



# The Ramsey County Community Human Services Anti-Racism Initiative



## **Introduction**

This document explains the basis for CHS's anti-racism initiative and is sometimes referred to as the Why Document.

CHS has adopted the goal:

### **Eliminate racial and culturally based disparity for CHS clients**

It is essential that CHS respond appropriately to the needs and perspectives of people from different racial and cultural backgrounds. The simplest example of this is the need to translate information into multiple languages and to provide translators. But subtler differences exist and have contributed to differential access and outcomes for racial and ethnic groups (often called institutional racism).

The Department directors and managers feel strongly that the Department must examine its approach and make changes that:

- are responsive to clients; and
- create a positive environment for CHS employees.

This work is not new to us – we acknowledge previous individual and collective efforts. But we also must take this work further.

This effort is consistent with and furthers the CHS Values Statement:

- We value and draw upon the diversity of our staff and community.
- Diversity is an asset to our Department and a key to providing services.

We have chosen to become an anti-racist, multi-cultural organization.

This introduction addresses commonly asked questions about the Anti-Racism Initiative.

## **What do we mean when we use the words racism and cultural bias? <sup>1</sup>**

People frequently perceive racism as an individual choice, conscious or unconscious. If perceived in this way, it is easy to slip into defensiveness and accusations. We are using a common definition of terms that moves us forward constructively, one that we can embrace together to improve the responsiveness and environment of the Department.

We are using the work of the Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative as a guide for defining racism. Ramsey County Human Services takes the view that racism is not the same thing as individual race prejudice, bias and bigotry. All people are racially prejudiced or biased (regardless of racial/ethnic identity). It is socialized into every person. Racism is more than race prejudice. It is more than individual attitudes and actions. Racism is the collective actions of a dominant racial group.

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsey County Community Human Services, MN Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative, presentation Feb18, 2004 *Pub. Date 09/23/09*

Power turns race prejudice into racism. Racial prejudice becomes racism when one group's racial prejudices are enforced by systems and institutions of a society, giving power and privilege based on racial identity to the group in power, and limiting the power and privilege of the racial groups that are not in power. Racism is the misuse of systemic power. Our agency, and everyone who works here, has power over the people who come through our door for services.

## **Why a focus on racism and cultural bias and why now?**

We are focusing on racism and cultural bias because:

Our programs are developed to provide the same services to all individuals regardless of culture or race – but one of the results has been service disparities based on culture and race. We are challenged to adapt our services to meet the needs of different cultural or racial groups. Ramsey County residents have no other choices for most of our services.

Nobody else can make these services more responsive. Staff face a host of challenges in delivering services to children, families and adults. Our community is becoming so diverse that our staff do not always have the information and skills needed to understand the multiple cultural influences involved. There is a shortage of appropriate programs, materials and guidelines for equipping workers with culturally competent skills.

Ramsey County is becoming more diverse as a community. In 1980, 7% of residents were persons of color. In 2007, that increased to 30%<sup>2</sup>.

As a small community of 1,000 individuals (inside the agency), we have to learn to work together better. We have many examples where we haven't met this standard.

Ramsey County Human Services is part of a system that limits the power and privilege of different racial groups. We administer systems that perpetuate institutional racism. It is incumbent on us to work within these systems to increase justice and equity in the programs.

## **Why focus on racism and cultural bias when there are other types of discrimination?**

We are concerned about all the ways that prejudice and bias affects people. The decision to focus on racism and cultural bias is not because other forms of bias aren't equally painful and unjust.

Focusing on racism and cultural bias at this time allows us to use our resources and energy to manage this effort. We believe that expanding this initiative to all areas of discrimination would overwhelm CHS and jeopardize our ability to be successful. We are committed to bringing about meaningful change.

We believe that the skills we develop addressing racism will improve our ability/skills to address all areas of discrimination; becoming better communicators, more thoughtful and respectful co-workers. This is the beginning of our path to a workplace and community that supports staff and clients regardless of their racial, cultural, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age. We believe work toward becoming an anti-racist, multi-cultural organization is a foundational building block to address other isms such as sexism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, and classism. As we learn and grow, we'll take our successes to other areas of discrimination and bias.

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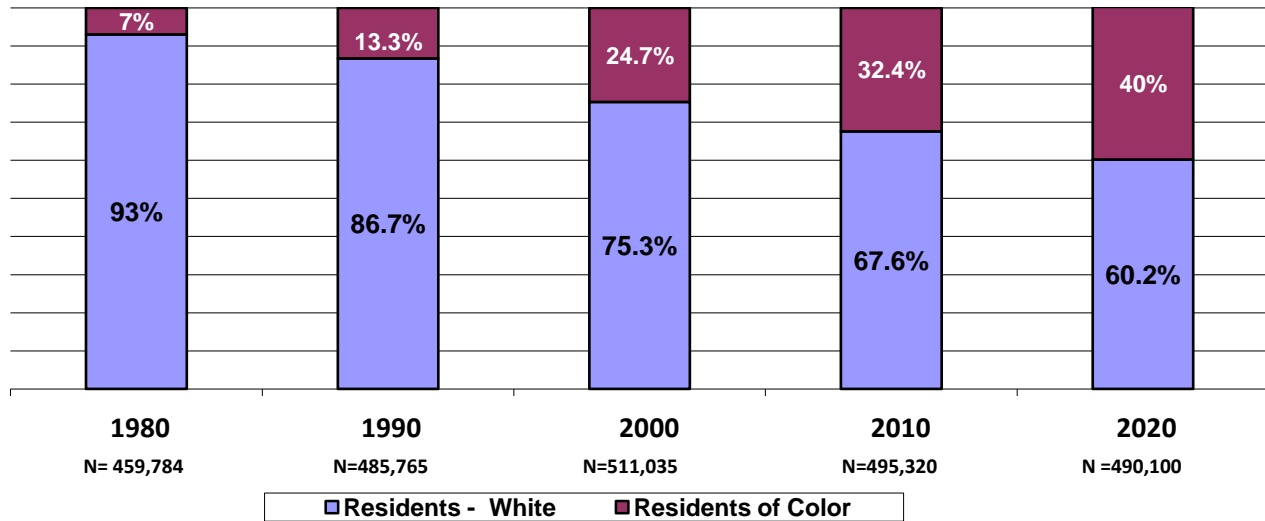
<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Demography Center – Ramsey County population projection for 2007. January, 2009.

## Changes in Ramsey County's Population

Ramsey County continues to grow in diversity. In January 2009 the Minnesota State Demographer's Office updated population projections by race and ethnicity for Ramsey County which is expected to grow in diversity and will be more racially and ethnically diverse into the future.

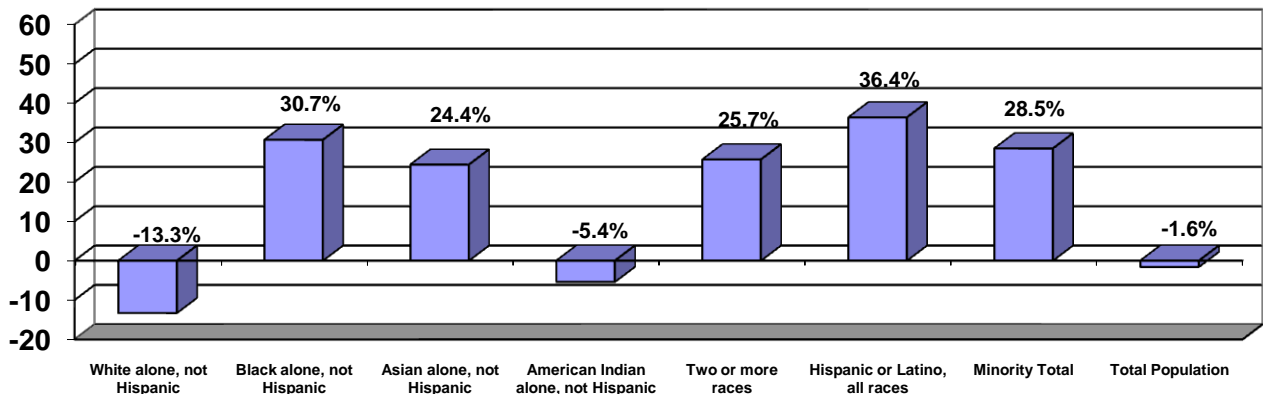
While the population in Ramsey County is projected to decrease by 10,000 from 2005 to 2020, Illustration 1 below shows that by 2020, 40% of Ramsey County residents are projected to be residents of color or Latino.<sup>3</sup>

Illustration 1: Proportion of Residents of Color Compared to White Residents, 2005-2020<sup>4</sup>



Between 2005 and 2020 Ramsey County will lose population, yet specific groups are expected to grow. White and American Indian are projected to decrease in population, and all other race ethnic groups are expected to increase by 25% or more in this time period. (White/non Hispanic -13.3%, Black/non Hispanic +30.7%, Asian/non Hispanic +24.4%, American Indian/non Hispanic -5.4%, Two or more races +25.7%, Hispanic any race +36.4%.

Illustration 2: Change in Population by Percent, by Race and Ethnicity, 2005-2015



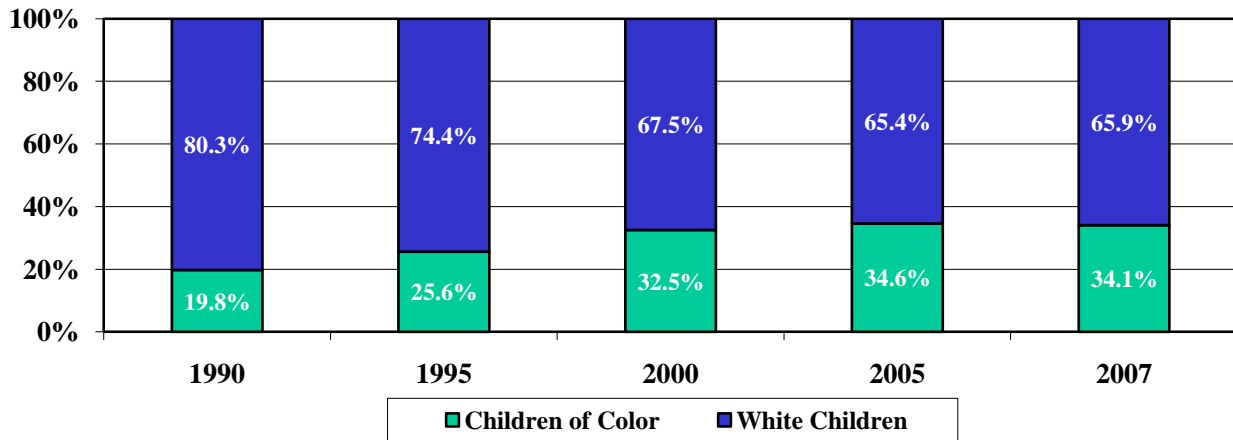
<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Population Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2005 to 2035 in Population Notes, Minnesota State Demographic Center, January, 2009 OSD-09-136.

<sup>4</sup> Residents of Color include: Black alone not Hispanic, Asian alone not Hispanic, American Indian alone not Hispanic, Two or more races, Hispanic or Latino all races. Data from Minnesota Population Projections, see citation above.

When we look at population data for Ramsey County’s children, children of color and Latino/Hispanic children continue to grow as a percent of the population. Ramsey County children are more diverse than the overall Ramsey County population. See Illustrations<sup>5</sup> 3 and 4 below.

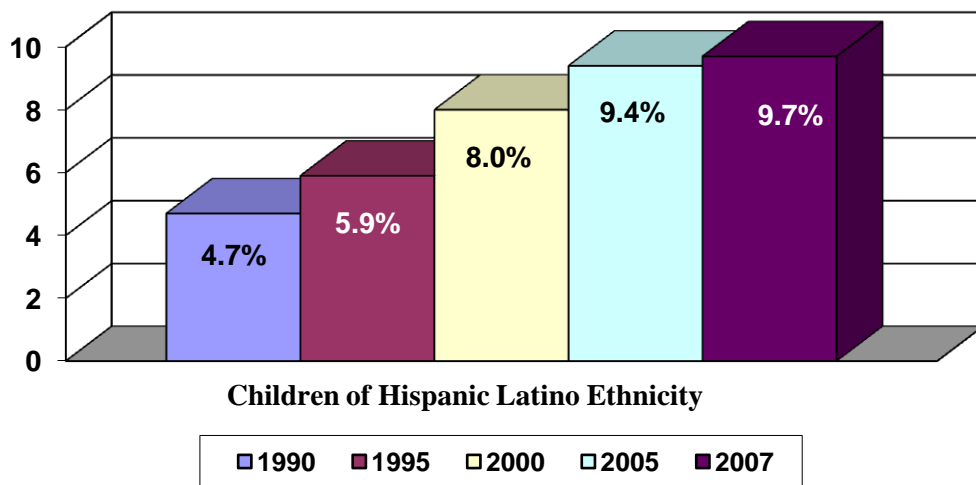
**Children** – In 1990, 19.5% of children living in Ramsey County were children of color (African American, American Indian, Asian). By 2007, the US Census population projections for Ramsey County found 34% children of color. In 1990, 80.3% of children were white. By 2007, the US Census population projections for Ramsey County found 65.9% of children were white. See Illustration 3.

Illustration 3: Percent Children of Color, White Children - Ramsey County 1990 - 2007



**Children of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity** – In 1990, 4.7% of children living in Ramsey County were of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. By 2007, the US Census population projections for Ramsey County found one in ten children (9.7%) of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Illustration 4: Percent Children by Hispanic and/or Latino Ethnicity - Ramsey County 1990-2007



<sup>5</sup> <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/exapop/asp/source.asp> National Center for Health Statistics (2008). Estimates of July 1 2000 – July 1 2007, United States resident population from the Vintage 2007 postcensal series by year, county, age and Hispanic origin. [Released 9.5.08, retrieved 9.15.08]. Prepared under collaborative arrangement with US Census Bureau.

## Who We Serve

On any given day, about one in five Ramsey County residents are served by Ramsey County Community Human Services (RCCHS). We serve a diverse population. Compared to population projections for the year 2010, Ramsey County residents served by Human Services are more diverse than the overall county population. Residents of color are overrepresented in our human service population. Across all Ramsey County Human Service social service and financial programs serving children, adults and families, at least 53% of service recipients are persons of color. In light of population projections for Ramsey County, we expect the service population to continue becoming increasingly diverse. The table below provides a point in time snapshot of Ramsey County Human Services population by race and Hispanic and/or Latino ethnicity.

Table 1: Race and Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity - All CHS Clients – January, 2009

	All Ramsey County Residents 2010 Population Estimate <sup>6</sup>		Community Human Service 2009 Client Population <sup>7</sup>	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
White/Caucasian	67.6%	334,900	35.0%	33,434
Black/African American	10.6%	52,640	28.1%	26,764
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.7%	3,620	1.4%	1,369
Asian/Pacific Islander	11.1%	54,970	20.2%	19,256
Multiple Races	2.4%	11,720	3.1%	2,933
Unknown/Unable to Determine	-		12.9%	12,333
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>	
Hispanic ethnicity	7.6%	37,480	7.6%	7,222
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>495,320</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>95,318</b>

<sup>6</sup> Minnesota Population Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2005 to 2035 in Population Notes, Minnesota State Demographic Center, January, 2009 OSD-09-136

<sup>7</sup> Ramsey County unduplicated count of client population, February, 2009. These are point in time counts vs. annual.

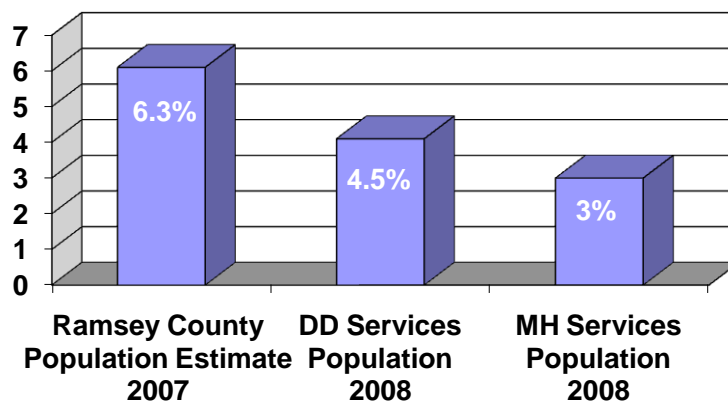
## Service Disparities by Race and Ethnicity

Across children, adult and financial services, there are instances where groups of persons are either over or under-represented in services when compared to the overall Ramsey County population. These disparities raise questions about whether we are providing equal access to services for all groups of Ramsey County residents and whether the services are effective in achieving results across racial and cultural groups. Below are a few examples of disproportionality and how Ramsey County is addressing the disparities seen in adult, children, and financial services.

### **In Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Adult Services persons of Latino and Hispanic heritage are underrepresented.**

**Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities** - Ramsey County provides case management services to persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). When compared to the overall population estimate for Ramsey County, Latinos are underrepresented in the I/DD service delivery system. Community feedback also suggests inequities in the I/DD service system, which is voluntary by design. I/DD services offered today originate from a Western-European model of service provision and do not adequately match the perspectives, lifestyles, and needs of diverse communities. In 2008, the Intake process was modified to improve service access for Spanish speaking individuals and families. This work unit is conducting targeted outreach to trusted organizations and leaders in Spanish speaking communities to learn and partner around how to address barriers to Intake. As barriers are decreased, it is expected that Spanish speaking persons will receive timely assessments for services, and for those who meet the service guidelines, will be opened to case management in a timely manner.

Illustration 5: Latino/Hispanic residents underrepresented in services compared to RC Latino/Hispanic population



**Mental Health Case Management** – Ramsey County provides adult mental health case management to persons with serious and persistent mental illness. Similar to I/DD, when we compare the overall population estimate for Ramsey County to persons of Latino and Hispanic heritage in our mental health service, we see that

Latinos are underrepresented in mental health case management services. In discussions with community leaders and providers, several key factors contribute to service under-representation including:

- Culturally based beliefs about mental illness
- System barriers such as limited services to undocumented residents or lack of bilingual services
- Logistical challenges from lack of transportation to lack of childcare and access to interpreters
- Immigration status

In response, Ramsey County issued a request for a Letter of Interest from primary clinics serving the Latino community to integrate medical and behavioral health services, reduce barriers and increase access to mental health services. It is expected that the numbers of Latino persons in services will increase over time as a result of this work.

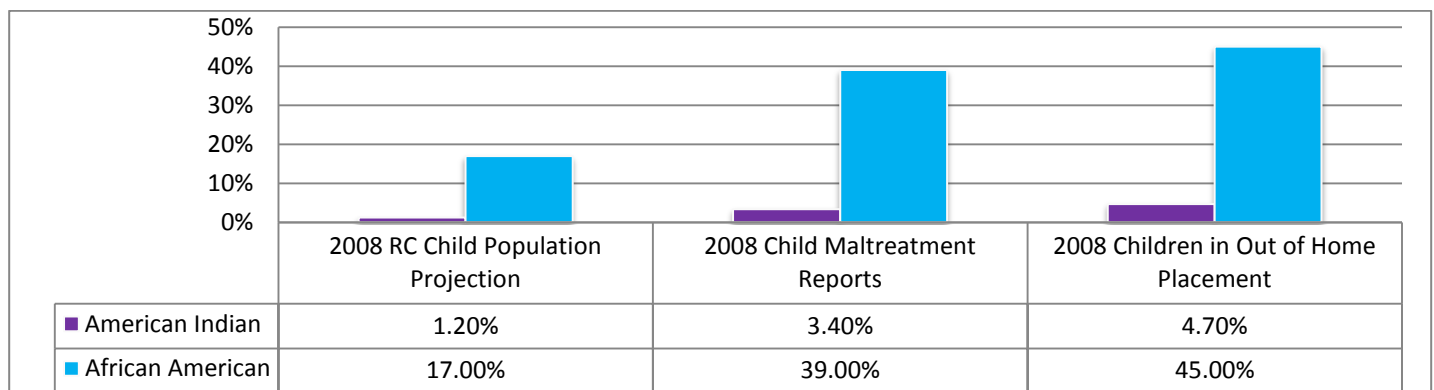
**There are other situations where specific groups of individuals are over-represented in our services, such as in Child Protection Services and Minnesota Family Investment Program.**

**Child Protection**

African American children are only 17% of the county population but 39% of children identified in maltreatment reports during 2008 were African American. In 2008, 45% of children in out of home placement were African American. CHS places children for the safety of the child, for treatment and when a child is under the supervision of the courts.

American Indian children are only 1.2% of the county population but are involved in 3.4% of the maltreatment reports we receive and 5.6% of the children who are placed out of home.

Illustration 6: African American and American Indian 2008 Child Maltreatment Reports, Children in Out of Home Placement compared to the Ramsey Child Population



To address disparities in the Child Protection and out of home placement systems, RCCHSD initiated the Ramsey County Ending Racial Disparities Project and is one of 4 sites nationally of the Casey Alliance for Race Equity in Child Welfare. Two key components of the project include Cross Cultural Skills Training and the Use of Cultural Consultants.

Training: Through these two connected projects, training has been provided to professionals working in the child protection and out of home placement systems. These professionals include law enforcement officers, school social workers and other school staff, child protection workers, foster care workers, adoption/guardianship workers, Guardians ad Litem, assistant county attorneys and staff from community agencies working with child protection and child welfare clients. The goal of the training is to enhance or increase the professional’s skills to work cross culturally so families receive services within the context of their cultures, and ones that fit their situation, in order to increase their capacity to provide a safe, healthy environment for their children.

Cultural Consultants: In addition, Cultural Consultants from the African American and American Indian communities have been working within their respective communities to both educate their communities on issues related to child protection and out of home placement as well as to solicit ideas on what supports and

services families need to reduce their risk of becoming involved with these two systems. As a result, RCCHSD is partnering with four different community initiatives, Vento Village, Nokomis Circle, Project Voice and Building Future Leaders, in which early intervention social workers are placed in geographic or culturally specific communities and working with the formal and informal infrastructures within those communities to connect families with the supports they need to provide the care and safety their children need.

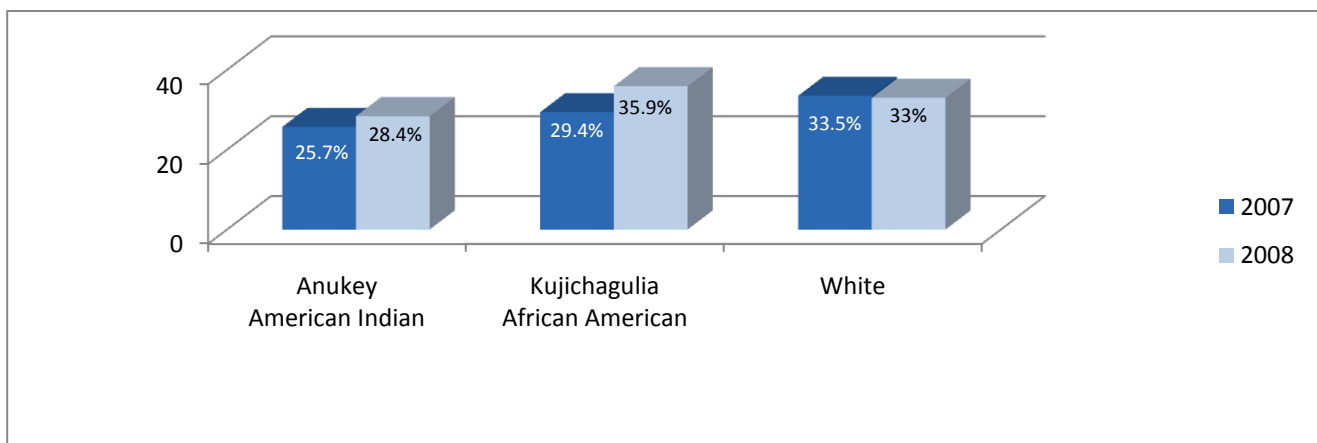
**Minnesota Family Investment Program**

In the Minnesota Family Investment Program African American and American Indians are overrepresented in services and disparities in employment outcomes exist. The Minnesota Family Investment Program, or MFIP, is the state’s welfare reform program for low income families with children. MFIP helps families move to work and focuses on helping families. It includes both cash and food assistance for a time limited period. MFIP helps families transition to economic stability. Parents are expected to work and are supported in work.

In 2003, employment outcomes were poor, particularly for African Americans and American Indians compared to the general MFIP population. In response, Ramsey County engaged communities to help define and redesign an employment service delivery model that would work for African American and American Indians. Following the community conversations, Ramsey County began working in partnership with the African American and American Indian communities.

As a result, the Anukey and Kujichagulia Projects were developed to eliminate racial disparities, so that people of color have comparable outcomes. Anukey, established in 2006 and a partnership with the American Indian Family Center, is a one-stop employment service, including child care and financial services assistance. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) Project, established in 2003, is a partnership with the Cultural Wellness Center, and works with MFIP families focusing effort on increasing self-reliance and the use of one’s culture/heritage as a resource. The programs have achieved modest gains in employment outcomes. From 2007 to 2008, the percentage of American Indian participants in the Anukey Partnership who were engaged in employment increased from 25.7% to 28.4% and the percentage of African-American participants in the Kujichagulia Partnership who were engaged in employment increased from 29.4% to 35.9%. In comparison, the percentage of White participants in MFIP Assisted Services decreased from 33.5% to 33%.

Illustration 7: Engagement in Employment<sup>8</sup>: American Indians, African Americans, and Whites



<sup>8</sup> Engagement in the workforce is defined as employed at least one hour or more per month



## Changes in our Workforce

The diversity of CHS employees has increased over the last several years.

Issues of cross-cultural respect and communication are important in ensuring understanding across cultural and racial groups that work for CHS. The illustration below describes the ethnic and racial breakdown of CHS employees in 2004 compared to 2007. Ramsey County has implemented work-plans to create a labor force that becomes increasingly diverse and reflects the population served.

Illustration 8: Percent Breakdown of CHS Employees by Race: 2004, 2007

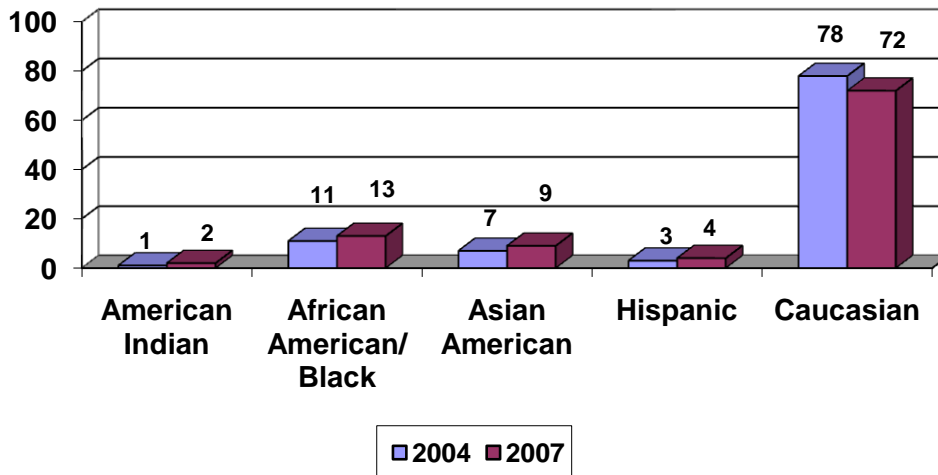
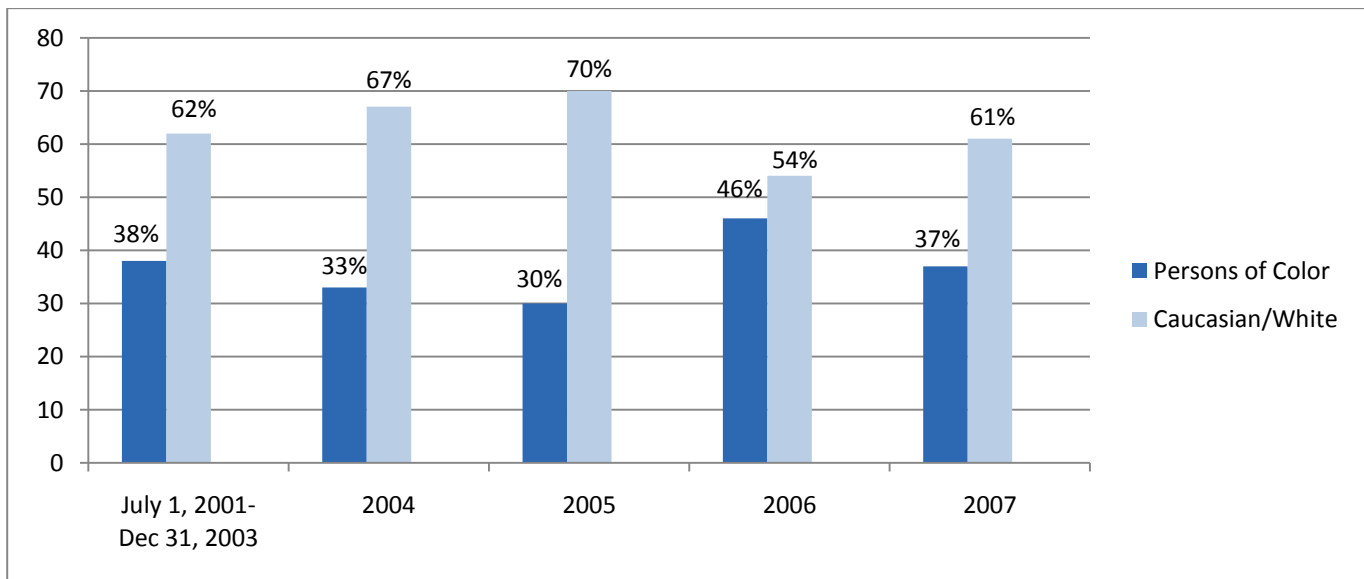


Illustration 9 shows the percent of all new hires (full-time and part-time). Between July 1, 2001 and December 31, 2003, 38% of CHS new hires were persons of color. From 2004 to 2007 the proportion of new hires that are persons of color has fluctuated. In 2007, 37% of new hires were persons of color.

Illustration 9: Percent CHS New Hires (full-time, part-time)



## **Highlights of What We Are Doing Now**

### **CHS has developed an Anti-Racism Initiative to build organizational capacity and address racial and cultural disparities.**

The **Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT)** provides organizational leadership, strategic direction and evaluation of the CHS transformation to an anti-racist multi-cultural organization.

Six workgroups made up of **ARLT members and CHS managers** meet monthly to develop and implement action plans across the organization aimed at delivering anti-racist client services and developing a multi-cultural and anti-racist agency. Work-plans have been developed in the following areas: Changing Practices, Hiring & Retention, Contracting, Communications, Training, and Leadership Development (REAL Team).

**Nine service teams** have the responsibility to manage the following service areas: Adult Mental Health, Chemical Dependency, CADI/TBI, Family Support, Child Protection, Children's Mental Health & Delinquency, Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities, Elderly/Adult Protection/Vulnerable Adults, Homeless/Low Income and Childcare. The service teams are the drivers of our disparity work. Each team works on developing culturally responsive services, developing inclusive community practices and creating targeted interventions to eliminate disparities in service access, utilization and outcomes.

The **CHS Director, Divisional Directors and Department Managers** manage CHS and are responsible for the intersection of Anti-Racist/Multicultural goals, activities and outcomes. These organizational leaders provide direction, support and communication to support the Anti-Racist Initiative across and within work units.

Ramsey County has directly partnered with **multi-disciplinary community members, organizations and agencies** to build organizational capacity and transform the organization into an anti-racist multi-cultural organization.

Staff who want to get involved, get more information or have comments should contact their manager, division director, or department director.