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## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

*Ramsey County envisions an inclusive economy where all residents prosper and have access to opportunity. By 2040, Ramsey County seeks to eliminate racial disparities in employment, educational attainment, and income. Full participation in the regional economy by all residents will create wealth, expand the talent pool and increase well-being. Ramsey County will leverage workforce development programs and partnerships, business expansion programs, internal procurement and hiring, the development of regional transit corridors, and inclusive redevelopment of key county sites, like Rice Creek Commons and Riverfront Properties, to accomplish this vision.*

## KEY THEMES:

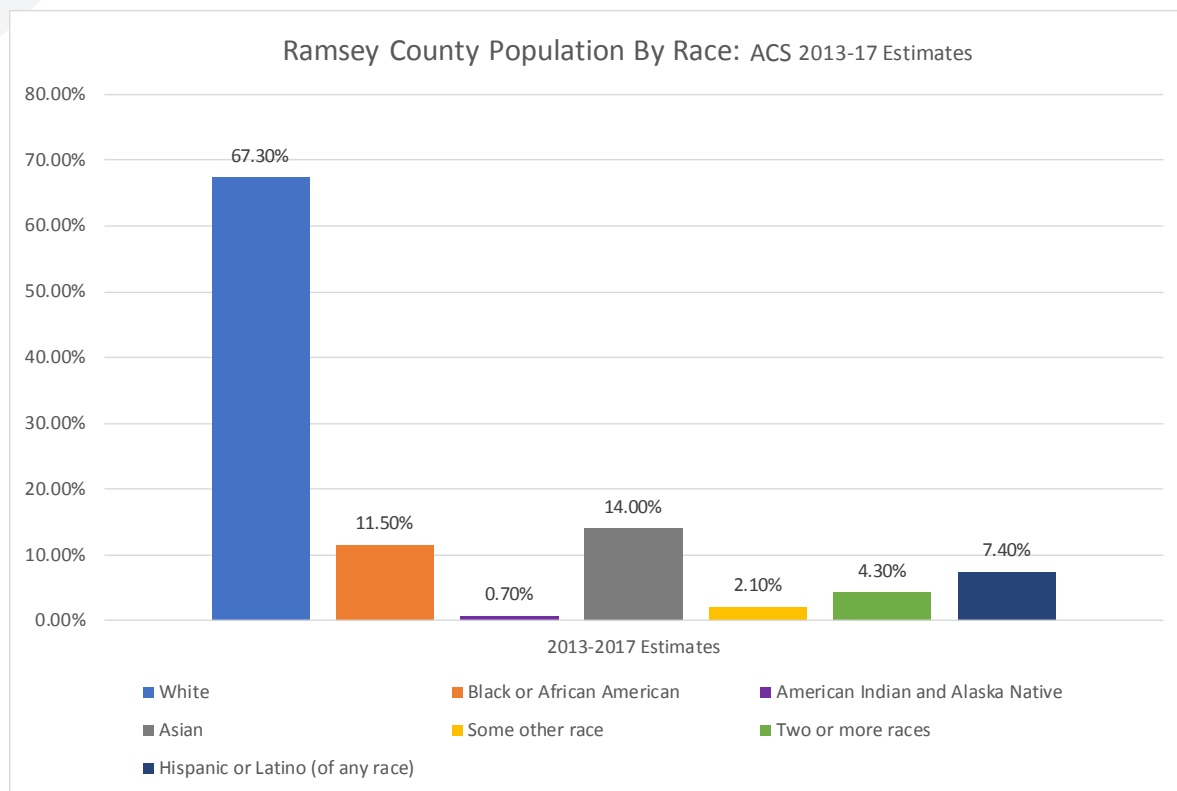
- ▶ Eliminate racial disparities in employment, educational attainment, and income.
- ▶ Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Support jobseekers, businesses, and entrepreneurs through an array of support services.
- ▶ Implement and meet county-specific workforce inclusion goals for all capital projects.
  - ▶ Implement and meet county-specific contracting inclusion goals.
  - ▶ Attract, grow and retain a talented, diverse and healthy internal workforce.
- ▶ Riverview, Rush Line, METRO Gold Line and the B Line will be in operation and connect to key job centers.
  - ▶ Rice Creek Commons will be an active, fully-developed regional center.
- ▶ Riverfront Properties will be home to a marquee, mixed-use development.



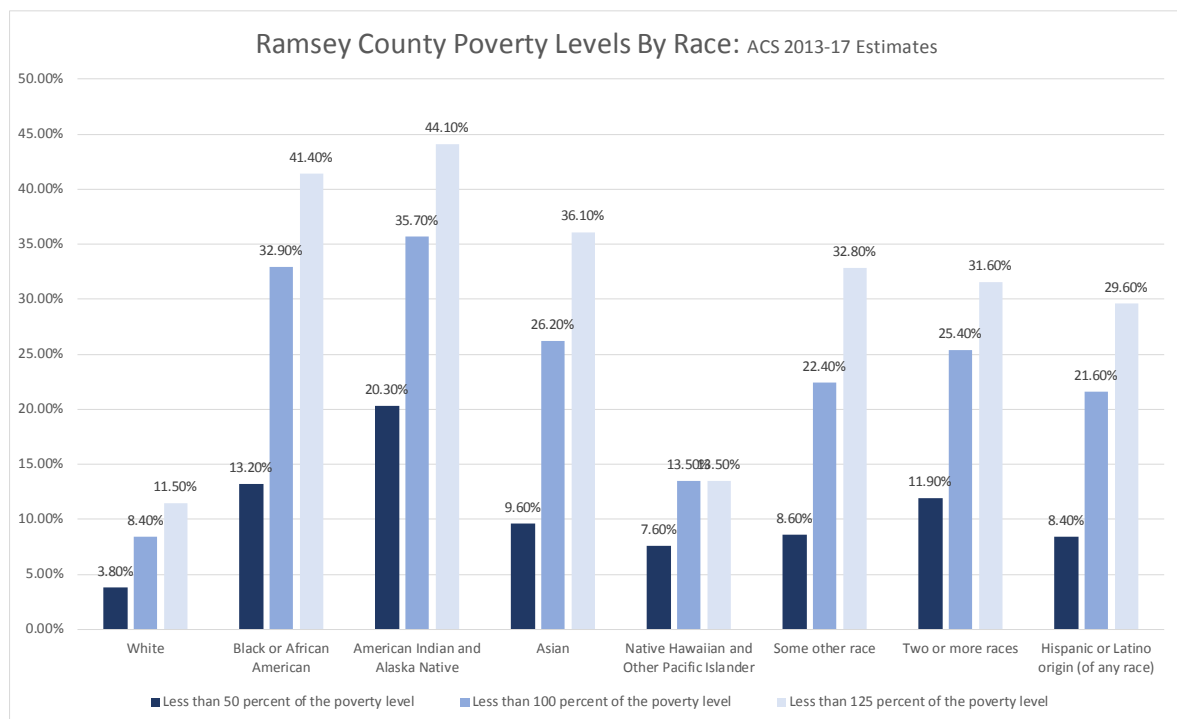
## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

## CURRENT REALITY

Ramsey County is racially and ethnically diverse. However, large disparities exist by race in poverty rates, educational attainment and unemployment rates. Eliminating these disparities would lead to a more just, inclusive and economically prosperous county for all.

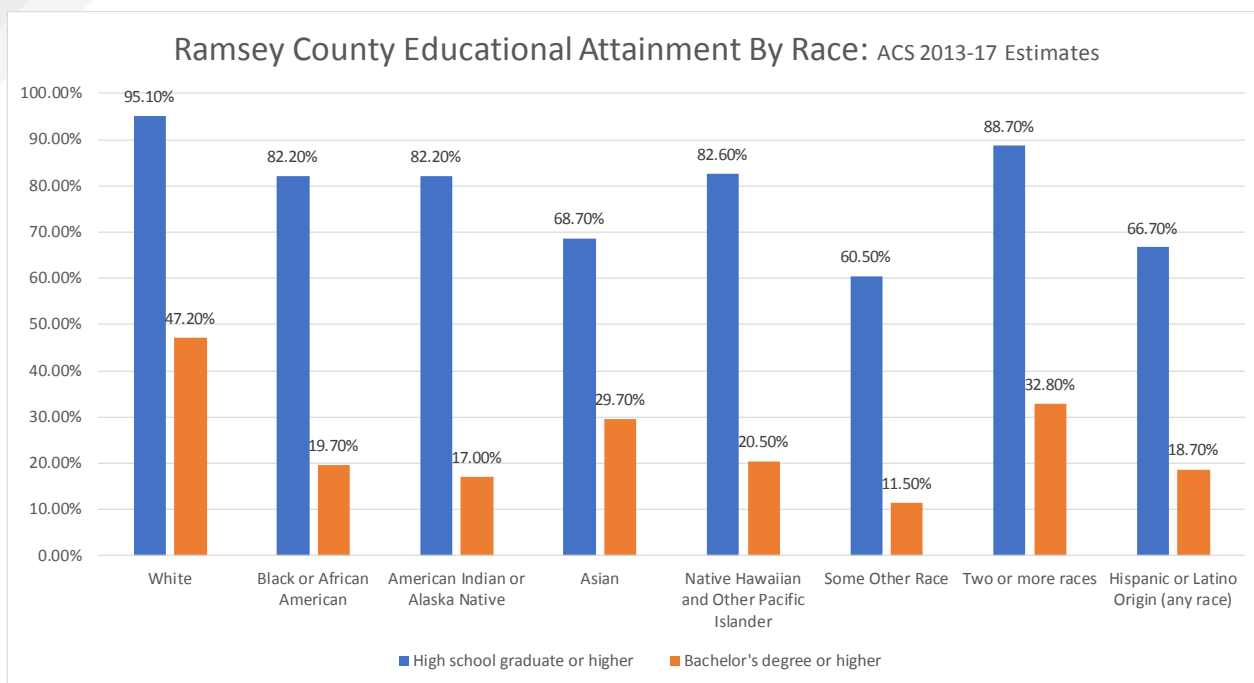


Poverty rates are significantly higher for American Indian, African American and Asian American residents compared to white residents.

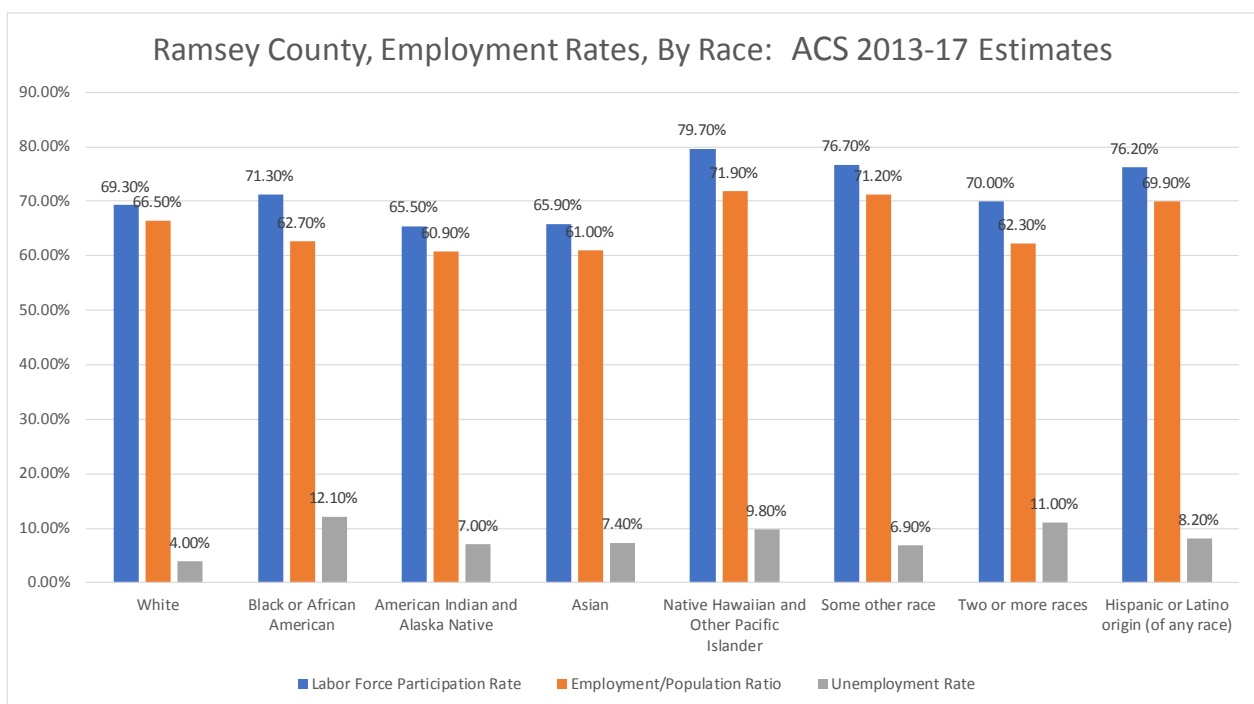


## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

White residents graduate from high school and obtain bachelor degrees or higher degrees at a significantly higher rate than residents of color or American Indian residents. Because educational attainment is strong predictor of income it will be extremely important to reduce this disparity.



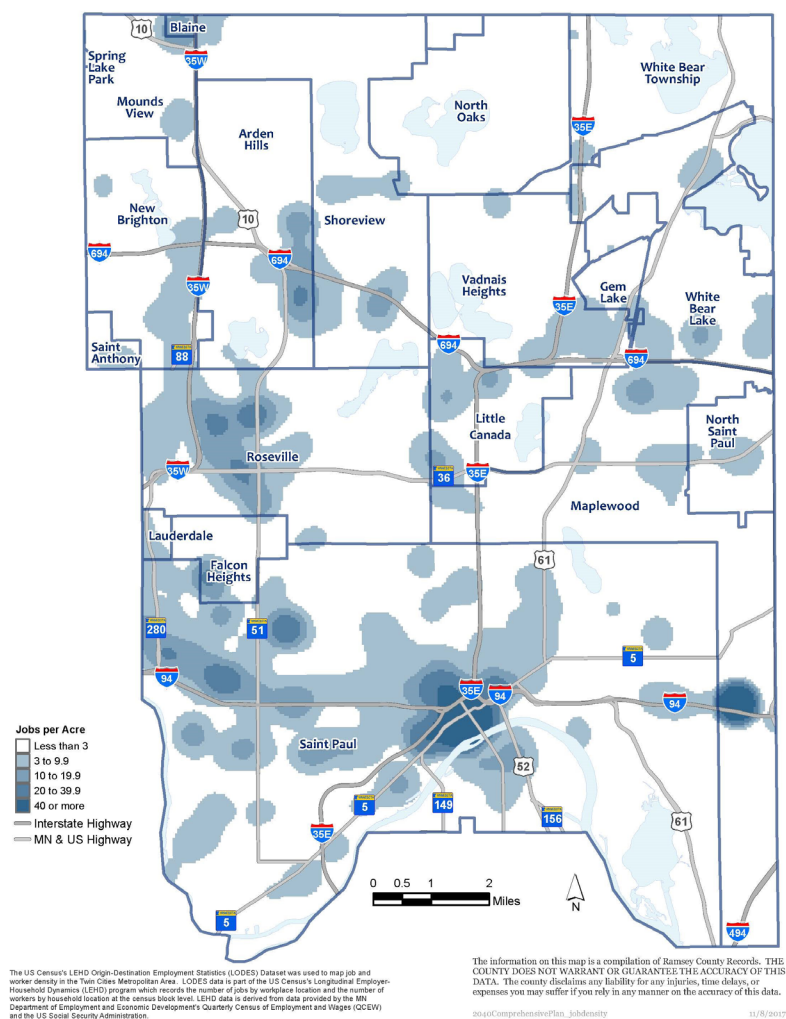
The unemployment rate is eight points higher for African American residents and mixed-race residents than white residents. Overcoming barriers to employment will allow all residents to more fully participate in the regional economy.



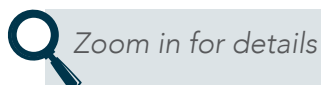
## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

A spatial mismatch between areas of concentrated poverty and areas with high job density are present in Ramsey County and across the region. Poverty is concentrated primarily in the city of Saint Paul whereas jobs are dispersed throughout the county. Major job concentrations exist in Downtown Saint Paul, Maplewood at the 3M Campus, western Roseville, Saint Paul's Midway and along the I-694 Corridor. Low wage jobs, which are potential career pathways for low-income residents follow a similar distribution. Many of the areas with employment opportunities are disconnected from public transportation, which puts many jobs out of reach for residents who do not have regular access to vehicles. Economic development strategic planning and multimodal transit planning will need to address this to create a more prosperous region and county.

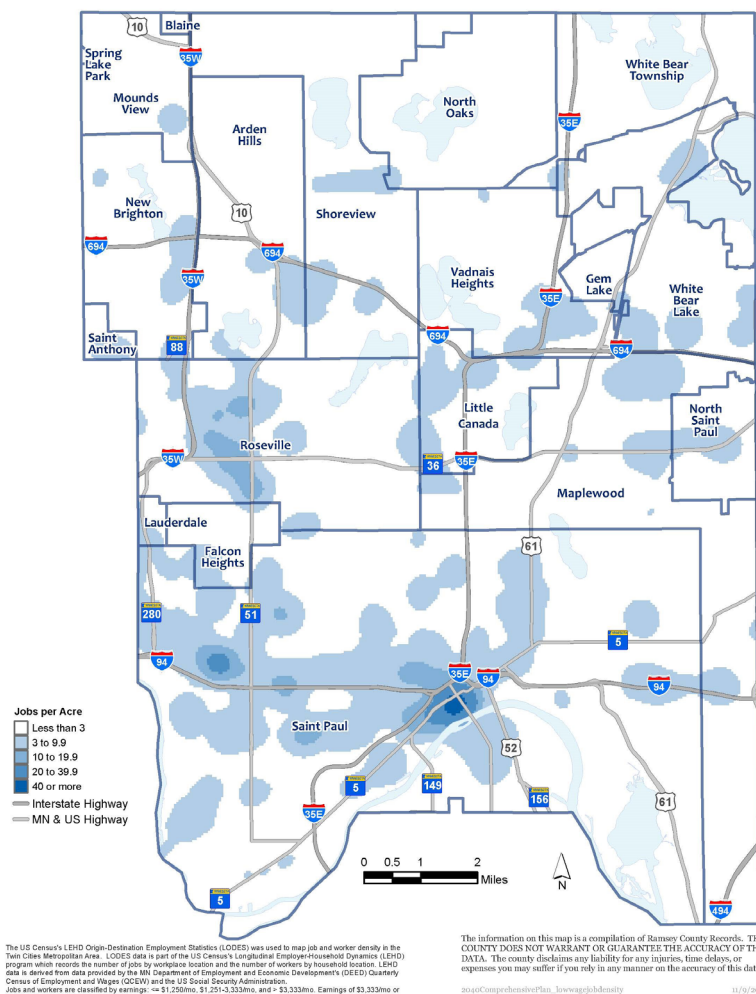
## LEHD Job Density in Ramsey County.



The US Census's LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) Dataset was used to map job and worker density in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. LODES data is part of the US Census's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program which records the number of jobs by workplace location and the number of workers by household location at the census block level. LEHD data is derived from data provided by the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) and the US Social Security Administration.



## LEHD Low Wage Job Density in Ramsey County.



The US Census's LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) Dataset was used to map job and worker density in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. LODES data is part of the US Census's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program which records the number of jobs by workplace location and the number of workers by household location. LEHD data is derived from data provided by the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) and the US Social Security Administration. Jobs and workers are classified by earnings: < \$1,200/mo., \$1,201-\$3,333/mo., and > \$3,333/mo. Earnings of \$3,333/mo. or more were classified into the highest category.

## STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

To create an inclusive economy and eliminate racial disparities Ramsey County will implement strategies that leverage and expand existing programs and initiatives. In 2019 Ramsey County will develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan that lays out a vision and expands upon existing programs and strategies.

### Workforce Development



Ramsey County's Workforce Solutions department is committed to connecting jobseekers and businesses with training services and employment opportunities. The department focuses on two key populations, workers who were laid off from their jobs and those who are connected to our assistance programs. Since economic conditions are constantly changing Ramsey County will remain agile and adaptable to both ongoing and acute economic trends.

Enhanced regional and county-specific partnerships, like the Workforce Innovation Board, will be essential to adapt to changing economic forces. Ramsey County and the larger metropolitan area are nearing full employment. Employers are struggling to attract and retain talent in the tight job market. The number of jobseekers that are utilizing workforce programs are decreasing due to the strong economy. Ramsey County must help diversify the labor market and connect this expanded labor market to all communities. This includes youth, people with criminal records, persons of color and/or American Indians, persons with disabilities, and people with low educational attainment.

Other economic trends must also be addressed. The "gig economy" is expanding rapidly due to corporate restructuring, accessible technology and employee preferences. Ramsey County must develop strategies and partnerships to better understand the implications of this transformation. The decentralization of employment, especially low and mid-skill jobs, to suburban and exurban jobs creates a spatial mismatch between the labor market and available jobs. Ramsey County must partner with employers and other government agencies to establish and expand effective strategies. This will include economic development planning, expanding transit service, and "last-mile" solutions that connect workers from transit corridors to their employment.

Ramsey County must reconsider and adapt its workforce development programs and entire service delivery model to better meet the needs of its residents. Partnership and collaboration with community providers, libraries, other county services, and government agencies are paramount to accomplish this. The goal is to make service delivery accessible and effective for all county residents. This will require a two-generation approach that focuses on the entire family and their needs. The county's technology will also need to be updated to provide more educational and employment training opportunities online.





### Major Redevelopments and Transit Corridors

Ramsey County is planning for two major development projects, Riverfront Properties and Rice Creek Commons. Rice Creek Commons in Arden Hills sits on the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP). The county-owned site is the largest Superfund site in Minnesota and following an extensive clean-up will be delisted in 2019. By 2040, Rice Creek Commons will become an inclusive, mixed-use town center that will feature a variety of housing types for an array of income levels, major employment opportunities, institutional space, green energy initiatives and recreational access. Road, trail and transit improvements will connect the development to the region and surrounding neighborhoods. Diverse construction hiring and contracting goals will ensure that the benefits of development extend to communities beyond the site. The county will continue to partner with Arden Hills, private developers and other government agencies to make this vision a reality.

Riverfront Properties is a nearly five-acre, county-owned site located along the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in Downtown Saint Paul. In 2015, Ramsey County began deconstruction of the former Adult Detention Center and West buildings to prepare the site for development. The site is now poised for a marquee development that will bring much needed Class-A office space and additional amenities to the downtown core. Once complete, the development will bring high-paying jobs to an area that is near hundreds of affordable housing units and is highly accessible to the entire region by public transportation. Again, diverse construction hiring and contracting goals will ensure that the benefits of development extend to communities beyond the site. Additionally, partnerships between future office tenants and workforce development programs will connect residents to job opportunities.

As mentioned in the transportation chapter, Ramsey County is partnering with other government agencies to complete three major public transit corridors that will connect residents to education, employment and recreational opportunities. The Riverfront Corridor will be a modern streetcar line that connects Downtown Saint Paul to the MSP International Airport and the Mall of America via West Seventh Street. The Rush Line will connect White Bear Lake to Downtown Saint Paul via Maplewood Mall. The line will provide greater access to many health care facilities and much needed service to St. Paul's Eastside. The METRO Gold Line will connect Woodbury to Downtown Saint Paul with stations on St. Paul's Eastside and the 3M headquarters. Ramsey County also supports Metro Transit as they work to expand the rapid bus system across the region, including the B Line on Marshall Avenue in Saint Paul.

## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

### Procurement and Contracting

Ramsey County procures millions of dollars' worth of goods and services each year. As a major consumer, the county can make sure that its spend better reflects its mission, vision and goals. Currently Ramsey County focuses on contracting with businesses that are certified small businesses. The focus is on firm size rather than race, gender or veteran status. Current data is incomplete, but shows room to expand procurement and contracting opportunities with small and disadvantaged businesses. In 2019, Ramsey County will reexamine its procurement practices to include a racial equity lens and expand current reporting to include non-profit vendors, a major provider of contracted services. An adjusted procurement process will create more opportunities for vendors owned by women, people of color and American Indians.

In 2018 Ramsey County created a diverse workforce hiring goal and laid the groundwork to create a diverse contracting goal for construction, capital and development projects. Starting in June 2019, all county-led construction projects will aim to hire 32% minority and 20% women, which reflects the state construction workforce goal. The county policy also gave directive for staff to create goals for inclusive and diverse contracting for construction, capital and development projects. Ramsey County will pursue a "carrot-based" approach, which will emphasize relationship-building between private developers, contractors, trade schools, unions, workforce development programs, and government agencies. This acknowledges that goals will not be met with strict enforcement, but rather through collaboration and evaluation.

### Internal Workforce

Ramsey County is one of the largest employers in the region with approximately 4,000 employees spread throughout the county. Ramsey County's overall workforce currently reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the county. 32% of the workforce are people of color or American Indian, compare to 30% of the overall county population. However, employees of color leave the county at a higher rate than white employees and there are less formal leaders of color than white formal leaders. Employees of color are not evenly housed across departments of the county. Some departments are predominately employees of color where other departments have no employees of color.

The county can work to attract, retain and promote a diverse and talented workforce that better reflects the community. Five job classes were identified that are struggling to recruit and retain employees, including 9-1-1 telecommunicators, clerk typists, financial workers, real estate appraisers and building maintenance mechanics. Strategies will be implemented to identify and support career pathways for these job classifications within the county. Additionally, Ramsey County has developed four themes to address talent attraction, retention and promotion issues.

- Organization-wide culture
- Human Resources as a strategic partner
- Modernize personnel rules to align with values
- Modernize job classifications and compensation

Ramsey County believes that the implementation of these themes will create a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Other efforts to attract a diverse workforce include the Progressive Internship Program that recruits students from St. Paul College and Metro State University to gain two years of work experience at the county. Similarly the Finance Fellowship is a three year program where fellows gain public finance experience in departments across the county.



2018 Small Business Procurement Fair





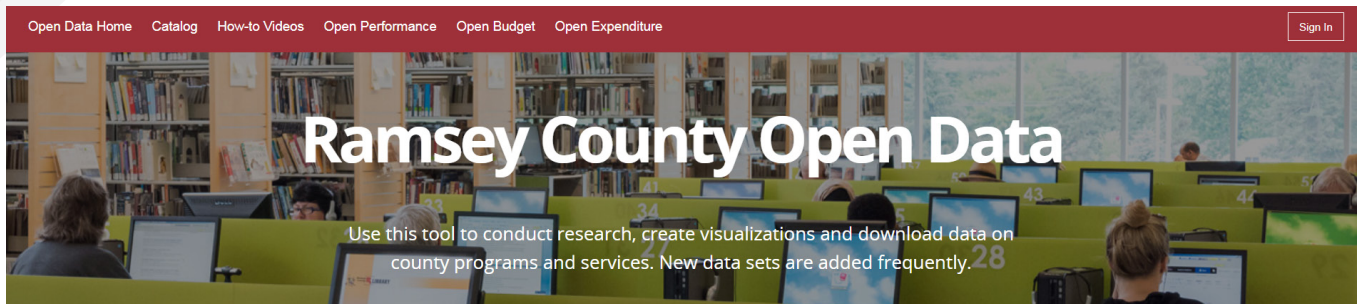
### Business Support Programs

Ramsey County's Economic Development Strategic Plan will identify which business support programs are desired by the private sector. Two current programs provide support and could be expanded in the future. Economic Gardening provides a suite of high-end, accelerated business growth resources to non-competing second stage businesses including CEO peer coaching and collaboration roundtables, CEO informational forums/referral networks, technical assistance and focused market research, GIS mapping, search engine optimization and social media marketing. The Economic Gardening program is available to for-profit, privately held companies that have been headquartered in Ramsey, Hennepin, Anoka or Scott County for at least the previous two years. The company must generate annual revenue or working capital between \$1 and \$50 million, employ between 10 and 99 full-time employees and demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during at least two of the previous five years. Additionally, eligible companies must provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets. The program is offered to qualifying companies at no cost.

Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers' (MCCD) Open to Business program helps new and early-stage businesses access the technical assistance they need to grow and prosper by providing advice and counseling to clients, helping them achieve their entrepreneurial goals. MCCD provides on-site business services specialists to work with city and county staff in such areas as startup and expansion financing, business plan development, licensing, zoning and regulatory issues, and financial management. MCCD also offers businesses access to low interest loans and other services on a fee-for-service basis. This is a cost-effective way of providing another level of small and medium-sized business assistance to our businesses to retain and grow jobs in Ramsey County. Open to Business addresses an important gap in the spectrum of business retention and expansion tools in the county. When combined with current activities like Economic Gardening, infrastructure improvements and selective property abatements, the county provide services across the business continuum to firms of all sizes.

## EVALUATION

## Open Data Portal and Performance Measures



Ramsey County is committed to becoming a resident-centered organization that delivers transparency and accountability in government. Open and accessible public data provides opportunities to partner with the community to develop innovative solutions, improve the quality of data and analysis, assist stakeholders and county staff with their work, and proactively disclose frequently requested public information. Engagement with the community is vital to ensuring that the county's [Open and Accessible Public Data Portal](#) supports the needs of a diverse community and is reflective of the county's resident-centered focus. Performance Measures that track department-level performance are important evaluation criteria to track progress and are included in the [biennial supplemental budget](#). Ramsey County's open data portal includes a page dedicated specifically to sharing the county's performance measures and community indicators. Community indicators are broad-based indicators about the state of the community and the region. Which policies are working well? How might we revise our policies where outcomes are not what the community desires or expects? What insights might emerge from analyzing the community indicators to guide future decisions, including adjusting policies and priorities to more effectively advance the county's vision, mission and goals? The open data portal and the community indicators together will help create an additional platform to foster dialogue with residents, partners and stakeholders. What can and will the county do to advance its vision, mission and goals? Where are the gaps, overlaps, and opportunities? What can we all do to support Ramsey County in its efforts to create a community of excellence where all are valued and thrive?