



Board of Commissioners

Agenda

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

November 4, 2025 - 9 a.m.

Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. **Agenda of November 4, 2025 is Presented for Approval** [2025-447](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the agenda of November 4, 2025.

2. **Minutes from October 21, 2025 are Presented for Approval** [2025-448](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the October 21, 2025 Minutes.

PROCLAMATION

3. **Proclamation: Native American Heritage Month** [2025-440](#)

Sponsors: Policy & Planning

ORDINANCE PROCEDURES

4. **2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance - Waive Second Reading and Hold Public Hearing** [2025-332](#)

Sponsors: Finance

1. Waive the second reading of the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance.
2. Hold the public hearing for the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

5. **Appointment to the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District** [2025-284](#)

Sponsors: Board of Commissioners

Appointment the following individuals to the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District

Board of Managers for a term beginning February 24, 2026 and ending on February 23, 2029.

- Mark C. Gernes (incumbent)
- Benjamin M. Karp (incumbent)

6. Appointment to the Rice Creek Watershed District

[2025-285](#)

Sponsors: Board of Commissioners

Appoint Marcie Weinandt (incumbent) to the Rice Creek Watershed District Board of Managers for a term beginning January 18, 2026 and ending on January 17, 2029.

7. Appointments to the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers

[2025-286](#)

Sponsors: Board of Commissioners

Appoint Rick Gelbmann (incumbent) the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers for terms beginning November 14, 2025 and ending November 13, 2028.

8. Appointment to the Ramsey County Extension Committee

[2025-431](#)

Sponsors: Board of Commissioners

Appoint the following individuals to the Ramsey County Extension Committee for a term beginning November 4, 2025 and ending on December 31, 2028.

- Heidi Miller (incumbent)
- Nancy Kasseth

9. Rename Metro Square to Ramsey County Government Center

[2025-430](#)

Sponsors: Communications & Public Relations, Property Management

1. Approve the renaming of the 121 7th Place East, St. Paul facility from 'Metro Square' to 'Ramsey County Government Center' in accordance with the Countywide Facilities Naming Policy.
2. Authorize Communication and Public Relations and Property Management to oversee implementation of the name change, including updating internal and external references, signage, communications, and systems.

10. 2026 Salary Rate for the Ramsey County Sheriff

[2025-441](#)

Sponsors: Sheriff's Office

1. Set the annual salary for the Ramsey County Sheriff at \$203,510 effective January 1, 2026.
2. Authorize the continuation of the contribution to deferred compensation consistent with that approved for non-represented employees for 2026.
3. Authorize the continuation of the uniform/clothing allowance of \$1,375 for 2026.

INFORMATION

11. Food and Infant Nutrition Support in Response to Federal Shutdown

[2025-476](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

None - for discussion only.

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

OUTSIDE BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

BOARD CHAIR UPDATE

ADJOURNMENT

Following County Board Meeting:

10:00 a.m. (est.) Legislative Committee of the Whole Meeting, Council Chambers – Courthouse Room 300

10:30 a.m. (est.) Board Workshop: Budget Addenda

Courthouse Room 220, Large Conference Room

Public access via Zoom:

Webinar ID: 917 1823 8667 | Passcode: 173774 | Phone: 651-372-8299

1:30 p.m. Board Workshop: Budget Addenda

Courthouse Room 220, Large Conference Room

Public access via Zoom:

Webinar ID: 954 0086 3719 | Passcode: 865916 | Phone: 651-372-8299

Advance Notice:

Nov. 11, 2025 No county board meeting – Veterans Day

Nov. 18, 2025 County board meeting – Council Chambers

Nov. 25, 2025 County board meeting – Council Chambers

Dec. 02, 2025 County board meeting – Council Chambers



Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

Item Number: 2025-447

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Agenda of November 4, 2025 is Presented for Approval

Recommendation

Approve the agenda of November 4, 2025.



Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

Item Number: 2025-448

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Minutes from October 21, 2025 are Presented for Approval

Recommendation

Approve the October 21, 2025 Minutes.

Attachments

1. October 21, 2025 Minutes.

Board of Commissioners Minutes

October 21, 2025 - 9 a.m.

Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:01 a.m. with the following members present: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Xiong and Chair Ortega. Commissioner Moran was excused. Also present were Ling Becker, County Manager, and Scott Schwahn, Assistant County Attorney, Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong
Excused: Moran

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Presented by Commissioner Miller.

1. Agenda of October 21, 2025 is Presented for Approval [2025-436](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the agenda of October 21, 2025.

Motion by Xiong, seconded by Miller. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: Moran

2. Minutes from October 14, 2025 are Presented for Approval [2025-437](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the October 14, 2025 Minutes.

Motion by Jebens-Singh, seconded by McGuire. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: Moran

PROCLAMATION

3. Proclamation: Mao Heu Thao Retirement Proclamation [2025-438](#)

Sponsors: Public Health

Presented by Commissioner McGuire. Discussion can be found on archived video.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

6. Amendment to the Agreement with Alia Innovations for Implementation of [2025-272](#)

Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare
Disproportionality Act

Sponsors: Social Services

1. Approve an amendment to the agreement with Alia Innovations for professional services to implement Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act to increase the not to exceed amount of the contract to \$560,750.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the amendment.
3. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreement and execute amendments to agreements with the county's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of grant funding.

Motion by Miller, seconded by McGuire. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: Moran

Resolution: B2025-195

4. Revenue Agreement with Monarch Healthcare Management IV LLC

[2025-405](#)

Sponsors: Financial Assistance Services

1. Approve the agreement with Monarch Healthcare Management IV LLC for financial assistance processing services for the period of October 21st, 2025, through October 20th, 2026 in the amount of \$96,644.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.
3. Authorize the County Manager to approve and execute amendment to renew the term of the agreement for up to one year, in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office.
4. Approve an increase in the personnel complement of Financial Assistance Services by 2 Full Time Equivalents Eligibility Specialist.

Presented by Jason Hedin, Deputy Director, Financial Assistance Services. Discussion can be found on archived video.

Motion by Jebens-Singh, seconded by Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: Moran

Resolution: B2025-196

5. Grant Agreement with State of Minnesota for the Minnesota Multi-Purpose
Community Facility Project Grant

[2025-409](#)

Sponsors: Library, Property Management

1. Ratify the submittal of the grant application to the state of Minnesota in the amount of \$450,155.
2. Accept a grant award and approve a grant agreement with the state of Minnesota for the Minnesota Multi-Purpose Community Facility Grant, for the period upon execution through December 31, 2026, in an amount of \$450,155.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant agreement.
4. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and execute amendments to agreements, in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures.

Discussion can be found on archived video.

Motion by Miller, seconded by Jebens-Singh. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong
Excused: Moran
Resolution: B2025-197

7. Amendment to Single Source Agreement with Youthprise for Youth Services [2025-253](#)

Sponsors: Community Corrections

1. Approve the Selection of and Single Source Amendment to Agreement with Youthprise, 3001 Broadway Street NE, Suite 330, Minneapolis, MN 55413, to administer funds for youth services that reduce out-of-home placements for the period of December 5, 2024, through June 30, 2027, in a not to exceed amount of \$1,300,000 for the term of the agreement.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.

Presented by Elijah Norris-Holliday, Planning Manager, Office of Safety and Justice.
Discussion can be found on archived video.

Motion by McMurtrey, seconded by Miller. Motion passed.

Aye: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Ortega, and Xiong
Excused: Moran
Resolution: B2025-198

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

Presented by County Manager, Ling Becker. Discussion can be found on archived video.

OUTSIDE BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Discussion can be found on archived video.

BOARD CHAIR UPDATE

Presented by Chair Ortega. Discussion can be found on archived video.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ortega declared the meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.



Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

Item Number: 2025-440

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Policy & Planning

Title

Proclamation: Native American Heritage Month

Attachments

1. Proclamation

Proclamation

WHEREAS, The area within Ramsey County is located on American Indian ancestral and contemporary land that was and continues to be home to American Indian people; and

WHEREAS, The original homelands of American Indian people within the county existed since time immemorial, and Ramsey County acknowledges the contributions of American Indian people prior to its formation and recognizes the inherent sovereignty of Tribal Nations, the unique political status of Tribal members; and

WHEREAS, The American Indian community has historically been left out of conversations involving relatives where their advocacy was not properly handled or heard; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County recognizes the mass displacement of American Indian people from their homeland due to the bias of government systems across the nation that have a history of practicing elimination techniques to dismantle the American Indian race within America; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County benefits when it partners with community members and Tribal Nations on issues affecting American Indian communities; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County partnered with the American Indian community to hire an American Indian Community Coordinator in 2024 to act as an Ambassador of the American Indian community in connections with Ramsey County to help remove barriers being faced among American Indians within County services and programs; and

WHEREAS, This partnership with community and this new role works towards reducing disparities and strives to eliminate systemic racism and discrimination against American Indian families; and

WHEREAS, Native American Heritage Month is a time to educate the broader public of American Indian past and present experiences involving colonization, genocide, violence, oppression, and relocation; to begin the truth and reconciliation process involving American Indian people who suffered colonization; and to celebrate American Indian culture, history, resilience, and contributions to the overall Ramsey County community; and

WHEREAS, During Native American Heritage Month, Ramsey County recognizes the American Indian community in their strength, resilience, Tribal sovereignty, and advocacy while committing to serve the American Indian population who reside within Ramsey County; Now, Therefore, Be It

PROCLAIMED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners recognizes November 2025 as Native American Heritage Month in Ramsey County; and Be It Further

PROCLAIMED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners encourages all residents of the county to join in recognizing and celebrating the contributions and the important presence of the American Indian communities in Ramsey County.



Rafael Ortega, Board Chair, District 5



Mary Jo McGuire, Commissioner, District 2



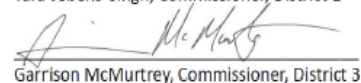
Rena Moran, Commissioner, District 4



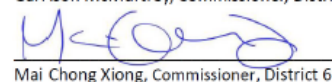
Kelly Miller, Commissioner, District 7



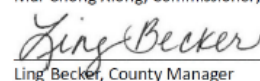
Tara Jebens-Singh, Commissioner, District 1



Garrison McMurtrey, Commissioner, District 3



Mai Chong Xiong, Commissioner, District 6



Ling Becker, County Manager

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-332

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Finance

Title

2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance - Waive Second Reading and Hold Public Hearing

Recommendation

1. Waive the second reading of the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance.
2. Hold the public hearing for the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance.

Background and Rationale

The proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Bond Ordinance authorizes the issuance of General Obligation Capital Improvement Bonds to finance capital projects identified in the County's proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Plan, or as the plan may be amended in the future by the Ramsey County Board.

The proposed ordinance sets the maximum amount of bond issuance at \$31,500,000, which is the amount identified for bond financing in the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Plan. The total amount of bonds issued under this ordinance may be less and cannot be more than the maximum set in this ordinance. At a future date, the Ramsey County Board will be requested to approve the actual amount of bonds issued and to award the sale of bonds to the lowest bidder.

Project financing included in the proposed 2026 Bond Ordinance:

2026 Proposed CIP New / Major Renovations Projects	\$13,000,000
2026 Technology Project	\$12,000,000
2026 Proposed CIP Maintenance Projects	<u>\$ 6,500,000</u>
Total 2026 Bond Ordinance amount	\$31,500,000

Ramsey County issues bonds in accordance with Ordinance No. 93-292, adopted on July 29, 1993, which sets forth the procedure for issuing bonds via ordinance in compliance with the Ramsey County Home Rule Charter. The county's ordinance procedures require every proposed ordinance receive two readings; first, at the time it is presented, and second, at the time of the public hearing. Both readings may be waived if a copy of the ordinance is supplied to each member of the Ramsey County Board prior to its introduction.

In accordance with these requirements, the second reading of the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond ordinance may be waived because a copy of the proposed ordinance was supplied to each member of the Ramsey County Board prior to its introduction October 14, 2026.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☒ Prosperity ☒ Opportunity ☒ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

This action by itself does not have a measurable racial equity impact, as the action is just one step in the ordinance process required by the County Charter to issue bonds. The county plans to issue bonds to finance numerous capital improvement projects, each of which provides programs and services to the community. The

racial equity impact should be considered by the county departments during the development of the associated programs and services for each capital project.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Ramsey County issues bonds to finance capital improvements identified in its annual capital improvement plan which is developed with public participation through the Capital Improvement Program Citizen's Advisory Committee (CIPAC), an advisory committee comprised of 14 residents, appointed by the Ramsey County Board, to assure public participation in the decision-making process. CIPAC reviews, rates, and recommends capital improvement projects. The Ramsey County Board also holds a public hearing as part of the Bond Ordinance process to afford the public an opportunity to comment on each proposed project. Direct community participation should be incorporated through the county departments in the development of the programs and services associated with each capital project.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

The proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance authorizes a maximum amount of bond issuance to finance the capital improvements identified in the county's 2026 Capital Improvement Program Budget and Financing Plan. The final bonding amount will reflect any amendments made to the 2026 budget.

Last Previous Action

On October 14, 2025, the Ramsey County Board waived the first reading of the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Ordinance and set the date of the Public Hearing for November 4, 2025 (Resolution B2025-193).

On April 1, 2025, the Ramsey County Board adopted the Enterprise Resource Planning Bond Reimbursement establishing procedures relating to compliance with reimbursement bond regulations under the Internal Revenue Code (Resolution B2025-063).

Attachments

1. Proposed Ordinance
2. Proposed Schedule - 2026 Capital Improvement Program Bond Sale
3. Affidavit of Publication

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10 OFFICIAL SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE
11 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF
12 GENERAL OBLIGATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS
13 IN AN AGGREGATE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$31,500,000
14

15 This ordinance authorizes the issuance of bonds, notes or other obligations, in one or more series in
16 an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$31,500,000 for capital improvement needs.
17
18
19

20 ORDINANCE NO. _____
21

22 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION CAPITAL
23 IMPROVEMENT BONDS IN AN AGGREGATE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$31,500,000
24
25

26 A. WHEREAS, since 1989, Ramsey County, Minnesota (the “County”), has issued
27 bonds to finance capital improvements identified in a capital improvement plan developed with
28 citizen participation; and
29

30 B. WHEREAS, the Home Rule Charter of the County (the “Home Rule Charter”) is a
31 desirable source of authority for the issuance of such bonds; and
32

33 C. WHEREAS, the County’s proposed capital improvement budget for 2026
34 contemplates undertaking capital improvements financed in part by bonds, notes or other
35 obligations, in one or more series, in an estimated aggregate amount of \$31,500,000; and
36

37 NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF
38 RAMSEY DOES ORDAIN as follows:
39

- 40 1. Authorization of Bonds - The bonding and borrowing of money by the issuance of general
41 obligation bonds, notes or other obligations, in one or more series from time to time as needed,
42 in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$31,500,000 plus the amount of any premium
43 paid with respect thereto (the “Bonds”) is hereby authorized to finance (1) the costs of
44 improvements set forth in the 2026 capital improvement budget of the County, as approved and
45 amended; (2) the costs of any other improvements set forth in the County’s capital
46 improvement budgets of any year and any other capital expenditures authorized by the County,

to the extent proceeds of the Bonds are not expended on improvements set forth in the 2026 capital improvement budget, as approved and amended. The amount authorized under this Ordinance is in addition to amounts previously authorized under prior ordinances of the County.

2. Bonding Procedure and Terms - The Bonds shall be scheduled for sale and awarded for sale by resolutions. The specific amount, maturities, interest rates and other terms and conditions of the Bonds and covenants with respect to the Bonds shall be set or made by resolution.
3. Taxes - The Bonds shall be general obligations to which the full faith and credit and taxing powers of the County are pledged. The Bonds may also be paid from interest earnings on the debt service account, and from any other moneys appropriated by the County Board. The taxes levied for the payment of the Bonds shall not limit or reduce the ability of the County to levy taxes for the payment of the costs of other capital improvements or obligations issued to finance the payment of such costs.
4. Authorization of Refunding Bonds - The bonding or borrowing of money by the issuance of bonds or other obligations to refund the Bonds is hereby authorized on the same basis as set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Ordinance No. 93-292, authorizing the refunding of bonds issued prior to November 6, 1992. Further proceedings to schedule such refunding bonds for sale, to set the terms and conditions thereof, to make covenants with respect thereto and to award the sale thereof may be, and are hereby authorized to be, done or taken by resolution.
5. Referendum Upon Petition - This ordinance is subject to the ordinance procedure of the County's Home Rule Charter, including the holding of a referendum if a sufficient petition is filed within forty-five (45) days after its publication. Among other conditions to be met, a sufficient petition must be signed by registered voters of the County equal in number to ten percent (10%) of those who voted in the County for the office of President of the United States in the last general election.

Ramsey County, Minnesota
General Obligation Capital Improvement Plan Bonds, Series 2026A
Proposed Schedule of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
October 14	First Reading of Ordinance and Set Date for Public Hearing on Ordinance
November 4	Second Reading Ordinance and hold Public Hearing on Ordinance
November 18	Adoption of Bond Ordinance and considers Resolution Authorizing the Sale of the Bonds
January 10	End of Forty-five (45) day Referendum Petition period
February 9	Sale of the Series 2026A Bonds
February 10	Results of the Series 2026A Bonds sale presented to the County Board
March 12	Settlement of the Series 2026A Bonds, receipt of proceeds

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF MINNESOTA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF RAMSEY)

Carter Johnson, being first duly sworn, on oath states as follows:

1. I am the publisher of the VADNAIS HEIGHTS PRESS, or the publisher's designated agent. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this Affidavit, which is made pursuant of Minnesota Statutes §331A.07.

2. The newspaper has complied with all of the requirements to constitute a qualified newspaper under Minnesota law, including those requirements found in Minnesota Statutes §331A.02.

3. The dates of the month and the year and day of the week upon which the public notice attached was published in the newspaper are as follows:

Once a week, for one week, it was published on Wednesday, the 22nd day of October, 2025.

4. The publisher's lowest classified rate paid by commercial users for comparable space, as determined pursuant to §331A.06, is as follows:

a) Lowest classified rate paid by commercial users for comparable space _____

b) Maximum rate allowed by law for the above matter _____

c) Total amount charged for the above matter \$ 6.47/inch

5. Mortgage Foreclosure Notices. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §580.033 relating to the publication of mortgage foreclosure notices: The newspaper's known office of issue is located in Ramsey County. The newspaper complies with the conditions described in §580.033, subd. 1, clause (1) or (2). If the newspaper's known office of issue is located in a county adjoining the county where the mortgaged premises or some part of the mortgaged premises described in the notice are located, a substantial portion of the newspaper's circulation is in the latter county.

We are a qualified newspaper in the following counties: Anoka, Ramsey and Washington

FURTHER YOUR AFFIANT SAITH NOT.

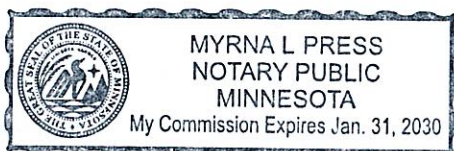
BY:



TITLE: Carter Johnson, Publisher
PRESS PUBLICATIONS
4779 Bloom Avenue
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 22nd day of October, 2025.

Myrna L. Press
Notary Public



RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing at 9 a.m., or as soon thereafter as possible, on Tuesday, November 04, 2025, in the Ramsey County Courthouse - Saint Paul City Hall (Council Chambers - Room 300), 15 West Kellogg Boulevard, Saint Paul, MN 55102.

This public hearing will be conducted in order to afford the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program Projects ordinance. The maximum proposed bond issuance under this ordinance is \$31,500,000. The projects are summarized below:

Project financing included in the proposed 2026 Bond Ordinance:	
2026 Proposed CIP New / Major Renovations Projects	\$13,000,000
2026 Proposed Technology Projects	\$12,000,000
2026 Proposed CIP Maintenance Projects	\$6,500,000
Total 2026 Bond Ordinance amount	\$31,500,000

The entire proposed Ordinance can be found on Ramsey County's web site www.ramseycounty.us (under the Public Notice section on the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners' page).

Persons who intend to testify are requested to contact the Chief Clerk - County Board prior to November 4, 2025. If in-person testimony is not feasible, comments may alternatively be provided via the following methods:

- Email: chiefclerk@ramseycounty.us
- Written mail: Chief Clerk, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd, Suite 250, Saint Paul, MN 55102

OFFICIAL SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS IN AN

AGGREGATE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$31,500,000

This ordinance authorizes the issuance of bonds, notes or other obligations, in one or more series in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$31,500,000 for capital improvement needs.

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS IN AN AGGREGATE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$ 31,500,000

A. WHEREAS, since 1989, Ramsey County, Minnesota (the "County"), has issued bonds to finance capital improvements identified in a capital improvement plan developed with citizen participation; and

B. WHEREAS, the Home Rule Charter of the County (the "Home Rule Charter") is a desirable source of authority for the issuance of such bonds; and

C. WHEREAS, the County's adopted capital improvement budget for 2026 contemplates undertaking capital improvements financed in part by bonds, notes or other obligations, in one or more series, in an estimated aggregate amount of \$31,500,000.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF RAMSEY DOES ORDAIN as follows:

1. Authorization of Bonds - The bonding and borrowing of money by the issuance of general obligation bonds, notes or other obligations, in one or more series from time to time as needed, in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$31,500,000 plus the amount of any premium paid with respect thereto (the "Bonds") is hereby authorized to finance (1) the costs of improvements set forth in the 2026 capital improvement budget of the County, (2) the costs of any other improvements set forth in the County's capital improvement budgets of any year and any other capital expenditures authorized by the County, to the extent proceeds of the Bonds are not expended on improvements set forth in the 2026 capital improvement budget due to changes occurring after the date hereof. The amount authorized under this Ordinance is in addition to amounts previously authorized under prior ordinances of the County.

2. Bonding Procedure and Terms - The Bonds shall be scheduled for sale and awarded for sale by resolutions. The specific amount, maturities, interest rates and other terms and conditions of the Bonds and covenants with respect to the Bonds shall be set or made by resolution.

3. Taxes - The Bonds shall be general obligations to which the full faith and credit and taxing powers of the County are pledged. The Bonds may also be paid from interest earnings on the debt service account, and from any other moneys appropriated by the County Board. The taxes levied for the payment of the Bonds shall not limit or reduce the ability of the County to levy taxes for the payment of the costs of other capital improvements or obligations issued to finance the payment of such costs.

4. Authorization of Refunding Bonds - The bonding or borrowing of money by the issuance of bonds or other obligations to refund the Bonds is hereby authorized on the same basis as set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Ordinance No. 93-292, authorizing the refunding of bonds issued prior to November 6, 1992. Further proceedings to schedule such refunding bonds for sale, to set the terms and conditions thereof, to make covenants with respect thereto and to award the sale thereof may be, and are hereby authorized to be, done or taken by resolution.

5. Referendum Upon Petition - This ordinance is subject to the ordinance procedure of the County's Home Rule Charter, including the holding of a referendum if a sufficient petition is filed within forty-five (45) days after its publication. Among other conditions to be met, a sufficient petition must be signed by registered voters of the County equal in number to ten percent (10%) of those who voted in the County for the office of President of the United States in the last general election.

Published one time in the Vadnais Heights Press on October 22, 2025.

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-284

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Board of Commissioners

Title

Appointment to the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District

Recommendation

Appointment the following individuals to the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board of Managers for a term beginning February 24, 2026 and ending on February 23, 2029.

- Mark C. Gernes (incumbent)
- Benjamin M. Karp (incumbent)

Background and Rationale

The Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) is responsible for preserving and improving water resources and related ecosystems in eastern Ramsey County and western Washington County. The watershed district is managed by a board of managers, which consists of four Ramsey County-appointed managers and one Washington County-appointed manager. The district cities include North Saint Paul, Maplewood, Little Canada, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake, Gem Lake, parts of Roseville, Saint Paul, and Shoreview. RWMWD managers must be residents of the watershed district and serve a three-year term. RWMWD managers must be appointed to fairly represent the various hydraulic areas within the watershed district by residence of the manager appointed.

There are currently two vacancies on the RWMWD Board of Managers due to term expirations. Recruitment through the county's open appointment resulted in two applications. On September 29, 2025, the applications were forwarded to the commissioners, and interviews were held on October 3, 2025 for final recommendations.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☐ Prosperity ☐ Opportunity ☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

In addition to the usual recruitment for advisory board and committee vacancies through GovDelivery, recruitment also occurred through word of mouth by committee members, and staff. This extended process is a step towards better outreach to recruit from a wider range of racially diverse and underrepresented community members. Furthermore, the application for these vacancies were updated to focus more on the lived experiences, knowledge, and skills a resident may bring along with an optional section to insert demographic information to ensure we are reaching new and diverse candidates.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Participation and input from community members help to improve programs and services for the community. There are also opportunities to share information and increase the level of understanding of programs and services through discussions and community engagement.

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

As a separate local jurisdiction, the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District policy provides for a per diem of \$50 to appointed managers.

Last Previous Action

On November 5, 2024, the Ramsey County Board appointed Gabrielle Grogan to the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Board of Managers for a term beginning February 24, 2025 and ending on February 23, 2028 (Resolution B2024-212).

Attachments

1. Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Roster

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District

Board Roster

Mark & C Gernes

1st Term Feb 24, 2023 - Feb 23, 2026

Appointing Resolution B2023-009

Benjamin M Karp

1st Term Feb 24, 2023 - Feb 23, 2026

Appointing Resolution B2023-009

Val Eisele

2nd Term Feb 24, 2024 - Feb 23, 2027

Appointing Resolution B2024-031

Gabrielle Grogan

1st Term Feb 24, 2025 - Feb 23, 2028

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-285

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Board of Commissioners

Title

Appointment to the Rice Creek Watershed District

Recommendation

Appoint Marcie Weinandt (incumbent) to the Rice Creek Watershed District Board of Managers for a term beginning January 18, 2026 and ending on January 17, 2029.

Background and Rationale

The Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) Board of Managers consists of five members - two are appointed by Ramsey County, two from Anoka County and one from Washington County. The Ramsey County district includes portions of Arden Hills, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Mounds View, New Brighton, Roseville, St. Anthony, Shoreview, Spring Lake Park, White Bear Lake and the town of White Bear. The managers govern the Rice Creek Watershed District and manage the water resources within it. Managers must be residents of the district and serve a three-year term.

There is currently one vacancy on the RCWD Board of Managers due to term expirations. Recruitment through the county's open appointment resulted in one application. On September 29, 2025, the application was forwarded to the commissioners and interviews were held on October 3, 2025 for final recommendations.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☐ Prosperity

☐ Opportunity

☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

The county currently recruits for advisory committee vacancies through an open process, which is currently limited to presence on the county website, GovDelivery distribution lists, and word of mouth by advisory committee members, staff and county commissioners. Changes to the recruitment strategies are being implemented to expand efforts to increase racial diversity and under-represented voices in the appointment process.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Participation by and input from community members appointed to advisory groups helps to shape and improve programs and services for the community, share information and increase the level of understanding through discussion, dialogue and engagement.

☒ Inform

☐ Consult

☐ Involve

☐ Collaborate

☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

Rice Creek Watershed District policy has provisions for per diem payments and mileage reimbursement to appointed managers.

Last Previous Action

On November 28, 2023, the Ramsey County Board appointed Michael Bradley to the Rice Creek Watershed

District for a term ending on January 17, 2027 (Resolution B2023-211).

Attachments

1. Rice Creek Watershed District Roster

□

Ramsey County

Rice Creek Watershed District

Board Roster

□

Marcie Weinandt

2nd Term Jan 10, 2023 - Jan 17, 2026

Appointing Resolution B2023-010

□

Michael Bradley

4th Term Jan 18, 2024 - Jan 17, 2027

Position Chair

Appointing Resolution B2023-211

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-286

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Board of Commissioners

Title

Appointments to the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers

Recommendation

Appoint Rick Gelbmann (incumbent) the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers for terms beginning November 14, 2025 and ending November 13, 2028.

Background and Rationale

The Valley Branch Watershed District (VBWD) is led by a five-person Board of Managers that is responsible for the control and management of the water resources in the VBWD; four managers are appointed by Washington County and one by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners

There is currently one vacancy on the VBWD Board of Managers due to term expirations. Recruitment through the county's open appointment resulted in one application from the incumbent. On September 29, 2025, the application was forwarded to three Ramsey County Board Commissioners to interview, which gave the commissioners an opportunity to engage with and learn more about the applicant. The interview occurred on October 3, 2025, for final recommendations.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☐ Well-being ☐ Prosperity ☒ Opportunity ☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

In addition to the usual recruitment for advisory committee vacancies through GovDelivery and word of mouth by advisory committee members, staff and the Ramsey County Board, the vacancies and application were promoted through an email listserv reaching numerous diverse organizations and networks. This extended promotion process is a step towards better outreach to more racially diverse and underrepresented voices that are often missed. Furthermore, the application for these vacancies were updated to focus more on the lived experiences, knowledge and skills a resident may bring along with an optional section to insert demographics to ensure we are reaching new and diverse candidates.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Participation by and input from community members appointed to advisory groups helps to shape and improve programs and services for the community, share information and increase the level of understanding through discussion, dialogue and engagement.

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☒ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

As a separate local jurisdiction, the Valley Branch Watershed District policy has provisions for per diem payments to appointed managers.

Last Previous Action

On October 25, 2022, the Ramsey County Board appointed Rick Gelbmann to the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers for terms ending November 13, 2025 (B2022-246).

Attachments

1. Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers Roster

□

Ramsey County

Valley Branch Watershed District

Board Roster

□

Rick Gelbmann

2nd Term Nov 14, 2022 - Nov 13, 2025

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-431

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Board of Commissioners

Title

Appointment to the Ramsey County Extension Committee

Recommendation

Appoint the following individuals to the Ramsey County Extension Committee for a term beginning November 4, 2025 and ending on December 31, 2028.

- Heidi Miller (incumbent)
- Nancy Kasseth

Background and Rationale

The Minnesota Extension Service is under the auspices of the University of Minnesota. Minnesota statutes sections 38.33 to 38.38 require the county to have an Extension Committee and define County Extension work to include educational programs and services provided by Extension educators in the areas of agriculture, agriculture finance, economic development, nutrition, youth leadership development (including 4-H), leadership, and environment and natural resources.

The statutes also define the composition of the Extension Committee to consist of nine members including two county commissioners, the county auditor or designee, and six members appointed at large by the county board. Appointed members support the Extension Committee programming in three ways:

1. Identifying local community needs and Extension resources.
2. Providing Extension Committee program support and advocacy.
3. Assisting in the development of an annual Extension Committee budget request.

There are currently two vacancies on the Extension Committee due to term expirations. Recruitment through the county's open appointment process resulting in two applications. On September 29, 2025, the applications were forwarded to three Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for review. Between September 29, 2025, and October 16, 2025, the three commissioners interviewed the applicants, which gave the commissioners an opportunity to engage with and learn more about the applicants, and final recommendations for a formal appointment was provided afterwards.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☒ Prosperity ☒ Opportunity ☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

In addition to the usual recruitment for advisory committee vacancies through GovDelivery and word of mouth by Ramsey County Extension Committee members, staff and the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, the vacancies and application were promoted through an email listserv reaching numerous diverse organizations and networks. This extended promotion process is a step towards better outreach to more racially diverse and underrepresented voices that are often missed. Furthermore, the application for these vacancies were updated to focus more on the lived experiences, knowledge, and skills a resident may bring along with an optional section to insert demographic information to ensure the is reaching new and diverse

candidates.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Participation by and input from community members appointed to advisory groups helps to shape and improve programs and services for the community, share information and increase the level of understanding through discussion, dialogue, and engagement.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

In 2022, Ramsey County began offering compensation for residents serving on formal advisory boards. Members of the Extension Committee can opt-in for a monthly \$25 gift card attendance compensation. Advisory board compensation comes from the Ramsey County Community Engagement Fund.

Last Previous Action

On May 7, 2024, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners appointed Alyssa Fabia and Donna McDuffie to the Ramsey County Extension Committee for a term beginning May 7, 2024 and ending on December 31, 2027 (Resolution B2024-071).

Attachments

1. Ramsey County Extension Committee Roster

Ramsey County

Extension Committee

Board Roster

Thomas Keul

1st Term Feb 08, 2022 - Dec 31, 2025

Appointing Resolution B2022-050

Heidi H Miller

1st Term Jul 12, 2022 - Dec 31, 2025

Position Chair

Appointing Resolution B2022-170

Dolly Mariucci

1st Term Sep 05, 2023 - Dec 31, 2026

Appointing Resolution B2023-138

Felicia Sherrod

1st Term Nov 28, 2023 - Dec 31, 2026

Appointing Resolution B2023-210

Donna McDuffie

3rd Term May 07, 2024 - Dec 31, 2027

Appointing Resolution B2024-071

Alyssa Fabia

1st Term May 07, 2024 - Dec 31, 2027

Appointing Resolution B2024-071

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-430

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Communications & Public Relations & Property Management

Title

Rename Metro Square to Ramsey County Government Center

Recommendation

1. Approve the renaming of the 121 7th Place East, St. Paul facility from 'Metro Square' to 'Ramsey County Government Center' in accordance with the Countywide Facilities Naming Policy.
2. Authorize Communication and Public Relations and Property Management to oversee implementation of the name change, including updating internal and external references, signage, communications, and systems.

Background and Rationale

In 2025, the Communications and Public Relations (CPR) team began researching naming practices for county buildings. This work included market research, subject matter expert interviews, a review of historic county building names, and analysis of Facility Signage Guidelines. CPR also conducted a comparative review of naming conventions used by peer counties (Hennepin, Anoka, Dakota, Scott, Carver).

Findings and a recommendation to rename *Metro Square* to *Ramsey County Government Center* were presented to the Executive Team on August 13, 2025. The Executive Team approved the proposed change for submission to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. This name best reflects the building's role as the central hub for services, and improves clarity and wayfinding for residents. The recommended change supports modernization, enhances brand consistency, and helps residents navigate county services more easily.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☐ Prosperity ☐ Opportunity ☒ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

This recommendation aligns with Ramsey County's Advancing Racial Equity Policy by removing barriers to access and ensuring that all residents can easily navigate county services. The new name, *Ramsey County Government Center*, is plain, descriptive, and immediately recognizable. This supports equitable access by improving clarity and wayfinding, particularly for residents with limited English proficiency or unfamiliarity with government systems. Clear and inclusive naming reduces reliance on prior knowledge, builds trust in government, and demonstrates the county's commitment to transparency and accessibility for all community members.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Feedback was gathered from internal and external stakeholders, including Service Center staff, department directors, and residents engaged through service experience surveys. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of clarity, consistency, and accessibility in county building names.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

There will be expenses for updated signage, digital references, maps, and communications related to the name change that are yet to be determined. Residents First funding will be used for these expenses.

Last Previous Action

None.

Attachments

None.

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-441

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

Sponsor: Sheriff's Office

Title

2026 Salary Rate for the Ramsey County Sheriff

Recommendation

1. Set the annual salary for the Ramsey County Sheriff at \$203,510 effective January 1, 2026.
2. Authorize the continuation of the contribution to deferred compensation consistent with that approved for non-represented employees for 2026.
3. Authorize the continuation of the uniform/clothing allowance of \$1,375 for 2026.

Background and Rationale

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners is required by law to set the salary of the elected Ramsey County Sheriff. State law requires that the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners set the salary of the Ramsey County Sheriff by resolution.

The longstanding custom and practice for setting the annual salary for the Ramsey County Sheriff is to invite the incumbent to make a written salary request to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. A salary request from the incumbent is attached.

When requesting a salary for 2026, the following factors were considered:

- The salary of the Sheriff's Chief Deputy now exceeds the salary of the Sheriff. This is due to county-wide classification and compensation restructuring and cost-of-living adjustments provided to all other county employees.
- From 2019 to 2025, the Sheriff requested only two salary increases, partly due to financial pressures related to COVID-19. The Sheriff's salary remained unchanged from 2019 through 2022, and again from 2023 through 2024.
- In 2025, the Ramsey County Sheriff's salary was the lowest in the seven-county metro area. For reference, the 2025 salaries for the sheriffs in the metro area are: Anoka County, \$214,240; Carver County, \$204,322; Dakota County, \$221,115; Hennepin County, \$224,820; Scott County, \$198,652; and, Washington County, \$217,552.

For the above reasons, a salary of \$203,510 is requested for 2026. This represents a 9% increase and sets the Sheriff's salary slightly below the Chief Deputy. As per past practice, it is also requested to continue the contribution to deferred compensation consistent with that approved for unclassified employees and a uniform/clothing allowance of \$1,375 for 2026.

Violent crime in Ramsey County has decreased by 53% from 2022 to September 2025. This significant reduction reflects the strength of ongoing partnerships between law enforcement, community organizations, and community. It also underscores Ramsey County's continued support and investment in public safety, community trust-building, and violence prevention.

Even with this increase, the requested salary likely sets the Ramsey County Sheriff's salary the lowest in the seven-county metro area in 2026.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)☒ Well-being☒ Prosperity☒ Opportunity☒ Accountability**Racial Equity Impact**

Upon approval, this action provides increased transparency in the setting of the salary of a key county position who is elected to serve the residents of Ramsey County. In the Sheriff's Office broader work, racial equity remains a priority, including establishing terms and conditions of employment that support recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.

Community Participation Level and Impact

There is no community engagement with this board action.

☒ Inform☐ Consult☐ Involve☐ Collaborate☐ Empower**Fiscal Impact**

Funds are available in the Sheriff's Office allocated personnel funding in the 2026-2027 proposed operating budget.

Last Previous Action

On December 17, 2024, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners set the 2025 salary of the Ramsey County Sheriff (Resolution B2024-276).

Attachments

1. Letter to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners - November 4, 2025



Ramsey County Sheriff's Office

Bob Fletcher, Sheriff

Minnesota's First Law Enforcement Agency – Established 1849

425 Grove Street • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

Phone: 651-266-9333 • Fax: 651-266-9301

www.RamseyCountySheriff.us

November 4, 2025

Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
Courthouse, Room 220
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Commissioners,

As you know, Minnesota state law requires that the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners set the salary of the Ramsey County Sheriff. The past practice in this regard has been for the Sheriff to make a written request to the Board of Commissioners regarding a proposed salary rate for the following year.

When requesting a salary for 2026, the following factors were considered:

- The salary of the Sheriff's Chief Deputy now exceeds the salary of the Sheriff. This due to county-wide classification and compensation restructuring and cost-of-living adjustments provided to all other county employees.
- From 2019 to 2025, the Sheriff requested only two salary increases, partly due to financial pressures related to COVID-19. The Sheriff's salary remained unchanged from 2019 through 2022, and again from 2023 through 2024.
- In 2025, the Ramsey County Sheriff's salary was the lowest in the seven-county metro area. For reference, the 2025 salaries for the sheriffs in the metro area are: Anoka County, \$214,240; Carver County, \$204,322; Dakota County, \$221,115; Hennepin County, \$224,820; Scott County, \$198,652; and, Washington County, \$217,552.

For the above reasons, a salary of \$203,510 is requested for 2026. This represents a 9% increase and sets the Sheriff's salary slightly below the Chief Deputy. As per past practice, it is also requested to continue the contribution to deferred compensation consistent with that approved for unclassified employees and a uniform/clothing allowance of \$1,375 for 2026.

Even with this increase, the requested salary likely sets the Ramsey County Sheriff's salary the lowest in the seven-county metro area in 2026.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Fletcher
Ramsey County Sheriff

Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2025-476

Meeting Date: 11/25/2025

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Food and Infant Nutrition Support in Response to Federal Shutdown

Recommendation

None - for discussion only.

Background and Rationale

The federal government shut down on October 1, 2025. Since that time, Ramsey County has been tracking impacts to federally funded programs. Due to a lack of funding caused by the federal government shutdown, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) food benefits will not be issued for November until the shutdown ends or the federal government issues further guidance. SNAP is a federal nutrition-assistance program enabling low-income households to purchase food. Ramsey County has about 35,500 active SNAP cases, providing benefits to about 68,500 individuals. The County has an additional 3,500 MFIP cases, providing benefits to about 9,800 individuals. These two programs combined provide about \$14 million per month in benefits for Ramsey County residents. Individuals receive an average of \$170 per month for food through the SNAP program.

In addition, funding for the Women Infant Children (WIC) is also at risk. WIC is a federally funded, state-administered nutrition program. It provides nutrition education, healthy food benefits, and health referrals to support the growth and wellbeing of pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and young children. Over 17,900 Ramsey County residents currently receive WIC benefits. WIC provides a monthly food package - loaded onto an eWIC card - with funds to be used for specific nutritious foods such as milk, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, eggs, and infant formula or baby foods, tailored to the participant's age and nutritional needs.

If these critical benefits are disrupted by the federal government shutdown, Ramsey County residents who rely on them will experience heightened financial hardships and food needs.

Ramsey County has a robust network of emergency food providers who support residents. They play a critical role at supporting families and individuals most at risk due to food insecurity. To respond to the immediate needs of residents unable to access SNAP and WIC benefits as a result of the shutdown, Ramsey County will partner with local area emergency food providers to infuse funding for additional food and infant formula. The funding will be a tiered investment based on the number of residents served and must be spent by December 31, 2025. Staff will monitor spending and if needed, the County Manager will make reallocations as needed.

Allocations were determined to food shelves that:

- Have an existing cooperative contract with Ramsey County.
- Have a physical food shelf location in Ramsey County.
- Serve a larger number of individuals, based on data the state uses to distribute its food shelf funding. Slightly higher allocations were made to organizations that serve more individuals.

Ramsey County plans to allocate \$70,000 to provide formula if there is a significant disruption to WIC benefits.

Minnesota Department of Health WIC recently announced that they have enough funding to sustain the WIC program through late November. At this time, the county is working to determine the best method for distributing formula in the event of a disruption.

Food Shelf	Investment
Keystone Community Services	\$40,000
Neighborhood House	\$40,000
Open Cupboard	\$40,000
Sanneh Foundation	\$40,000
Merrick Community Services	\$40,000
White Bear Area Food Shelf	\$40,000
Corner Shelf	\$40,000
Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)	\$25,000
Hallie Q. Brown Community Center	\$25,000
Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul - Department of Indian Work	\$25,000
Vineyard Community Services (VCS)	\$25,000
Infant Formula Investment	\$70,000
TOTAL	\$450,000

These additional resources cannot make up for the SNAP and WIC federal resources that are infused into our community through these resources. On October 28, 2025, the State of Minnesota committed \$4 million of additional funding for emergency funding for food shelves in response to the shutdown. In addition, some Ramsey County jurisdictions are developing plans of support as well. The county encourages all community stakeholders and residents who are able to consider donating and supporting Ramsey County's local emergency food ecosystem at this time.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☐ Prosperity

☐ Opportunity

☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latine populations in Ramsey County generally rely on food benefits at higher rates than the white population. Although Black residents comprise about 13% of Ramsey County's population, they account for approximately 37% of SNAP participants and 28% of WIC participants. Although Asian residents comprise about 15% of Ramsey County's population, they account for approximately 28% of SNAP recipients and 33% of WIC recipients. SNAP participation aligns closely with population share for the Hispanic/Latine community (8% of residents and 7% of SNAP recipients), whereas WIC participation is much higher at 23%.

Disruptions to SNAP and WIC benefits will have a disproportionate impact on the Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latine populations in Ramsey County. Ramsey County aims to partially mitigate this impact by supporting local food shelves and ensuring that residents are aware of the resources they provide.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Based on the comprehensive community engagement that occurred for the Food Security Assessment in 2022, and the 2024/2025 Food Security Strategic Plan, community had primary input on how the county addressed food insecurity. Over 75 community agencies were interviewed and over 400 people were directly engaged on what the county's response should be around advancing food security, this has been affirmed consistently with the continued engagement and feedback on the plans by the food security team. The primary strategy was strengthening the current safety-net system on the first response on addressing food insecurity and using the existing food distribution network through food shelves.

☒ Inform ☒ Consult ☒ Involve ☒ Collaborate ☒ Empower

Fiscal Impact

\$450,000 in funding from the Residents First Strategic Priority will be used for these investments. There are sufficient funds for this investment in 2025.

Last Previous Action

On December 12, 2023, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners heard from the Health and Wellness Service Team regarding the Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthening Families Strategic Priority workshop.

On November 22, 2022, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners heard from the Health and Wellness Service Team regarding the Food Security Assessment Findings.

Attachments

1. Food Security Strategic Plan
2. Food Security Assessment 2022

Food Security Strategic Plan

2024 – 2025



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SETTING THE CONTEXT

Ramsey County's food security work centers equity to improve health and wellbeing by advancing food sovereignty*, access, and justice to create a sustainable and resilient future that allows communities to thrive.

Food Insecurity is a condition of limited access to healthy, culturally connected, and medically appropriate food to support an active and healthy lifestyle. Food insecurity can contribute to chronic diseases, mental health issues, and social, behavioral, and educational challenges.

Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap data set estimates in 2021 that 17% of Ramsey County children and 11% of adults were food insecure. However, increased demand from local food shelves and food assistance programs show that food insecurity rates are rising.

Ramsey County's racially and ethnically diverse communities experience the highest food insecurity rates, especially among elders, young adults and children under five. For a more detailed data breakdown, please visit the Ramsey County Food Security webpage at www.ramseycounty.us/food-security.

RAMSEY COUNTY'S ALIGNED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY INCLUDE:

- Invested nearly \$800,000 to support Food Security in 2022/23. This funding supported local food shelves, food banks, and food rescue programs to provide more than 5 million pounds of food to our community in 2023.
- Appointed the first Food Security Coordinator to oversee the Food Security Team, collecting current data, observing trends, and building internal capacity and external partnerships.
- Support strategic alignment of Priority "Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Families," as well as the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility efforts and Climate Action Framework.

* Food sovereignty is the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and taking ownership within the food and agricultural system.

CREATING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

"WHAT IS RAMSEY COUNTY'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING GREATER FOOD SECURITY?"

The Food Security Assessment reviewed internal Ramsey County data and other measures to reveal the extent of food insecurity and its impact within the Ramsey County community. Geographic Informations Systems (GIS) mapping helped to identify how historical policies and practices still impact food insecurity rates today. Additionally, more than 400 interviews and surveys were used to engage community on the strategic direction of the County's response. Through this broad community and stakeholder engagement, the following strategic priorities have been defined:

RAMSEY COUNTY FOOD SECURITY KEY PRIORITIES OVERVIEW:

PRIORITY 1: Supporting the Food Safety Net System

PRIORITY 2: Increasing Access to Public Benefits

PRIORITY 3: Building Urban Agriculture

PRIORITY 4: Expanding Food Availability and Affordability

Ramsey County will undertake food security work through these foundational strategies to achieve greater food security:

- **STREAMLINING COMMUNICATIONS** to make sure food resources, information and outreach is resident focused and helps navigate complicated government systems.
- **ADVOCATING LOCALLY AND FEDERALLY FOR HUNGER RELIEF** working through a systems and policy lens to help enhance the food system and support those who struggle to meet their basic food needs.



PRIORITY 1: SUPPORTING THE FOOD SAFETY NET SYSTEM*



1.1 INCREASE CULTURAL, FRESH, AND HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

- Increase funding to food shelves for culturally appropriate, fresh, healthy foods.
- Advocate within legislative priorities to encourage state funding for food shelves.
- Encourage the donation of culturally appropriate foods to food shelves.

1.2 SUPPORT FLEXIBILITY TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Build partnerships within the safety-net system to fill system gaps.
- Build and sustain Food Rescue** system to reduce effects on climate health, reduce food waste and address food insecurity.
- Close transportation gaps that limit access to food resources by building and enhancing partnerships.
- Reduce documentation burden for accessing food at food shelves and other distribution locations.

* Food Safety Net system includes food shelves, food banks, meal programs and other low cost or free food distribution points.

** Food Rescue system collects fresh foods from stores and brings them to food shelves for immediate distribution to the community.

PRIORITY 1: SUPPORTING THE FOOD SAFETY NET SYSTEM

KEY METRICS FOR PRIORITY 1 MAY INCLUDE:

- Amount of grant funding awarded to food safety net organizations.
- Pounds of food distributed to those in need.
- Number of individuals receiving food assistance.
- Pounds of food rescued by safety net system.
- Reviewing food shelf survey data, and total food insecurity rates



"This food shelf has changed my life. I've volunteered at food shelves, driven clients to them... I never thought I would need to utilize one. But everybody there made me feel like there was nothing to feel ashamed about... I'm not embarrassed anymore that utilizing a food shelf is part of my new normal."

*– Community Member feedback
shared by Food Shelf Partner*

PRIORITY 2: INCREASING ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS *



2.1 INCREASE ACCESS AND EASE OF APPLYING FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS

- Align efforts to integrate new access points to apply for public benefits.
- Increasing co-enrollment and referral of benefits like Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Medical Assistance, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Launch a marketing campaign on public benefits and food resources for priority populations like elderly, young adults, and low wealth residents.

2.2 ENHANCE FOOD INSECURITY SCREENING AND REFERRAL PROCESSES

- Build better systems as a County to assess food insecurity and provide resources.
- Align with community partners to promote referrals to WIC and SNAP benefits.

* Public Benefits like SNAP and WIC provide food-related benefits. But any public benefit, like housing or medical assistance, can stretch the family budget.

PRIORITY 2: INCREASING ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

KEY METRICS FOR PRIORITY 2 MAY INCLUDE:

- Percent of eligible residents enrolled in food-related public benefits like SNAP and WIC.
- Number of residents receiving outreach materials to promote their participation in food-focused public benefits.
- Number of partner organizations collaborating with Ramsey County to refer residents to food-focused public benefits.
- Number of residents being internally referred and enrolled in WIC.



PRIORITY 3: BUILDING URBAN AGRICULTURE



3.1 PROMOTE URBAN AGRICULTURE LAND USE IN URBAN PLANNING

- Support policy to expand land availability for long-term agricultural efforts.
- Aligning agriculture-related policies and planning documents into internal department plans.
- Partner with municipalities to encourage policies that promote urban agriculture.
- Educate policy makers on the benefits and needed enhancements to promote effective urban agriculture spaces.

3.2 IMPROVE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO URBAN AGRICULTURE LAND

- Work with partners and community to identify key recommendations to ease land access for long-term use.
- Connect community to urban agriculture resources such as growing education, soil remediation, and food rescue connections.

3.3 INCREASE WEALTH CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Create connection points for wealth creation trainings for those growing food.
- Encourage community to join garden-to-retail activities, like farmers markets, small grocers and restaurants.

PRIORITY 3: BUILDING URBAN AGRICULTURE

KEY METRICS FOR PRIORITY 3 MAY INCLUDE:

- Percent of Ramsey County owned land used for urban agriculture.
- Number of municipalities supported by Ramsey County to update zoning and policies to ease urban agriculture access.
- Number of urban growing activities.
- Asset map created with community partners of all points in the urban agriculture landscape, such as education, soil, training, and food rescue resources.



"More farm to table access, less prepackaged, less garbage and junk food, more farmers markets and fresh foods ... Cheaper and affordable fresh food and produce."

– Anonymous Female Resident (45-64 years) visiting a food shelf

PRIORITY 4: EXPANDING FOOD AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY



4.1 EXPAND SUBSIDY PROGRAMS

- Expand usage of Market Bucks and Fare for All through streamlined communications and benefit redemption.
- Align legislative priorities to encourage state funding for expanded access to subsidized programs, like Market Bucks to make food more affordable.

4.2 MAINTAIN STABLE, CONSISTENT FOOD ACCESS FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- Maintain an updated map of all food access points in the county, including farmers markets, food shelves, and grocery stores to promote food access in areas with limited food availability.
- Expand food rescue opportunities to ensure food affordability.
- Continue to build partnerships so that areas of low food access points can be addressed.

PRIORITY 4: EXPANDING FOOD AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

KEY METRICS FOR PRIORITY 4 MAY INCLUDE:

- Percent of increase in use of subsidized food programs.
- Continued updates of food resource maps with partnership input.



**THANK YOU TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS WHO
CONTRIBUTE TO OUR WORK.**

External Partners' Network is vast, essential, and made up of representatives from community organizations, health care entities, municipalities, local food shelves, food banks, and advocacy and cultural organizations. We appreciate and thank you for your partnership.

Ramsey County is led by a Board of County Commissioners who are elected representatives of our seven districts. Please reach out to your city, county, state, or federal representatives to share your thoughts on shifting the food system and prioritizing food security.

Carissa Dillon, Food Security Coordinator
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www.ramseycounty.us/foodsecurity



Food Security Needs Assessment 2022

I. Assessment Overview

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life,” which is a “household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.”¹ Demand for food support increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among low-income individuals who faced greater struggles to overcome the resulting economic challenges. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2020, low-income families spent an average of 11% of their budget on groceries, whereas high income households spent around 7%.² Low-income families commit higher proportions of their budget to rent, utilities, health insurance and other necessities when compared to high income families, further stressing limited household budgets, and widening systemic income inequalities during times of economic hardship.

In response to this challenge, Ramsey County has strengthened the food security system by delivering more than 500,000 meals to residents in 2020-21, supporting food shelves and other food programs to provide culturally appropriate foods and expand their infrastructure to meet increased demand, and funding organizations that serve youth whose service-industry livelihoods were deeply impacted by COVID-related shutdowns. In addition, Ramsey County’s Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grant supported farmers markets, expanded food support for those experiencing homelessness, and contributed funding to the development of various analytical and communications materials, including the [Food Communications and Resource Page](#) and this assessment.

Ramsey County also appointed a Food Security Coordinator to serve as the primary convener to facilitate this broad systems assessment that examines food security systems from a holistic perspective, not just as the last step of providing food to residents. The assessment process started in late 2021 and continued throughout 2022. It was rooted in community engagement and included broad stakeholder input from partners across the food system. The results of this assessment are being used to improve efficiency, reduce waste, fill gaps, and build a more resilient food system for all residents, especially those who are most vulnerable to food

¹ USDA ERS (2021, Sept. 8). “Definitions of Food Security.” <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>

² Siegel, R. (2022, Feb. 13). “‘Survival Mode’: Inflation falls hardest on low-income Americans.” *Washington Post* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/02/13/low-income-high-inflation-inequality/>.

insecurity. The results also help to answer the long-standing question: “What is Ramsey County’s role in supporting greater food security?”

II. Assessing Food Insecurity

This assessment was undertaken as an iterative process, with each step building on the previous effort. It commenced with a full review of food insecurity rates found in quantitative data specific to Ramsey County, followed by significant community engagement efforts undertaken through in-depth interviews with service providers, an online survey sent to service providers and recipients of food support, and in-person collection of more than 300 qualitative surveys with community members at six pop-up events. Each of these elements is described in more detail below.

a. Quantitative Data Review

Measuring hunger is a challenging task; this assessment used data as proxy measures to show the status of food insecurity in Ramsey County. Whereas one measure alone does not tell the extent of food insecurity, when taken together, they offer a snapshot of the extent to which residents in our county are experiencing hunger. The data review process analyzed Ramsey County’s 2020 Food Needs Assessment and 2021 Food and Basic Needs Survey data, as well as primary data captured by Ramsey County’s Financial Assistance Services (FAS) Department for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). In addition, secondary data reported by other government and non-government entities were analyzed, as well as information shared cooperatively by local community-based organizations working to address hunger like Meals on Wheels (which primarily serves elderly residents), school feeding programs (serving school-aged children), and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Food Shelves operating within Ramsey County. Data from each of these sources are analyzed below. (See Appendix A for a full list of Sources Consulted.)

i. Ramsey County SNAP and WIC Rates

Ramsey County supports greater food security by administering the SNAP and WIC programs, among other programs. WIC addresses gaps in the nutrition needs of low-income families by funding supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for pregnant, lactating, and postpartum parents, and to infants and children up to age five at nutritional risk. SNAP benefits are intended to supplement work earnings to stretch food budgets for those with lower incomes.

While many states set their SNAP income limit at 125% of the US Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), Minnesota was using 165% of FPG (\$45,787 for a family of four) until it was expanded to 200% of FPG (\$55,500 for a family of four) on September 1, 2022. This change made an estimated 28,000 more people eligible for SNAP benefits: according to the 2021 Census data estimates, 141,997 individuals were eligible for SNAP based on the 165% of FPG guideline, which increased to 169,925 individuals eligible for SNAP at the 200% FPG guideline. In 2021, a total of 82,912 Ramsey County residents received SNAP benefits.

Analysis of beneficiary data for SNAP and WIC usage rates in Ramsey County shows significant racial and ethnic inequities. As shown in Figure 1 below, some racial and ethnic groups use SNAP and WIC at rates disproportionate to their size of the county population and those who identify as being from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be food insecure and/or struggle with financial barriers that make them eligible for SNAP and WIC. The following analysis demonstrates how the county's population accesses SNAP and WIC at widely different rates depending on the racial and ethnic identities.

White residents make up 60% of the total population in Ramsey County (2021 US Census estimates³) but represent 25% of total SNAP recipients and 9% of total WIC recipients. In 2021, Ramsey County had 17,229 White residents on SNAP, versus an estimated total population of 325,411, which means that about **1 in 20 White residents** (5%) received SNAP benefits.

Black, and African American residents make up 13% of the total county population but represent 38% of total SNAP recipients and 29% of total WIC recipients. This translates to 30,691 Black residents on SNAP in 2021, versus an estimated total population of 72,796 residents, which means that **nearly half of all Black residents** in Ramsey County (42%) received SNAP benefits.

Asian residents make up 15% of the total county population but represent 30% of total SNAP recipients and 39% of total WIC recipients. In 2021, 24,974 Asian residents were on SNAP, versus an estimated total population of 85,291, which means that about **3 in 10 Asian residents** (29%) received SNAP benefits.

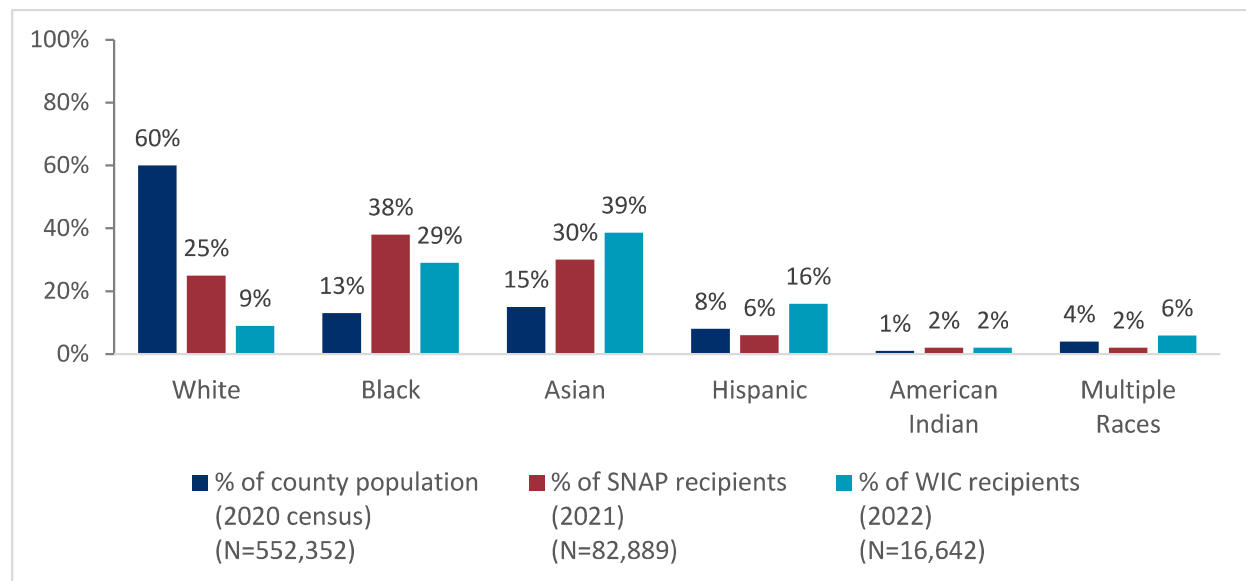
Hispanic residents make up 8% of the total county population but represent 6% of total SNAP recipients and 16% of total WIC recipients. In 2021, 5,036 Hispanic residents were on SNAP, versus an estimated total population of 42,531, which means that about **1 in 10 Hispanic residents** (12%) received SNAP benefits.

³ Total population estimates by race based on 2021 US Census estimates of Ramsey County's population disaggregated by race and used for all race and ethnic groups in this report:
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/ramseycountyminnesota>.

American Indian residents (including Native Alaskans, Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders) make up 1% of the total county population but represent 2% of total SNAP recipients and 2% of total WIC recipients. In 2021, 1,138 American Indian residents were on SNAP, versus an estimated total population of 6,075, which means that about **1 in 5 American Indian residents** (19%) received SNAP benefits.

Multiple race residents make up 4% of the total county population but represent 2% of total SNAP recipients and 6% of total WIC recipients. In 2021, there were 2,462 Multiple Race residents on SNAP, versus an estimated total population of 20,989, which means that about **1 in 10 Multiple Race residents** (12%) received SNAP benefits.

Figure 1. Ramsey County SNAP and WIC rates by race and ethnicity, compared to population size



These data demonstrate a trend that is seen across many social service benefits programs that Black, Asian, and American Indian residents access services at higher rates proportionate to their overall population than do White, Hispanic, and Mixed-Race residents. While it is important to ensure that residents who need food assistance can access it, the fact that nearly half of the county's Black population qualifies for SNAP because they meet the federal guidelines for being low income illustrates the ongoing legacy of redlining and other policies that continue to impact the economic vitality of our Black communities. On the other hand, seeing that just over 10% of Hispanic and Mixed-Race residents, and 5% of White residents are accessing SNAP benefits indicates that there are other social barriers to receiving assistance that create challenges for these groups.

ii. SNAP Program Access Index (PAI)

This trend that racial and ethnic groups access food assistance at different rates is also reflected in the SNAP Program Access Index (PAI). The USDA, which supervises state and county administration of SNAP benefits, uses SNAP PAI as a proxy measure to determine the degree to which states reach low-income people who may be eligible for SNAP. The USDA uses SNAP PAI annually as a basis for awarding performance incentives to the top four states with the best performance, and the top four most improved states.⁴

The USDA's SNAP PAI calculation divides the average number of people eligible for SNAP per month by the American Community Survey's (ACS) 2020 five-year estimated number of people living at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG), as demonstrated in the graphic below.⁵

$$\text{PAI} = \frac{\text{Average number of people eligible for SNAP per month}}{\text{Estimated number of people living at or below 125\% of the Federal Poverty Guideline}}$$

However, as noted above, Minnesota had used 165% of FPG as the SNAP guideline until 2022, when it was increased to 200%. When interpreting SNAP PAI, a score of 100% indicates that individuals whose incomes are below the indicated level are accessing SNAP successfully.⁶ As shown in Figure 2, Ramsey County's SNAP PAI rating in 2021 was about 51% (at the 165% FPG level), which indicates that about half of those whose income is less than 165% of the FPG receive SNAP benefits. When these outcomes are disaggregated by race, they show similar trends to the SNAP and WIC rates discussed above: Black, Asian, and American Indian residents' use of social benefits are higher, above 60%, but White, Hispanic, and Multiple Race residents' uptake rates are lower, below 30%.

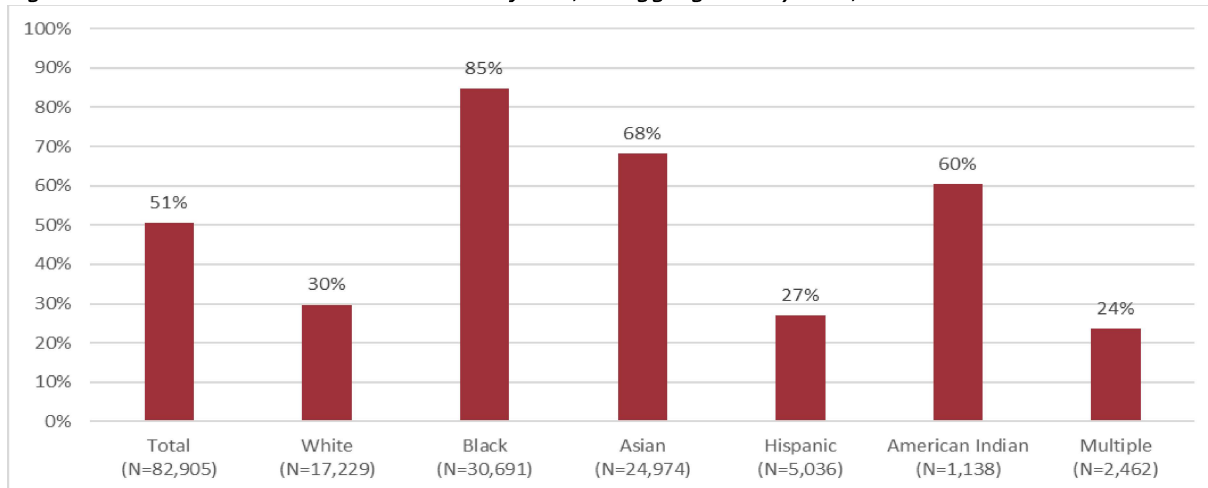
Black residents access SNAP benefits at the highest rate (85%) of all the cohorts, as shown in Figure 2 below. American Indian and Asian residents' access rates are 60% and 68% respectively, indicating that about two-thirds of these residents who meet the income guideline are accessing SNAP benefits in Ramsey County. However, access rates for White, Hispanic, and Multiple Race residents indicate that fewer than half of the residents whose incomes meet this threshold are accessing SNAP benefits (although there are other eligibility factors that are not considered in this calculation).

⁴ USDA Food and Nutrition Service. (2015). Calculating the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Program Access Index: a Step-by-Step Guide for 2013. <https://www.cwda.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/pai2013.pdf?1455134856>

⁵ For 2022, 125% of the FPG for a family of four is \$34,688, 165% is \$45,788 and 200% is \$55,500 for a family of four. Source: [Federal Poverty Guidelines - ProJusticeMN](#)

⁶ Totals do not equal out because all are averages for each group over the calendar year.

Figure 2. SNAP PAI Access Rates at 165% of FPG, disaggregated by race, 2021



iii. Mapping Food Insecurity in Ramsey County

The University of Minnesota’s Healthy Food, Healthy Lives Institute hosts a Food Security Dashboard that reports food insecurity rates based on Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap research. The map shows that the **most food insecure areas are the University Ave Corridor** and the **Frogtown/Capitol Heights/North End** communities, including tracts 336, 337 and 428. Two of these tracts have food insecurity rates over 25% and the third is 23.5%. Tract 327, covering the **Como and Western community**, follows as the third most food insecure area at 23.5%, and tract 319, covering the area just east of the **University Avenue intersection with Hwy 280**, as the fourth most food insecure tract, at 23.5%. Table 1 provides food insecurity rates by tract number and neighborhood description.

Table 1. Ramsey County’s Most Food Insecure Census Tracts, 2021 est.

Tract Number	Tract Description	Food Insecurity Rate (%)
305	North End	22.9
314		21.6
327	Como/Western Ave.	23.5
319	University Ave. & Hwy 280	23.5
334	University Ave Corridor from Fairview to Rice Street (moving west to east)	22.1
335		22.0
336		23.5
337		25.9
359	W. 7 th St. & Grand Ave.	21.0
428	Capitol Heights	25.2
310	Payne-Phalen	20.7

Tract Number	Tract Description	Food Insecurity Rate (%)
315	East Side & Prosperity Heights	22.3
317		21.9
318		21.3
361	Concord-Robert	23.4

The tracts that are the **least food insecure** are **Roseville** north of County Road B, between Lexington Ave. and Rice Street, with the area between Lexington and Dale having the lowest food insecurity rate in the county at 6.4%. The **Battle Creek** neighborhood from Bailey Road in the south to Hudson Road in the north, between McKnight and Century Avenue also has low food insecurity at 6.7% and 7.1% in two census tracts. Finally, the **Bellaire community** from Highway 61 in the east to County Road F in the south and Shore Boulevard in the north has low food insecurity rates, at 7.1%. Table 2 below provides food insecurity rates by tract number and neighborhood description for the least food insecure communities.

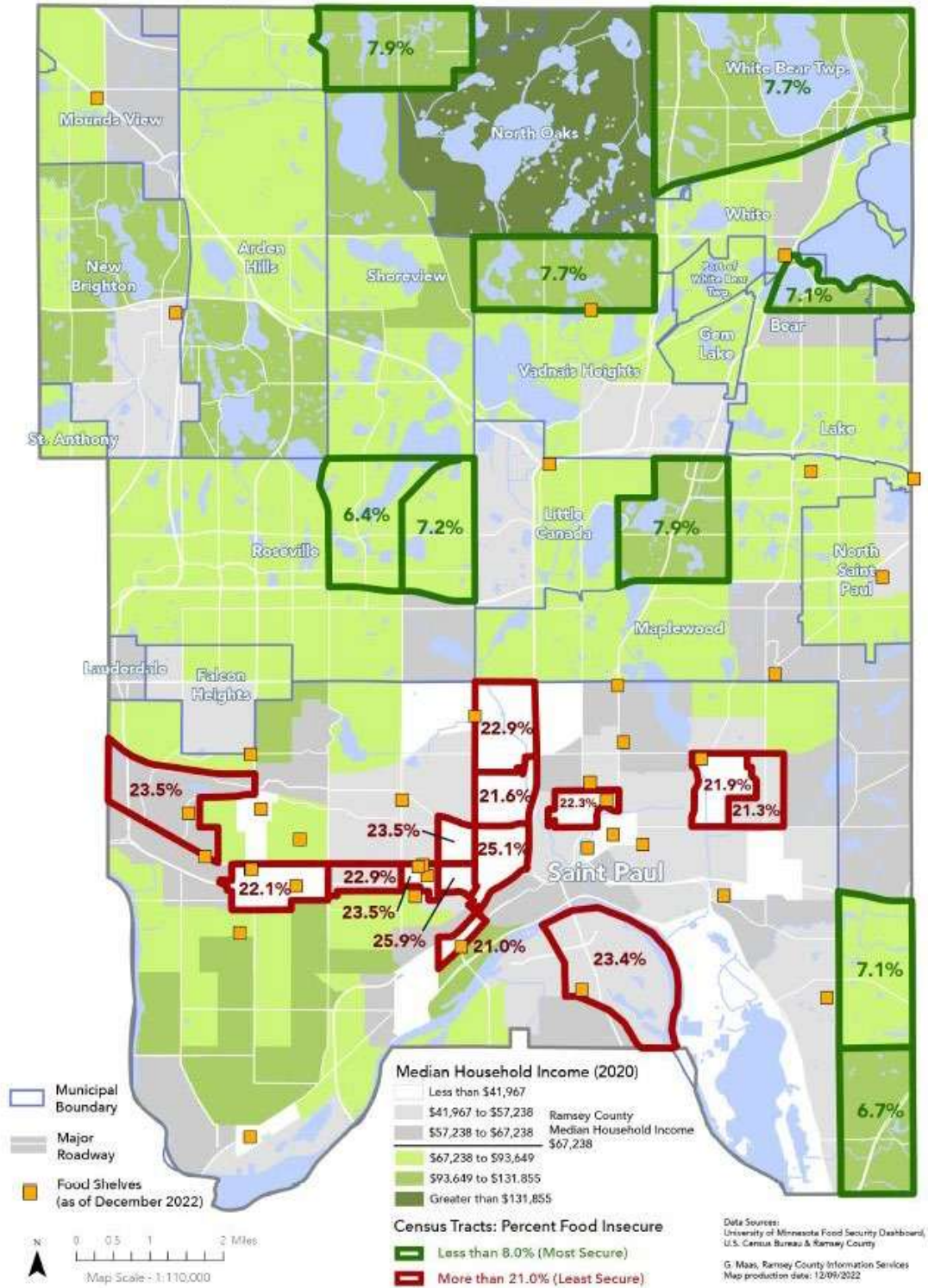
Table 2. Ramsey County's Least Food Insecure Census Tracts, 2021 est.

Tract Number	Tract Description	Food Insecurity Rate (%)
401	White Bear Lake	7.7
403.01	Bellaire	7.1
406.03	Vadnais Heights	7.7
404.06	Arden Hills	7.9
415	Roseville north of Cty. Rd. B (moving west to east)	6.4
416.01		7.2
423.01	North Maplewood	7.9
425.03	Battle Creek	6.7
425.04		7.1

When these tracts are mapped out and compared to the median household income of the community, it shows the clear relationship between poverty and food insecurity rates. Of the most food insecure tracts (rates above 21%), all have earning rates below the median household income level, with 10 of them earning less than \$41,967/year. All of them fall in or near the urban core, in communities with higher proportions of residents who are racially or ethnically diverse.

Conversely, the nine least food insecure tracts, those with food insecurity rates under 8%, are all located in affluent suburbs in which White residents are a higher proportion of the tract's population than the county average (about 60%). Figure 3 below shows the distribution of these most and least food insecure tracts, along with the median household income for the area.

Figure 3. Food Insecurity Rates and Median Household Incomes of Most and Least Food Insecure Tracts

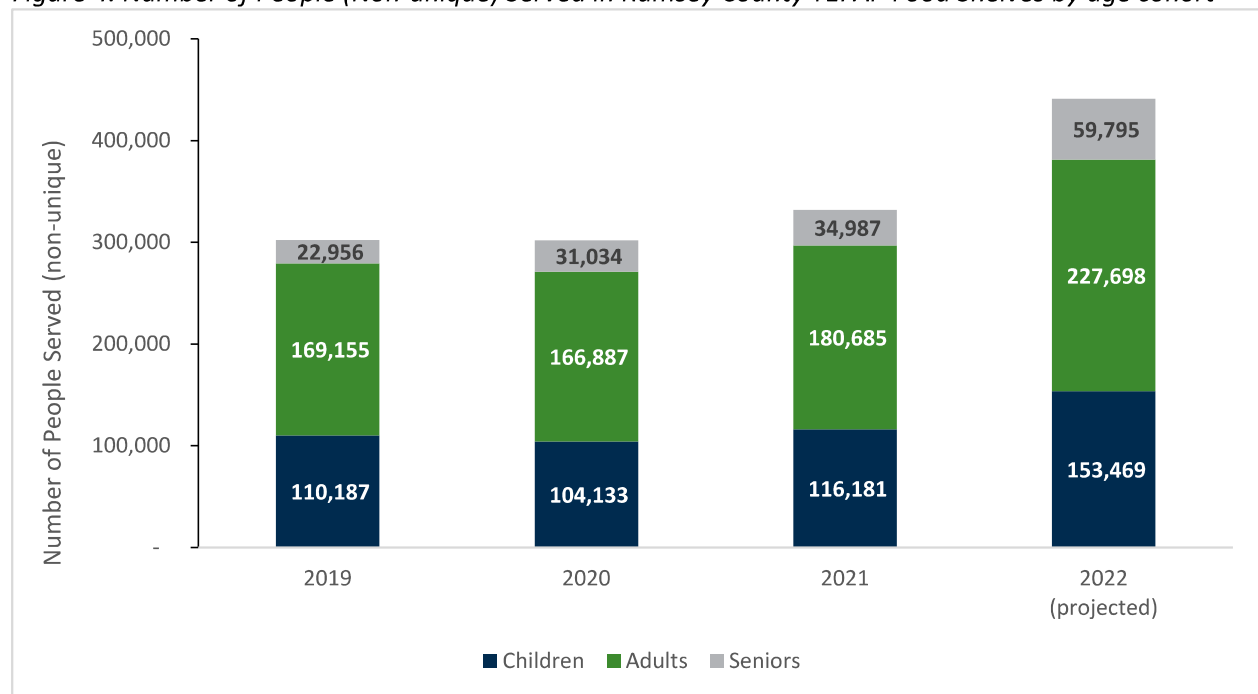


iv. TEFAP Food Shelf Usage Rates

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (MDH) collects data on food shelves funded by TEFAP, a federally funded program that provides emergency food assistance to Americans in need. In 2022, there were 42 TEFAP food shelves operating in Ramsey County, which are projected to distribute more than 8.7 million pounds by the end of 2022.

As shown in Figure 4 below, use of food shelves has increased dramatically since the start of the pandemic. In 2019, food shelves served just over 300,000 individuals (non-unique) per year. This stayed about the same in 2020 before increasing by about 10% in 2021. However, thus far in 2022, the food shelves are projected to reach more than 440,000 individuals, which is nearly a 50% increase from pre-pandemic levels. Seniors' demand has increased by more than 160% since the start of the pandemic.

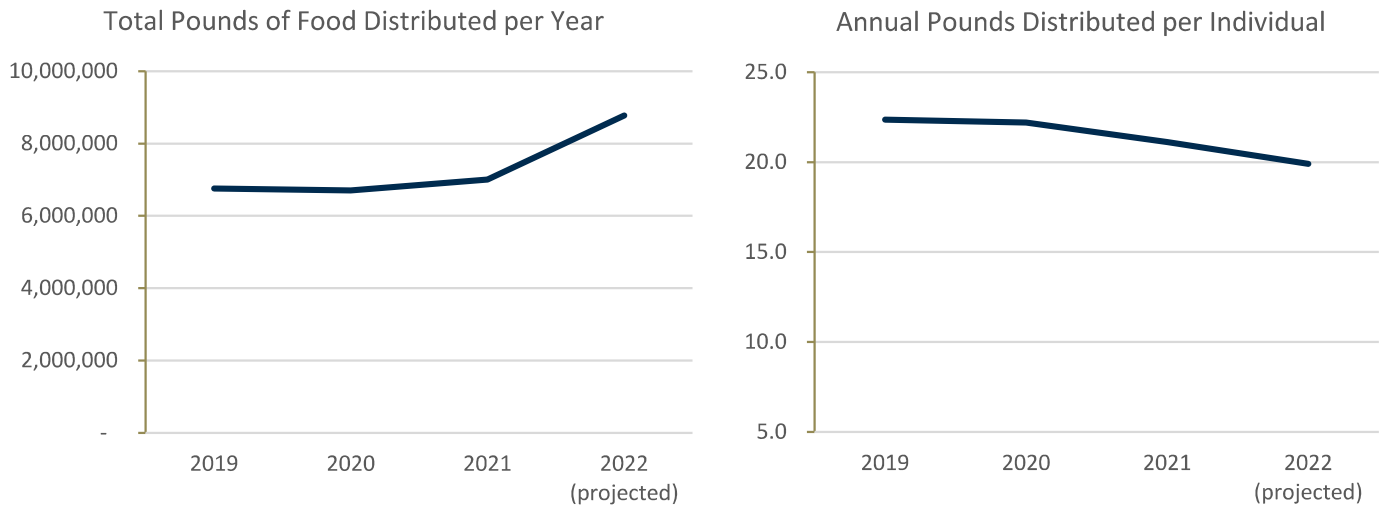
Figure 4. Number of People (Non-unique) Served in Ramsey County TEFAP Food Shelves by age cohort



In addition to the number of people served, MDH also collects data on the total pounds of food distributed per year and the pounds of food distributed per person. As shown in Figures 5 and 6 below, TEFAP food shelves are projected to distribute more than 8.7 million pounds of food during 2022, which is an increase of about 25% from 2021. However, the demand is also higher: projections indicate that TEFAP food shelves will serve at least 100,000 more (non-unique)

individuals than in 2021. Therefore, the pounds distributed per person is projected to fall below 20 pounds a person, which will be a decrease of about 12.5% since the start of the pandemic.

Figures 5 & 6. Total Pounds of Food Distributed per Year and Annual Pounds Distributed per Individual at Ramsey County TEFAP Food Shelves



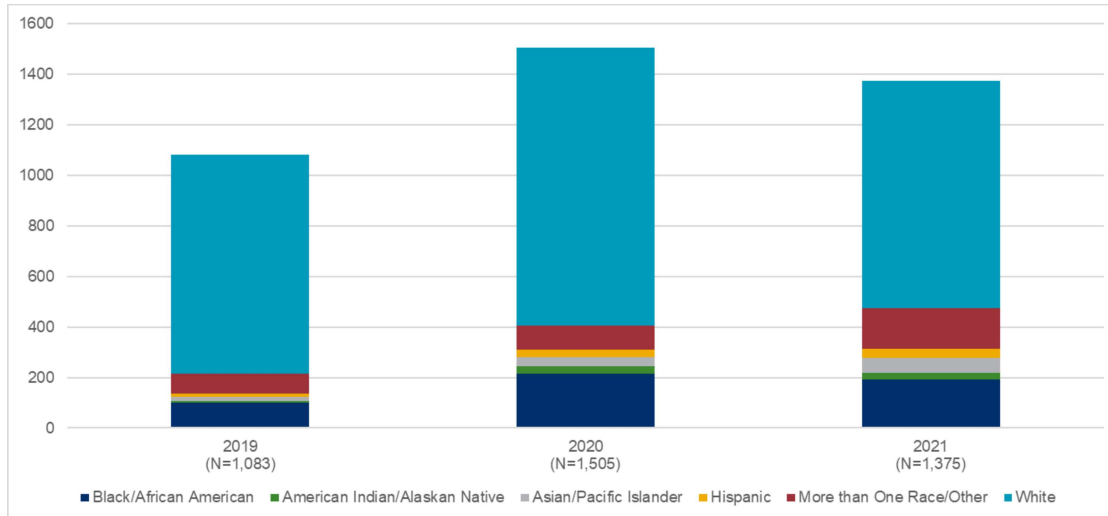
v. Meals on Wheels Usage Rates

Meals on Wheels of Ramsey County (MOW) is a private, non-profit organization managed by the Senior Services Consortium of Ramsey County with funding support from the county (in addition to other sources). MOW provides home delivery service of ready-to-eat hot meals and/or pre-prepared frozen meals for elderly residents and residents with disabilities.

In 2019 (pre-pandemic), MOW served 136,956 meals to 1,083 residents, for an average of 126 meals per person per year. In 2020, the number of individuals served grew by nearly 50%: MOW served 175,650 meals to 1,505 residents, for an average of about 117 meals per person, per year. In 2021, MOW served 210,489 meals to 1,375 people, or about 153 meals per person, per year. In other words, while fewer residents received assistance in 2021, those who did receive food needed more assistance than they did prior to COVID, which indicates that the most vulnerable residents needed more support.

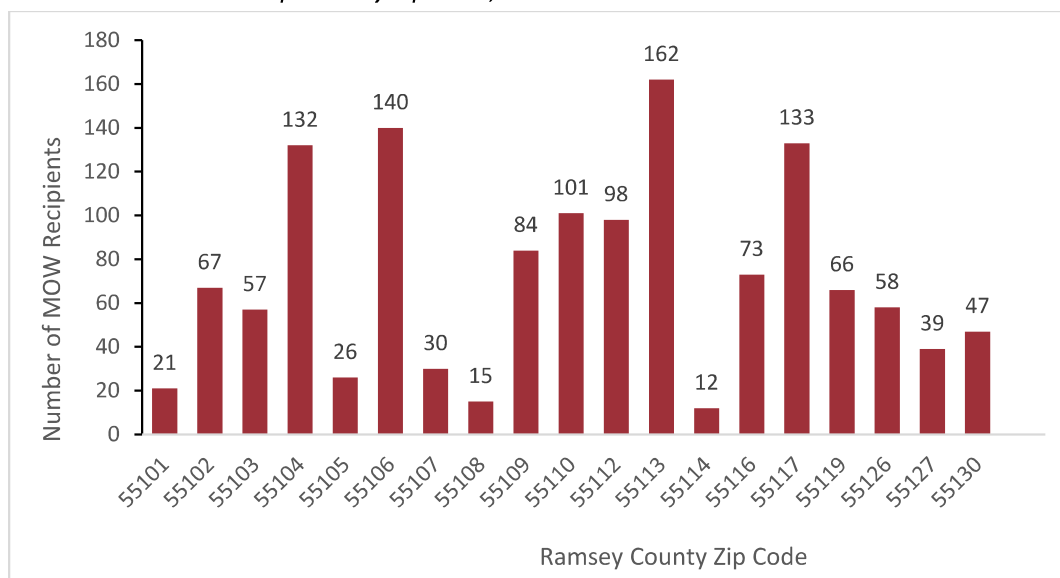
As shown in Figure 7 below, MOW service is predominantly used by white residents, who comprise between 65-80% of beneficiaries between 2019-2021. However, Black/African American and Mixed-Race beneficiaries grew as a percentage of MOW recipients in that time, increasing from 9 to 14%, and 7 to 12% of recipients, respectively.

Figure 7. Meals on Wheels usage in Ramsey County disaggregated by race, 2019-2021



As shown in Figure 8 below, disaggregating 2021 MOW usage numbers by zip code demonstrates four primary clusters where recipients were located: 55014 (Hamline/Midway), 55106 (East Side), 55113 (Roseville), and 55117 (North End and 35E corridor). These are areas in which more elderly residents are clustered. (While MOW is open to anyone who can pay the minimal cost to receive food, public and private financial assistance is offered to recipients over the age of 50 who are unable to pay the fees and/or recipients with disabilities.)

Figure 8. Meals on Wheels recipients by zip code, 2021



vi. School Feeding Program Usage Rates

Childhood hunger rates in Ramsey County are higher than the statewide rate: in 2017-18, nearly 3 out of 5 children (55.9%) in Ramsey County received free or reduced lunch as compared to the MN average of 37.5%. According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap, 20% of Ramsey County children (or 1 in 5) were estimated to be food insecure in 2020.

In the past, uptake rates of free school lunch were used as a proxy measure of child hunger. However, during COVID, all children were eligible to receive Universal Free School lunch. This benefit expired in June 2022 and Map the Meal Gap projected a decline in child hunger rates in 2021 (still forthcoming at the time of this assessment). However, anecdotal evidence from local food assistance providers who participated in the interviews (discussed in the next section) as well as in informal discussions, indicates childhood hunger rates have risen in 2022. For the 2022-23 school year, students whose family income is less than 185% of the federal poverty guideline meet the income requirements for free or reduced lunch (there are other criteria, as well). Children whose families receive SNAP or Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) (or those living in a household that includes a foster child) do not have to provide information on their income for their application; however, WIC recipients do have to provide income information. The free or reduced school lunch program requires a formal application process, presenting an additional barrier for many students and their families that may be a contributing factor in low uptake rates among Hispanic and Latinx residents.

b. Community Engagement Data

i. Service Provider Interviews

Starting in late 2021, the Food Security Coordinator conducted a series of interviews with more than 75 service providers representing food shelves, food banks, volunteers at pop-up distribution points, service organizations, state and local leaders, and community groups. Discussions represented the first steps in community engagement and focused on identifying the gaps and opportunities to improve food security in Ramsey County. This engagement was also a first step in the process of recruiting appropriate and engaged participants for the External Governance Team, which is discussed more at the end of this report.

Key themes that emerged from the service provider interviews included: improving county-administered social benefits systems, strengthening the food shelf and safety net system, building resiliency through enhanced urban agriculture, land access and local economy in the food system, and improving access and service provision of policy support and other communication efforts to align partner and county work. Discussion topics and recommendations shared by interviewees within each of these thematic areas is described in more detail below.

Theme 1. Funding and Social Benefits

- Funding for culturally appropriate foods and to meet health needs.
- Increased funding for smaller organizations servicing specific culturally and ethnically diverse communities.
- Rising costs of basic food items due to inflation.
- Policy impacts.
- Farm bill.
- Universal Free School Meals.
- Expansion of SNAP/WIC/county benefits through direct communications (make sure those eligible apply) eligibility (just over threshold), working requirements and expanding waivers.
- Form internal work groups for specific benefits process workflow improvements (Service Center Navigators who advise residents on access to wrap-around services, WIC, SNAP, housing, health care).

Theme 2. Strengthening the Food Safety Net System

- Increased opportunities for delivery (scheduling); alternative transportation support (buses, walking, safety); proximity of distribution sites.
- Infrastructure and capacity support to meet demand (storage for fresh foods/staff) volunteers and communications, expanding hours.
- Less paperwork for access; communications around public charge (someone who is primarily dependent on public assistance for their subsistence).
- Local ordering systems from farmers to food shelves.
- Food rescue and delivery to food shelves (reduce waste).
- Wraparound model at food shelves (Service Center Navigators).
- Centralized donations for food shelves and other food system organizations.

Theme 3. Urban Agriculture

- Allow access to land for urban agriculture, zoning for green space and food supply.
- Database for local farmers to sell directly to hospital systems, restaurants.
- Supporting the local economy through food system upgrades.

Theme 4. Access and Service Provision

- Communications campaign (linking college students and seniors to county benefits); multilingual, phone-based, remove shame surrounding hunger.
- Focus on Trusted Messengers to expand access.
- Continue updating food access resources/map and knowledge of resources.
- Focus on ethnically and racially diverse communities and vulnerable populations - elders, young adults, pregnant mothers, disabled.
- Linking health care/hospitals to food safety net systems, including at discharge.
- Aligning food waste to feed people.

iv. Online Survey

Informed by the service provider interviews discussed above, an online survey was launched in January 2022 to gather inputs from service providers and food assistance recipients about the status of food insecurity in the county. Potential respondents were recruited by direct invitation using Ramsey County's Food Security Update newsletter distributed periodically via email to a 1,600-person subscriber list that largely includes food service providers. Paper copies of the survey were also disseminated through Ramsey County's Public Health Child and Teen Checkups office, but no completed copies were returned.

Survey questions included closed-ended quantitative measures and open-ended qualitative (write-in) questions to gather more detailed responses (see Appendix B for a copy of the survey). Some of the questions were differentiated by respondent type: respondents representing food service providers were asked to describe the current demand for food support and provide qualitative inputs on policy and service provision recommendations; respondents who had received food benefits were asked about their experiences obtaining food from food shelves and what challenges they have faced in this process, including transportation and the appropriateness of food to their cultural and health needs. Both groups were asked to prioritize key food security needs from the same closed-ended list.

A total of 71 individuals attempted the online survey, of which eight people were disqualified for not meeting the eligibility requirements (i.e., they had not engaged with Ramsey County's food security systems within the past year). Sixty-two percent of the eligible respondents were service providers and 38% were food recipients. Food recipients were asked to self-identify race and ethnicity; 21 individuals chose to respond (a very small proportion), including 62% white, 19% Black/African American/American Descendent of Slavery, 9.5% African born (Somali,

Ethiopian, Liberian, Eritrean, etc.), and 9.5% Asian or Asian American (including Southeast Asian) respondents.

Survey respondents representing food assistance service providers included nine Food Shelf employees, seven Meals on Wheels/home delivered meals providers, and 22 other individuals representing other organizations, such as school feeding programs and community-based feeding organizations focused on food security. Of these, **70%** of providers said the **need for food had increased** in the past three months, with 40% saying it increased a lot.

Providers reported referrals were most frequently made to **food access points** like food shelves, followed by **Second Harvest Heartland**, then the **Ramsey County website**. Service Center **Navigators** was the lowest ranked resource with four respondents (out of 28) saying they had referred residents to Navigators as a resource for those seeking food assistance.

Providers most frequently requested **more funding** to obtain culturally appropriate foods and **easier access** to food support among the open-ended responses.

Respondents who had used food assistance in the past year preferred to receive information via social media rather than through the Ramsey County website or general Google search. Nearly half of these respondents said that transportation was an issue for them in accessing food.

Food recipients were asked to rate their experiences at food shelves. Overall, they reported positive experiences:

- o **Food shelf staff and volunteers' work was highly regarded**, they were reported to be friendly and helpful. Respondents said they did not need to fill out a lot of paperwork or show documentation (but two-thirds of respondents identified as White, so this is not a representative sample of all individuals' experiences).
- o Respondents said that they rarely had an opportunity to **choose their own food** and or choose from **different varieties of food**, with around 30% of respondents saying that never happens when they visit a food shelf.
- o The **wait times were sometimes long**, and the food shelf **environment could be uncomfortable** (e.g., lack of places to sit while they wait).

Both groups (service providers and food recipients) were asked to rate their top three priorities from within a closed set of issues that were identified as common barriers by the research team. These close-ended categories were developed through analysis of key topics from the 2021 Food Security Needs Assessment report and the responses to the key informant interviews (discussed in more detail below). As shown in Figure 9 below, 42 respondents completed the question and chose three priority areas. Transportation was rated the highest

priority (29) followed by need for fresh foods (22), and the right type of foods for cultural and medical needs (21), and information about food support is not available or people don't know how to access it (21) were tied for third priority.

Figure 9. Survey Respondents' Priority Areas in Food Insecurity



Survey respondents who had accessed food support in the past year most often used a car to pick up food (79% of respondents drove or got a ride), with a small percentage walking or taking public transportation to food distribution sites. Nearly half (47%) of those who accessed food support in the past year reported that transportation was very or somewhat challenging, as compared to 37% who said transportation is not very or not at all challenging when they are accessing food support.

ii. Qualitative Surveys at Food Distribution Pop-up Events

In spring of 2022, Ramsey County contracted Imagine Deliver, a Twin Cities-based consulting firm, to facilitate engagement efforts on behalf of the county with community members who may be experiencing food insecurity. The engagement was facilitated through pop-up events at pre-selected food distribution sites, including: the North St. Paul Food Shelf, the West 7th Street Public Library, a Fare for All food distribution event at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church in Frogtown, Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, Merrick Food Shelf on the East Side, and Focus House in the Midway/Frogtown area.

The six pop-up events were held between June 17-27, engaging a total of 306 respondents in a series of open-ended questions about their current food security needs and suggestions to close the gaps for those needing additional support, including the following five questions:

1. What matters most to you when choosing food for yourself or your family?
2. When you need foods that fit your cultural, dietary, or medical needs, what are the best resources to get what you need?
3. When you or your family don't have enough food, how do you find more food?
4. If you do not currently use county food benefits like SNAP and WIC, are there any reasons why you do not apply for them?
5. If you could dream of better food options in your community 10 years from now, what would that look like?

Respondents were offered a variety of ways to respond, including using a tablet provided by Imagine Deliver, scanning a QR code to access the survey on their own device, or engaging in an interview-style discussion with either an Imagine Deliver or a Ramsey County representative who entered the data into the tablet on their behalf. During data collection, a welcoming and fun atmosphere was generated with lively music, shaded spaces to sit while completing the questionnaire, and on-site researchers who invited individuals to participate and offered any support needed by respondents completing the survey. After the survey was completed, respondents received a \$15 cash incentive for their time and a popsicle. At one location (Fare for All), respondents had an option to take the cash directly into the distribution point and purchase low-cost food with it if they wished (which many respondents did).

Out of this effort, Imagine Deliver identified six insights under three main themes: food autonomy and choice; food affordability and supplemental assistance; and filling gaps in food availability. Each of these is summarized below.

Theme 1. Food Autonomy and Choice

- Access to healthy food builds stronger families and communities, including more offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, and other nutrient-dense options.
- Localized food production, especially through community gardens, can increase access to fresh foods, support local farmers, and provide communities with more autonomy over the food they eat and its production.

Theme 2. Food Affordability and Supplemental Assistance

- Food costs are rising, most especially for fresh, healthy food, so food budgets do not stretch as far and there is more demand for discounted food programs.
- Access to public food benefits is a challenging and complex system. Community members seek more dynamic, flexible benefits systems that meet their needs.

Theme 3. Filling Gaps in Availability

- Food shelves and other emergency food providers fill gaps in the system when public assistance fails, or individuals cannot or do not want to use these resources.
- Social connections including family, friends, and places of worship also fill gaps in the system and can address challenges like transportation or limited access to kitchens and cooking equipment.

Question 5 asked respondents to share their **vision of better food options in their community** ten years from now. Their responses fell into eight general categories, each of which is described below along with a quote from one or two community respondents that represent the kind of feedback received in each category.

Community Vision 1. Access, including local grocery stores, transportation, and delivery support, especially for the elderly

"Local, fresh, healthy options that are affordable and in a walkable or bikeable community." (White female, age 18-24, zip code 55408)

"More grocery stores and food shelves in my neighborhood" (Black Male, age 35-44, zip code 55104)

Community Vision 2. Homegrown food, healthy fruits and vegetables, public gardens, individual animal husbandry (chickens, pigs), organic food

"10 years from now, I hope that the food has more flavor, not so tasteless like tomatoes. I would like to see farmers markets with fresh food, fresh bread, and flowers every day of the week in every city, and it must be accessible to the disabled." (White Female, age 45-64, zip code 55106)

"Everyone has a garden in backyard and my own chickens, this system isn't going to sustainable, expanding farmers markets, rooftop farming, fruit trees (plum trees, etc.) fruits grown locally, different fruits from different countries, more fishing clubs > taking people to go out to go fishing for their own food." (Black Transgender, age 45-64, zip code 55102)

Community Vision 3. More food shelves, food kitchens

"Place to go like a food kitchen with a good nutritional meal for free or reduced price or a delivery. Could be tied in with a call nurse or assistance program. Could be organized by a donation system based on what you can give. Service for those who also can't cook. Fresh vegetables available." (White Female, age 65+, zip code 55102)

Community Vision 4. Local farmers and better use of farmland

"More farm to table access, less prepackaged, less garbage and junk food, more farmers

market, and fresh foods. Better marketing of nutritional options. Bad when you first enter a grocery store and what you see is junk food. Cheaper and affordable fresh food and produce.” (White Female, age 45-64, zip code N/A)

Community Vision 5. Affordable, more equitable distribution, SNAP more accessible, more school feeding programs

“I truly feel the cost of food is extreme. We barely survive paying for daily essentials and rent. I feel the cost of food should be realistic and not just a high cost for all. We all don't make the same income, so I feel that is not fair. If that can't be, then the income limits for SNAP should be higher.” (Multiracial Female, age 25-34, zip code 55112)

Community Vision 6. Education on food health

“Daily affordable, healthy, and sustainably sourced meals for families, plus snacks for kids. Community gardens, food processing resources, and educational resources for everyone.” (White Female, age 35-44, zip code 55102)

Community Vision 7. Less food waste, less need to steal food

“Food available everywhere so people don't have to steal food.” (Race N/A Male, age 45-64, zip code 55103)

Community Vision 8. Culturally appropriate foods

“More affordable, fresh vegetables, fresh meat. Asians don't eat ground beef.” (Asian Female, age 65+, zip code 55119)

As discussed earlier in this report, data suggested that White residents are more likely to reject the idea that they are food insecure. The data from this community engagement effort also pointed to this trend. In two questions: (*When you need foods that fit your cultural, dietary, or medical needs, what are the best resources to get what you need?* and *If you do not currently use county food benefits like SNAP and WIC, are there any reasons why you do not apply for them?*). White residents were more likely to respond with comments like “Not applicable” or “I don’t need them [public assistance benefits].” In the first question, the only respondents to say this type of response reported their racial identity as White (total of 19 respondents). In the second question, for the 24 individuals who said this type of response, 16 of these respondents identified as White.

Please note that there are a couple of caveats to the data discussed above: first, one of the collection sites in which these latter data were gathered was the West 7th Library. While this site did have a food distribution activity taking place during the data collection process, there was also a children’s reading event taking place that may have attracted visitors not participating in food distribution activities (unlike the other five sites, which were solely focused on food distribution). Second, these data were captured as qualitative, open-ended statements

and then enumerated by a data analyst, a subjective exercise that can misconstrue the data. Therefore, these findings should be considered indicative of a trend also supported by other data points presented in this assessment.

III. Conclusions

Based on all the above inputs, the Food Security Coordinator has determined the following two priorities are areas in which the County can support and guide development:

1. **Urban Agriculture** - facilitating land access and use for local produce and community gardens.
2. **Public Benefits Access and Strengthening the Food Safety Net** - expanding uptake of public assistance benefits among those eligible and interested in receiving assistance; supporting local food shelves and other distribution sites to meet current demand, especially for marginalized populations.

Other key topics, including Enhancing the Food Safety Net, Expanding Food Affordability, Advocacy, Facilitating Informal Connections (i.e., within communities) and Resources/Communications development, are either long-term goals or are happening organically, without county guidance (e.g., through informal connections). Going forward, the Food Security Coordinator will work with the External Governance Team, and an Internal Steering Committee of relevant county staff, to guide these efforts. The participating members of each of these groups are described in more detail below.

Internal Steering Committee is composed of representatives of food security and health service providers within Ramsey County, including WIC, FAS, SHIP, Policy and Planning, Research and Evaluation, and Racial and Health Equity Liaison team members.

External Governance Team is composed of representatives of food security and health service providers outside Ramsey County, including Sanneh Foundation, Fairview HealthEast, Keystone Services, CLUES, Wilder Foundation (Promise Neighborhood), Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Food Shelf, the Department of Indian Works – Interfaith Action team, White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf, Somali Farmers Association, Allina Health and Health Partners.

This foundation will enable Ramsey County to achieve the above short- and long-term goals to address food insecurity over the coming months and years. It will promote a greater sense of collaboration, communication, and consistent messaging across the food system as county residents and service providers recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix A. Data Sources Consulted

Ramsey County Assistance Programs

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Appendix B. Online Survey

The following survey was administered between January and March 2022 via the Survey Monkey online platform to service providers and recipients of food assistance.

FOOD AND BASIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Ramsey County's Food and Basic Needs program provided assistance for residents in need during the COVID pandemic from August 2020 to December 2020. As the County works to address the ongoing food-related needs in our community, we are asking for your input to better understand your experiences to inform future food-related efforts.

The survey is anonymous. We will not record your name and will only ask general demographic questions. Participation is voluntary and there are no benefits or drawbacks to participating in this survey other than helping to inform future food-related assistance and there are no known risks to participating. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

If you have questions about the survey, you can contact Sarah Auten in the Ramsey County Health and Wellness Administrative Division's Office of Research and Evaluation at sarah.auten@co.ramsey.mn.us

If you would like assistance to translate this survey into another language, please contact the Ramsey County Language Line for interpretation assistance at 651-266-8500.

1. Which best describes you?
 - ☐ I work as a Provider or an organizational representative of a place that provides food or food support.
 - ☐ I have received food or food support in the past 12 months. For example, food from a Food Shelf, School Meal Program, WIC (Women, Infants and Children Program), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or other food provider resource. [SKIP to Q. 10]

FOOD SERVICE PROVIDER QUESTIONS

2. Which type of Food Service Provider are you?
 - ☐ Food Shelf
 - ☐ Food Bank
 - ☐ School Meal Program
 - ☐ Representative of WIC (Women, Infants and Children Program), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or FAS (Financial Assistance Services)
 - ☐ Food Producer
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
 - ☐ None of the above [End survey as respondent is not eligible to participate.]

3. Which of the following Ramsey County zip codes do you represent and/or serve? (Check all that apply or select ALL, if applicable).

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ☐ 55101 | ☐ 55114 |
| ☐ 55102 | ☐ 55116 |
| ☐ 55103 | ☐ 55117 |
| ☐ 55104 | ☐ 55119 |
| ☐ 55105 | ☐ 55126 |
| ☐ 55106 | ☐ 55127 |
| ☐ 55107 | ☐ 55130 |
| ☐ 55108 | ☐ 55144 |
| ☐ 55109 | ☐ 55155 |
| ☐ 55110 | ☐ We work with residents from ALL areas of Ramsey County |
| ☐ 55112 | ☐ None of the above [End survey as respondent is not eligible to participate.] |
| ☐ 55113 | |

4. Which of the following primary communities do you try to reach? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Adults over 65 years old
- ☐ School aged children
- ☐ Families with young children
- ☐ Asian, including Southeast Asian, immigrants
- ☐ African born (e.g., Somali, Ethiopian, Liberian, Eritrean, etc.) immigrants
- ☐ Black, African American, ADOS (American Descendent of Slavery)
- ☐ Hispanic/Latinx
- ☐ Native American/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders
- ☐ Residents with limited transportation
- ☐ Undocumented residents
- ☐ Residents with limited English language skills
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ None of the above

5. Over the past three months, what statement best describes Ramsey County residents' need for food support services?

- ☐ Increased a lot
 - ☐ Increased a little
 - ☐ Stayed about the same
 - ☐ Decreased a little
 - ☐ Decreased a lot
 - ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer
6. What gaps exist that your organization would like to fill, but cannot? (Please include details about specific geographic areas and/or groups who are more vulnerable or whose needs are not being met by the current system.) _____
7. What are the top three (3) projected food-related needs of your organization over the next six months? _____
8. Do you have specific recommendations for policy changes at the state and/or federal level that would enable more effective operations within your organization? _____
9. To which of the following resources have you referred people seeking food assistance in the past three months?
- ☐ Second Harvest Heartland
 - ☐ Ramsey County website for food resources
 - ☐ Ramsey County Service Center Navigators
 - ☐ Ramsey County for SNAP or WIC information
 - ☐ Food shelves or food distribution event information
 - ☐ None of the above
 - ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____ [SKIP to Q. 21]

FOOD RECIPIENT QUESTIONS

10. In which Ramsey County zip code do you live? [SAME LIST AS ABOVE] [If none, end survey as respondent is not eligible to participate.]
11. Which of the following food resources have you used in the past 12 months? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Food shelf or food pantry
 - ☐ Food bank (e.g., Second Harvest Heartland, Food Group)
 - ☐ School meal program (when school wasn't in person)
 - ☐ WIC, SNAP, and/or TEFAP benefits
 - ☐ Pop-up food distribution site

- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ I have not received food assistance in the past year [End survey as respondent is not eligible to participate.]

Before we learn more about your experiences with food assistance, we would like to ask you to provide some basic information about you and your household. These questions are voluntary and you will not be asked your name, age, or any other identifying information. We appreciate your response to these questions!

12. How many people live in your home, including yourself?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 or more
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

13. How many children live in your home (under 18 years of age)?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 or more
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

14. How many seniors (over the age of 65) live in your home, including yourself if you are a senior?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 or more
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

15. How many individuals with disabilities live in your home, including yourself if you are disabled?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 or more
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

16. What is your racial and ethnic background? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ African born (e.g., Somali, Ethiopian, Liberian, Eritrean, etc)
- ☐ Asian or Asian American, including Southeast Asian
- ☐ Black, African American, ADOS (American Descendent of Slavery)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
- ☐ Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- o White or Caucasian
- o Other (please specify): _____
- o I prefer not to answer

17. How often do you experience these things when you visit a food provider?

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Don't know/prefer not to answer
The process of selecting my food is easy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can choose my own food.	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are plenty of different varieties of food available.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The food looks fresh and appealing.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foods from my culture are available.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers and/or staff speak my language or can find some way to assist me in my language.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to understand the signs and instructions at the food shelf.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteers and/or staff greet me and make me feel welcome.	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is a comfortable place to wait.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The wait time is reasonable.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Volunteers and/or staff listen to my needs and answer my questions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not a lot of paperwork or documentation is required for me to access food.	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. At this time, what is your primary transportation method to get food from a food shelf, free meal program, etc.?

- ☐ Drive or get a ride to pick up food from a distribution point.
- ☐ Take public transportation to pick up food from a distribution point.
- ☐ Walk to pick up food from a distribution point.
- ☐ Have food shelf food or meals delivered to my house from a service.
- ☐ Get food from my child's school.
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ None of the above

19. How challenging is transportation for you (and/or your household) to access food?

- ☐ Very challenging
- ☐ Somewhat challenging
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Not very challenging
- ☐ Not at all challenging
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer

20. How would you like to receive food-related information in the future? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Ramsey County website
- ☐ Ramsey County Navigators (individuals providing information, located in libraries and other County office sites)
- ☐ Word of mouth (friends, neighbors, family members, etc.)
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ General Internet search (Google)
- ☐ Advertising on billboards, print media, television, etc.
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to answer

- o Other (please specify): _____
- o None of the above

QUESTIONS FOR BOTH TYPES OF RESPONDENTS

21. Please select which three (3) issues are MOST URGENT to address? (Choose three)

- o Not enough food is available at the food shelves to fill the current need.
- o The right type of food is not available to meet cultural or medical needs.
- o Transportation is not available to go to food shelves and bring food home, and delivery is not available.
- o Fresh foods are not available at food shelves or other distribution points.
- o Non-food hygiene items are not available for those in need.
- o Recently hospitalized people or those seeking medical treatment cannot get food.
- o The food shelves are not welcoming or supportive of visitors.
- o Information about food support is not available or people don't know how to access it.

22. What recommendations do you have for Ramsey County to better meet residents' food and basic needs? _____

23. Is there anything else you would like to share? _____

Thank you for participating!

Appendix C. Food Security System

