
Sponsor: Community & Economic Development

Meeting Date: 12/2/2025

Title: Agreement with Hennepin County for CEO Next Business Institute and CEO Now Programming

File Number: 2025-504

Background and Rationale:

In 2024, Ramsey County launched the CEO Now business program for the first time in partnership with Hennepin County. Designed to accelerate the growth and expansion of existing businesses, CEO Now focuses on early-stage, growth-minded companies. The program equips new founders with the strategic and technical skills needed to build a strong foundation for long-term success, including business systemization and scaling strategies.

Eligible participants are privately owned businesses with at least one employee beyond the owner, a minimum of two years in operation, and annual revenue of at least \$250,000. The inaugural cohort saw six Small Business CEOs successfully graduate. All of them are still operating and a few of the participants have been showcased on the Community and Economic Development (CED) newsletter and social media platforms.

CEO Next is a no-cost cohort program that provides practical tools and techniques designed specifically for growing regional second-stage companies. Ramsey County has also partnered with Hennepin, Dakota, and Scott counties to offer this business program at no cost for business leaders who manage annual sales revenues between \$1 Million and \$50 Million and have 10-99 employees.

The CEO Next program connects CEOs and their businesses with a team of topical experts and research specialists who will spend up to 45 hours addressing areas of human resources, operations and supply chain, accounting and finance, global trade, sales and marketing, succession planning, secondary market research, online marketing and customer prospecting.

Additionally, CED referred each participant of in both programs to New Impact Fund, a nonprofit organization that offers capital to small businesses, giving them the opportunity to access financial support.

With the continuation of the CEO Now and CEO Next programs, Ramsey County is strengthening its ability to support emerging and expanding businesses, fostering a more competitive and resilient regional economy.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Authorize the County Manager to execut an agreement with Hennepin County for CEO Next Business Institute and CEO Now Programming for the period of December 2025 through December 2026 in accordance with the rates established in the agreement.
2. Authorize the County Manager to execute amendments to the agreement in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office.
3. Authorize the County Manager to establish a project budget of \$95,000 for the and CEO Now Programming in the Community and Economic Development budget.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McMurtrey, seconded by Commissioner Miller.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Jebens-Singh, McMurtrey, Miller, Moran, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: - 1: McGuire

By: 

Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board