.
Final approval	Nov 19, 2024	Nov 4, 2025 (planned)

RAMSEY COUNTY

2

Legislative platform development and approval

July – August

Input
- Directors
- SMEs
- Partners
- Community
- Gov Relations

August – September

Review
- Gov Relations
- Directors
- Executive Team
- County Board

September – October

Org approval

Exec Team

County Manager

Mid-November

Final approval

County Board

Framework for 2026 Legislative Priorities

Legislative platform development has been guided by the same priorities that framed the budget process:

Operating as One Ramsey County

County Responsible Services

Investing in Organizational Excellence

Advancing Partnerships

Supporting Long-Term Fiscal Health

Legislative Platform Advisory Teams (LPATs)

- Nine teams based on specific legislative areas.
- Bring together cross-departmental leaders and SMEs with Government Relations, Racial and Health Equity Administrators, and Policy & Administrative Strategy.
- Collaborate to identify priorities for legislative platforms.
- Coordinate review and approval of platform items.
- Prepare GR staff to advocate knowledgably for platform items.

Legislative Platform Advisory Teams

Health & Human Services (FAS)	Health & Human Services (SS, PH, VS)	Transportation
Economic Development	Housing & Homelessness	Parks & Environment
Public Safety	State Aids, Taxes & Elections	Organizational Governance

Bonding & Earmarks (Executive Team)

Themes in 1:1 Discussions with Commissioners

(in no particular order)

Reforming County Program Aid (CPA) formula	**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for Ramsey County**	**Economic development, supporting local and small business, workforce development**	**Defending against state and federal cuts and cost shifts**
Protecting people from federal actions	**Affordable housing**	**Shelter and supports for those experiencing homelessness**	**Human Services technology modernization**
Social services, mental health, and child welfare	**Food insecurity**	**Bonding priorities**	**Building broader coalitions**

RAMSEY COUNTY

Community and Partner Engagement (So Far)

Ongoing engagement strengthens connections for future work.

- Cross Sharing Partner Work Group
- Ramsey United
- Community Advisory Councils
- Heading Home Ramsey
- Ecolab's Homelessness Roundtable
- Association of Minnesota Counties
- Ramsey County legislators
- City of Saint Paul
- Hennepin, Scott & Washington counties
- More to come...

Affordability	**Medicaid and SNAP cuts**	**Homelessness**
Downtown issues	**Bonding projects**	**Mental health**
Transportation	**Need for improved systems and processes**	**Provider workforce shortages**

Ramsey County's Overarching Themes in 2026

No new unfunded mandates.

Protect counties from further cuts.

Counties must be at the table for any service delivery change.

CPA formula fix and PILT for Ramsey County.

Top Issues So Far

- HHS systems modernization
- HHS cuts and cost shifts
- County Program Aid and PILT
- Revisions to MN Statute 383A
- Enhancing efficiencies and ensuring appropriate funding method for Home and Community-Based Services.
- Mental health, gun violence, and local control
- Public safety
- Downtown revitalization
- Homelessness
- Transportation funding defense

RAMSEY COUNTY

Advocacy Strategy

Government Relations engages with legislators and partners like AMC throughout the year. For the 2026 Session, we will need:

- A tight focus on the most critical legislative priorities, and what is urgent and realistically achievable—less is more.
- An emphasis on supporting county responsible services.
- Strong commissioner engagement with legislators.
- "Hot topic" presentations for legislative delegation pre-Session.
- Leveraging partnerships wherever possible.
- Engage in Special Session (mental health, local control) if it happens.

RAMSEY COUNTY

Commissioner Engagement and Next Steps

Steps	Date
Meetings with Legislative Committee chair and co-chair	Ongoing
Individual meetings with commissioners	July 29 – September 17
1st Board Workshop	September 23
2nd Board Workshop	October 21
Legislative Committee of the Whole	November 4
Final Board approval (REVISED)	November 18

RAMSEY COUNTY

Platform Development Timeline

July	August	September	October	November - December
Engaged with organizational leadership Launched LPATs • Begin weekly meetings • Begin development of platform items Community and partner engagement	Continued LPAT meetings Update Legislative Committee chair/co-chair Continued community and partner engagement	Sept 17: GR presents draft platform to Executive Team Sept 23: 1st Board Workshop Work with Legislative Team and organization leaders to finalize platform recommendations. Continued community and partner engagement	Work with Legislative Team and organization leaders to finalize platform recommendations. Oct 21: 2nd Board Workshop Continued community and partner engagement	Nov 4: Legislative CoW reviews platform draft and makes recommendations Nov 18: Final board approval of state platform Nov 19: Approved draft to Communications December: Legislative delegation meeting on platform Continued community and partner engagement

RAMSEY COUNTY

Discussion

RAMSEY COUNTY