

RAMSEY COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 1979 the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners created the Ramsey County Community Human Services Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). Currently there are seven advisory committees that each represents a specific service population:

- The **Adult Services Committee** represents the needs and issues impacting 1) older adults (60+) who have difficulty living independently and are at risk of abuse, neglect and material exploitation, and 2) persons between 19 and 60 who have a major physical or neurological disability.
- The **Chemical Health Committee** represents low income adolescents and adults who have serious alcohol or drug abuse problems, people of color who need culturally specific services to ensure access to drug or alcohol treatment resources, and family or significant others who have been affected by the problems of chemical dependency.
- The **Children's Mental Health Advisory Council** represents families with a child who fit the legal description of Emotionally Disturbed or Severely Emotionally Disturbed, an organic disorder of the brain or a clinically significant disorder to thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory, or behavior and which seriously limits a child's capacity to function in primary aspects of daily living, such as personal relations, living arrangements, work, school, and recreation.
- The **Children's Services Review Panel (CSRP)** is comprised of volunteers who are representative of the community in which they live or serve and who are charged with examining policies and procedures of the Ramsey County Social Services Departments Child Protection System. The CSRP evaluates the extent to which Ramsey County and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. The CSRP annually reports their findings and recommendations to the County and Agency. The CSRP also serves an additional role as one of Minnesota's Citizen Review Panel under Federal Law.
- The **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Committee** represents individuals with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities, neurodevelopmental disorders, other related conditions or physical disabilities who are limited in their ability to function in at least three major life activities, such as self-care, toileting, household and money management, community living, and leisure including people with an IQ of less than 70 and/or cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or autism.
- The **Low Income Committee** represents individuals and families who need help meeting their basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing, including persons who qualify for public assistance because their income or assets fall below Federal or State poverty guidelines.
- The **Mental Health Advisory Council** represents adults with mental illness, an organic disorder of the brain or a clinically significant disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, memory, or behavior that seriously limits their capacity to function in primary aspects of daily living such as personal relations, living arrangements, work, and recreation.

Advisory committee members are appointed by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for two-year terms and represent diverse backgrounds and communities. Each committee strives for a balanced representation and varied perspectives, including consumers of service, family members of the target population, professionals in the field, interested citizens, service providers, and representatives from community organizations. Both urban and suburban views are represented as well.

The CAC is a valuable resource for the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners and the Social Services and Financial Assistance Services Departments by providing meaningful and thoughtful input from a citizen perspective. The CAC gives citizens a voice in public policy by providing valuable knowledge, insight and experience in the decision-making process. The CAC serves as a bridge between the community and county government. Citizen involvement is even more important today, with the challenge of limited funding and a dramatic increase in the need for services.

All committees have an opportunity to present to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners annually to share insights, observations, recommendations, and ideas about important issues.