

Request for Board Action Details

File #: 2022-409

Type: Administrative Item **Status:** Passed

In control: Board of Commissioners

On agenda: 8/23/2022 **Final action:** 8/23/2022

Title: Joint Powers Agreement with City of Saint Paul for Immigrant and Refugee Services

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Saint Paul - Ramsey County Joint Powers Agreement for Immigrant and Refugee Services, 2. City of Saint Paul Resolution 22-1145, 3. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
8/23/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Joint Powers Agreement with City of Saint Paul for Immigrant and Refugee Services

Recommendation

1. Approve the Joint Powers Agreement with the city of Saint Paul authorizing the city's transfer of funds up to \$100,000 to the county for immigrant and refugee legal defense services, for the period from August 23, 2022 through December 31, 2023.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the Joint Powers Agreement.

Background and Rationale

Residents and community have met with Ramsey County to discuss the impact that current immigration policies have on immigrant and refugee communities. The federal policies result in uncertainty, fear, anxiety and family disruption that impacts the well-being, prosperity and overall opportunity of residents, businesses and families. Within the past decade, detained representation rates have generally risen across immigration courts overall. Ramsey County and the city of Saint Paul are committed to engaging the community and building trust across public services to ensure that long-term community prosperity is shared by all and all residents and community, regardless of immigration and refugee status, feel welcome and safe.

The two parties now wish to enter into a Joint Powers Agreement pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 471.59 to continue and maintain the jointly funded immigrant and refugee legal defense program. Ramsey County and the city of Saint Paul will both contribute \$100,000 each to the joint fund. This program is also in partnership with the Vera Institute for Justice, who distributes the funds and have been collaborating with three immigration legal service providers: Immigrant Law Center of MN; The Advocates of Human Rights; and Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. These partners provide legal representation to residents facing removal proceedings and who earn less than 200% of the poverty guidelines. Ramsey County will provide the Vera Institute of Justice the joint funds to distribute to residents who utilize the program. Pursuant to the Joint Powers Agreement, monies paid by the city of Saint Paul will be used for legal services provided to Saint Paul residents.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☒ Prosperity

☒ Opportunity

☒ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

Immigrants and refugees in the county come from various backgrounds and are racially and ethnically diverse. A large portion of county residents are foreign-born and ensuring there is investment toward legal representation and support for the immigrant and refugee communities helps to advance racial equity. Enabling equal access and reducing barriers to legal representation in the justice system means increasing the success rate of legal outcomes for immigrant and refugee communities in Ramsey County. This positively impacts and allows residents to remain in the workforce, utilize benefits and services to which they are entitled, support their children in academics and maintain family unity.

Community Participation Level and Impact

During the past three years, Ramsey County and the city of Saint Paul have been consistently engaging with impacted residents and community organizers to gather input on existing needs, gaps and resources. Feedback and information collected from residents and communities impacted have resulted in partnerships with multiple and various grass-roots community organizations to offer wraparound services and referrals to immigration legal resources provided by the immigration legal defense fund. The city and county continue to work together with residents and community organizations to identify emerging issues and connect vulnerable and impacted families and residents to legal supports.

☒ Inform

☒ Consult

☒ Involve

☐ Collaborate

☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

The city of Saint Paul will transfer up to \$100,000 to the county for legal services provided to city residents. The existing legal immigration defense project already contains \$100,000 from the county dedicated for universal representation of detained, indigent, and unrepresented Ramsey County residents. Approval of this Joint Powers Agreement will not have any additional fiscal impact on the county.

Last Previous Action

On February 26, 2019, the Ramsey County Board approved a Joint Powers Agreement with the city of Saint Paul and the transfer of \$50,000 from the city of Saint Paul to Ramsey County for an immigration legal defense fund (Resolution B2019-073).

On November 6, 2018, the Ramsey County Board approved the transfer of \$100,000 to the County Manager's Office for an immigrant and refugee legal defense fund for universal representation of detained, indigent, and unrepresented Ramsey County residents, and authorized the County Manager to account for the legal immigration defense project as a project budget in the County Manager's department budget (Resolution B2018-293).

Attachments

1. Saint Paul - Ramsey County Joint Powers Agreement for Immigrant and Refugee Services
2. City of Saint Paul Resolution 22-1145