

# 2017 Federal Legislative Priorities

## Government Relations

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## Ramsey County's Vision, Mission and Goals

### Vision

A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive.

### Mission

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

### Goals



WELL-BEING

**Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being**

through effective safety-net services, innovative programming, prevention and early intervention, and environmental stewardship.



PROSPERITY

**Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty**

through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.



OPPORTUNITY

**Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses**

through connections to education, employment and economic development throughout our region.



ACCOUNTABILITY

**Model fiscal accountability, transparency and strategic investments**

through professional operations and financial management.

## Community, Economic and Workforce Development

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – Protect the CDBG Program. CDBG supports community development programs that provide assistance to low and moderate income persons in suburban Ramsey County. Ramsey County currently receives approximately \$1 million, down 50% from historic levels. (NACO)

## Environment, Energy and Land Use

- **Renewable Energy Policy** - Increase federal funding for research and development toward the goal of identifying and supporting new and emerging renewable energy technologies. (NACO)
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LAWCON)** – Maintain LAWCON funding, which provides outdoor recreation grants to develop and redevelop parks. Ramsey County has received over \$860,000 for park projects since LAWCON was enacted in 1964.

## Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs

- **Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds** – Continue availability of tax-exempt bonds for local municipalities. Issuance of tax-exempt municipal bonds is the primary method used by Ramsey County to finance capital improvement and infrastructure projects, increasing infrastructure investment and providing jobs and economic development opportunities. (NACO)

## Health and Human Services

- **Social Services Block Grant funding (SSBG)** – Maintain SSBG block grants. SSBG supports services such as adult protective services, special needs childcare, child welfare, and child abuse prevention. (NACO)
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Preserve the SNAP program in its current form. SNAP provides food assistance to nearly 63,000 low income families in Ramsey County.
- **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** – Maintain key provisions of the ACA, including coverage for pre-existing conditions, dependent coverage until until age 26, no limits on annual/lifetime coverage and no-cost coverage for preventative care, are essential. Support the local-state-federal partnership structure for financing health care access and oppose measures that shift federal and state costs to counties.

- **Medicaid Services Financing** – Enhance flexibility in the Medicaid program to support local care systems. Preserve the ability to match local funds and receive targeted supplemental payments, as well as the Federal-State-Local Partnership structures for Medicaid services. (NACO)
- **Mental Health Parity** – Support the consistent funding for mental health services provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as well as legislation that will increase Ramsey County’s ability to provide local systems of care. Funding for the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) block grant should be held to at least FY 2016 levels in the FY 2017 Labor-HHS Education appropriations bill. (NACO)
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** - Increase investment in TANF. TANF funds are a major component of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) which provides financial assistance to nearly 18,000 low income Ramsey County families. TANF also helps pay for child care assistance for MFIP families and supports County employment services. (NACO)

### Justice and Public Safety

- **Second Chance Act (SCA)** – Reauthorize the Second Chance Act. The Second Chance Act assists counties in reducing the rate of recidivism and helps facilitate reentry programs for previously incarcerated individuals. (NACO)
- **Juvenile Justice Programs** - Sustain funding for juvenile justice programs. Without this funding, more youth would face a greater risk of possible harm during incarceration.

### Infrastructure

- **Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act** – Implement provisions in the FAST Act, reauthorizing highway and transit programs, as well as Amtrak, through 2020, including:
  - Expanded funding options for programs under the Capital Investment Grant program (Core Capacity/Small Starts/Fixed Guideway Capital Projects).
  - Conversion of the Surface Transportation block grant program.
  - Modifications to the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, making transit-oriented projects eligible to apply for TIFIA loans.
- **Intercity Passenger Rail** - Increase support for intercity passenger rail through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program and authorize a State of Good Repair grant program.

- **Clean Water** – Support investment and funding for infrastructure improvements relating to any contamination of water systems, as well as improved corrosion control, lead monitoring and public notification of contaminants in public drinking water. Support improvement of storm water, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.
- **Transportation Reauthorization** – Sustained transportation reauthorization will benefit the following Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Projects:
  - **Riverview Corridor:** Between Union Depot and the Mall of America
  - **Gateway Corridor:** Between Union Depot and Woodbury
  - **Rush Line Corridor:** Between Union Depot and Hinckley
  - **Red Rock Corridor:** Between Union Depot and Hastings
  - **Minnesota High-Speed Rail:** Twin Cities – Milwaukee – Chicago Corridor
  - **Second AMTRAK Train:** Between Chicago and Union Depot
- **Strengthen Urban Communities** – Infrastructure Investment, training and jobs programs for intercity residents.

### **Additions to the Ramsey County Federal Platform**

In addition to the recommendations contained in this platform, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners generally support the legislative recommendations of the organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- The National Association of Counties (NACo) and its associated professional organizations

The County reserves the option to oppose individual items in the NACo platform that are contrary to the interests of the County.

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