



# RAMSEY COUNTY

## **Ramsey County Board Workshop: 2020 Legislative Platforms**

November 19, 2019

Estimated start: 9:45 a.m.

220 Courthouse, Large Conference Room

### **Agenda**

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction               | Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire |
| 2. 2020 Legislative Platforms | Jennifer O'Rourke, Director  |
| 3. Discussion and Questions   | All                          |

# Board Workshop: 2020 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

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Government Relations  
November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

# Agenda

- Workshop overview.
- Desired outcomes.
- Process for developing platforms.
- State platform discussion.
- Federal platform discussion.

## Desired outcomes

- Share development process and next steps.
- Review DRAFT state and federal legislative platforms.
- Take input for items to refine, add, remove or reprioritize.

## Process for developing platforms

- **June/July** Developed and submitted bonding priorities for MN Management & Budget process.
- **August** Implemented streamlined process with special focus on Racial Equity Impacts and Community Participation.
- **September** Launched online form through RamseyNet.
- **Mid-September** AMC Policy Conference; committee priorities.
- **September/October** Connected with Strategic Team, Service Teams on platforms--new ideas and changes.
- **October 1** Met with Chairs of Legislative Committee.
- **Late October** Shared results with DCMs and Policy Team.
- **Today** Board Workshop on State and Federal Platforms.
- **December 17** Submit to Legislative Committee of the Whole.
- **January 14** Submit to Board of Commissioners for approval.

## Process for developing platforms (cont.)

- Aligned items with budget and Strategic Priorities with special focus on Racial Equity Impacts and Community Participation.
- Collaborating with Communications on platform development and distribution.
- Looking at late January or early February for legislative delegation meeting at the Capitol to officially present platforms.
- Will continue weekly updates during session for commissioners and staff.

## 2019 State Platform

- Headline achievements in 2019:
  - Health Care Provider Tax continued at 1.8%, no sunset.
  - Increased County Program Aid (CPA) \$26M statewide, \$2.1M for Ramsey County.
  - MFIP monthly cash allowance increased by \$100/family.
  - Measures to address opioid epidemic - \$8M to counties for child protection from manufacturers' fees.
  - Increased funding to housing/homelessness prevention programs at MN Housing.
  - Pig's Eye Habitat restoration and enhancement, \$4.3M.
  - “PRO-plan” extended at PERA.

## 2020 State Platform

- Recommended priority initiatives for 2020:
  - Ramsey County bonding priorities.
  - Ramsey County policy / fiscal priorities.
    - Housing stability (affordability and homelessness). (p.3)
    - Update Minn. Stat. 383A.404 (Community Corrections management). (p.11)
    - Addressing racial disparities in out-of-home placements. (p.10)
    - Support transportation funding that includes new revenue for roads, bridges and transit. (p.5)

## 2020 Bonding Priorities

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | Riverfront Property – Riversedge   | \$40M    |
| 2. | Ramsey & Washington County Recycling & Energy Center<br>Next Gen Technology Upgrades | \$21M    |
| 3. | Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area  | \$2.127M |
| 4. | I-35E and County Road J Interchange  | \$1.5M   |
| 5. | Rush Line BRT  | \$2.5M   |
| 6. | Riverview Corridor   | \$2.5M   |
| 7. | Twin Cities Milwaukee Chicago 2 <sup>nd</sup> Train                                  | \$4M     |
| 8. | Gibbs Farm   | \$7.13M  |

# **2020 State Platform Discussion (See attachment.)**

# Federal Outlook

## 2020 Federal Platform

- Major recommended initiatives:
  - Protect major human services funding streams that support critical services for children and vulnerable adults. (p.4-5)
  - Continued healthcare access for low and moderate-income populations. (p.4-5)
  - Reauthorize transportation infrastructure funding.
  - Explore federal funding opportunities for Riversedge.
  - \$4 million request for Bruce Vento Trail extension.

**Discussion:** Census and voter turnout impacts for Ramsey County.

# **2020 Federal Platform Discussion (See attachment.)**

## Next Steps for Platform Development

- Meet with commissioners and staff to review updated positions.
- **December 17** Legislative Committee of the Whole.
- **January 14** Final approval of platforms by Board.
- **Late January** Ramsey County State Legislative Delegation meeting.
- **February 11** Session starts.

# 2020 Proposed State Platform Positions (Items Grouped by Service Team)

## Prepared for Board Workshop, November 19, 2019 2020 Legislative Platform Development

Each summer and fall, the Government Relations Department works on developing the state and federal legislative platforms for the next legislative session. This document reflects the discussions, meetings and review of written submissions and comments from the executive team and other key leaders within the county. The county's Government Relations team also considered parallel work being done by statewide county organizations, several individuals counties, various state departments, advocacy and community groups.

This document contains all 52 of the individual items contained in the 2019 Ramsey County State Legislative Platform, grouped by Service Team, to facilitate discussion by the Board at the November 13, 2019 workshop.

For each service team, proposed items for the 2020 State Platform are listed in the following order:

1. **Carry Over Items** – These are items that were included in the 2019 platform. They may be refocused, expanded or abridged, and these changes will be noted
2. **New Items** – These items were suggested by staff from the service teams, with approval from the DCMs (with any exceptions noted).
3. **Deleted Items** – These items from the 2019 platform are not being included in the 2020 Platform draft. The reasons for deleting them are noted.

Service Team items can be found on the following pages:

- EGCI.....pages 2 - 7
- IPR.....page 8 - 9
- H&W.....pages 10 – 16
- S&J.....pages 17 – 19

# BONDING

## RAMSEY COUNTY REQUESTS

- Riversedge, \$40 million - **NEW**
- R&E Center Improvements, \$21 million - **NEW**
- Gibbs Farm Improvements, \$7.130 million - **NEW**
- County Road J and I35E, \$1.5 million - **NEW**
- Battle Creek Winter Recreation Construction, \$2.126 Million – CARRY OVER
- Riverview Modern Streetcar Project, \$2.5 Million – CARRY OVER
- Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project, \$2.5 Million – CARRY OVER

## Support Items - Bonding Requests

- Kellogg -Third Street Bridge Replacement, \$55 million – CARRY OVER
- **LEAD:** City of Saint Paul
- Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago Second Train, \$4 Million - CARRY OVER
- **LEAD:** Minnesota Department of Transportation

## CARRY OVER ITEMS

### Housing

The gap between the need for affordable housing and the availability is growing rapidly in communities across the state. The shortage increases costs, compounding the problem and pricing more low-income families and individuals out of the market and into unsafe, substandard housing or worse yet, into homelessness. Broad government and community investments are needed to address this urgent issue.

#### **Increase Funding for Affordable Housing and for Housing Programs Focused on Specific Populations**

In communities across the state, there are critical shortages of affordable housing. While the current housing market makes it very difficult for a significant number of individuals and families to secure safe, adequate housing, there are additional barriers for some populations, particularly low-income families and individuals. Additionally, people experiencing mental illness, or other disabilities, individuals with criminal records, large families, veterans and those who are homeless often need a hand in obtaining and keeping housing. Funding for traditional government housing programs needs to be increased and creative housing solutions should be further explored. Without these further investments, homelessness will continue to rise steeply across Minnesota and the cost of housing will continue to climb.

**LEAD:** Homes for All and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

#### **Create a Dedicated Fund for the Development of Affordable Housing Across the State.**

The cost to build affordable housing under current state and federal programs is increasing. Incentives and funding are needed to attract private developers. The Minnesota Housing Partnership is working with other advocates to advance the creation of the Minnesota Tax Credit Contribution Fund. The Fund enrolls private investors into the production of affordable housing. In addition to providing financial benefit to investors, the new housing benefits local businesses, creates jobs and contributes to the overall growth of the economy.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Housing Partnership and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

#### **Expand Housing Support Demonstration Capacity to Include Seven Twin Cities Metro Counties**

The Housing Support Demonstration project under 256l.04 Subd. 3(a)(3) allows for the use of Housing Support as traditional rental assistance (30% of income toward rent) and support services for persons experiencing homelessness. State statute currently limits this use of Housing Support to Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties and to 226 total people or “supportive housing units”. This has been in place since 1997 and has been successful providing housing stability for individuals enrolled in the program. This proposal would include three additional metro counties including Carver, Scott and

Washington Counties. Additionally, it would increase the number of people who could be served to 300. With the involvement of all seven metro counties, the program would have broader reach and would serve more homeless people.

### **Regional Rail - UP Railroad/BNSF Railway Grade Separation Project**

State funds of \$1 million are requested for predesign and design activities for the Union Pacific/BNSF Railway grade separation project. This work includes environmental design and engineering required for the completion of a grade separation of UP and BNSF track adjacent to Westminster Junction to the east of downtown St. Paul. This has been identified as a critical junction to move all rail lines through this area and help address rail line congestion.

**LEAD: Ramsey County**

### **Leased Vehicle Sales Tax**

#### **Include Hennepin and Ramsey Counties as Recipients of Revenue Derived from the Leased Vehicle Sales Tax.**

Currently, metro-area counties receive funding for transportation projects through the leased vehicle tax, except Ramsey and Hennepin, even though most of the funds are collected in these two counties. State statute should be amended to include all metro counties.

**LEAD: Ramsey County** and Hennepin County.

### **Local Bridges and Roads - Support MnDOT Local Bridge Replacement Program.**

The Local Bridge Replacement (LBRP) and Local Road Improvement Programs (LRIP) administered by the State Aid Division of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) provide important funding support to counties, cities and townships. This includes funding for the replacement, rehabilitation or removal of deficient bridges on the local road systems and for the construction or reconstruction of local roads. Ramsey County supports MnDOT's efforts to secure state bridge bonds to fund these transportation programs.

**LEAD: Minnesota Department of Transportation.**

### **Increase Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) to \$17 Million Annually Statewide**

Funding for this program has been flat since state FY 2009, at \$13.57 million annually. Distributed through the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), RLBSS funds provide direct support for Ramsey County Library services, programs, staff training, and technology infrastructure. Collective purchases made by MELSA with RLBSS funding enhance free access to online digital resources and database services for Ramsey County residents. If this funding is allocated, libraries also support adoption of a Minnesota Library Association-endorsed distribution formula that reflects population and local tax base.

**LEAD: Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA)**

### **Regional Workforce Efforts**

Workforce efforts at the local, regional and state levels need to be aligned to ensure maximum benefits for individuals and businesses. To successfully compete in the global marketplace, businesses need access to a diverse, skilled workforce. Addressing the economic, racial and gender disparities, particularly for African Americans and American Indians, requires that career pathways be opened and that barriers be mitigated. Attention to training and education, must be coupled with equity efforts in housing, transportation, child care and other stabilizing factors.

Harnessing the state's active employer leadership and the state and local workforce efforts requires the investment of adequate, ongoing and predictable state funding.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA).

### **SNAP Employment and Training Programs: Support Local Flexibility.**

Currently, Minnesota mandates that able-bodied adults enrolled in the federal- and state-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) must participate in the SNAP Education and Training (SNAP E&T) program. The state has the option of making this requirement voluntary, which would allow local programs to strategically match these vital support services to specific participants. The Minnesota Department of Human Services will ask the state legislature for approval to include this change in the state's SNAP E&T Plan, which must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture annually.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).

## **NEW ITEMS**

### **Support DEED Economic Development Programs**

The Minnesota Department of Economic Development offers a number of impressive business and job programs that help grow and stabilize the state's economy. Ongoing funding is essential to build on the following core programs:

- The Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) has a strong history of using state loan dollars to leverage private sector investment to fuel job creation, business expansion and the creation of new tax base by Minnesota businesses.
- The Job Creation Fund (JCF) is a performance-based program that has proven to be a solid complementary program to MIF. JCF encourages business investment and job creation by providing awards after the business meets performance commitments.
- Redevelopment projects are funded through the Redevelopment Grant programs and demolition Loan Programs. These funding mechanisms are vital to the growth and sustainability of communities as they remove financial barriers that exist on blighted sites. Funds are used to demolish blighted buildings and to prepare sites so that business expansion and new development can occur. The measurable results of these projects include creating quality jobs, removing blight and increasing the tax base.

**LEAD:** Economic Development Association of Minnesota

### **Support Library Construction and Remodeling Grants for Libraries**

Under a proposal from the Metropolitan Library Service Agency and the Minnesota Library Association, a \$10 million appropriation would be made to an existing grant program under MN Statute 134.45. The library construction grant program augments existing capital funds for construction and renovations to better serve local residents. The renovation project at the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood may benefit from this state appropriation to libraries.

**LEAD:** Metropolitan Library Service Agency and the Minnesota Library Association

### **Require Access to Multi-Unit Housing for US Census Workers**

Minnesota is at risk of losing one of its eight congressional seats and an electoral college vote, should the upcoming census under-count the actual population. Renters are at particularly high-risk of being missed in the count because census workers cannot gain

access to apartment units. Ramsey County residents are more likely to be renters than other state residents (40% compared to 25% statewide) and most live in multi-unit housing, making an undercount in Ramsey County more likely. An accurate count is important to the state to avoid the possible loss of a congressional seat and an electoral college vote. Additionally, an undercount could also impact federal allocations for programs such as highway aid, Medicaid, SNAP and Section 8 Housing.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership.

### **Support Statewide Transportation Funding**

Investment in a comprehensive transportation system is an investment in the economic vitality and sustainability of our communities. The annual funding gap for counties has resulted in deferred basic maintenance, safety concerns, mounting congestion and missed economic growth for businesses and commuters. A comprehensive, balanced and sustainable transportation system including roads, bridges, sidewalks/trails, transit and are needed to address the varying needs in different parts of the state.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota County Engineers Association.

## **DELETED ITEMS**

### **Streamline Water Permitting Process for Local Infrastructure Projects**

In collaboration with local government, a state assumption of the Section 404 federal permitting program related to local infrastructure projects would increase efficiencies and decrease project start-to-finish timelines. In 2015, the state legislature passed an initiative supporting the Association of Minnesota Counties to study the feasibility of a state assumption of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Section 404 waters and wetlands dredge/fill regulatory program. Subsequently, the study findings did not support a state assumption of duties. More recently, the Corps of Engineers has changed their assessment and now supports a state assumption of the program. Counties support moving enabling legislation forward this session, in their ongoing efforts to streamline the permitting process for local infrastructure projects, both public and private.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Support Metropolitan Operation and Maintenance Request for the Metropolitan Regional Park System.**

In the first year of the state biennium, the state legislature determines the allocation to supplement the operations and maintenance of Metropolitan Area Regional Parks Agencies. Appropriations are distributed to the 10 implementing agencies (IAs) based on a statutory formula. The amounts may vary year-to-year based on the amount of Lottery in Lieu funding that is available. The Metro Regional Parks implementing agencies include Ramsey County. In 2018 Ramsey County received approximately \$687,000.

**LEAD:** Metropolitan Council and the Metropolitan Area Regional Parks Agencies.

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED

### **Support Allocation of Legacy Funds for Parks and Trail Projects.**

Legacy Funds are distributed to various parks systems as follows: 40 percent to Metropolitan Area Regional Parks, 40 percent to State Parks (Dept. of Natural Resources) and 20 percent to Greater Minnesota Regional Parks. Ramsey County supports the continuation of this formula.

Ramsey County receives from these funds each year approximately \$1.5 million, which are used for projects recommended by Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.

**LEAD:** Metropolitan Area Regional Parks Agencies.

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED

**Support the Allocation of Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Funds for the Ramsey County Pigs Eye Lake Project.**

Ramsey is seeking funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Fund of \$4.337 million, which will be used by Ramsey County for an Island Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project at Pigs Eye Lake. This state funding will be used as a match for the \$11.233 million in federal funding that Ramsey County is seeking through the Army Corps of Engineers.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County.

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED – received \$4.3 million for this project

**Fund Regional Library Telecommunications Aid (RLTA) -- \$2,300,000 annually**

**statewide:** In conjunction with the federal E-Rate program, RLTA covers the full telecommunications cost for Minnesota's public libraries and can be used to maintain libraries' network infrastructure. Given the heavy reliance on online catalogs and collections and public internet/wireless demand, this support is critical.

**LEAD:** Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA)

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED – funding remained the same

**Fund Arts & Cultural Heritage (ACHF)/Legacy Programs:** In the current biennium, \$2.5 million annually supported arts programs in public libraries throughout the state. By formula, more than \$635,000 was made available to Twin Cities area libraries through this program. ACHF/Legacy programs for public libraries must receive a new funding authorization in the 2019 Legislative Session to continue into the next biennium.

**LEAD:** Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA)

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED – funding remained the same

## IPR

### CARRY OVER ITEMS

#### **Balance Data Practices Laws to Foster Government Efficiency and Transparency.**

The efficient, transparent operation of government is enhanced by well-balanced data practices and privacy laws. Defined public data access, coupled with prudent protection of information that is personal and defined as private or non-public, allows residents to be informed of government actions. Technological advances and changes in business practices that rely less on paper and more on electronic formats (such as email) are driving the most recent review of current data practices laws.

Local governments are responsible for setting data retention schedules and for filing periodic reports with the state. If state-mandated retention schedules are further defined to include fixed retention intervals, flexibility for local governments would be diminished – without any expected improvement in service delivery to residents. Additionally, overly prescriptive requirements may overwhelm local technical capabilities. Updates to data practices laws should consider the costs to state and local governments and how these laws improve access; they should also address the occurrence of intentionally disruptive, expensive data requests that provide little or no benefit to the public.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

#### **Increase Funding for the Technology Systems Employed by Counties and the State to Support State Mandated Programs.**

Increased funding is needed to improve the variety of computer systems that counties must use to administer and deliver a broad variety of programs in social services, public health, and correction to ensure that the correct services are being delivered to those who are eligible. Protecting the data privacy of our residents is also a central charge that requires updated technology and programs. One of the most important systems is the METS, which is used by county human services departments to assess applicant eligibility for health care programs and to efficiently identify and correct errors. Technology improvements are needed to assist financial aid workers following eligibility updates, increased demands for services and the addition of state-mandated data matching activities.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA)

### NEW ITEMS

#### **Allow Use of Federal Identification Numbers in Lieu of Social Security Numbers on Homestead Classification Application**

Under current law, only property owners with a valid Social security number are allowed to apply for homestead classification. Under the proposal, property owners with a valid individual taxpayer identification number issued by the Internal Revenue Service would also be allowed to apply for homestead classification and then be able to participate in the Minnesota Property Tax Homestead Credit Refund.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County Assessor's Office

### **Allow Flexibility of Interest Rates for Contracts for Deed on Tax Forfeited Properties**

Counties boards are authorized to sell at auction or allow repurchase of certain tax forfeited properties by prior owners using a contract for deed (CFD). State statute requires that the interest rate charged on these CFs must be the same as the rate charged for late payment of property taxes, which is currently ten percent. This creates a barrier to low-income families wanting to purchase or repurchase these properties. Lowering this interest rate to the rate charged for homestead Confession of Judgement, which is two percent above the prime rate charged by banks or five percent, whichever is higher, would provide a path to home ownership to families with more modest incomes.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County Assessor's Office

### **Revise Eminent Domain Process**

Support the Minnesota County Engineers Association legislative platform to require owners to submit the basic property valuation 45 days (currently five days) before an eminent domain-related commission hearing date. This change would provide counties time to review the property owner's valuation and amend their initial offer. Additionally, to contain public costs, tie the interest rate for wards to the US Treasury Bill secondary market and establish parameters for attorney fees.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County Assessors Office

## **DELETED ITEMS**

NONE

## CARRY OVER ITEMS

### **Support the African American Family Preservation Act**

While the number of out-of-home placements and the financial costs for the state and counties has received considerable attention in recent years, continued examination, reforms and funding are needed. Statewide, 15,000 children were placed in out-of-home care (2016). Compared to white children, American Indian and African-American children are significantly more likely to be placed in out-of-home care. County social services supervise 86 percent of these placements. Case management and support services need to accommodate cultural differences, address challenges and build on strengths to remedy the disproportionate placements of children of color into foster care and other out-of-home placements.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County and the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACCSA).

### **Child Care**

#### **Support Child Care Licensing Practices that Consistently Prioritize Child Safety and that also Support the Successful Operation of Quality Child Care Providers.**

Last year, the Minnesota Legislature's health and human services committees considered family child care licensing and oversight changes in response to provider complaints alleging uneven interpretation of rules by state and county licensing staff. Legislators have indicated they will continue to pursue licensing changes to clarify and simplify rules and promote improved relations between child care providers and regulators. The Department of Human Services and counties support training refinements, county liability insurance reforms and other changes that foster best practices in all child care settings.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACCSA) and the Department of Human Services.

#### **Maximize the Use of All Available Child Care Subsidy Funds through Strategic Wait-List Changes.**

The current prioritization of families on the waiting list for child care subsidies puts low-income, working families who have not used Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) at a disadvantage in securing a subsidy. This proposal would better utilize all child care subsidy funding streams and allow more families to receive this essential work-related support.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County and Hennepin County.

### **Continue to Improve Health Care Access for All Residents.**

Insurance costs are surging, threatening access for many people, especially those who gained coverage because of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and expansion of Medical Assistance in Minnesota. Health care access needs to be maintained and core elements of the ACA need to be preserved, including coverage for dependents up to age 26, the prohibition of denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions and the prohibition of lifetime caps for coverage.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

### **Increase Funding for the Minnesota Eligibility and Technology System**

**(METS).** Increased funding is needed to improve the computer system that counties must use to assess applicant eligibility for health care programs and to efficiently identify and correct errors. Technology improvements are needed to assist financial aid workers following eligibility updates, increased demands for services and the addition of state-mandated data matching activities.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of Social Service Administrators (MACSSA).

### **Support Changes to the County Cost Share for AMRTC and Community Behavioral Health Hospitals.**

Counties are responsible for paying 100 percent of the cost of care for their residents placed at the Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) and the community behavioral health hospitals (CBHH) once the facility deems hospital-level care is no longer required. In 2017, county costs statewide were \$14.8 million at the AMRTC and nearly \$4 million for non-acute days at a CBHH. Counties support legislation moved (but not passed) last year that would constrain the cost shares by: 1) requiring notice to counties of patient readiness for discharge, 2) creating a standard wait list process, 3) shifting costs to the state when a discharge delay is due to unnecessary state delay and, 4) expanding the appeals process for counties to seek redress from the state.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA).

### **Revise the Civil Commitment Statute to Improve the Response to Defendants Who Are Experiencing Mental Illness, and Provide Funding for Competency Restoration.**

Under Minnesota's judicial system, the court procedures for determining competency to stand trial and for civil commitment are separate processes. In many cases, these separate processes create a gap in accessing services when a defendant is found incompetent to stand trial but not civilly committed, and therefore, not necessarily referred to services to address their ongoing mental health needs. This limits the response provided by the state and counties, which is not cost effective and fails to consider public safety. Another barrier occurs when jailed defendants who have a mental illness and are civilly committed are not transferred to a state facility within 48 hours. A critical shortage of treatment beds at state treatment facilities frequently delays these transfers.

Reforming the civil commitment and competency processes and providing additional community-based services are essential components for improving the state's mental health system.

**LEAD:** NAMI-MN, Minnesota County Attorneys Association, Association of MN Counties.

### **Update Ramsey County Community Corrections Statutory Governing Language**

Currently, Ramsey County's state governing statute, 383A, contains language regarding the operations and oversight of the county's Community Corrections Department. More specifically, 383A.404, gives joint oversight of Ramsey County's corrections department to the county and the district court. Another statute, (Minn. Stat 401.02), which was enacted after the full state take over the courts, designated all community corrections counties – including Ramsey County - as the sole authority for their corrections departments, giving them responsibility for funding, structure, administration, operation, management, and supervision. Last year, the county and the district court established the County-Court Joint Committee to explore better ways to work together. To resolve the ambiguities of current statutes, 383A.404 should be repealed. Further,

the county and the court plan to continue the County-Court Joint Committee to facilitate ongoing collaboration and coordination.

**LEAD: Ramsey County**

### **Clarify the Re-Establishment of Voting Rights Following Completion of Prison Time Served for Felonies.**

Current state law allows felons to vote only after all their sentence is completed, including any supervised release or probation. Many states restore voting rights to people convicted of felonies after they are released from prison. Minnesota does not restore these rights until any court ordered supervised release or probation is completed. Additionally, Minnesota's probationary periods are typically much longer than in other states, which means lengthy delays before people can vote again. All residents should be encouraged to be civically engaged. Those who have served their time and are now living, working and paying taxes in their home communities should be able to vote to elect their government representatives.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Second Chance Coalition and Restore the Vote Coalition.

## **NEW ITEMS**

### **Probation Reform: Limits the Length of Probation with Exceptions for Certain Crimes**

Minnesota Ranks fifth in the nation and percentage of resident per capita who are on probation. Currently, probation sentences can be 30 years or more. Additionally, there are large inconsistency in probation lengths across jurisdictions. Research indicates that people are most likely to reoffend within 36 months of their initial release and that extended probation does not contribute to public safety generally. Lengthy probations perpetuate racial disparities in the criminal justice system as well. Capping probation lengths – to five years or similar outcome-based time limits – offers offenders the best chance of getting their lives on-track, contributes to public safety, and it saves tax payer dollars.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of County Correction Act Counties (MACCAC) and the Robina Institute at the University of Minnesota.

### **Enhanced Asthma Care Services for Minnesota's Children**

Statewide more than 7% of all children have asthma. Of these, a quarter (25%) have asthma that is very poorly or not well controlled. Most children have their first asthma symptoms by age 5, impacting early learning and health. Improving asthma management can save up to 25% of total asthma costs, and is easy to do through home visits, education on home products and referrals and follow up. The estimated Return on Investment (ROI) is more than 4:1. This initiative seeks Medical Assistance coverage for home visits and educational efforts to address under-managed asthma in children.

**LEAD:** City of Minneapolis Health Department and Ramsey County

### **Fund Ash Tree Wood Waste Processing Program**

Emerald Ash Borer is killing ash trees at an alarming rate across 20 Minnesota counties, including Ramsey County. Processing these dead trees is expensive but could be partially offset by using this waste for biomass fuel, which could be then be used by Saint Paul Cogen (District Energy), as well as for research and development efforts to recover value from wood waste. Currently there are no alternatives for this volume of wood waste. This material, by law, cannot be landfilled. It cannot be placed in the trash for delivery to a resource recovery facility. Nor is open burning allowed. Saint Paul Cogen provides renewable energy to a substantial

portion of downtown Saint Paul (including Ramsey County buildings) and produces electricity sold to Xcel Energy under a power purchase agreement. That agreement expires in 2023, and the economics of wood waste management will change as a result. State support is necessary to allow wood waste to continue to be handled by Saint Paul Cogen. Should funding not be available, it is likely the Saint Paul Cogen would discontinue use of wood waste as fuel, convert to natural gas, and cease producing electricity.

**LEAD: Saint Paul Cogen**

## **DELETED ITEMS**

### **Support the Full Distribution of County Child Protection State Grant Allocations Statewide (discontinue withholds based on meeting certain performance benchmarks).**

Each year, the Department of Human Services withholds 20 percent of the state child protection grant allocated to each county, releasing it only when a county achieves certain performance measures. This practice compounds the difficulties a county may be experiencing in meeting benchmarks. Counties are still trying to make up for the deep cuts made in the early 2000s to child welfare funding. The full allocation of the child protection state grant should be regarded as a funding base for this service-intensive mission.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACCSA).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Increase Resources and Build a Strong Infrastructure for Quality Targeted Home Visiting Programs and Services.**

Targeted home visiting programs work with families who are identified as needing intense support to provide the kind of home environment that supports healthy child development. This early prevention program is time tested, providing excellent results and significantly decreases spending for deep-end social services. Maintaining current funding streams, increasing the types of home visiting programs that can be supported with these funds and increasing funding for home visiting to families living in poverty (up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level) are needed to reach more families and enhance the range of services available.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting.

**Reason for Deletion:** Non funding year and received additional funding in 2019.

### **Support State Investments to Encourage Start-up and Ongoing Support for Child Care Providers.**

A critical shortage of childcare across the state, particularly in rural areas and areas of concentrated poverty in urban cores, has prompted discussion at the legislature to examine contributing factors and possible solutions. Industry cites several examples of abandoning new development or expansion of existing operations because childcare was not available in surrounding areas. Counties support innovative policies and funding that reward business and community investment in quality childcare.

**LEAD:** Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

**Reason for Deletion:** Other priorities in metro area regarding child care.

### **Address the DWRS Federal Disallowance of State Rate Increases.**

The federal Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services issued a ruling last year that disallowed approximately seven percent of the increases Minnesota added to their Disability Waivered Services Rate (DWRS) paid to providers caring for individuals enrolled in a waived service program. Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) said that these increases were duplicative of the inflationary rate increases that occurred over the same time period. If the state does not replace this lost federal funding, providers of services will face shortfalls in their budgets, which in turn may reduce the availability of services to individuals with disabilities.

**LEAD:** The Best Life Alliance.

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Provide for Protection of Seniors and Other Vulnerable Adults in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities.**

In the 2018 session, the legislature engaged in a major push to address the surge in the number of complaints filed with the Department of Health regarding neglect and maltreatment of vulnerable seniors residing and receiving care in nursing homes and other senior care facilities. Oversight changes were adopted but reforms fell far short of those sought by advocates. Preventative measures that include enhanced protections need to be adopted, but personal privacy and choice should not be needlessly compromised.

**LEAD:** Department of Human Services (DHS).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Increase State Funding for the County Veteran Services Office.**

State funding for county Veteran's Services Offices is essential for the availability of services to veterans in communities across the state. County funding for these services has increased through the years and the state's contribution needs to keep pace with needs as well.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED; small increase in 2019.

### **Support Continuation of the Two Percent Health Care Provider Tax.**

The two percent tax on gross revenue of medical providers, hospitals, and drug distributors will sunset at the end of 2019. Revenue from this tax is the primary source of funding for the Health Care Access Fund (HCAF), which was established to increase access to health care for low income Minnesotans and to finance MinnesotaCare. HCAF also provides funding to the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), specific Medical Assistance costs and DHS program administration. After the planned sunset, revenue in the HCAF, is expected to expire in 2022. Repeal of the sunset and the continuation of the provider tax or replacement with other state funding is essential for supporting the gains made to-date in health care prevention and access growth currently supported by the health care provider tax.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Support Adequate Funding for SHIP.**

Enacted in 2008, the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is an integral component of Minnesota's bipartisan and nation-leading health care reform legislation designed to reduce chronic disease and health care costs. Ramsey County has the highest rate of premature death in the metro area, with communities of color disproportionately impacted. SHIP is funded in large part by the Health Care Access Fund, which derives its funds from a state two percent health care provider tax.

The tax is set to sunset at the end of calendar year 2019. Continuation of this tax or replacement funding is essential to maintaining the success achieved to-date by SHIP.

**LEAD:** Local Public Health Association (LPHA).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Support Increased Funding for Local Public Health Grants.**

Ramsey County depends on the Local Public Health Grant as a foundation to support public health programs/services, surveillance and prevention efforts. In order to meet growing community needs, these grants need to be increased.

**LEAD:** Local Public Health Association (LPHA).

**Reason for Deletion:** Non-funding session.

### **Allocate State Funding to Replace Lost Federal Funding for Children's Residential Mental Health Treatment Facilities.**

The federal Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services recently announced that it will no longer reimburse for mental health services delivered by residential mental health facilities to children in Minnesota. CMS is now defining these intensive services as Institutes for Mental Disease (IMD); CMS does not pay for services delivered by IMDs. Without this coverage, counties will have to bear the full cost of these services provided to their residents.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Develop Additional Community-Based Mental Health Placement Options and Services.**

When counties place an individual in a state-operated facility for mental health or competency restoration services, the county currently must pay an increasing portion of the costs for an individual's care after inpatient-level care is no longer deemed necessary. One of the main reasons for longer stays in state facilities is the critical shortage of appropriate community care settings to which people can be discharged. To begin to address this underlying problem, county payments should be specifically designated for the development of community alternatives.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA).

**Reason for Deletion:** 2020 is a non-budget year.

### **Support Efforts and Funding to Address Opioid and Other Drug Abuse.**

Counties are often the first to respond to alcohol and other drug abuse incidence in their jurisdictions, whether through corrections, child protection or health care. The steep increase in the use of opioids in the U.S. and in Minnesota in the last five years has significantly increased societal and economic costs, some of which counties are responsible for. To gain ground against this costly epidemic, a systemic public health approach that emphasizes prevention and early intervention needs to be funded and supported by government at all levels.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Fund the Ramsey County Supervised Release Revocation Prevention Pilot Project.**

Ramsey County has the second highest rate of probation revocation among Minnesota's 87 counties. Probation requires offenders to adhere to supervised release conditions. Violation of those conditions, both serious and technical, often result in offenders being returned to prison. Re-incarcerations herald poor short and long-term outcomes for offenders. Additionally, costs for incarceration are significantly higher than for supervised release. Ramsey County seeks state

support and funding for a Center for Intermediate Sanctions that would send probationers to the workhouse for short stays, for minor or intermediate violations. Funding could come from the savings the state would realize from avoiding prison reincarceration. Keeping more of these offenders out of prison would also decrease the pressure on the state to build new prison beds.

**LEAD: Ramsey County**

### **JDAI – Support Ongoing State Funding to Replace Expiring Private Foundation Grant Funds (Annie E. Casey).**

The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) was designed to support the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s vision that all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults. After more than 20 years of innovation and replication, JDAI is one of the nation’s most effective, influential and widespread juvenile justice system reform initiatives. In Ramsey County, since adopting JDAI, admissions to detention have been reduced 75 percent. Funding from the Casey Foundation ceased several years ago for the county. Ongoing, stable funding from the state would provide stable support to continue this proven approach to working with juveniles. JDAI focuses on the juvenile detention component of the juvenile justice system because youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long-lasting negative consequences for both public safety and youth development.

**LEAD:** Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, Minnesota (JDAI).

**Reason for Deletion:** Resolved.

### **Streamline Water Permitting Process for Local Infrastructure Projects**

In collaboration with local government, a state assumption of the Section 404 federal permitting program related to local infrastructure projects would increase efficiencies and decrease project start-to-finish timelines. In 2015, the state legislature passed an initiative supporting the Association of Minnesota Counties to study the feasibility of a state assumption of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Section 404 waters and wetlands dredge/fill regulatory program. Subsequently, the study findings did not support a state assumption of duties. More recently, the Corps of Engineers has changed their assessment and now supports a state assumption of the program. Counties support moving enabling legislation forward this session, in their ongoing efforts to streamline the permitting process for local infrastructure projects, both public and private.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Support Statewide Coordination of Recycled Material Market Development**

Commodity markets for materials otherwise found in waste are best developed through statewide coordinated efforts. Counties play a central role in the collection and redirection of recyclables to industrial sectors using these materials. Domestic and international markets for recycled materials have been volatile, making it difficult for counties to reliably move what they collect to manufacturers. Without a well-developed reusable market place, the environmental goals that drive recycling efforts lose their purpose. Counties, along with other partners, support a public/private partnership that enhances the regular use of recyclables by local markets, which creates jobs and protects Minnesota’s environment.

**LEAD:** Partnership on Waste and Energy

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

## CARRY OVER ITEMS

### Child Support

#### **Clarify Ambiguity and Correct Error in Child Support Reforms Adopted in 2016.**

After the 2016 state legislature made changes to the parenting expense adjustment (PEA), it was discovered that several clarifications need to be made:

1. Minnesota case law and statute relating to child support modification are inconsistent. Clarifications are necessary to help families get their child support orders modified to fit the new PEA law.
2. The language related to one-parent support when a child is not living with either parent, but is living with another caretaker, contains unintentional errors and needs to be aligned with the intent of what was passed by the legislature.

**LEAD:** Child Support Guidelines Task Force.

## NEW ITEMS

### Child Support Equity Initiatives

#### **Update Basic Support Table**

The state child support guidelines the courts must use to establish child support obligations has not been significantly updated since 2005 legislative changes were implemented in 2007. Changes are needed to recognize underlying societal economic changes and to address inequities in current guidelines that result in lower income obligors ordered to pay higher percentages of their earnings than those with higher incomes. A 2016 legislative Child Support Guideline Task Force recommends changes that would make the guideline more equitable and workable for low-income parents.

**LEAD:** Child Support Guidelines Task Force.

#### **Eliminate Interest on Past-Due Child Support**

Under current state law, child support arrears are assessed interest, which is calculated at the same rate as all other civil judgements. Adding interest to past-due payments makes it even more difficult for a parent to catch up on support. The collection of interest also complicated the automated child support enforcement system because of added complexity in calculating fluctuating monthly payments. Obligor with no or very low incomes (\$10,000 per year) make up 70 percent of those with arrears. Charging interest does not improve timely support and places strain on families.

**LEAD:** Child Support Guidelines Task Force.

#### **Credit Bureau Reporting**

Under current state law, past-due child support must be reported to consumer reporting agencies when a parent has not paid current monthly support for three months. The credit bureau handling of this information is difficult to keep timely when arrears are met, and other factors can result in inaccuracies. When an obligor is struggling to pay child support, a poor credit rating may contribute to ongoing financial difficulties. Providing discretion to child support workers in reporting or not reporting would address the problems that can arise with this current mandate.

**LEAD:** Child Support Guidelines Task Force.

### **Mandate Court-Appointment of Counsel for Eligible Parents and Other Caretakers Involved in CHIPs Cases**

Under current law, judges may appoint counsel to parents and other caretakers involved in child protection cases when they meet income guidelines for being defined as low-income. Counties are responsible for covering these costs for counsel. A proposal is being introduced that would require that judges appoint counsel in all cases. This will increase costs for counties, although the rights of parents and the stability of at-risk families would be enhanced in court proceedings with this change. In Ramsey County, the court most often makes these appointments, so cost would be minimal. This is not the case in all counties, where costs could be a consideration for making the appointment of counsel mandatory in all cases.

**LEAD:** ??

### **Support Mandated Background Checks for All Firearms Purchases and Support Red-Flag Initiative**

A lack of consistent oversight of firearms sales has contributed greatly to the proliferation of firearms-involved crimes across the nation. Enacting mandatory background checks for all firearms sales and purchases has proven effective to some degree in addressing this problem. Another firearms measure that could impact firearms-related crime would be providing a legal means for families and others to initiate the temporary seizure of firearms from an individual who is exhibiting erratic and violent behavior. The courts, law enforcement and advocacy groups support these measures as a first step in addressing the gun violence that impacts our communities.

**LEAD:** Minnesota County Attorneys Association.

## **DELETED ITEMS**

### **Reconcile the Annual Child Support Collection Fee with the Recent Federal Increase.**

Last year, a federal law was enacted that increases the annual child support collection fee from \$25 to \$35 per family. Enabling legislation must be passed to initiate the increase in Minnesota. Without this change, counties will lose more than \$400,000 in federal funding statewide each year. This funding is crucial to counties for their operation of the federally-mandated, state-delegated child support collection program in Minnesota.

**LEAD:** Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

**Reason for Deletion:** PASSED.

### **Direct Prison Savings Resulting from the 2016 Drug Sentencing Reform Act to Counties for Local Justice Reinvestment.**

In 2016, the Minnesota Legislature reformed state sentencing guidelines for drug offenses. Sentencing for first time and minor drug offenses were significantly reduced. As a result, the number of people convicted of first time and minor drug crimes were not sentenced to prison time, and the state realized considerable savings. At the same time, these convictions increased community supervised release. The state savings from these reforms should be targeted to community corrections to engage in local justice initiatives.

**LEAD:** Minnesota County Attorneys Association.

**Reason for Deletion:** 2020 is a non-budget year.

### **Support Changes to the Definition of Inebriation in State Consent Laws.**

A statutory change is needed so that prosecutors can address sexual assault involving the mental incapacity that comes from alcohol or drug intoxication. Current law requires them to prove a physical state of actual or near unconsciousness, which can be challenging when the victim has limited or no recall of events. Reconsideration of the statutory definition of inebriation should be updated to reflect the expanded understanding of incapacitating factors and the impact involving sexual assault.

**LEAD:** Ramsey County and Hennepin County Attorneys.

**Reason for Deletion:** Short session, complex issue, opposition, language needs additional assessment.

### **Coordinate the Statute of Limitation for Failure to Report Child Sexual Abuse with the Statute of Limitation for Child Sexual Abuse.**

State law currently defines who is mandated to report suspected child maltreatment or abuse to law enforcement or human services authorities. Under current statute, a mandated reporter can be charged with failure to report for up to three years after the sexual abuse offense occurred. However, the statute of limitation for the sexual abuse of a child is much longer – nine years or within three years of the report to law enforcement – in recognition of the fact that children often do not tell anyone about the abuse until later. Lengthening the statute of limitation for failure to report by a mandated reporter should match that of the sexual abuse statute of limitations.

**LEAD:** Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA).

**Reason for Deletion:** short session, complex issue, opposition.

# DRAFT 2020 FEDERAL Legislative Priorities



INFRASTRUCTURE



COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY  
AND LAND USE



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



## 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.

Information about how the county is pursuing its mission and goals is available in the county's Strategic Plan at [ramseycounty.us/strategicplan](https://ramseycounty.us/strategicplan)

Information about performance measures related to the county's mission and goals is available in the county's Open Performance portal at [openperformance.ramseycounty.us](https://openperformance.ramseycounty.us)



## Infrastructure

Ramsey County will continue its long commitment to working across all levels of government to maximize funding opportunities. The county is encouraged by indications that the White House supports federal transportation investment and will continue to be a proactive partner to our congressional delegation and US Department of Transportation.

### Passenger Rail

Increase support for passenger rail through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program and authorize a State of Good Repair grant program. Provide funding for rail improvements from Union Depot in Saint Paul, MN to Chicago, IL, which will enable a second daily passenger train for this corridor and for the completion of an environmental assessment of existing rails.

### Transportation Reauthorization

Sustained transportation reauthorization will benefit the following Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Projects involving Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul:

**Riverview Corridor:** Between Union Depot and the Mall of America (Bloomington).

**METRO Gold Line Corridor (Gateway):** Between Union Depot and Woodbury.

**Rush Line Corridor:** Between Union Depot and White Bear Lake.

**Red Rock Corridor:** Between Union Depot and Hastings.

**Second Daily Train:** Between Union Depot and Chicago.

**Bruce Vento Trail:** From Buerkle Road to Highway 96

### 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.
- Fully fund capital improvement grants.



## Community, Economic and Workforce Development

### Protect Basic Human Rights of Immigrants

Oppose increased efforts to discourage immigrants from accessing public assistance, such as housing, medical assistance, basic cash support and law enforcement protection. Like most other residents and citizens, immigrants seek public assistance as a last resort, and only in times of temporary, intense need for basic services that may arise as they work to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency. Inhibiting immigrants through fear or threat of consequence when they need services, deprives them of access and denies them the opportunities to build stable lives for themselves, their families and to contribute to the communities in which they live. Further, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Enforced Departures (DED) and access to legal representation continue to be unresolved pressing issues for immigrants and the communities in which they live.

### **2020 Census**

The next full census takes place in 2020. Extensive preparation and coordination with federal, state and local government partners requires adequate funding from the federal government. If the census does not yield an accurate count and in fact, misses a significant number of residents, Minnesota could lose one of its eight congressional seats and an electoral college vote. The most likely residents to be missed are immigrants, both legal and illegal, who may avoid being counted in the 2020 out of fear related to recent immigration disruptions. Ramsey County has the highest number of immigrants per capita amongst Minnesota counties; therefore, an efficiently-run census operation with accurate outcomes is important the county.

### **HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)**

Protect the HOME Program, which provides important funding for affordable housing units in market-rate multifamily new construction, foreclosed/forfeit property acquisition, rehabilitation and resale, and down-payment assistance to first-time homebuyers throughout suburban Ramsey County cities. Ramsey County is part of a four-county consortium and currently receives approximately \$400,000 per year from HOME, a reduction of more than \$350,000 per year over the past 10 years. HOME is also an important source of program income from loan repayments, allowing additional investment in affordable properties. The President's latest budget would eliminate funding for HOME. Congress will need to address this important funding in 2020 and oppose the President's budget proposal.

### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

Restore funding to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). CDBG supports community development programs providing assistance to low- and moderate-income persons in suburban Ramsey County. Ramsey County currently receives approximately \$1 million, down 50 percent from historic levels. The latest budget proposal issued by the President included elimination of the CDBG program altogether in his latest budget proposal (NACo). Ramsey County supports the restoration of funding for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant



## **Environment, Energy and Land Use**

### **Water**

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LAWCON)**

In 1964, LAWCON was established to provide grants for outdoor recreation projects and to develop and redevelop parks. To date, Ramsey County has received nearly \$1 million from LAWCON for park projects.

- **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.



## **Health and Human Services**

### **Social Services Block Grant funding (SSBG)**

Maintain or increase SSBG block grants at the current funding level. 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 to address hunger and food security issues for no and low-income residents. Given the recent efforts by the White House to eliminate or reduce eligibility through rule, it is increasingly important to voice strong support for services that address basic human needs, such as food security. SNAP provides food assistance to nearly 63,000 low-income families in Ramsey County. The SNAP Education and Training program, which provides support services (such as child care and transportation) to SNAP-enrolled students, is a central component to helping families achieve and maintain economic stability.

**Affordable Care Act (ACA)**

Protect essential provisions of the ACA, including: coverage for pre-existing conditions, dependent coverage until age 26, no limits on annual/lifetime coverage, no-cost coverage for preventative care, and the mandate for individual coverage. Support the local-state-federal partnership structure for financing health care access and oppose measures that shift federal and state costs to counties. This law has proven effective in significantly expanding access to insurance to more low and moderate-income families and individuals. Ramsey County supports premium assistance to help keep the cost of insurance within reach.

**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 and bolster the federal-state-local partnership structures for Medicaid services (NACo).

**Mental Health**

Support 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 funded at current levels or increased to rise with demand for services (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).

**Ramsey County Support of Other Platforms**

In addition to the recommendations contained in this platform, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners generally supports 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 board reserves the option to oppose individual items in the NACo platform that are contrary to the interests of the county.

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