



# Board Workshop / Discussion Agenda

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

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April 15, 2025 - 10:30 a.m.

Courthouse Room 220

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## WORKSHOP

1. **Strategic Priority: Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Individuals and Families**

[2025-134](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office



# Board Workshop / Discussion

## Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
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**Item Number:** 2025-134

**Meeting Date:** 4/15/2025

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**Sponsor:** County Manager's Office

**Title**

Strategic Priority: Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Individuals and Families

**Attachment**

1. Presentation



April 15, 2025

# Advancing a Holistic Approach to Families



# Agenda

## **Strategic Priority Overview**

Alex Kotze, Interim Deputy County Manager

Dana DeMaster, Health & Wellness Director of Strategy & Innovation

## **Department Performance Measures**

Catrice O'Neal, Workforce Solutions Director

Christina Rost, Veterans Services Director

## **Opportunities and Next Steps**

Dana DeMaster, Health & Wellness Director of Strategy & Innovation

# Advancing a Holistic Approach to Families

Ramsey County will connect policies, programs, and processes to address family and individual needs through a holistic approach. Families should not have to understand our programs, policies, or structures to get their needs met. The onus is on the county to provide services in a way that addresses the entire family system.

Our strategies are based on transforming internal processes and culture to holistically support families and individuals, build community capacity in a self-sustaining manner, and build internal and community infrastructure.

# Goals, Strategies, and Projects

- **Families can identify and advocate for their needs.**
  - Support **Family Coach** programming, with a focus on African American and American Indian communities.
- **Strengthen systems that support basic needs.**
  - Implementation of the 2024/2025 Food Security Strategic Plan.
- **Ensure families receive all benefits they want and are eligible for.**
  - Creation of a one-stop, automated referral system by implementing an eligibility screening tool.
  - **Support services**, like Veterans Services and Minnesota Family Investment Program Employment Services, **that use a holistic approach to service.**

# Food Resources



This webpage can help connect you and your family with food resources.

## Get help finding or affording food

- [Minnesota Food HelpLine](#) | [888-711-1151](tel:888-711-1151) Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- [Ramsey County Navigators](#) | [651-266-8500](tel:651-266-8500) (Monday - Friday 8 a.m. -

## Food Security Strategic Plan

*Strengthen systems that support basic needs*

1. Supporting the food safety net.
2. Increasing access to public benefits.
3. Promoting urban agriculture.
4. Expanding food availability and affordability.

# Eligibility Screening Tool

*Ensure families receive all the benefits they want and are eligible for.*

- How to ensure families are aware of all programs and services?
- Electronic screening tool that provides connections to more than 20 county programs and state/federal benefits.
- Will be available online and in service centers for staff and residents.
- Addresses barriers due to data privacy, decentralized computer systems, and limitations of a completely staff-based approach.
- Implementation in late 2025.



# Advancing the Strategic Priority: Department Performance Measures

*Support programs and services that have a whole family, multi-generational approach.*

Department	Title	Full Performance Measure
Workforce Solutions	Holistic Services for families receiving MFIP	Percentage of MFIP families engaged in structured holistic services with specific and intentional investments
Veterans Services	Increasing Income and Access to Healthcare	Percent of veterans connected to income and access to healthcare through Ramsey Veterans Services

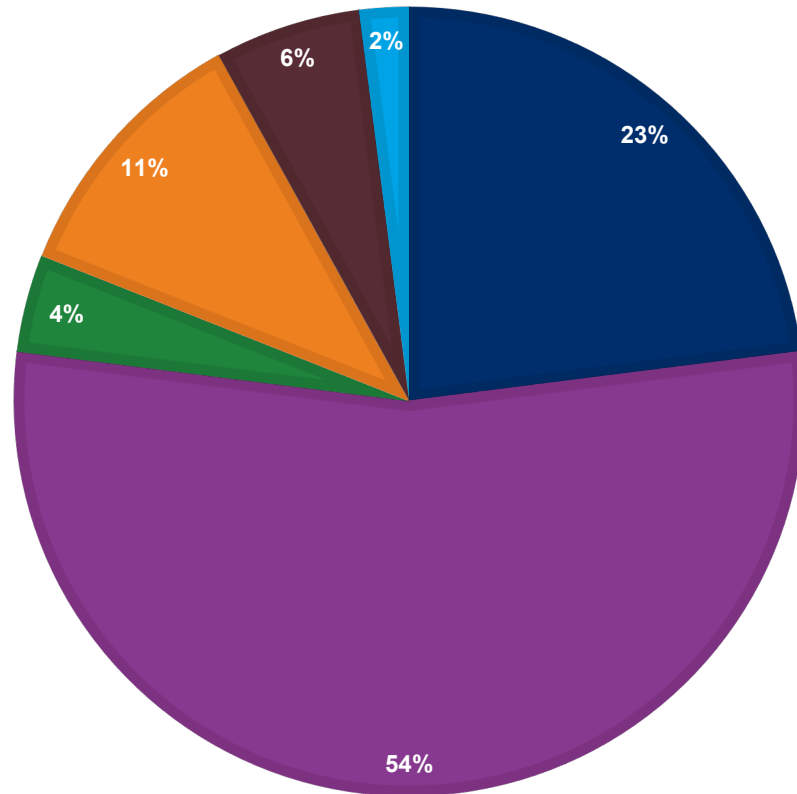
## What is the Minnesota Family Investment Program MFIP?

- MFIP provides cash assistance, food support, childcare and employment services.
- Time limited to 60 months unless eligible for an extension.
- Approach is to deliver services that are family-centered and goal oriented.
- All families participate in a range of activities depending on their goals and circumstances.
- MFIP is federal and state funded.

## Who we are serving on MFIP (April '23- March '24)

MFIP FAMILIES BY RACE

■ White ■ Black or African American ■ American Indian ■ Asian ■ Multirace ■ Did not identify



- Total families= 5,881
- 80% Single-headed households
- 40% Family Stabilization Services or extended beyond 5 years
- 20 different spoken languages other than English
- 8% Hispanic
- 11% immigrant or refugee

Performance Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Goal: 2025	Goal: 2027
Percentage of MFIP families engaged in structured holistic services with specific and intentional investments				26%	26%	30%	35%

Through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) - Employment Services, we have invested in better coordination, increased access and awareness of holistic and multigenerational services. Families receiving MFIP are required to participate in Employment Services.

Multigenerational services address the needs of each family member, recognizing that individuals within a family are interconnected.

By providing support for parents, children, and sometimes extended family members, these services offer a holistic approach to well-being that bolster successful employment and training outcomes.

## Internal Awareness, Access, and Coordination

- Designated Liaisons.
- Coach Approach – Lifelong Learning.
- Holistic Goals – Meaningful to the Family.
- Ongoing Active Engagement.
- Staff Training and Development.
- Learn, Evaluate, Improve.

## Investment in Partnerships

- Intentional investments and partnerships.
- Co-create evaluation plans.
- Embrace collective decision-making, plans and implementation strategies.
- Learning directly from families.
- Maintain a growth mindset.



## Partnership Highlight- Network for the Development of Children of African Descent (NdCAD)

- Parents and children receive services rooted in African culture and heritage.
- Cohort model.
- We learn from families, families learn from us, and we learn from each other.
- Parents increase self-determination, skills, and work readiness.
- Children increase reading outcomes.
- *“Culturally specific services make all the difference when you can see what you can achieve.”*

Performance Measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	Goal: 2025	Goal: 2027
Percent of veterans connected to income and access to healthcare by Ramsey Veterans Services	12%	16%	24%	26%	27%	30%

Veterans Services aims to increase the number of veterans and their dependents who receive assistance from our department with applying for federal and state veteran’s benefits that enhances their income (for both short-term special needs or long-term compensation, pension, and other sustained financial needs) and access to Veterans Administration healthcare.

Our goal is to focus on increasing access to these benefits for veterans of color and women who make up the smallest proportion of clients receiving these services.



# Understanding Veterans Connection to Increase Income and/or Healthcare Benefits

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Served	2,533	2,500	3,138	3,524
Benefits in Process or Other Services	2,219	2,108	2,371	2,623
Connected to New Benefits	314	392	767	901

- Expansion of federal and state benefits.
- Increased outreach.
- Streamline access to benefits.

# Veterans Services Partnerships for Holistic Services

Partnership	Programs Offered
Social Services Department	Aging and Disability Services, MnCHOICES Assessment, Elderly waivers and long-term care
Financial Assistance Services Department	Cash and food assistance
Housing Stability Department	Housing and shelter
Veterans Administration	Medical care and veterans' benefits
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs	Dental, optical, and Veterans' Relief Grant
Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans	Housing, employment, and free legal services
Ramsey County District Court	Veterans Treatment Court and Mentor Program
Ramsey County Service Centers	Veterans benefit connections
MN Food HelpLine	Connection to food resources

# Strategies to Increase Income and Access to Healthcare Benefits

- Proactive outreach to historically underserved communities.
- Streamline access to benefits and healthcare.
- Strengthen partnerships and coordination.
- Increase advertising to internal and external partners.
- Updated website to include an electronic referral form.
- Increase Veteran Outreach Social Workers community engagement.

# Opportunities

- Changing the way staff and departments approach their work.
- Addressing structural silos between state and county departments.
- Building a governance structure to guide strategies and increase awareness.
- Strengthening local partnerships as federal programs continue to face funding decreases.

## Next Steps

- Presentation this afternoon on Family Coach.
  - *Families can identify and advocate for their needs.*
- Implementation of eligibility screening tool.
  - Board workshop later this summer.
- Operationalize the Food Security strategic plan.
- Build structured governance to broaden scope, support, and understanding of the priority.