

# **CARES Evaluation: Workforce Development**

May 11, 2021

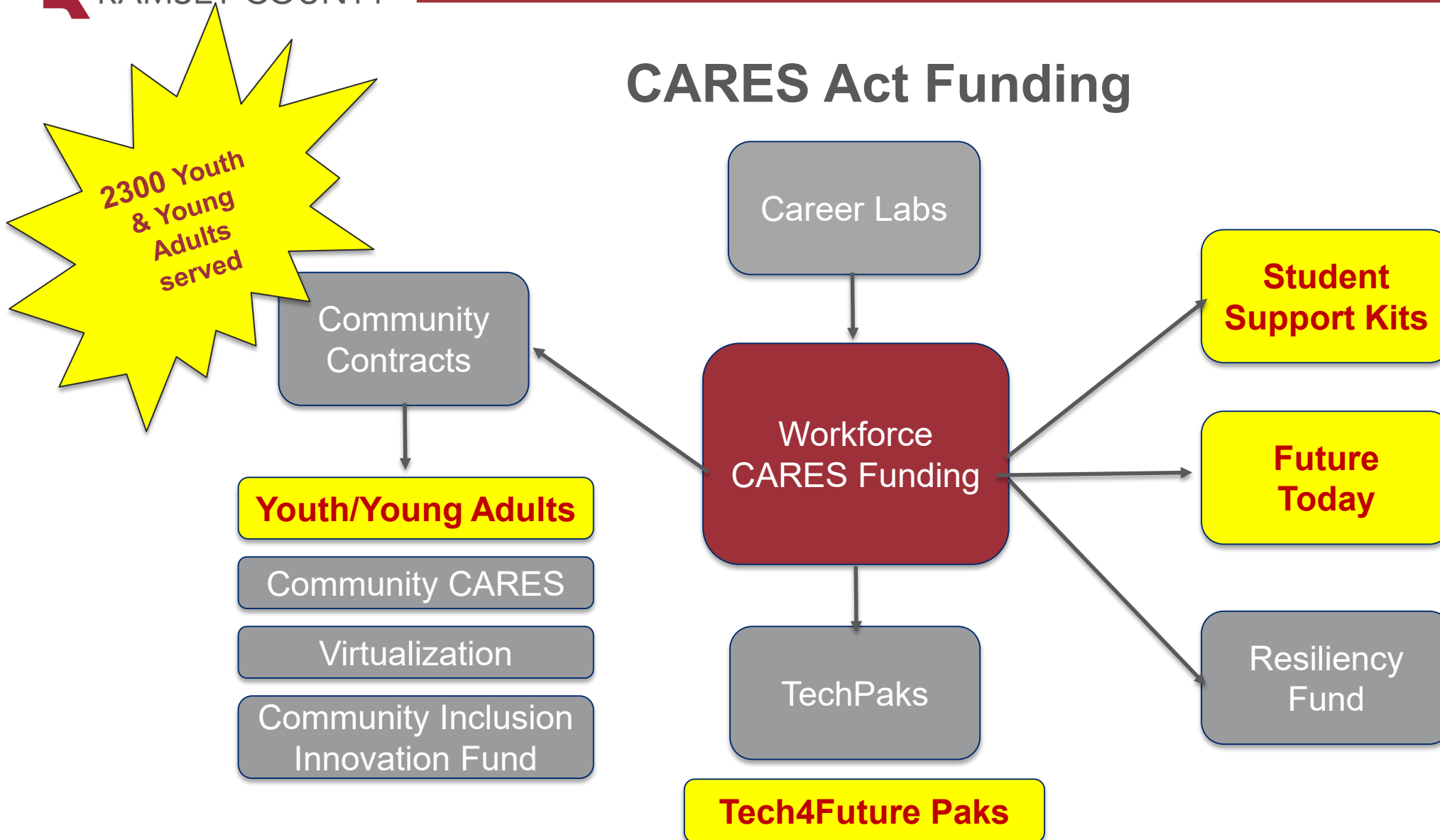
## Agenda

- I. Introduction and Opening Comments – County Manager Ryan O'Connor
- II. Presentation – Ling Becker and Larry Timmerman
- III. Questions and Comments

## What We Did

- Workforce Solutions (WFS) received \$15 million, or 16% of the total direct allocation of federal funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.
- A total of \$12,722,188 spent to support employment services to residents.
- WFS used a series of Emergency Purchasing Informal Quotes to solicit requests from community agencies.
- Agencies were asked to provide resources for programs targeting employment services for most severely COVID-19 impacted communities with the CARES allocations.

## CARES Act Funding



## Youth and Young Adult Contracts

African American Leadership  
Forum

City Academy

Cookie Cart

Genesys Works

High School for Recording Arts

JL Griffis

Keystone

Roots for the Home Team

Saint Paul Urban Tennis

Sanneh Foundation

SPARK Y

Tree Trust

Urban Boatbuilders

Urban Roots

Afro American Development  
Association

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Center for Hmong Art and Talent  
Change, Inc

CLUES

Construction Career Pathways

Goodwill Easter Seals

Isuroon

JK Movement

Junior Achievement of the Upper  
Midwest

New Vision Foundation

Oromo Community of Minnesota  
Street Therapy

The Anika Foundation

Catalyst Music

Confederation of Somali  
Communities

Face 2 Face

Fortune Relief and Youth  
Empowerment Organization

Generation 2 Generation

Hack the Gap

HIRED

Project Restore MN

Right Track

Saint Paul College

Saint Paul Police Department

The Man Up Club

YMCA





## What's inside a TechPak?



### LAPTOP

Refurbished laptop with power cord, pre-loaded bookmarks for job search and training, carrying bag with luggage tag, and TechDiscounts' computer support for 1 year



### TECHNOLOGY

Hotspot Internet access and headset



### TRAINING

Digital Navigator support on basic computer skills training, assessments, one-on-one tutoring, and referrals to structured classes on computer and internet skills as well as job training, further education, and social services. Materials related to COVID-19, libraries, adult basic education, and QuickStart guides in 5 languages were included.



## TechPaks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voicB7Nn-XU>

## CARES Workforce Development Goals

- Ensure **access**, in person and virtual, for residents to connect with employment resources.
- Work toward **closing some of the tech gap** for residents who lack technology and digital literacy.
- **Invest in community-based organizations** including supporting the pivoting of more training opportunities online with a focus on **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations**.
- Provide **gap services for youth/young adults** in partnership with community stakeholders



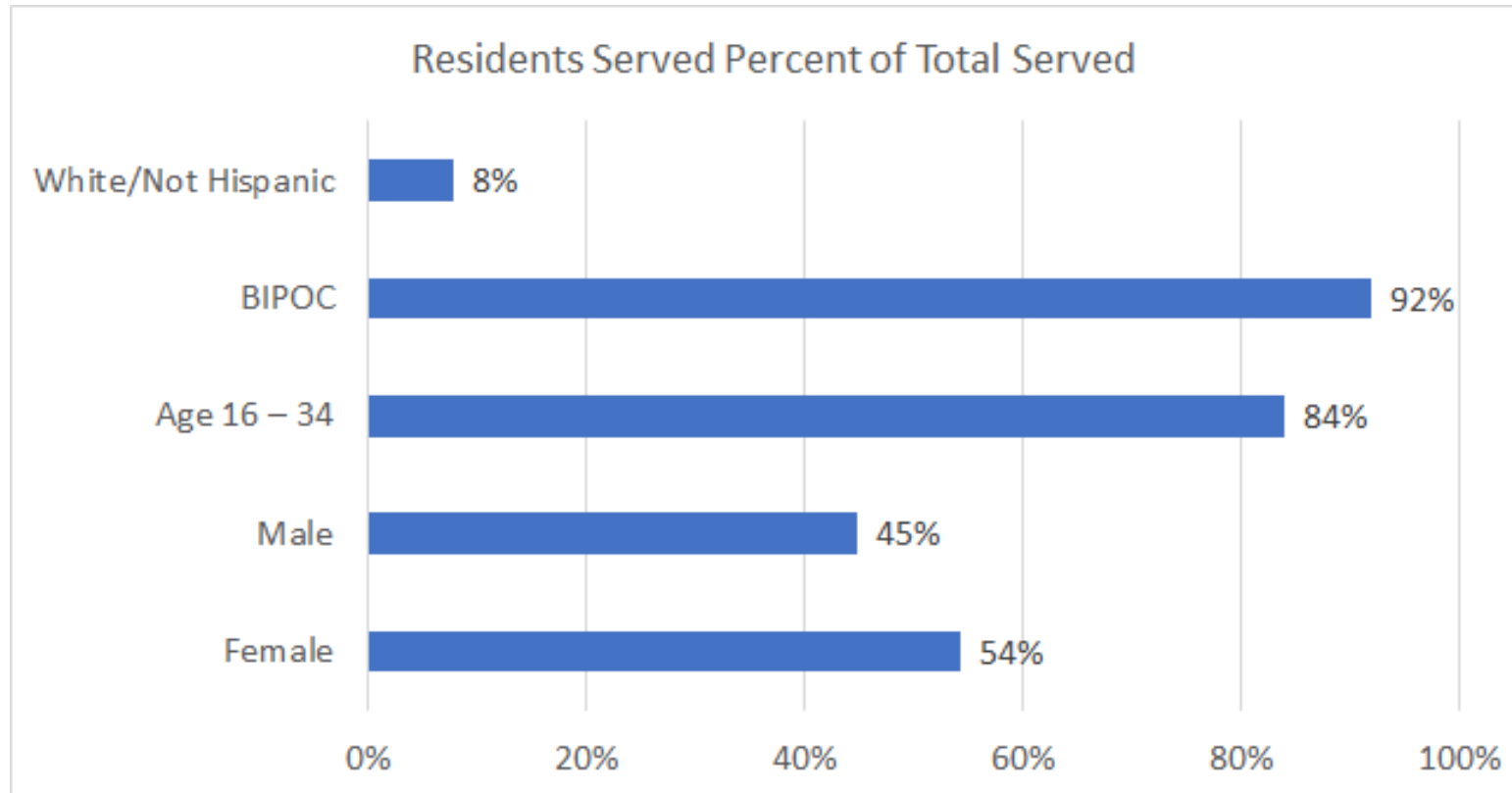
## Workforce CARES Evaluation Questions

- Are Ramsey County residents better off as a result of CARES Workforce Development programming?
- Did the project achieve the outcomes the community was seeking?
- How can Ramsey County better attract, retain, and support community partners with county contracts?

## How Was It Evaluated

- Monthly progress reporting from community partners.
- Demographic reports of staff and residents served provided by partners.
- Surveys of 504 program participants.
- Four focus groups/listening sessions in December with 36 community partners attending.
- Cohort feedback from organizations funded by the Community Inclusion and Innovation Fund (CIIF) with analysis from the Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI).

## CARES Residents Served Key Demographics



## Engagement and Outreach

- About 8000 Ramsey County residents served with CARES.
- More than 5300 residents engaged in community-based services.
- More than 2000 residents received TechPaks.
- More than 13,000 services delivered.
- Phone and web-based services accommodated more than 4500 inquiries.
- In-person Community Career Labs took reservations to serve nearly 1300 additional residents.
- 20% found a job while receiving services.

## What We Learned

### **Are Ramsey County residents better off due to Workforce CARES programs?**

- Most notably two groups experiencing the most severe job losses during the pandemic, young adults and BIPOC residents, accounted for nearly 60% and nearly 90% of the residents served.
- A survey of more than 500 program participants found that about 84% felt the services they received matched their employment-related needs.
- Many unmet needs do remain.

## From our residents...

*“The services I have used benefits me and my children in many ways. It helps me keep food on the table, helps me dedicate time to my children’s growth instead of worrying about where our meals are coming from and how bills will be paid. It also opens the world of the internet to us by not limiting what we are able to do and view online due to mobile phone restrictions.”*

*“My children have especially benefitted because they were able to have more computer time and resources which has lessened them from falling behind. It has relieved a lot of stress and services has definitely better prepared us as a family for the coming year.”*

*“It (the TechPak) has helped me prepare and understand working not only through a pandemic but helping me prepare for future jobs and opportunities for me.”*

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## What We Learned

### **Did the Projects Achieve the Outcomes the Community Was Seeking?**

- CARES Workforce Development funding was invested directly to community-based organizations
- Workforce Solutions launched career labs to ensure broader availability of workforce services would be available throughout 2020 as most traditional career labs were closed to the public.
- Technology supports assisted in providing a holistic approach to employment.

## From Community Contractors...

*“The goals were well aligned with the community needs and with what we wanted to do.”*

*“The cohort model really helped to empower the youth because they felt there was a sustainability in their professional development journey outside of the program.”*

*“First of all, trying to create programs that reach needed parts of our community. Secondly, being intentional about finding partners that serve the community authentically and with compassion, love and respect. Thirdly, for doing what you're doing in terms of trying to improve it.”*

## What We Learned

### **How Can Ramsey County Better Attract, Retain, and support Community Partners through Contracts?**

- CARES partners describe challenges with establishing appropriate accounting and reporting processes to provide the information the county requires.
- On-going contract management and administrative support for some CARES projects should be maintained to provide liaison and technical assistance to current and prospective community partners.
- Community partners should take a stronger leadership role in gathering community partners to allow for collaboration.

## From Community Vendors...

*“I think that there is probably a very great opportunity that might have been missed. Because not knowing what each other were doing, we could have maybe referred people to various services that are community based that the community would probably trust a little bit more. So that would be my going around next time and if at all possible, just more time for your application and implementation.”*

*“We sought creative ways to fulfill the requirements and if we had any questions, she (county staff) was really good at making sure that we were within guidelines to do what we want it to do.”*

*“It's the first time we're working with Ramsey County and it turned out really well. And they made it simple enough for us to be successful. So it worked out well.”*

## Recommendations

Short Term	Long Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration and networking.</li> <li>• Convene community partners in a pre-program launch.</li> </ul>	<p>Earlier engagement with community-based organizations in the planning process.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop cohorts that include technical assistance.</li> <li>• Simplify the reporting and monitoring require</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a county resource team dedicated to developing community resources.</li> <li>• Provide liaison and technical assistance to prospective community partners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver more holistic, family-focused approaches to providing assistance</li> <li>• Housing Stability</li> </ul>	<p>Create a county resource team dedicated to developing community resources. Provide liaison and technical assistance to prospective community partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus more resources on improving Tech Equity</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video/digital community engagement</li> </ul>	

# Questions or comments?



*A county of excellence working with you to enhance our quality of life.*

**Thank You!**