

# Board Workshop: 2021 State and Federal Legislative Platforms

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Government Relations  
November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Agenda

1. Introductions. Commissioner McGuire
2. Workshop overview Jennifer O'Rourke
3. Purpose and desired outcomes
4. Process for developing platforms
5. State platform discussion
6. Federal platform discussion

## Purpose of Workshop

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

## Timeline for developing 2021 platforms

- **June – October** 5 special sessions, Chapter 3 Bonding Bill
- **Mid-September** AMC Policy Conference; committee priorities.
- **September/October** Executive Team, Service Teams - 2021 platforms for budget concerns, new ideas, deletions & changes.
- **Ongoing** Meet with Chairs of Legislative Committee, strategy for new legislators, community engagement, virtual settings.
- **Today** Board Workshop on draft State and Federal Platforms
- **November** Fine tune priorities and platforms - Executive Team, Commissioners and senior staff.
- **December 1** Submit to Legislative Committee of the Whole.
- **December 15** Approval by Board of Commissioners.
- **Tentative January 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>** Official Delegation meeting with Commissioners and Legislators.

## Expanded Engagement Efforts

- Streamlined document aligning items with Strategic Priorities' Racial Equity Impacts and Community Participation.
- Meeting with individual legislators to discuss 2021 priorities.
- Brainstorming other ways to educate new legislators. (e.g. Ramsey County orientation)
- Early January for virtual legislative delegation meeting with commissioners and legislators to officially present platforms.
- Two town halls on Legislative Involvement 101 December 7 & 9<sup>th</sup> for community and staff.
- New for 2021: Adding virtual weekly staff meeting check in. Continue written weekly updates during session for commissioners, subject-matter-expert staff (SMEs).

## 2020 State Platform Priorities

- Housing stability (affordability and homelessness).
- Update Minn. Stat. 383A.404 (Community Corrections management).
- Addressing racial disparities in out-of-home placements.
- Support transportation funding that includes new revenue for roads, bridges and transit.
- Ramsey County bonding priorities.

## 2020 State Platform Wins

- Headline achievements in 2020:
  - Bonding wins with
    - \$1.8M Battle Creek Winter Rec
    - \$7M Recycling and Energy Center improvements
    - \$1.5M 35E/County Road J
    - \$52M for Kellogg Avenue/Third Street bridge
  - Waivers
  - Defense of Ramsey County federal CARES dollars
  - Updated MN Statute 383A.404 community correction administrative alignment

## Remaining 2020 Bonding Priorities

1.	Riverfront Property – Riversedge	\$40M
5.	Rush Line BRT	\$2.5M
6.	Riverview Corridor	\$2.5M
7.	Twin Cities Milwaukee Chicago 2 <sup>nd</sup> Train	\$4M (\$10M?)
8.	Gibbs Farm	\$7.1M <i>(support item)</i>



## 2021 Recommended State Priorities

- Protect existing county funding streams and waivers
- Housing stability (affordability and homelessness)
- Addressing racial disparities (more specific?)
- Criminal justice reform
- Advancing Ramsey County bonding project needs
- Other?

# 2020 State Platform Discussion (See attachment.)

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# Federal Outlook

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November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Federal Platform

- 2020 major recommended initiatives:
  - Protect major human services funding streams that support critical services for children and vulnerable adults.
  - Continued healthcare access for low and moderate-income populations.
  - Reauthorize transportation infrastructure funding.
  - Explore federal funding opportunities for Riversedge.

**2021 Discussion:** CARES funding, other recovery for Ramsey County, Supreme Court case on Affordable Care Act?

# 2021 Federal Platform Discussion (See attachment.)

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2021 Federal Platform Discussion  
(See attachment.)

## Next Steps for Platform Development & Rollout

- Meet with commissioners and staff to review updated positions.
- **December 1** Legislative Committee of the Whole.
- **December 15** Final approval of platforms by Board.
- **Early January** Official Ramsey County State Legislative Delegation meeting.
- **January 5th** Session starts.

## Residents First

Ramsey County supports improvements in service delivery and facilities, with an emphasis on engaging residents and employees, process efficiency, innovative technology and accessibility.

## Racial and Health Equity

Ramsey County supports deconstructing systemic and organizational barriers to create fairer, more

### Data Practice and Privacy Reforms (JCO)

- Maintain flexibility in local governments' data retention schedules and reporting requirements to avoid overwhelming local technical capabilities.
- Consider local costs and improved public access when considering data practice updates.
- Address the use of intentionally disruptive and expensive data requests that provide little or no public benefit.

### Eminent Domain Revisions (JCO)

- ~~Extend the required filing period for eminent domain valuation challenges to 45 days to give counties the opportunity to amend offers and promote settlements while reducing litigation costs.~~
- ~~Tie interest rates for eminent domain awards to the US Treasury Bill secondary market and establish parameters for attorney's fees to further reduce public costs.~~

### Repayment of Misappropriated Medicaid Funds (MF)

- Hold counties harmless for DHS overpayment of approximately \$9M in Medicaid funds for chemical health services.
- Ensure state compliance with federal background check requirements for staff at ~~childcare facilities~~ that endanger Title IV-E reimbursements.

### DHS Waiver Extensions (MF)

- Continue health and human services waivers that demonstrate administrative efficiency and improve outcomes and service delivery.

### Funding for Libraries (JCO)

- Increase Regional Library Basic System Support ~~to \$17M~~ to enhance free access to online digital resources and database services for Ramsey County Residents.
- Support Library Construction and Remodeling grants to help fund safety and construction and renovations at the Ramsey County libraries. Library in Maplewood.
- Maintain Arts & Cultural Heritage Legacy funding for regional public library systems to support arts, arts education, and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.

### Increased Healthcare Access (MF)

- Continue to preserve coverage for dependents up to age 26, prohibit the denial of coverage for preexisting conditions and the use of lifetime caps for coverage.
- Address racial disparities in healthcare access, quality and outcomes.
- Enhance Medicaid asthma services for children and their families by providing home assessment, allergen-reducing equipment and parental education.
- Increase METS funding to develop needed technological improvements that help county financial aid workers address eligibility updates, increased demands for services and the addition of state-mandated data matching activities.

### Community Mental Health Placements (MF)

- Develop additional community-based mental health placement options and services to shorten stays in state facilities and reduce costs after inpatient care is no longer necessary.

### Equal Rights Amendment (JCO)

- Support the ratification of the ERA to bolster pay equity, domestic violence laws and pregnancy discrimination protections, among other equity goals.

inclusive government.

## A Holistic Approach to Strengthening Families

Ramsey County supports listening to families' needs, understanding needs and providing non-traditional services and opportunities that promote wellbeing for infants, children, youth and their families.

### Criminal Justice Reform (MF)

- Support POCI Caucus legislation that further reform the investigation and prosecution of officer-involved deaths and wrongful actions; increases police accountability and transparency; raises standards of conduct and supports officer excellence; partners officers with the communities they serve; repairs and builds community trust and enhances community-centered public safety.

### Guaranteed Basic Income (MF)

- Support guaranteed income demonstration projects to understand the impact of unconditional cash payments on early childhood development of infants and toddlers, income instability and financial well-being.

### African American Family Preservation Act (MF)

- Support AAFPA legislation encouraging county case management and support services 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 displacements.

### Families First (MF)

- Support Families First legislation allowing states and counties to use federal Title IV-E funds to focus child protection efforts on engaging families, building support networks and providing culturally informed services that help avoid compounding the trauma out-of-home placements often cause.

### Court-Appointed Counsel for CHIPs Cases (MF)

- Require judges to appoint counsel to all parents and caretakers involved in child protection cases to enhance the rights and stability of at-risk families during court proceedings.

### Childcare Reforms (MF)

- Support childcare licensing practice improvements to simplify rules and promote improved relations between providers and regulators.
- Implement refinements to training, county liability insurance and other requirements to foster best practices in all childcare settings.
- Support state compliance with background study and minimum provider requirements from the Federal Child Care Block Grant of 2014 to prevent the loss of federal funding.
- Maximize the use of all available childcare subsidy funds through strategic waitlist changes that allow more families who have not used MFIP to access essential work-related support.

### Child Support Reforms (MF)

- Clarify ambiguities and errors to help families get their child support orders modified in child support reforms adopted in consistent with 2016 to help families get their child support orders modified to fit new parenting expense adjustment statutes.
- Align language with the law's legislative intent related to one-parent support when a child is not living with either parent ~~with the law's legislative intent.~~
- Update child support guidelines to address inequities that require parents with lower incomes obligators to pay higher percentages of their earnings.
- ~~Eliminate Stop charging interest on past-due child support to help keep paying obligators parents from going deeper in debt and allow all payments to go directly to support the child, most of whom make less than \$10K/year, catch up and to~~

- ~~simplify the automated child support enforcement system's calculation of fluctuating monthly payments.~~
- Allow discretion in ~~making reports of reporting~~ arrears to the Credit Bureau to prevent ~~poor-negative~~ credit ratings from ~~exasperating-adding to~~ families' financial ~~difficulties-challenges~~ and ~~untimely reporting from producing inaccuracies.~~
  - Provide flexibility in ~~the collection of collecting~~ child support and other cost-of-care funds when a child is in foster care to ~~avoid-intensified-reduce~~ financial instability for families in crisis and ~~lower-decrease~~ collection costs.

~~over its corrections department while acknowledging its continued collaboration with district courts.~~

**Fines & Fees (MF)**

- Increase flexibility to waive fines and fees charged in the criminal justice system.
- Remove the requirement to suspend drivers licenses for failure to pay.
- Eliminate harm to community caused by the cash bail system by allowing the use of a risk assessment tool to release individuals back into the community if they are determined not to be a risk to society.

## Justice System Outcomes

Ramsey County supports policies that align justice system transformation with state and community values.

**Civil Commitment and Competency Reforms (MF)**

- Make civil commitment statute more responsive to defendants experiencing mental illness and provide funding for competency restoration to ensure those who are not civilly committed are referred to mental health services and those who are can transfer to state facilities in a timely manner.

**Probation Reforms (MF)**

- Cap probation lengths to five years or similar outcome-based time limits to address racial disparities and give offenders the best shot at positive community and family involvement while improving public safety and saving taxpayer dollars.

**Extension of Post-Conviction Relief (MF)**

- Extend the current two-year post-conviction relief time limit for immigrants who face deportation proceedings or are otherwise unable to apply for immigration benefits due to improper, defective or outdated misdemeanor convictions.

**Felon Voting Rights (MF)**

- Clarify the reestablishment of voting rights for felons who have served their time and are not living, working and paying taxes in their home communities so they do not have to complete extensive probationary periods before they are able to vote.

**Gun Safety (MF)**

- Support mandated background checks for all firearm purchases to reduce firearm-related crime.
- Provide a legal means for families and others to initiate the temporary seizure of firearms from an individual who is exhibiting erratic and violent behavior.

**Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act (MF)**

- Support legislation that gives those who have become permanently or temporarily ineligible for some licenses, employment or housing a means to apply for a restoration of their rights and notifies individuals when they are criminally charged, and again when they are sentenced and released, about the sanctions that apply to them.

**Community Corrections Statutory Clean-Up**

- ~~Update Ramsey County governing statute to conform its community corrections administrative structure with other counties and give the county sole authority~~

## Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Ramsey County supports strategies that advance economic competitiveness and inclusiveness by creating greater prosperity and opportunity for all.

**State-Local Fiscal Partnership (JCO)**

- Maintain County Program Aid (CPA) with indexing funding and increasing the base appropriation after the COVID-19 economic recovery.
- Consider a 2021 omnibus bonding bill that addresses the backlog of the state's growing public infrastructure's needs.

**Regional Workforce Investments (JCO)**

- Support efforts to align local, regional and statewide investments for workforce development training programs to ensure the unique needs of businesses are met while supporting job seekers with career pathways needed to obtain family sustaining wage and benefits. ~~that supply the diverse, skilled workforce needed to successfully compete in the global marketplace.~~
- Address existing economic, racial and gender disparities, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and Native communities, by coupling training and education with equity efforts in housing, transportation, childcare and other stabilizing factors.
- Dedicate sufficient adequate, ongoing and predictable state funding to provide workforce programming targeted to those who are underemployed, under-employed, or under-represented in the workforce as a means to reduce disparities and to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce. ~~leverage the state's active employer leadership and harness state and local workforce efforts.~~

**Flexibility for SNAP Employment and Training Programs (MF)**

- Make participation in SNAP Education and Training Programs voluntary so that local programs can strategically match these vital support services to specific participants.

**Transportation Funding (JCO)**



## Housing Stability

Ramsey County supports programs that provide access to safe, healthy, stable and accessible housing options for all residents.

- Support statewide transportation funding that adequately invests in the long-term sustainability of local communities and addresses deferred basic maintenance, safety concerns, mounting congestion and missed economic growth opportunities for businesses and commuters.
- Amend the Motor Vehicle Leased Sales Tax to include Ramsey and Hennepin Counties as recipients so revenues can be spent in the metro-area counties where most funds are collected.
- Invest in MnDOT's Local Bridge Replacement and Local Road Improvement Programs to fund the replacement, rehabilitation or removal of deficient bridges on the local road systems and for the construction or reconstruction of local roads.
- Support the UP Railroad/BNSF Railway Grade Separation project adjacent to Westminster Junction to the east of downtown Saint Paul, which has been identified as a critical junction for addressing regional rail line congestion.

### **Affordable and Stable Housing (JCO)**

- Increase funding for affordable housing and housing programs focused on specific populations in need of additional assistance, including those experiencing mental illness, or other disabilities, individuals with criminal records, large families, veterans and those who are homeless.
- Create a dedicated fund for the development of affordable housing that enrolls private investors into the production of affordable housing to benefit local businesses, creates jobs and contributes to the overall growth of the economy.
- Expand Housing Support Demonstration capacity to include all seven metro-area counties to increase access to Housing Support for traditional rental assistance and support services for people experiencing homelessness.

### **Federal Identification Numbers for Homestead Applications (JCO)**

- Allow use of FINs in lieu of Social Security numbers on homestead classification applications to expand access to Minnesota's Property Tax Homestead Credit Refund.

### **Interest Rates on Tax Forfeited Property (JCO)**

- Allow flexible interest rates on contracts for deed on tax forfeited properties to reduce barriers for low-income families interested in purchasing or repurchasing these properties and provide a low-barrier pathway to homeownership for those with more modest incomes.

### **Eviction Protections (language TBD) (JCO)**

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## Racial and Health Equity

Ramsey County supports deconstructing systemic and organizational barriers to create fairer, more inclusive government.

### **Protect Basic Human Rights of Immigrants (MF)**

Oppose increased efforts to discourage immigrants from accessing public assistance, such as housing, medical assistance, basic cash support and law enforcement protection. 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.

### **Affordable Care Act (ACA) (MF)**

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.

### **ERA Ratification (JCO)**

Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to provide equal protection under federal law to all people, regardless of gender. The ERA amendment would bolster pay equity, domestic violence laws and pregnancy discrimination protections, among other equity goals.

### **Medicaid Services Financing (MF)**

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.

Ramsey County supports policies that are responsive to changing environmental, economic and social conditions.

## A Holistic Approach to Strengthening Families

Ramsey County supports listening to families' needs and providing non-traditional services and opportunities that promote wellbeing for infants, children, youth and their families.

develop and redevelop parks. To date, Ramsey County has received nearly \$1 million from LAWCON for park projects.

### **Clean Water (MF)**

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.

### **Recycling and Energy (MF)**

Increase investments in sustainable and renewable energy. Environmental concerns, particularly climate change, bring waste generation, recycling and energy production into sharp focus. With international recycling markets stalling, federal efforts are necessary to incentivize industry to invest in innovative recycling practices and to spur communities and individuals to reduce waste and engage more intently in local and national recycling practices.

### **Mental Health (MF)**

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.

### **Social Services Block Grant Funding (SSBG) (MF)**

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.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (MF)**

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 childcare and transportation) to SNAP-enrolled students, is a central component to helping families achieve and maintain economic stability.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (MF)**

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 childcare assistance for MFIP families and supports county employment services.

### **Families First (Title IV-E) (MF)**

Implement Full funding and roll-out of the Families First promises to address long-standing issues with state and county child protection and foster care systems, including racial disparities of out-of-home placements. Enriching financial support for prevention, wrap-around services that are culturally attuned is essential to improvements in the nation's child protection and family support programs.

## Resiliency

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LAWCON) (MF)**

Provide continued funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1964, LAWCON was established to provide grants for outdoor recreation projects and to

## Justice System Outcomes

Ramsey County supports policies that align justice system transformation with state and community values.

### Firearm Regulation (MF)

Reinstate the Firearms Assault Weapons Ban to take a strong first step in addressing the epidemic number of mass shootings and other gun-related violence. When the 1994 ban sunset in 2004, a surge of automatic weapons shootings occurred, which has not subsided. The ban was effective and should be reinstated.

### ICE Detention During COVID-19 Pandemic (MF)

- Support the immediate release of immigrants in ICE detention who do not pose a threat to public safety during the length of their removal proceedings, starting with individuals in high-risk categories such as people 60 and over, women who are pregnant, and people with chronic illnesses, compromised immune systems, or disabilities.
- Ensure ICE detention facilities currently holding detainees are adhering to CDC COVID-19 safety guidelines, are proving effective and timely testing, and offering health supports including medical treatment.

### Placeholder for others (MF)

### Passenger Rail (JCO)

Support for passenger rail needs to be enhanced through increased funding to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program, and by authorizing the State of Good Repair grant program. Additionally, funding needs to be provided 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 (JCO)

Provide reliable funding for planned transportation projects. Sustained transportation reauthorization will benefit the following Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Projects serving Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul:

- Riverview Corridor: Between Union Depot and the Mall of America.
- 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.

## Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Ramsey County supports strategies that advance

economic competitiveness and inclusiveness by creating greater prosperity and opportunity for all.

- 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.

## Housing Stability

Ramsey County supports programs that provide access to safe, healthy, stable and accessible housing options for all residents.

### HOME Investment Partnership Program (JCO)

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.

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

Restore funding to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). CDBG supports community development programs for low- and moderate-income families in suburban Ramsey County. Ramsey County currently receives approximately \$1 million, down 50 percent from historic levels. The county supports the restoration of funding for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant.

### Tax Incentives for the Development of Affordable Housing (JCO)

Support passage of the Affordable Housing Improvement Act to increase the development of affordable housing nationwide by approximately 450,000 housing units. The bill provides incentives to developers by increasing the housing credit allocation by 50 percent, phased in over five years. It would also lock in the four percent LIHTC credit rate for financing with housing bonds and tax credits.