



## Goal 1:

Create social and physical environments that promote equity and good health for all people in Ramsey County.

# Social Determinants of Health

To improve health in a sustainable way, we need to impact the root causes of poor health – inequities in living and working conditions that affect health, such as employment, income, education, housing and transportation.

## Health Equity and the Social Determinants of Health Defined

“Health equity” means attaining the highest level of health possible for all people in Ramsey County. More than disparities or differences in health and safety outcomes, inequity describes unfairness and the systematic nature of disparities.

Studies show that for certain populations in the county, there are persistent, significant, and socially determined differences in the conditions that create health and the opportunity to be healthy. These social determinants of health are described in the 2013 Minnesota Department of Health report: Advancing Health Equity in Minnesota: Report to the Legislature:

“Social determinants of health include living and working conditions that influence individual and population health, e.g., place of residence, race and/or ethnicity, occupation, gender, religion, education, income, sexual orientation, and health insurance status. Inequities in the distribution of these social conditions in the population lead to population-based differences in health outcomes (i.e., health inequities).”

Ramsey County has embarked on an economic prosperity initiative aimed at combating areas of concentrated poverty in the county. The social determinants goal in this plan will support the county initiative and address these questions: What can be done to reduce the number of people, including children, living in poverty in the county? How can groups collectively work to address housing, employment, transit and graduation outcomes?

## Why This Is A Priority Issue

Some key data points from the Ramsey County Community Health Assessment illustrate why “social determinants of health” is a priority issue in Ramsey County.

### Poverty

- Ramsey County has more residents living in poverty than any other metro county.
- In Saint Paul public schools, 72 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- Children in Ramsey County are more likely to live in poverty than any other age group.

### Income

- The median income among all Ramsey County residents is \$52,700 but there are wide disparities by city.
- The median income in North Oaks is almost five times higher than Lauderdale.

### Education

- Even though graduation rates increased over the last decade (especially in Saint Paul), Ramsey County has not met the Healthy People 2020 graduation goal of 82.4 percent.
- White students in Ramsey County are graduating on time at almost twice the rate of American Indian students.
- Ramsey County has the lowest percentage of residents who have any education beyond high school in the metro area.

### Unemployment

- Black/African American residents have more than double the rate of unemployment than their white peers.
- Saint Paul has the lowest proportion of adults aged 16-64 years old who are working compared to other Ramsey County cities and Minnesota.

### Home Ownership/Affordable Housing

- The percentage of black/African Americans who own their homes in Ramsey County is three times less than whites.
- On average, children make up 35 percent of the homeless shelter population.

### Transportation

- Transportation is essential for creating true communities of opportunity, with far-reaching impact on the structure of communities, job creation, energy efficiency, housing stock, and economic opportunity.
- Transportation equity - the degree to which the benefits and costs of transportation systems are distributed fairly and appropriately - requires investments that are smart, targeted, and expand opportunity to the greatest number of people.
- Structural elements of the transportation system - including the presence of sidewalks, availability of bike lanes and multi-use trails, low traffic density and access to public transportation - are associated with improved health.

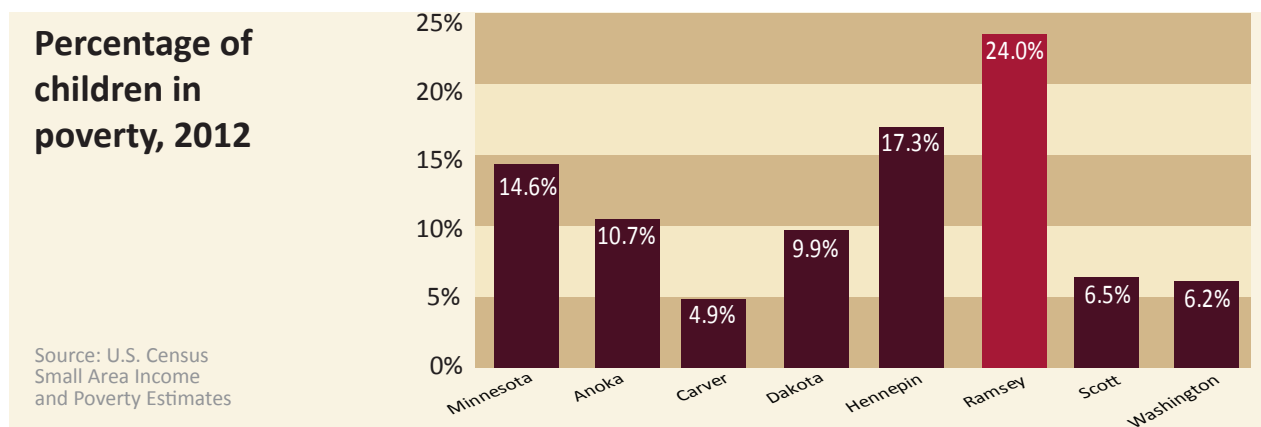
# What We Will Do About It

**Objective 1.** Reduce the percentage of the population living in poverty in Ramsey County from 17 percent to 10 percent by December 2018.

## Strategies

- Raise the minimum wage.\*
- Increase availability of local employment options.

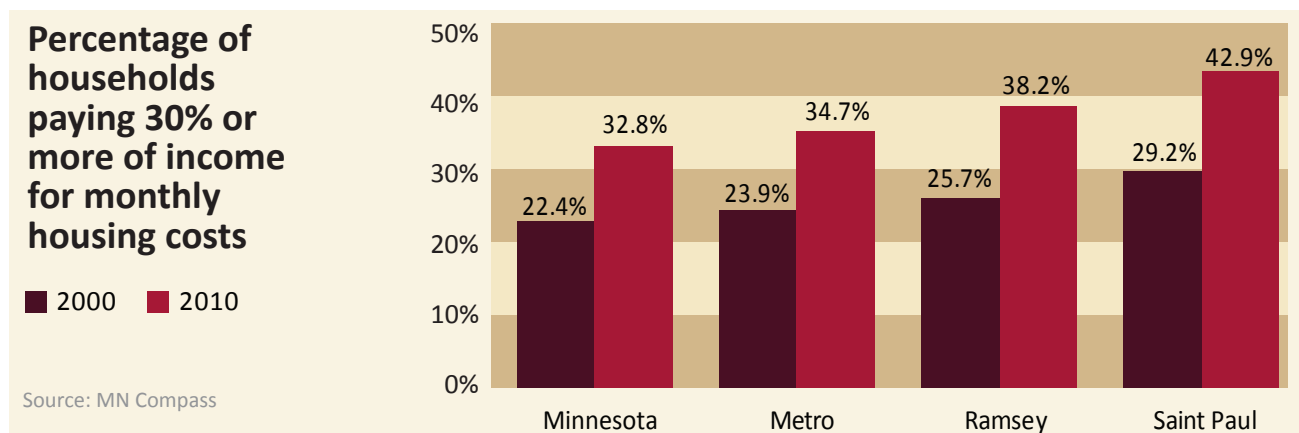
**Objective 2.** Reduce the percentage of children under 18 living in poverty in Ramsey County from 24 percent to 14 percent by December 2018.



**Objective 3.** Reduce the percentage of households paying 30 percent or more of income for monthly housing in Ramsey County from 38 percent to 28 percent by December 2018.

## Strategies

- Increase the amount of affordable housing required with new development and throughout the county.
- Monitor Central Corridor development to ensure affordable housing.\*\*
- Invest in rehabilitation of abandoned homes (with local labor).
- Partner with Habitat for Humanity to increase affordable housing stock.



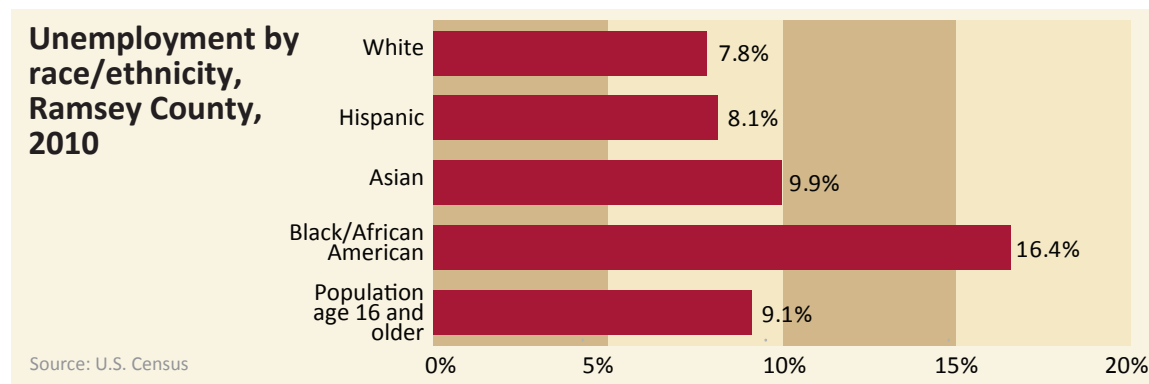
\* Ramsey County supports "living-wage job growth".

\*\* Consider county-wide approach.

**Objective 4.** Reduce the unemployment rate for non-Hispanic white, black/African American, Asian, Hispanic age 16 and older groups in Ramsey County to 7 percent by December 2018.

#### Strategies

- Partner with community colleges to offer two-year degrees in high school.
- Develop mentoring programs and support social networks to connect people with knowledge and resources.



**Objective 5.** Increase safe, accessible, efficient, affordable transportation options (transit, walking, biking) in Ramsey County by 20 percent by December 2018.

#### Strategies

- Conduct an audit of existing, active transportation (walking, biking and transit) and make recommendations to state, county and municipal governments for a safe, accessible and efficient multimodal system in Ramsey County. (Working in concert with Active Living Active Communities)
- Evaluate barriers to safe, accessible, efficient, affordable senior transportation services in Ramsey County.
- Increase the amount of state and federal dollars allocated to providers for senior transportation services in Ramsey County.

**Objective 6.** Increase the percentage of students in Ramsey County who graduate from high school within four years to the Healthy People 2020 goal of 82 percent by December 2018.

#### Strategies

- Review barriers to high school graduation.
- Identify partnerships to address the problems.
- Identify opportunities to increase impact of Generation Next on Saint Paul/Ramsey County.
- Fund community-based initiatives.
- Identify and address causes of instability (transiency) and enhance community.

