

COVID-19 Racial Equity and Community Engagement Response Team (RECERT) Engagement Session

April 27, 2021

Disclaimer

This session is being recorded.

We are recording for documentation purposes.

We cannot get into specifics about client cases or discuss private and confidential information about residents we serve at this session.

Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Land Acknowledgement
- III. Purpose and Strategic Priority
- IV. Racial Equity and Community Engagement (RECERT) Overview
- V. Phase I & II RECERT CARES Funded Initiatives
- VI. Reflection from Community Members and Partners
- VII. Community Feedback and Discussion
- VIII. Next Steps

Facilitator and Presenters



Sara Hollie,
Racial and Health Equity Administrator



Mee Cheng,
Racial and Health Equity Administrator



Prince Corbett,
Racial and Health Equity Administrator

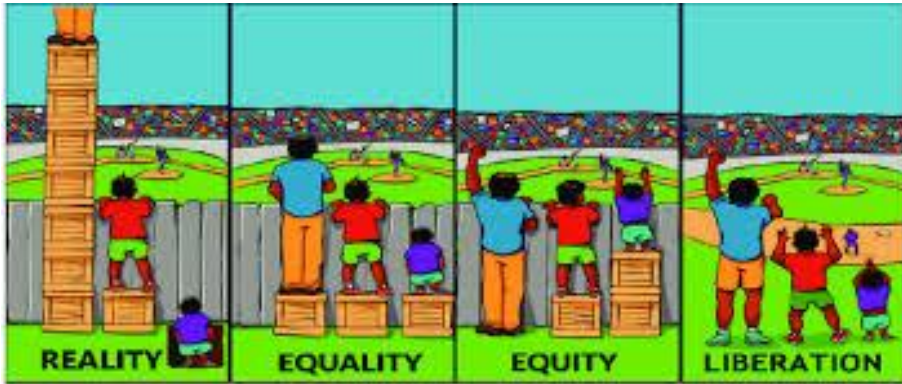
Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land since time immemorial. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.

We are standing on the ancestral lands of the Dakota People. We want to acknowledge the Ojibwe, the Ho Chunk and the other nations of people who also called this place home. We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the treaties made by the tribal nations that entitle non-Native people to live and work on traditional Native lands. Consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.

The acknowledgment given in the USDAC Honor Native Land Guide - edited to reflect Minnesota tribes. In review with SIA and endorsed by Shannon Geshick, Executive Director Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

Purpose



Race Equity – Racial equity is achieved when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all are improved.

- To learn more about RECERT activities, outcomes and lessons learned from the 2020 CARES funded initiatives.
- To gather input on what is most important to community in order to determine what the county should prioritize and/or consider for the 2021-2022 American Rescue Plan and/or county funded racial equity activities.



Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power

- Ramsey County will strengthen our countywide approach to leverage programs, processes and policies and prioritize innovations in governance and operations to advance racial and health equity, including addressing historical and long-standing race-based disproportional outcomes.
- Ramsey County will also deconstruct systemic and organizational barriers to be more fair, inclusive and transparent in how we share power with residents and communities in order to build a more equitable, responsive and effective organization.

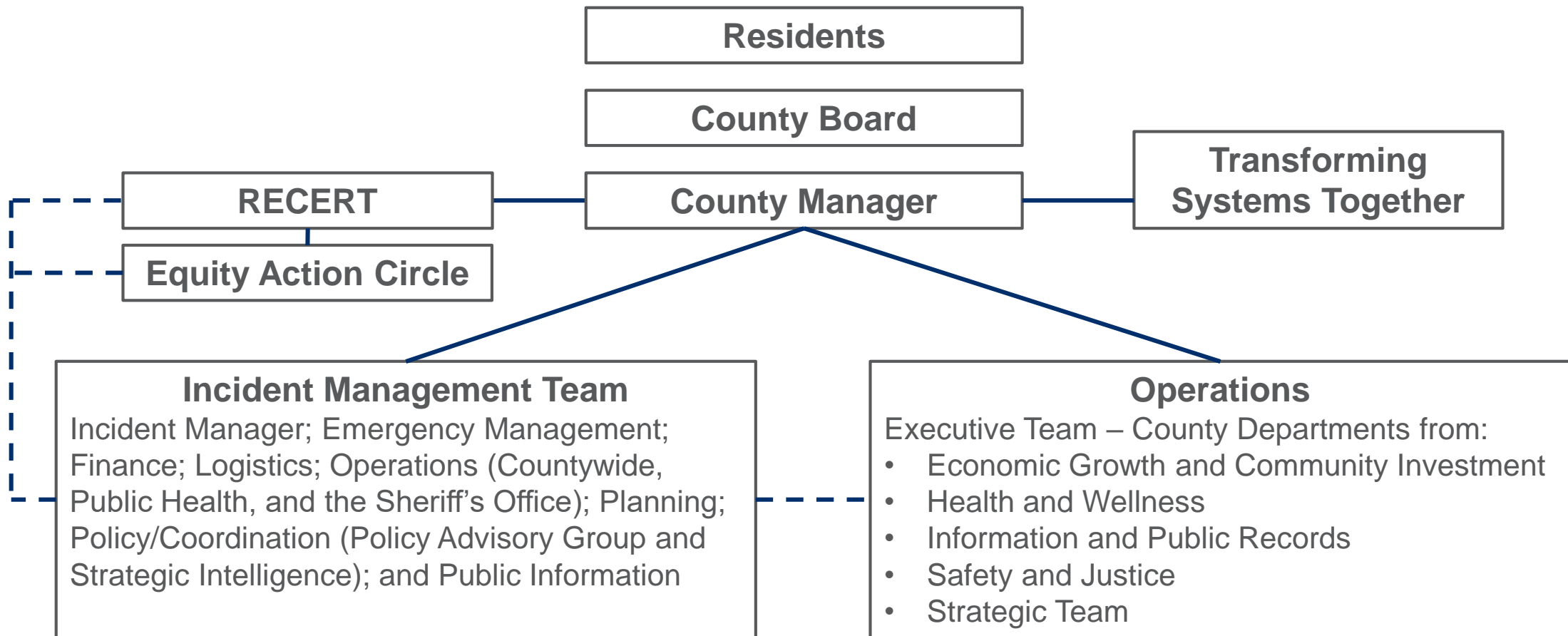
RECERT Overview

April 2020 to Present

Racial Equity and Community Engagement Response Team

- Launched April 13, 2020 to ensure racial equity and community engagement are being addressed during the COVID-19 response.
- Advises the County on the priorities, policies, systems, and environmental changes with a charge to advance racial equity throughout the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.
- 15 members of the response team serve as liaisons, leaders and subject matter experts to help elevate the needs, wants, and voice of racially, ethnically and culturally diverse communities.
- Focus Areas: Communications and Messaging; Data and Evaluation; Policy and Systems Change; and Community Engagement and Outreach
- Not a formal department but reports to County Manager during the COVID-19 response.

COVID-19 Response Organizational Structure

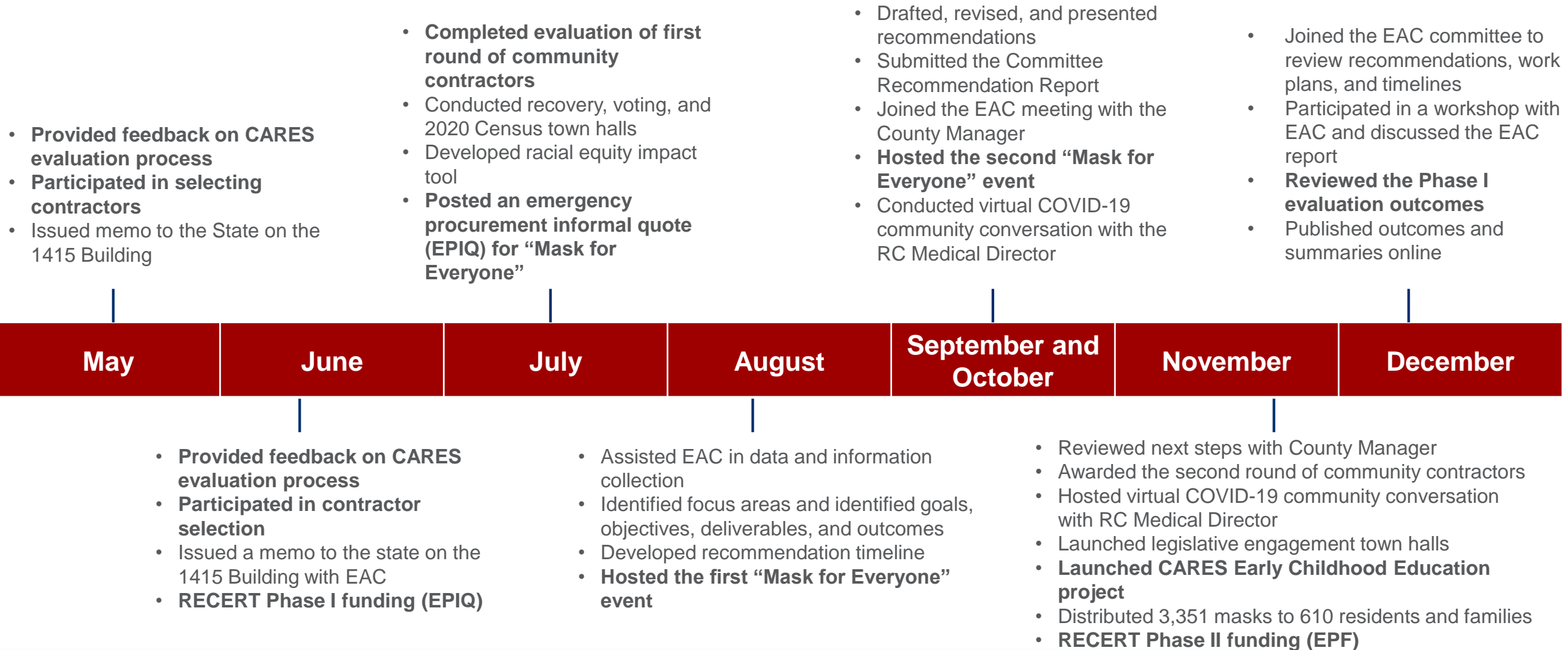


RECERT Members

Led by Racial and Health Equity Administrators: Mee Cheng, Prince Corbett and Sara Hollie

Service Team / Department	Team Member
Economic Growth and Community Investment	Ken Peltó
Health and Wellness	Ameé Xiong, Kamala Jaglall, Sarah Myott, Kee Vang and Kari Umanzor (back-up)
Information and Public Records	Kaosong Yang and Allison Winters
Safety and Justice	Nina Harris
Strategic Team	Derek Thomas, Maria Sarabia and Lidiya Girma

COVID-19 RECERT History and Accomplishments Timeline (2020)



July 2020 – February 2021
RECERT CARES Funded Initiatives

Mask for Everyone Initiative

August 2020 – to date

RECERT *A Mask for Everyone* Initiative



- Purpose: To ensure that individuals and families, specifically racially, ethnically and culturally diverse communities, have access to:
 - A homemade mask.
 - Accurate and up-to-date information about the importance of masks.
 - Instructions on proper use and care of homemade masks.

RECERT *A Mask for Everyone* Partners

- Community vendors
 - Request for Quote (RFQ) for community mask makers (July 2020-August 2020).
 - Funded 30 community contracts to make homemade masks
- Donations and distribution
 - Call to action for mask donations started in August 2020.
 - Targeted outreach and distribution to residents at two events
 - Total of 755 attendees
 - Over 4,000 homemade masks distributed to date
 - 500 boxes of food distributed
 - Received and distributed all 96,000 masks for small service-based businesses with a focused distribution to Asian and Latinx businesses.
 - Continue to accept mask requests and still mail and deliver masks

Early Childhood Initiative

November 2020 – January 2021

Early Childhood Education Initiative

- Support educational needs of up to 1,300 pre-k children ages 0-5 with a \$300 Lakeshore Learning Voucher
- 2,700+ parents/caregivers applied
 - Targeted outreach to low-income families receiving services
- 871 families (1,340 children) received voucher
 - Multiple children in a household were eligible
 - 100+ vouchers issued to families in emergency shelters
- Demographics of families
 - 30% Asian, 28% Black, 6% Latino, 2% American Indian
 - 15% of parents/caregivers under age 24
 - 75% of children between ages 1-4

Media Messaging Initiative

July 2020 – September 2020

Media and Messaging Initiative (July-Sept)

- **Purpose:** Partners will provide media services to aid the county in getting culturally specific, relevant, linguistically appropriate, accurate and timely messages and communication related to COVID-19 to racially, ethnically and culturally diverse communities.
- **Activities to date:**
 - Twelve (12) *Media and Messaging Community* contracts executed from July 2020 through August 2020.
 - Launched a learning community for community partners and RECERT.
 - Analyzed the feedback from our community partners, with outcomes of our learning shared in the RECERT evaluation report.

Media Messaging Initiative (July-Sept)

- Over 500,000 individuals were reached.
- Media and messaging was distributed to many different cultural and ethnic communities including Asian (Vietnamese, Hmong, Karen, Karenni, Cambodian, Lao), African American, African-born (Somali, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Oromo, Liberian, Nigerian) , Latino/x and Spanish speaking individuals and American Indian.

Trusted Messenger Initiative

July 2020 – February 2021

Trusted Messenger Initiative (July-Sept)

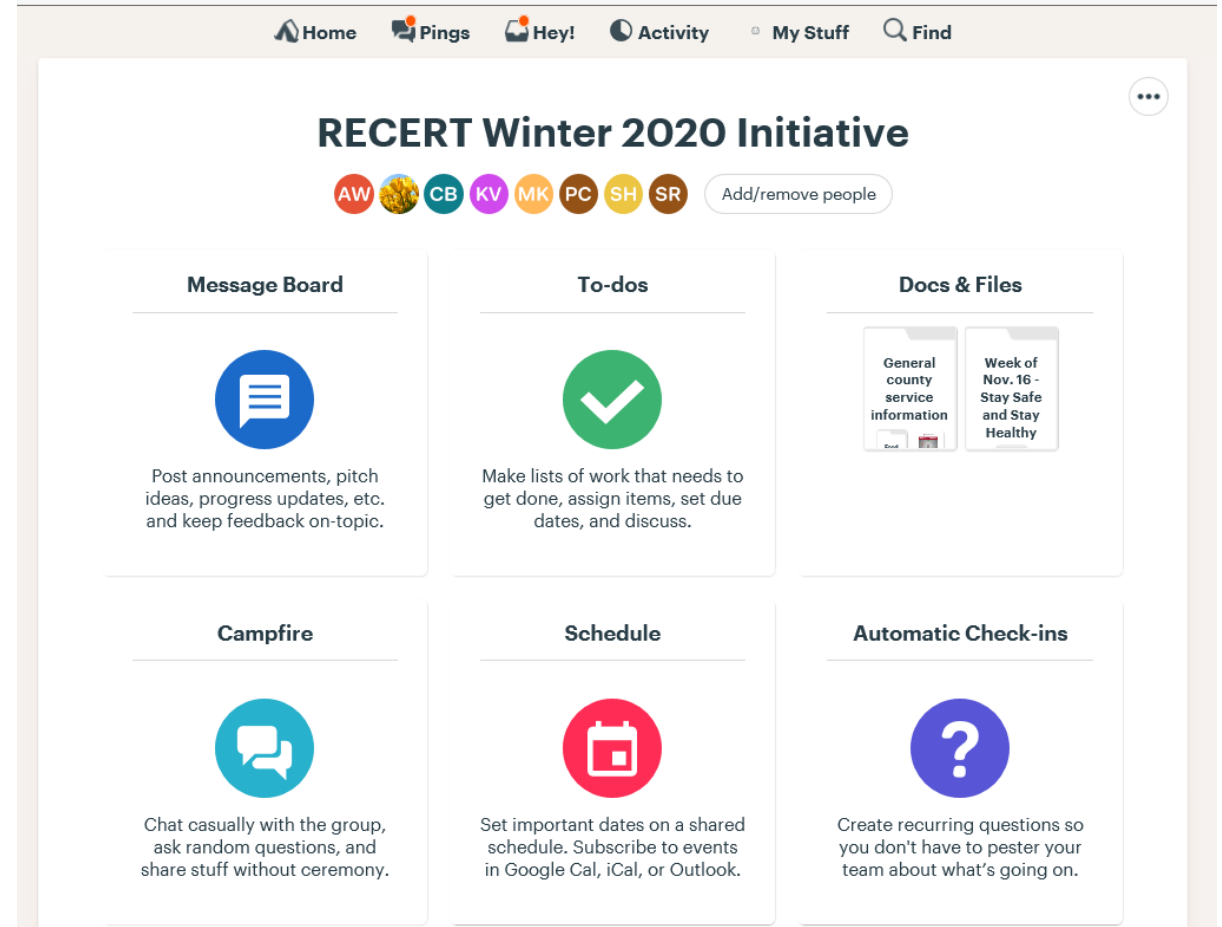
- **Purpose:** Partners will ensure that individuals and families are engaged and have accurate and up-to-date information to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and can access resources and services for which they qualify both in their community and with Ramsey County.
- **Activities to date:**
 - 15 community contracts executed from July 2020 to August 2020.
 - Launched a learning community for the community partners and RECERT
 - Analyzed the feedback from our community partners with outcomes of learnings shared in the RECERT evaluation report.

Trusted Messenger Initiative (July – Sept)

- Over 100,000 Ramsey County residents were reached.
- Reach extended beyond Ramsey County to across Minnesota and the United States or even a global audience.
- Worked with many different cultural and ethnic communities including African American, African-born (Somali, Oromo, Nigerian), Asian (Hmong, Karen, Karenni), Latino/x American Indian, White and mixed culture communities.

Trusted Messenger Initiative (Nov-Feb)

- 21 agencies provided media, messaging and engagement services to aid in getting culturally specific, age appropriate, relevant, linguistically appropriate, accurate, and timely messages and information to at least 100 individuals and families



Trusted Messenger Initiative (Nov – Feb)

- Partners ranged from using 1 to 8 communication methods, with an average of 5 communication methods.
- Messages delivered in 11 different languages.
- Many creative, innovative strategies employed.
- Ultimate reach well beyond Ramsey County.

Example of COVID-19 Messaging Schedule

- Week of November 16 – November 27
- Stay Safe and Stay Healthy key messages and talking points:
 - The amount of COVID-19 in our communities is at an all-time high.
 - This increases the chance that you will be exposed, even if you are with people that have no symptoms.
 - More people are getting sick with the virus and more are in hospitals than ever before.
 - We all need to limit contact as much as possible with anyone who does not live in our house or apartment.
 - Gatherings with any groups of people who do not live with you is risky right now.

Trusted Messenger Accomplishments (Nov – Feb)

Methods	# Partners	How Many	Reach
Social media	20	over 787 posts	over 500,000 reached
Webpage/other online material	15	90 webpages or web material	281,782 hits
Community engagement event	13	58 events	3,551 participants
Outreach activity	12	121 outreach activities	8,917 participants
Printed material	11	45 printed materials	12,042 materials distributed
Web-based video programming	8	36 web-based video programs	172,434 viewers
Radio programming	6	592 radio programs	613,360 listeners
E-newsletters and E-blasts	6	84 e-newsletters or e-blasts	2,736 subscribers
Television programming	5	10 tv programs	915,758 viewers
Podcast	4	91 podcast episodes	9,835 downloads
Direct mail	3	over 6 mailings	1,323 recipients

Cultural Community Connectors Initiative

November 2020 – February 2021

Cultural Community Connectors Initiative (Nov-Feb)

- 9 trusted community members and/or community agencies provided accurate and timely COVID-19 education, outreach, and resource connections and referrals to county and community services in culturally specific/relevant, age and linguistically appropriate ways to at least 50 people.
- Connectors leveraged community strengths and trusted community networks is essential to responding to COVID-19 and the longstanding racial and health inequities this pandemic has exacerbated for Ramsey County residents.
- Connectors helped community members navigate to critical resources.

Cultural Community Connectors Initiative (Nov-Feb)

- Partners ranged from connecting their community members with between 2 and 12 different types of resources.
- Over 2,000 Ramsey County residents connected with resources.

Cultural Community Connectors Initiative (Nov-Feb)

Resource	# Partners
COVID-19 health resources	7
Financial assistance	7
Food access	7
Housing	7
Mask resources	7
COVID-19 testing	5
Mental health and wellness	5
Employment & training programs	4
General resources	4
Childcare	3
Youth development/education	3
Elder services	2
Legal rights	2
Working from home and distance learning	2
Early childhood education	1

Community Conversations Initiative

November 2020 – February 2021

Community Conversations Initiative (Nov-Feb)

- 15 trusted community members and/or community agencies to:
 - Gather input and knowledge on the community's perceptions of COVID.
 - Gather what is needed in to slow the spread of COVID-19 among the racially, ethnically and culturally diverse communities in Ramsey County during the pandemic.
- Community partners engaged individuals, families and community groups in culturally specific, age and linguistically appropriate in at least two web-based and/or call-in community conversations

Community Conversations Initiative (Nov-Feb)

- A total of 49 conversations were held with a total of over Ramsey County 2,800 residents in racially and ethnically diverse communities between November 2020 and February 2021.
 - Conversations held in 15 different languages.

Key Cultural Considerations

- Communities have resilience and strength and have been helping each other during the pandemic. There is interest in taking more active role in their community in support and education of community members.
- Role of family and community and gatherings in their cultures.
- Role of faith/spirituality and traditional practices/medicines impact how communities perceive and respond to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Views on health and disease and role of use of traditional medicines.
- Discrimination and historical trauma.

Continued Need for COVID-19 Education and Resources

- Ongoing concern about COVID-19 spread in their communities and need for more education and resources.
 - Misinformation, stigma, language access, distrust of medical systems and access to culturally specific providers/COVID-19 clinics are barriers.
- Increased risk to large, multigenerational households and frontline workers, with many expected to keep working even when sick.

Widespread Economic Struggles

- Communities are struggling with job loss, financial challenges, food access, mental health concerns grief/loss and distance learning/education concerns.
- Available resources have only gone so far to meet the need.
 - Food insecurity continues
 - Help with rent and housing expenses
 - Lack of culturally specific mental health resources
 - Access to masks and other PPE/supplies
- Even when resources are available, there are barriers to accessing them:
 - Culturally appropriate food and services
 - Ineligible due to legal status
 - Strict application/documentation requirements

Other Support Needs

- Culturally-specific mental health support
- Grief and loss
- Community and cultural healing and supports
- Distance learning and educational support

Community Partners (July 2020 – February 2021)

Africa Network for Development Incorporated	Association of Nigerian Nurses of Minnesota	Black Civic Network	Center for Hmong Arts and Talent (CHAT)	Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)	CTV North Suburbs	Darul Uloom	Empire Smile
Fairview Health Foundation	Family Values for Life	Generations 2 Generations	Girls Are Powerful	Grace Restoration International	Hallie Q. Brown	Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER)	Hmong 18 Council
Hmong American Partnership (HAP)	Hmong Health Care Professionals Coalition	JR Broadcasting: AM 950 Radio/ Native Roots Radio	Kaleidoscope	Karen Organization of MN (KOM)	McLemore Holdings LLC	Minnesota Dawah Institute	Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder
MN Institute for Nigerian Development	OMG Digital Media	Portico Healthnet	Project Restore MN	Restoration for All Inc.	Run Like Harriet	Saint Paul Indians in Action	Santamaria Broadcasting (La Raza)
Social Impact Strategies Group	Southeast Asian Diaspora Project	St. Paul Promise Neighborhood	The Anika Foundation	The Ark Covenant Ministry	The Black Tech Guy	The JK Movement	The Other Media Group
Ujamaa Place	Vietnamese Social Services	Voices of Racial Justice	WellShare International	ZeHabesha LLC			

Reflection from Community Partners

Impacts of Round 2 Projects

- Increase in knowledge and behaviors around COVID-19 prevention and management, including use of masks, testing, interest in vaccination.
- Increase in knowledge of and access to available resources, including food, rent assistance
 - In turn, alleviates stress in household
- Had opportunity to share their experiences and have voice heard
- Community partners-built capacity through knowledge gained around COVID-19, available resources and about their own communities as well as new partnerships.



What We Learned from Community Partners

- Natural gravitation to hybrid efforts that blended goals of Trusted Messenger, Cultural Community Connector and Community Conversations.
- Partners noticed their Round 1 feedback used to make improvements to Round 2.
- Accessing existing relationships was key to all projects.
- Trust was a key factor to success.
- Engaging with leaders and influencers essential.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The length of contract was too short and long-term investment and sustainability should be a priority for supporting this work moving forward.
- Mixed experience with communication- benefitted from having a single contact person but encountered issues with getting replies to emails and receiving confusing email communication.
- Delay in RC approving materials.
- Community conversations would benefit from earlier partner involvement in design.
- Partners experienced challenges with county's invoicing and payment process, especially when they had subcontractors.

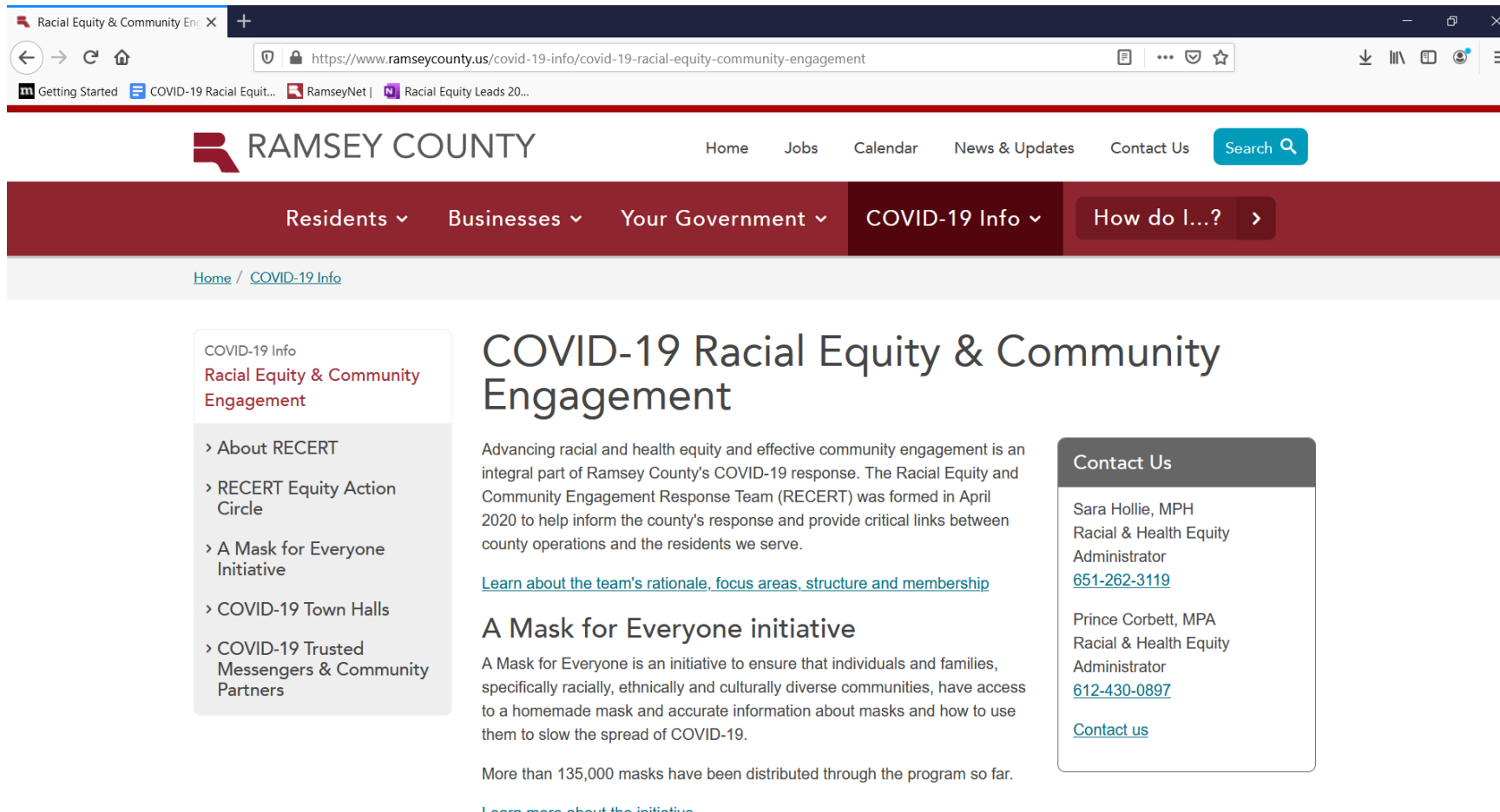
Learned from Both

- Racism, discrimination and historical trauma
- Important role that trusted community partners play in removing barriers to accessing information and resources.
- Need for focus on youth and elders.
- Both community members and partners working on their behalf face barriers to working with Ramsey County services.
- Need for long-term investment.
- Need for ongoing engagement with communities

Next Steps

- RECERT will:
- Take the feedback received today into account when deciding next steps with any future funding opportunities and/or partnerships.
- Provide a final report of all CARES funded RECERT initiatives by June 2021.
- Continue to engage residents and key stakeholders in our work to advance racial equity and shared community power.

Ramsey County Webpage



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.ramseycounty.us/covid-19-info/covid-19-racial-equity-community-engagement>. The website header features the Ramsey County logo and navigation links: Home, Jobs, Calendar, News & Updates, Contact Us, and a Search button. A dark red navigation bar contains links for Residents, Businesses, Your Government, COVID-19 Info (selected), and How do I...?. Below this, a breadcrumb trail shows Home / COVID-19 Info.

The main content area is titled "COVID-19 Racial Equity & Community Engagement". It includes a sidebar on the left with a "COVID-19 Info" section containing links to "Racial Equity & Community Engagement", "About RECERT", "RECERT Equity Action Circle", "A Mask for Everyone Initiative", "COVID-19 Town Halls", and "COVID-19 Trusted Messengers & Community Partners".

The main text area begins with a paragraph: "Advancing racial and health equity and effective community engagement is an integral part of Ramsey County's COVID-19 response. The Racial Equity and Community Engagement Response Team (RECERT) was formed in April 2020 to help inform the county's response and provide critical links between county operations and the residents we serve." This is followed by a link: [Learn about the team's rationale, focus areas, structure and membership](#).

The next section is titled "A Mask for Everyone initiative". It describes the initiative: "A Mask for Everyone is an initiative to ensure that individuals and families, specifically racially, ethnically and culturally diverse communities, have access to a homemade mask and accurate information about masks and how to use them to slow the spread of COVID-19." Below this, it states: "More than 135,000 masks have been distributed through the program so far." and includes a link: [Learn more about the initiative](#).

On the right side, there is a "Contact Us" box. It lists two contacts: Sara Hollie, MPH, Racial & Health Equity Administrator, with phone number 651-262-3119; and Prince Corbett, MPA, Racial & Health Equity Administrator, with phone number 612-430-0897. A "Contact us" link is also provided.

Group Agreements

- Be open-minded.
- Listen actively/respectfully when others are speaking.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (Use "I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Respectfully ask challenging questions and refrain from personal attacks.
- Be engaged and provide feedback.
- The goal is not to always agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be aware of your facial expressions --they can be perceived as disrespectful as words.
- Do not dominate the discussion, allow others to be heard.
- "Step Up and Step Back!"

Community Feedback & Discussion

Thank You!

racialequity@ramseycounty.us