

## Request for Board Action Details

**File #:** 2022-397

**Type:** Administrative Item      **Status:** Passed

**In control:** Board of Commissioners

**On agenda:** 9/20/2022      **Final action:** 9/20/2022

**Title:** Joint Powers Agreement with City of Saint Paul for Workforce Services Through American Rescue Plan Act Funds

**Sponsors:** Workforce Solutions

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Joint Powers Agreement, 2. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/20/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

**Sponsor:** Workforce Solutions

**Title**  
Joint Powers Agreement with City of Saint Paul for Workforce Services Through American Rescue Plan Act Funds

**Recommendation**

1. Approve the Joint Powers Agreement with the city of Saint Paul for workforce services through American Rescue Plan Act funds.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.

**Background and Rationale**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 was signed into law on March 11, 2021. The relief package provides funding in several areas such as state and local aid, education, rental assistance, transit, stimulus payments for individuals, and other provisions. ARPA also provides \$350 billion in additional funding for state and local governments.

Multiple workforce initiatives have been approved for ARPA funding and align with county identified tiers for investment. In addition to Ramsey County investments, the city of Saint Paul is planning to co-invest on these workforce initiatives. ARPA co-investments were approved by the Ramsey County for \$7.65 million in March 2022. The city of Saint Paul intends to approve \$15.3 million in partnership with the county. These co-investments are an opportunity to continue to demonstrate innovative collaboration for residents. Currently, the county and the city operate under a pre-existing Joint Powers Agreement for workforce services and programming to all county residents. For these ARPA investments, Saint Paul funds will be aligned with serving city residents and county funds will ensure initiatives are serving the entire county.

A Joint Powers Agreement serves as the mechanism for the county to receive funds from the city of Saint Paul and implement ARPA workforce programs as a subrecipient of the city.

**County Goals** (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☒ Prosperity

☒ Opportunity

☒ Accountability

### Racial Equity Impact

The economic impacts of COVID-19, including job loss, reduction in hours and educational disruption, has disproportionately impacted Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, young people ages 18-35 and individuals with a high school diploma or less. The information has informed the development of these new workforce initiative projects to ensure that disparities that have been illuminated by COVID-19 are not deepened. Rather by providing COVID-19 impacted residents, particularly young people, with additional opportunities to reduce their barriers to work and provide paid occupational education/training paired with access to professional networks and supports, these funds will reduce economic impacts of the pandemic and mitigate the harms that have been caused.

Additionally, by investing resources, Ramsey County is investing into the future of the local workforce and business community by creating a more inclusive economy with diverse future workers, business owners, and leaders. As stated by the county's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan, Wage disparities across racial lines are softening competitiveness and creating unnecessary economic burdens for individuals and families. A renewed - and targeted - focus on job access, skill training, and high-wage industry growth, coupled with intentional efforts to dismantle institutional racism, can create economic pathways. This has the potential to close stagnant racial income and wealth gaps while simultaneously accelerating economic growth in Ramsey County as the community recovers from COVID-19.

During the pandemic, the city of Saint Paul experienced higher rates of unemployment than the state, the metro region and the county. The uniqueness of the community, with many hospitality-related jobs made the city susceptible to significant COVID job loss. These impacts were disproportionate in who they affected.

### Community Participation Level and Impact

Workforce Solutions (WFS) has engaged in a number of community engagement activities and events to inform the creation of these workforce initiatives. First, Ramsey County gathered information both from community members and community-based organizations during the evaluation of the CARES-funded programs that occurred in 2020. During that process, feedback that included increased coordination across multiple systems (county, city, schools, etc.). Additionally, WFS has been working with a variety of working groups around issues such as youth homelessness, employer needs, schools, and more. Again, the information provided by these groups is that young people need additional training and opportunities to develop both their professional and occupational skills. Finally, WFS completed several direct youth engagements including a survey and facilitated conversations over the last few months. These engagements were designed by youth and conversations were led by youth. The number one need that youth identified throughout the course of these engagements was "living assistance", indicating to WFS that young people are burdened by financial responsibilities and therefore need supplemental financial support in order to fully engage in learning and development opportunities.

These projects will be closely connected to the Ramsey County Workforce Innovation Board's Youth Committee, the city of Saint Paul's Youth Commission, the county's Transforming Systems Together Youth Advisory Council. The employer engagement initiative will create a Youth and Employer Workplace Council.

☐ Inform

☒ Consult

☒ Involve

☒ Collaborate

☐ Empower

### Fiscal Impact

Under this Joint Powers Agreement, Ramsey County could receive up to \$15.3 million of ARPA funds from the city of Saint Paul to implement workforce services and programs.

### Last Previous Action

On March 8, 2022, the Ramsey County Board approved funding for Workforce Programs through the American Rescue Plan Act (Resolution B2022-073).

**Attachments**

1. Joint Powers Agreement