

# Creating Action with the Community

Ramsey County's Upward Mobility Project is a countywide initiative intended to boost mobility from poverty and ensure that prosperity is shared by all residents. Through this project, the county will use a racial equity lens to address inequities in economic and social outcomes. This work focuses on the priority areas of affordability, wealth creation, early childhood, health, and public safety.

## **A VISION FOR UPWARD MOBILITY**

Ramsey County is guided in this work by their vision of a vibrant community where all are valued and thrive. This vision depends on addressing racial and ethnic disparities to create an environment where all residents can experience fair outcomes, achieve the highest level of health and well-being, and access opportunities for advancement and growth.

## **WHO IS INVOLVED?**

Ramsey County's Upward Mobility Project uses a two-track approach to champion this work. First, the project team assembled a countywide working group for government staff members across seven departments. Then the project team formed a second working group, the Community Partners, composed of leaders from community-based organizations that operate programs addressing affordability, wealth creation, early childhood, health, and public safety:

## RAMSEY COUNTY GOALS

### **AFFORDABILITY**

Make living in Ramsey County affordable for racially and ethnically diverse communities to create a strong, stable foundation for economic success.

### **WEALTH CREATION**

Build pathways to homeownership, entrepreneurship, and other opportunities for racial and ethnically diverse communities to build generational wealth.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Ensure racially and ethnically diverse families and young children have access to quality and consistent early care, education, resources, and opportunities.

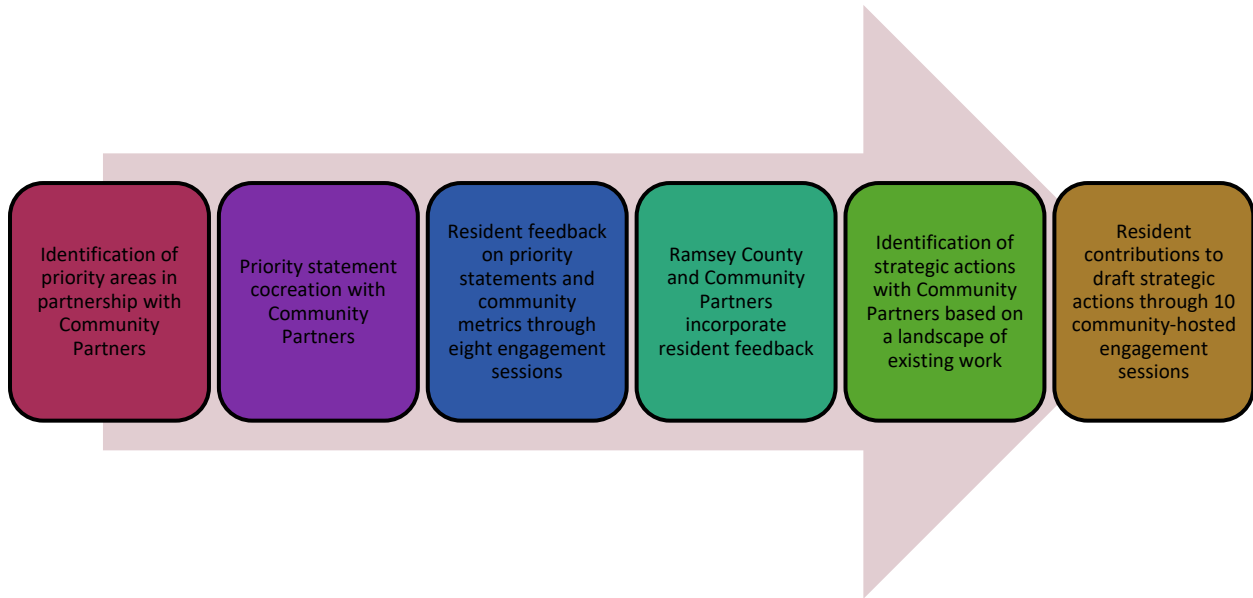
### **HEALTH**

Address racial disparities to ensure equitable health outcomes for all Ramsey County residents.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Realign justice system outcomes through well-being investments aimed at eliminating harm to Black and American Indian communities imposed by the justice system.

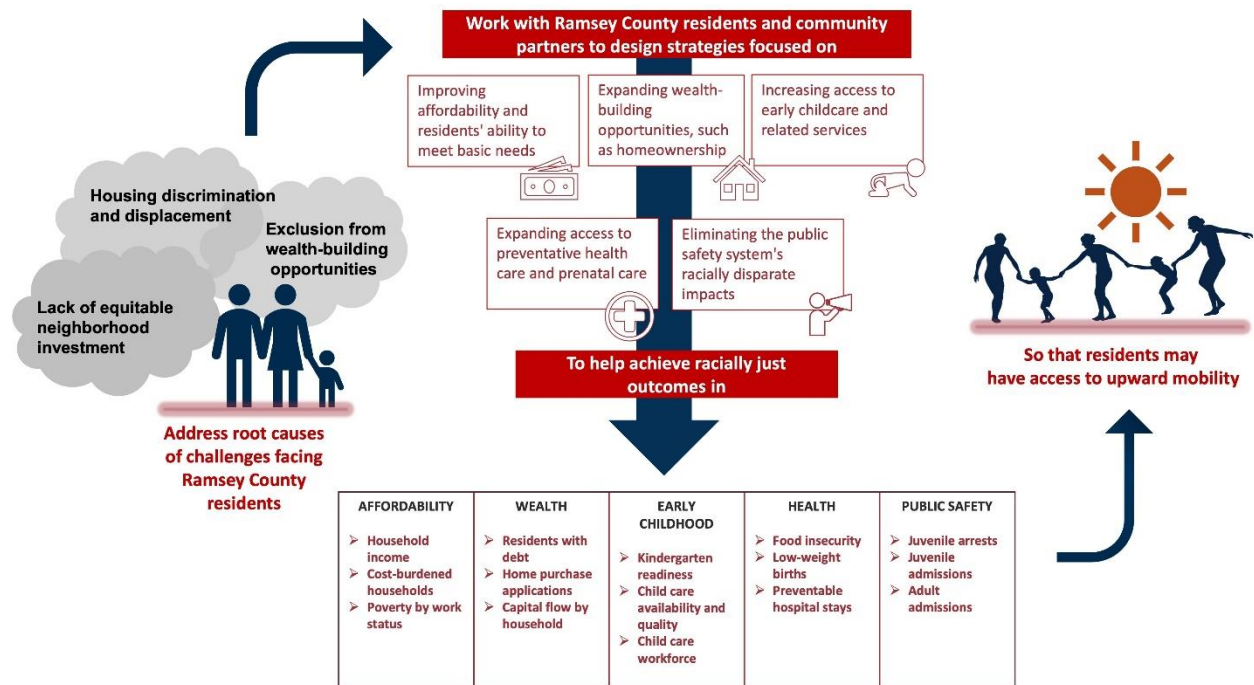
- Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties
- East Metro Community Centers (Hallie Q Brown Community Center, Keystone Community Services, Merrick Community Services and Neighborhood House)
- Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood
- Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative



### **CREATING WITH COMMUNITY**

The insights that informed this planning process were guided by interdepartmental coordination and extensive community engagement. The county worked closely with the four Community Partners mentioned, who were key partners in two rounds of community engagement with Ramsey County residents to get feedback on the priority statements and the strategic actions identified based on those priorities.

## A THEORY OF CHANGE



## KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

### AFFORDABILITY

- 1 Preserve and increase the supply of rental housing units for the county's lowest-income residents.
- 2 Sustain and accelerate "earn and learn" programming to connect job seekers with in-demand career pathways.
- 3 Enhance the accessibility and awareness of available assistance.

### WEALTH CREATION

- 1 Expand affordable homeownership opportunities and improve housing stability for communities that have experienced historic wealth extraction.
- 2 Develop pathways to entrepreneurship and Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous business ownership.

3

Provide financial coaching and accessible resources that demystify lending processes and empower racially and ethnically diverse communities to build assets.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

1

Increase access to high-quality early care and education.

2

Engage families experiencing the greatest disparities in early care and education with community-based family coaches.

3

Strategically coordinate services so that all Ramsey County touchpoints for families understand and refer to other early care and education services.

4

Create an Early Childhood Academy to expand the early childhood workforce with well-trained, high-earning, successful child care providers.

## HEALTH

1

Expand access to preventive health services and mental and behavioral health services.

2

Expand access to prenatal care to support healthy birth weights.

3

Promote food security and access to nutritious foods.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

1

Realign justice system outcomes through well-being investments aimed at eliminating harm to Black and American Indian communities imposed by the justice system.

2

Partner with the community to offer alternatives to confinement and reduce the number of Black and Native Americans who are imprisoned and incarcerated.

3

Reduce the number of Ramsey County residents who are financially obligated to the criminal justice system.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

Ramsey County has a set of Community Indicators, which are measures that help planners and community leaders make decisions that affect future outcomes and show community progress toward achieving the county's vision, mission, and goals. The Community Indicators will be updated as a result of the upward mobility work to reflect the priorities identified through this process.

The strategic actions outlined above and in the county's Mobility Action Plan will be implemented by a coalition comprising county departments and Community Partners and will be assessed by the county's performance measurement and evaluation team.