

American Rescue Plan Act Funds for Workforce Initiatives

November 23, 2021

Goals for Today

- Introduce proposed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments Workforce Initiatives
- Share details on two specific requests for board action coming forth in December 2021
- Lay foundation for future discussion

Background

- Past CARES and ARPA investments.
- Partnership with Saint Paul to leverage in funding in workforce supports.
- Aligns with County Tier 1 identified priorities.
- Policy Link’s *10 Priorities for Advancing Racial Equity Through the American Rescue Plan A Guide for City and County Policymakers*: “Every city and county in this country faces the challenge of eliminating racial inequities, and every city and county should use these recovery resources to remove barriers to full participation and proactively advance racial equity and inclusion.”
 - Connect unemployed and low-wage workers with good jobs
 - Invest in frontline, Covid-impacted, and disinvested communities

Why These Initiatives?

- Ramsey County residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in employment by factors of race/ethnicity, age and education level.
- Alignment with labor market statistics data and the future economic needs of our community.
- Ramsey County's residents as an economic asset for investment.
- Moves toward achieving outcomes identified in the Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan.

Workforce Priority Projects

- Disproportionately impacted populations
- Investing in Earn and Learn Models
- Supporting Youth and Young Adult Ecosystem
- Addressing Childcare workers and childcare shortages
- Collaborating with Saint Paul, suburban partners and other stakeholders.

Two Immediate Requests

- Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy
- Ramsey County Public Health Career Pathways

Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy Workforce Needs

- Early Childhood Policy Action Group identified this area as a funding gap in ARPA or any other COVID-19 relief funding.
- Recommendation creates a Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy for early childhood worker training and small business support.

Childcare Worker Need and Impacts

- National data shows that 46% of childcare program and 54% of minority-owned programs are on the verge of closing without assistance.
- 1:3 U.S. workers have children, with 75% requiring childcare services.
- Childcare Workers are disproportionately **female** (93%) and **young** (31% 16-24 years), with a **high school diploma or less** (32%), and **Black** (15%) or **Hispanic** (10%).
- Average wage for the more than 23,000 childcare workers in Minnesota is little more than \$12/hr.
- On November 1st, there were almost 100 childcare jobs in Ramsey County posted on Indeed.com.

Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy

- **Workforce Retention and Development**
 - Retention bonuses, training, and Child Development Associate credential
 - Wage subsidy pilot and opportunity to gain work experiences in variety of settings.
- **Child Care Business Startup Support**
 - Business start-up and management support, matched with an experienced, Parent Aware-rated childcare
 - Stipend for teaching, trainings required for licensing and for Parent Aware participation.
- Cost: \$750,000 over three years.
 - Participants served: 300
 - Total Slots Created: 420
 - Slots Saved: 975

Public Health Career Pathways

- Registered nurses and Community Health Workers are needed for the **Health, Safety and Well-Being** of community due to the declining public health workforce infrastructure.
- Program designed for County front-line staff in entry level positions as an **Opportunity** to connect them with good jobs, wages and cultivate **Prosperity**.
- Aligns with our **Talent Attraction, Retention and Promotion** work to retain and promote a diverse and talented workforce to meet the evolving demographics and changing workforce needs of our community.

Public Health Workforce Need

During the past decade, nationally the Public Health Workforce has shrunk by 56,000.

The United States will need 1.1 million new registered nurses by 2022 to avoid a nation-wide nursing shortage and according to Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) registered nursing is the most in demand job in the state.

In Ramsey County, there is a shortage of registered nurses in many areas including correctional health and detox.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported last year, about 16,000 openings for health education specialists/community health workers are projected each year, on average, over the next ten years.

Program Design

- Three Public Health Career Pathways are being created:
 - Registered Nurse
 - Community Health Worker/Health Educator
- Pathways lead to an Associate Nursing Degree or Community Health Worker Certificate.
- Community Health Worker track will launch January 2022 and Nursing track Fall 2022.
- Plan to support ten staff on the nursing track and twenty staff on the community health worker track.
- Cost: \$1.1M

Next Steps

- Expected funding request for ARPA workforce investments of \$9.5M.
- Request for board action before end of 2021 for:
 - Ramsey County Early Childhood Academy
 - Public Health Career Pathways
- Board workshop or presentation in early 2022 to discuss details of remainder of \$9.5M request.
- WFS also partnering with City of Saint Paul, City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County on EDA Good Jobs Challenge grant opportunity.
 - Tech, Healthcare and Green Construction Sector Partnerships being developed.

Discussion and Questions