

Hennepin County Annual Report

Pandemic Response Projects

July 2021 – June 2022



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Executive Summary

Hennepin County will leverage its American Rescue Plan Act — State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA-SLFRF) to further its mission and vision to support residents who are adversely affected by disparities; to support innovative, equitable and sustainable changes in service delivery; to promote private and public partnerships within our community, and to seek other funding sources to maximize our investments and best position Hennepin County for the future.

Through the ARPA-SLFRF program, Hennepin County has a total award of \$245.9 million to respond to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 and to mitigate its impact on the community, residents and businesses. Key principles and priorities have been set to build upon the county's approach to disparity reduction and to support pandemic recovery efforts. Hennepin County is committed to using a racial equity lens to target resources and focus outcomes on reducing disparities in the following domains: education, employment, health, housing, income, justice and transportation. In addition to the domain areas, overarching infrastructure and supports have been prioritized.

In March 2022, the county board took action to use the dollars from ARPA-SLFRF for government services. Starting in 2022, the county will use other revenue sources for pandemic response and recovery efforts, which is anticipated to result in efficiencies. Programs and services previously authorized by the board will continue but will be funded through other sources outside of the ARPA-SLFRF.

This annual report summarizes Hennepin County's pandemic response projects from July 2021 through June 2022. Projects are presented by disparity domain area. The following details are provided for each project:

- Project name
- Allocation amount
- Project description
- Progress narrative
- Key performance indicators
- Next steps

Pandemic recovery funds

Hennepin County continues to leverage federal funding to serve residents and to advance disparity reduction efforts. Various federal funding streams, identified below, have allowed the county to provide timely services and programs for residents in crisis. Specifically, ARPA-SLFRF has enabled the county to continue investments in the public health response, jump-start disparity reduction strategies, and drive transformational change.

As described in the 2021 Recovery Plan for ARPA-SLFRF, Hennepin County has established the following principles and priorities to guide pandemic response efforts.

Principles

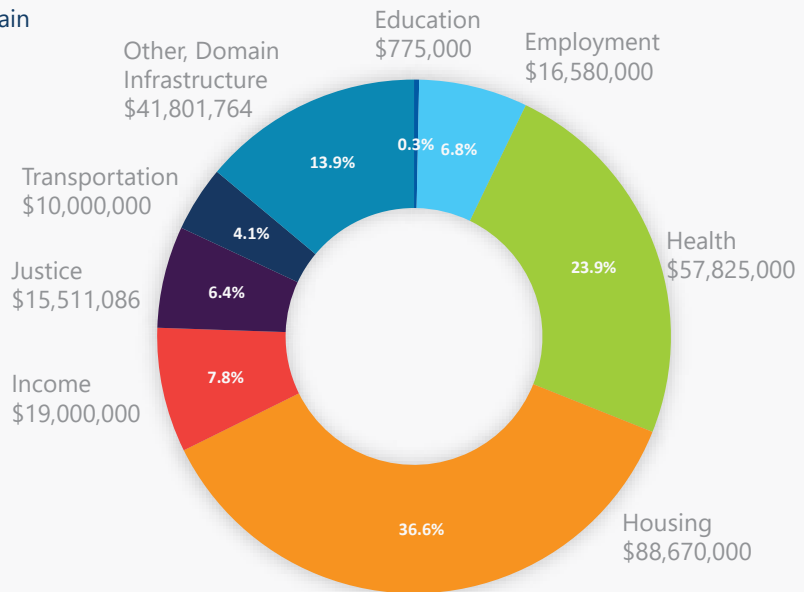
- Hennepin County embraces and embodies core values of continuous improvement, customer service, diversity and inclusion, employee engagement, and workforce development as we serve our residents.
- Hennepin County is committed to using a racial equity lens to target resources and focus outcomes on reducing disparities in the following domains: education, employment, health, housing, income, justice, and transportation.
- In response and recovery efforts, Hennepin County embraces opportunities for transformative change including lasting investments and more efficient, effective and accessible service delivery for residents in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Hennepin County will pursue and leverage other available federal and state funding before using CARES or SLFRF funding to support the recovery of residents, communities and businesses.
- Hennepin County is committed to a people-centered, inclusive and equitable approach in policymaking and service delivery.

Priorities

- Fund health programs to respond to COVID-19.
- Ensure legally required functions of county government can continue during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Invest in capital resources and infrastructure that help improve service delivery, remove barriers and mitigate health risks.
- Prioritize strategic investments that will have long-term value or cost reductions.
- Support the recovery of communities, residents, small businesses and nonprofits impacted by COVID-19 in ways that will help our region emerge from this crisis with an even stronger, more inclusive and resilient economy over the long term.
- Expand support and outreach to culturally specific human services and health care providers to strengthen their long-term ability to meet community needs.

Pandemic Response Projects

Funding by Disparity Reduction Domain



Hennepin County

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Hennepin County relies upon the disparity reduction domains to describe the pandemic response projects. Here is an overview of the funding allocations and how they are spread across the disparity reduction domains.

Revenue replacement

In early 2022, Hennepin County took action to use the dollars from ARPA-SLFRF for the provision of government services. The revenue replacement calculation was submitted in the April 2022 Project and Expenditure Report and applies to expenditures from January 1, 2022, through the duration of ARPA-SLFRF. Programs and services previously authorized by the Hennepin County Board will continue but will be funded through other sources outside of ARPA-SLFRF.

Federal funding

Hennepin County has received a variety of federal pandemic response and recovery funds. The funds have been allocated in alignment with the county's mission and vision to support residents. It is imperative that the county continues to review and leverage funding sources to maximize investments and best position the county for the future.

Here is a snapshot of the federal pandemic relief funds received by Hennepin County:

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)
- American Rescue Plan Act-State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA-SLFRF)
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME-ARP)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Hennepin County is an organization committed to resident services. With nearly 9,000 public employees, the county works to enhance the health, safety, and quality of life of all residents. We envision a future where every community is thriving.

Inequities in education, employment, health, housing, income, justice, and transportation are starkest between residents of color and their White counterparts. When we start our work from this shared perspective, shifting our guiding lens to a vision that is focused on reducing disparities, we see the places, partnerships, programs and services where we have a responsibility to act.

Our work is intentional and comprehensive. In 2013, Hennepin County solidified its commitment to reduce disparities and began to build an infrastructure that could support the process of systemic change. From this foundation, and with a clear organizational focus, we have established priorities and are investing in strategies that support meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of our residents. We know that we cannot do this work alone, and partnerships are critical to reducing disparities in every domain.

Hennepin County's response to COVID-19 was swift and multi-faceted, and led through the lens of racial equity. We maintained continuity of service by adopting innovations that could help us reach residents wherever they are — from expanded digital service to off-line engagement efforts. The pandemic has underscored the interconnectedness of our seven disparity domains and deepens our commitment to this work.

Fueled by the ARPA-SLFRF, we are propelling our disparity reduction efforts beyond strategy and into action. With the support of our dedicated staff and community partners, Hennepin County will continue to invest in priorities and strategies to close the gap between residents who are thriving and those who are not.

Disparity reduction domain goals

Reducing any individual disparity can leverage positive change and help reduce disparities in other areas. If one gear turns, they all move. These seven domains are interconnected and integral to reducing disparities. Hennepin County's goal is to reduce disparities in the seven domains. Below are the goals for each domain area, as identified in November 2021. Hennepin County is developing a set of reports and dashboards to tell the story of the county's disparity reduction efforts. It is anticipated that an initial version of the reports and dashboards will be available in December 2022.

Education

- Developing youth-, family- and community-driven priorities to support education success.
- Investing in resources to strengthen academic skill development, financial empowerment, independent living skills and career readiness.

Employment

- Residents earn a living wage and employers are educated about new and innovative approaches to hiring residents.
- Continue to build and expand career pathways, including increasing employer participation.
- Support families as they move out of poverty.
- More employers will pay a \$20 minimum wage or retool benefit packages.

Income

- Through training and employment programs, Hennepin County and its partners will help more people transition to permanent housing and jobs.
- Disparities in business ownership will be reduced as the county and its partners offer grants, mentoring and other supports.
- The county will continue helping small and minority-owned businesses obtain contracts with the county, particularly in construction and professional services.

Health

- Hennepin County continues to empower and partner with communities to reduce chronic disease through:
 - Addressing food insecurities
 - Improving access to health care
 - Integrating medical and mental health clinical services

Housing

- Creating pathways to exit shelter/homelessness through expanding shelter diversion, new low-barrier shelters, and increasing case management to help people move to permanent housing.
- Increasing deeper affordability by piloting a new 30% AMI unit subsidy to further reduce rents in county-financed housing projects, and increasing supply of affordable, supportive and single-room-occupancy housing.
- Decreasing barriers to home ownership through homebuyer assistance grants and affordable single-family home development.

Justice

- Strengthening community-based partnerships to support gun violence interruption and outreach.
- Addressing behavioral health needs of youth and adults in county facilities.
- Expanding availability of electronic home monitoring as an alternative to incarceration.
- Implementing trauma-informed services and programming for clients who are Black, Indigenous or people of color in adult probation.
- Supporting Hennepin Healthcare’s Next Step Program, a hospital-based violence interruption service for victims ages 12-28 who are hospitalized due to violent injury.
- Increased staff for victim services.

Transportation

- Continued investment driven by revised policies and expanded community engagement.
- Resilient, multi-modal infrastructure that reflects a sense of place and community.
- Safer, better mobility options supported by safety and accessibility plans.
- Improved air quality with reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Greater access to quality broadband.



Community Engagement

Hennepin County Communications and Engagement Services plays an integral role in the COVID-19 response and recovery through messaging and public outreach into local communities, specifically engaging and supporting Black and Indigenous people and people of color and priority populations. Similar to the use of CARES funding, pandemic response funding is being used to expand scope of work, innovate media strategies, build out translation services and the Trusted Messenger Program, and staffing to meet the demands of the pandemic. Staff listen to community needs and build upon engagement efforts and relationships to act as a conduit to provide resources to communities in need.

The ongoing countywide, coordinated, integrated community engagement efforts aim to build trust and strengthen community relationships. In addition to the overall capacity building in the Engagement Services project, the team also supports community engagement efforts across the county's pandemic response projects. The focus is to engage communities in Hennepin County who are experiencing stark disparities and are most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Supporting pandemic response projects with engagement efforts helps to meet community needs during recovery while building a sustainable and equitable community engagement framework that will serve the public beyond the pandemic.



Use of evidence

Hennepin County will employ a combination of evidence-based interventions and will complete rigorous program evaluation to build evidence where it is not available. Embedded within the county's approach to disparity reduction is the vision to foster a culture of innovation and excellence across all county departments. Continuous improvement is a key component to how the county can build upon existing structures and processes, seek to make them more efficient and effective, and build organizational capacity. This approach extends to the county's pandemic response and recovery efforts.



Project inventory

Hennepin County will continue to support residents through the pandemic and beyond as residents and communities work to recover. This annual report includes a summary of Hennepin County's pandemic response projects from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Projects are presented by disparity domain area. The following details are provided for each project:

Project name

Allocation amount—This is the amount of funding allocated for the project.

Project description

Progress narrative

Key performance indicators—This is a description of the key performance indicators set for each project. Results and outcomes vary by project due to implementation timelines.

Next steps —This is the work that will occur in the next three to six months.

Educational Services

Allocation amount: \$775,000

Project description

Hennepin County is providing academic tutoring services to county-connected children and youth who are negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through its Educational Support Services Department. County-connected youth are referred to the program from other services such as Children’s Mental Health, Child Protective Services and the juvenile justice system, as well as other county services and programs. Hennepin County’s Education Support Services Department strives to address the racial and educational disparities faced by youth who receive county services, and to address the academic achievement gap of county-connected youth to increase engagement, academic skills and educational outcomes for students in grades K-12 and GED seekers. Academic tutoring services are conducted by a contracted provider. Students are assessed when they enter the program and again after receiving 30-50 hours of tutoring. Our goal is to provide tutoring services to county-connected youth and help them to grow their skills in math, reading, and other academic subjects.

Progress narrative

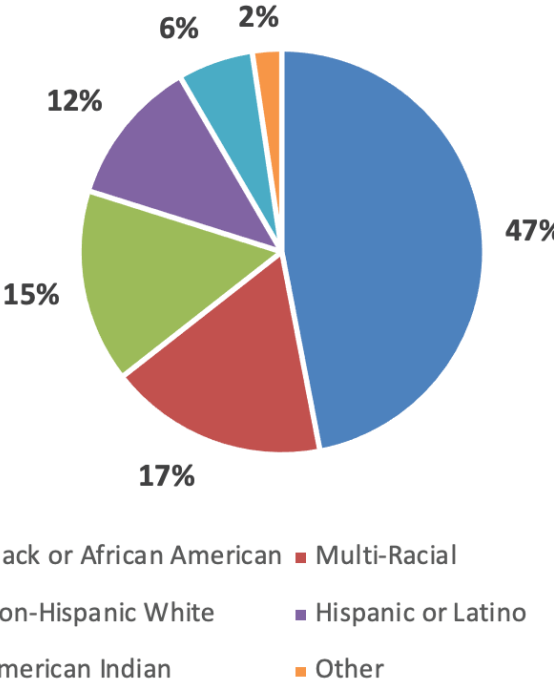
Students connected to county services from 56 different school districts across the state were referred to academic tutoring at Huntington Learning Center. When starting academic tutoring through Huntington Learning Center, students are given an academic assessment to determine if students are behind academically, and if so, how far behind grade level they are testing. Tutoring schedules are determined based on the outcome of the initial assessment, and a tutoring plan is developed to address any academic needs identified in the assessment. Additional assessments are completed after a student receives 30-50 hours of tutoring.

Assessment tests include:

- Performance Series Reading Test
- Performance Series Math Test
- Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT)
- Test of Phonics (early learners and non-readers)

To support success in tutoring, assistance is provided to families as needed to help them ensure the students attend tutoring on a regular basis to support the student’s educational success. In addition, program staff engage with schools on a regular basis to support tutoring and get input on academic needs for students.

STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY



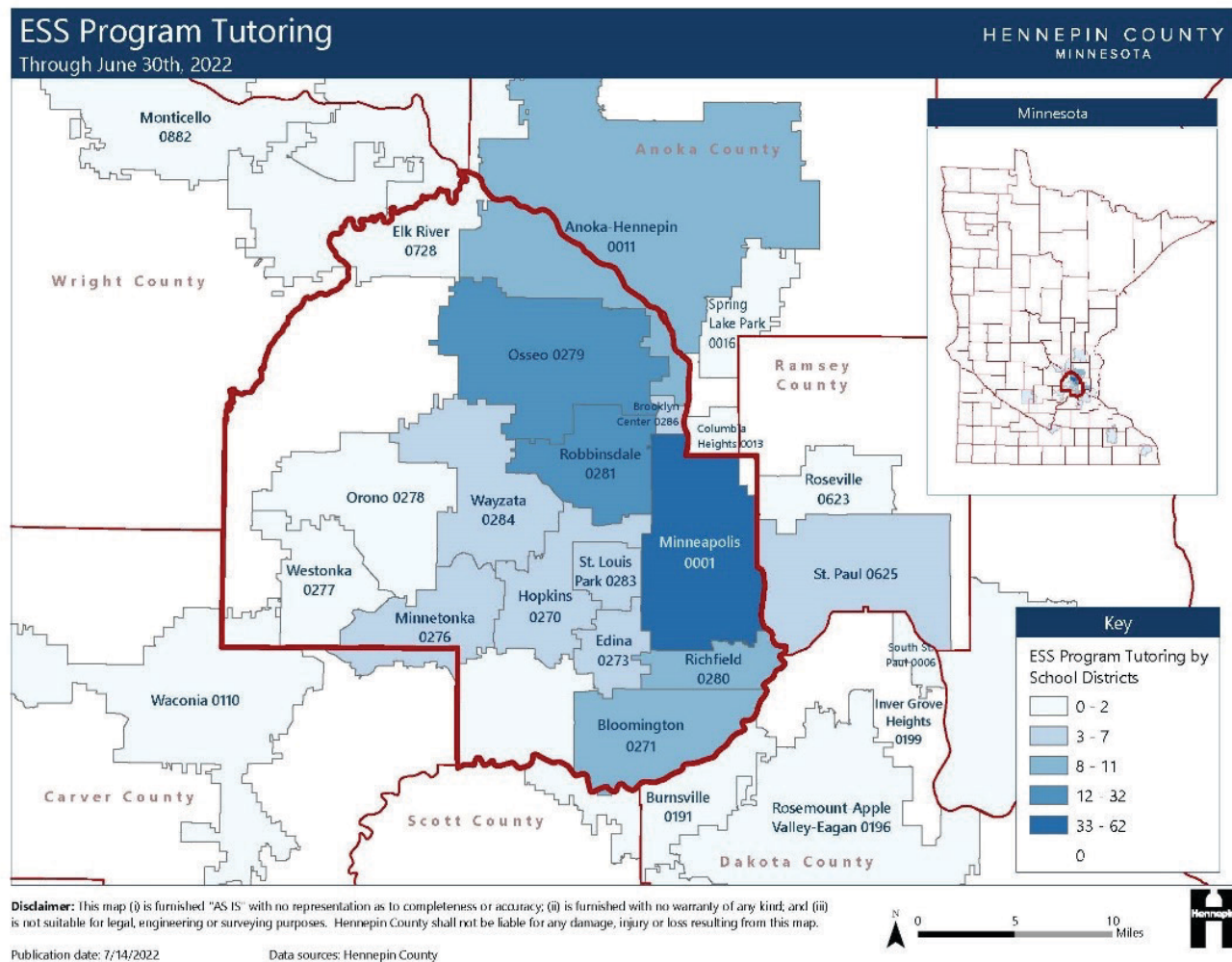
Key performance indicators

The key performance indicators for this project are:

- Number of students enrolled in academic tutoring
- Improvement on test scores in reading and math
- Improvement in grades and confidence in school (specifically math and reading)
- Increase in grade level equivalent

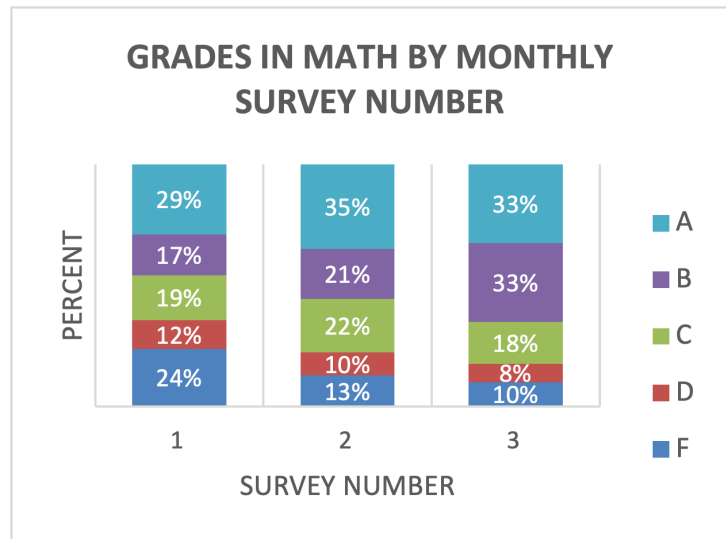
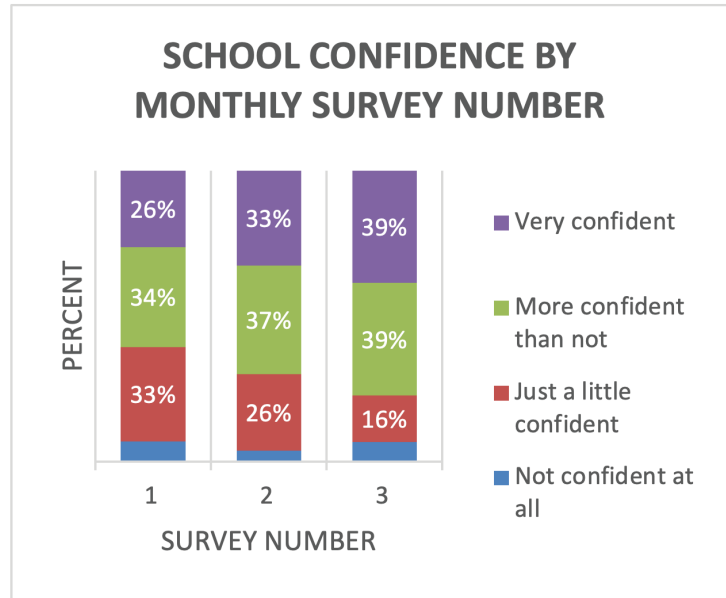
Results of the initial academic assessments and subsequent assessments are evaluated to determine if student test scores improve after a student receives tutoring, and if there is a relationship between the number of hours of tutoring and the degree of improvement. Evaluation efforts also examine whether the students are improving in the key outcome variables listed above. The information from the evaluation is being used to improve the program with the goal of further reducing education disparities.

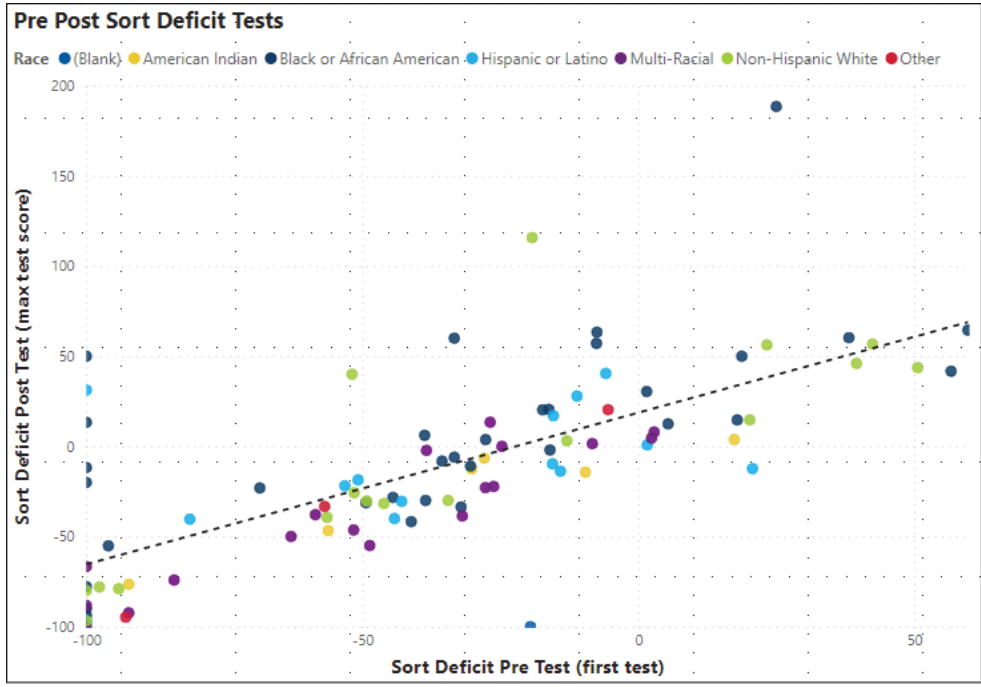
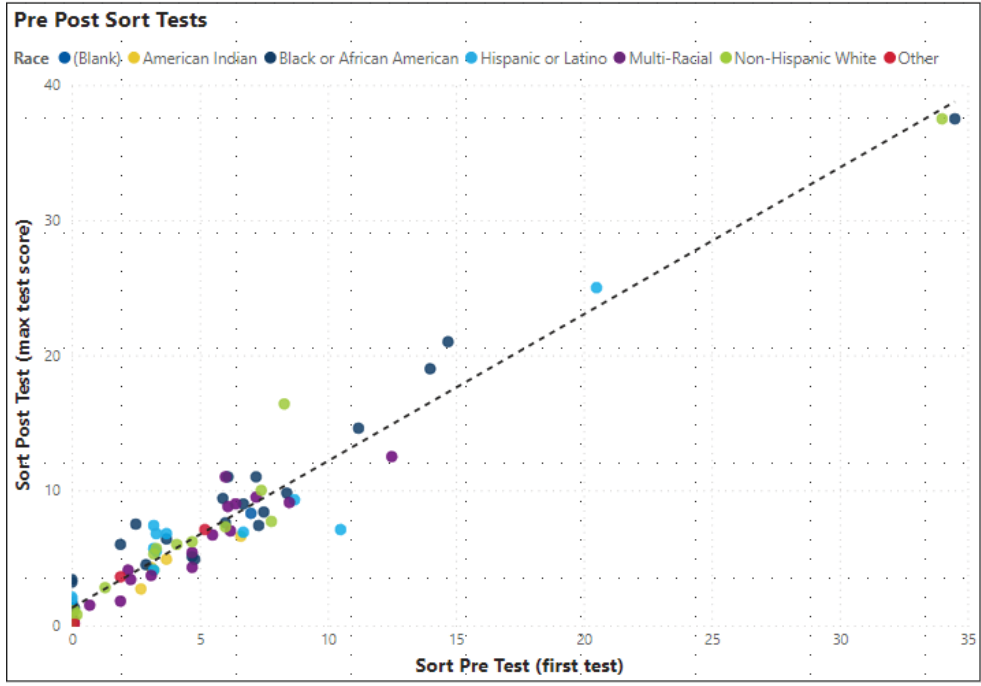
Student school districts by frequency



Academic tutoring outcomes

- 191 students in grades K-12 were referred for academic tutoring from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022.
- Students in tutoring demonstrated increased scores on initial reassessments in math and reading, with an average increase of 28 points on reading and math tests after a few months of tutoring.
- Math and reading/English grades of students in tutoring improved after one to two months of receiving services.
- Students have increased confidence levels and positive feelings towards school after receiving tutoring. Positive feelings about reading improved after only one month of tutoring, whereas positive feelings about math improved after two months of tutoring.
- Students start an average of 37.74% below grade level on the SORT, which is about two to four grade levels behind. After tutoring, the average deficit score is only 13.61% below grade level.
- Student scores on phonics and reading readiness increased by 33 points on average after a few months of tutoring.
- A very strong positive and statistically significant linear relationship exists between pre- and post-test scores on the SORT.





Next steps

During the next three to six months, tutoring services will continue for students currently receiving tutoring as needed and new students will continue to be enrolled in academic tutoring services. Academic assessments and reassessments will be completed on a schedule set by the contracted tutoring agency. Evaluation of tutoring outcomes will continue.

Employment Strategies

Allocation amount: \$16,580,000

Project description

Sustainable employment can make a difference in people's ability to pay for basic needs, bringing stability to individuals and families. This project aims to create and implement a number of employment strategies that will benefit county residents and employers, and, ultimately, the county's overall economic landscape. The county cannot do this work alone. The business community, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and the public workforce system are all critical partners in creating jobs and facilitating access to jobs that pay a livable wage and are in demand. The project team will work collaboratively to promote equity through the development and implementation of workforce development programs, employment readiness services, and other strategies that prepare and connect residents to employers.

Employment strategies will focus on:

- Partnering with the Housing Stability area to provide employment and training services that will supplement case management and housing-related supports for anyone who is interested in work, is 18 years or older and single (no dependents), is currently or recently experiencing homelessness. Services under this project include, but are not limited to, employment coaching, skills development through training and education, and assistance with placement and retention.
- Creating a consortia of workforce development providers that can provide just-in-time employment and training services leading to living-wage jobs by ensuring participants have the skills employers are seeking.
- Creating the Workforce Leadership Council (WLC) which is the platform the county will use to convene business partners for cross-sector sharing of ideas, promising practices and resources, and for cultivating strong partnerships to address pandemic-related economic hardships.

Progress narrative

Employment and Training Services for People Exiting Homelessness initiative

In 2021 the Hennepin County Board authorized funds to be used to provide meaningful employment services to individuals who are experiencing, or have recently experienced, homelessness. The board agreed that to improve long-term success in maintaining permanent housing and achieving self-sufficiency, persons transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing need to earn an income that meets basic needs. Employment services provide intentional focus on readiness, skills training and occupational learning to help this population find and keep jobs.

Hennepin County has partnered with Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota (GWES) and American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Centers Takoda Stability (AIOIC Takoda Stability) to provide low-barrier, supportive employment and training services to people experiencing or recently exited from homelessness. Hennepin County Homeless to Housing (H2H) case managers assess individuals they serve for readiness and interest in employment and training services. If a person is deemed appropriate and interested the H2H case manager submits a referral to one of the two partner organizations chosen by the individual being served. GWES and AIOIC Takoda Stability each have one career navigator designated to serve individuals in the pilot program.

Program updates to date:

- A new program coordinator was hired and began January 17, 2022.
- The program coordinator facilitated weekly program development and implementation meetings with leadership from Hennepin County Housing Stability, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, and American Indian OIC February through April. Ongoing program meetings changed to bi-weekly in May. Case review was completed every other meeting.
- A referral form and process was created in February. Referral and release of information forms training was provided to H2H case managers March 1, 2022.
- Custom Workforce One program was set up and launched in March.
- The program began “soft launch” for the month of March, with a goal of five referrals to each provider in conjunction with extra support from the program coordinator to assist with questions or concerns. A total of 11 referrals were received during the “soft launch” (five to AIOIC and six to GWES).
- The program fully launched April 1 (no limit on number of referrals).
- As of July 8, 2022, there have been a total of 28 referrals to the pilot program (14 to each organization). The first-year pilot goal is to serve a total of 50 individuals.
- Individuals have had access to support services (bus cards, funds for groceries, one new bike, one pair of steel-toed boots, interview clothing) and five referrals to Hennepin County’s technology assistance program for digital support needs (laptops and hotspots).
- Internal Hennepin County monthly management meetings to provide updates and discuss program planning.
- The contract manager is currently working to extend the current contracts through December 2023. The request will go before the county board in August. If approved, a new budget will then be completed.

Workforce Development Roster Program and Workforce Leadership Council (WLC)

In October 2021, the County Board authorized \$10 million for career pathways programming and \$3 million for the Workforce Leadership Council (WLC) as employment strategies to address the unequal impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on certain Hennepin County communities, especially residents who are Black, Indigenous and people of color.

It is critical to have multiple access points to various forms of career pathways in order to ensure appropriate services are in place for adults and youth, and programming is aligned with the needs of businesses.

The initial strategy for the \$10 million career pathways was to create a consortium of nonprofit organizations that could provide just-in-time employment and training services leading to living-wage jobs by ensuring participants have the skills employers are seeking. To accomplish this, project staff planned, prepared and engaged in facilitation of the creation of what became the Workforce Development Roster Program. Activities included consultation with the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office and Hennepin County Information and Technology, Purchasing and Contracting, and the City of Minneapolis and Ramsey County; provision of two information sessions to market the program and gather input from community partners; conducting a Request for Qualifications process which resulted in 34 providers being selected to the roster program; negotiation of contracts with vendors to support the project; adaptation of templates and materials from previous umbrella contract processes used in the county to create documents for this program; and the hiring of limited-duration staff for this strategy.

The Workforce Leadership Council (WLC) is the platform the county will use to convene small- and mid-sized business owners and stakeholder organizations to better understand employment and business operations needs and challenges, and to explore opportunities for improvement and innovation. The county recognizes the role these businesses play in strengthening communities, from creating local jobs to increasing the tax base to encouraging entrepreneurship to promoting community identity. Small- to mid-sized businesses are the backbone of our local economies.

With the nature of work changing rapidly, it has been critical for owners of small- and mid-sized businesses to access resources to navigate this new way of working. Over the last two years, businesses have used technology to deal with the realities of the pandemic and to accelerate how products and services are delivered. Coupled with this technology shift have been worker shortages, changing demographics, and resignations and retirements. A collaborative approach to recovery is needed to get to the other side of these social and economic impacts. The WLC provides a place for these critical conversations.

Progress on the WLC includes the appointment of Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando to the first two-year term as the co-chair of the WLC; the beginning of a search process to find a co-chair from the private sector; creation of an internal communication document and project timeline; negotiation of a contract with vendor to support this project; grounding/alignment meetings with Commissioners Fernando and Greene, county administration and other internal leaders; identification of date for kick-off event; beginning of planning logistics for kick-off event; and hiring of limited-duration staff for this strategy.

Key performance indicators

Employment and Training Services for People Exiting Homelessness initiative

– Key performance indicators are:

- Obtain employment
- Obtain stable housing
- Short-term job retention
- Long-term job retention

– Evaluation efforts include:

- Custom Workforce One program (captures participant demographics, programming and outcomes)
- Ongoing manual monitoring of program participant data (race, age, reason for referral, barriers to employment, service status, housing status)
- Current discussion with implementing partners and Hennepin County management regarding additional data needed to support the program long-term

Workforce Development Roster Program and Workforce Leadership Council (WLC)

Key indicators at this time (subject to change):

- Number of providers on the roster
- Number of businesses
- How many of the businesses connected with (roster) providers, and which ones
- How many people hired
- Employment retention data
- Mitigation of negative economic impact of COVID-19
- Employer engagement strategies
- WLC kick-off (number of participants, strategies or tools implemented)
- Quarterly plans with contracted vendors

Evaluation efforts will focus on:

- Workforce development services that directly address a negative economic impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and include a strong partnership with businesses
- Alignment with the county's disparity reduction efforts
- Use of pandemic recovery project funding for culturally specific and/or culturally responsive services
- Expediting the process of soliciting and engaging well-qualified workforce development providers

Next steps

Employment and Training Services for People Exiting Homelessness initiative:

- Continue program implementation efforts (ongoing partner meetings and internal management meetings, support to providers and case managers).
- Determine what additional information/data is necessary to obtain to support program long-term (currently discussing).
- Obtain program feedback from participants.
- Continue to monitor quantitative data/outcomes.

Workforce Development Roster Program and Workforce Leadership Council (WLC):

- Finalize roster program request for proposals (RFP) process.
- Officially launch the roster program with a welcome session for providers.
- Solidify and post internal requests for services (Library navigators, County Attorney's Office Youth Diversion Program, Hennepin Health Talent Garden).
- Finalize plan for WLC kick-off.
- Launch WLC with kick-off event on August 1.

Behavioral Health

Allocation amount: \$20,000,000

Project description

The Behavioral Health project will invest in early interventions, prevent overreliance on deep-end services, and reduce disparities for Hennepin County residents through behavioral health strategies and interventions.

Initiatives toward these intended outcomes include:

1. Expanding School Based Mental Health
2. Developing and expanding a network of culturally specific mental health services
3. Expanding Family Home Visiting
4. Expanding Caring Connections 4 Kids
5. Reforming 911
6. Expanding hours at 1800 Chicago
7. Expanding the embedded police social worker initiative
8. Launching a juvenile behavioral health initiative
9. Expanding Family Response and Stabilization Services
10. Piloting a family-based recovery program
11. Launching a mental health awareness campaign

The measures supported through this effort will increase access for more than 11,000 people annually to low-barrier, upstream, whole-person and family supports designed to meet the complex needs of diverse communities. They will leverage multiple funding sources and expand the reach of Hennepin's current investment.

Progress narrative

Over the past seven months, community engagement and feedback has been intentionally utilized to guide the direction of this work. Community agencies, individuals seeking services, and other stakeholders have given input and insight into how to effectively use the \$20 million allocated for behavioral health supports.

During this time, Behavioral Health initiatives have succeeded in hiring 31 of the 36 staff needed to carry out this work. Teams took a diversity, equity and inclusion approach to hiring to ensure staff represent the range of experiences, expertise and backgrounds needed to serve community effectively. Five of the 11 initiatives engaged in competitive processes to secure contracts with agencies to deliver services, with a priority on contracting with culturally specific agencies. One resident who is a lifelong user of behavioral health supports shared that they wish this work happened when they were younger, because they would have had more positive outcomes if they had culturally specific options earlier on.

Each initiative has made progress toward launching or expanding services, building up to full capacity by Q4 of 2022.

Key performance indicators

Since July 1, 2021, funded initiatives have served more than 16,000 individuals via existing services as well as expansion made possible through pandemic recovery funds. Initial impacts of these efforts include:

- Support offered to communities through our culturally specific contracts and Family Response and Stabilization programs based on the communities' identified needs rather than a requirement to meet program qualifications.
- Warm connection to resources and supports for safety, stability and well-being, including medical coverage, mental health providers, housing and employment.
- Increased hours at 1800 Chicago providing walk-in supports for residents in a harm-reduction and person-centered manner.
- Increased access to appropriate mental health and substance use supports for individuals calling 911 and police for support.

Next steps

- Behavioral Health initiatives will continue to grow and iterate over the next six months. Key milestones to be achieved include:
- Continued community engagement with particular focus on a mental health awareness campaign content and delivery.
- Expansion of partnerships for delivery and use of services.
- Execution of all remaining contracts, with service delivery immediately following.
- Development of data infrastructure to measure impact and outcomes of initiatives.
- Investigation of sustainability options to ensure needs continue to be met when pandemic recovery funding is used up.

Food Insecurity

Allocation amount: \$5,825,000

Project description

The purpose of the Food Insecurity project is to provide financial support to organizations providing food access to communities impacted by COVID-19. Awards are through an application process.

Organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Provide for the food insecurity needs of Hennepin County residents through the distribution of perishable and non-perishable food items, including culturally specific food to mitigate the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis for people of color and low-income communities, since the organizations' services prioritize racial equity, inclusion, and culturally specific outreach.
- Be registered as "active/good standing" with the Minnesota Secretary of State.
- Have the capacity to serve Black and Indigenous people and people of color in a manner that considers culturally specific foods.
- Deliver healthy food items whenever possible.
- Be a trusted faith-based organization, community organization, educational institution or nonprofit.
- Be part of a longer-term strategy to address food insecurity issues in Hennepin County.

Progress narrative

In 2022, Hennepin County allocated an additional \$3 million in food insecurity funding to provide support to current community sites distributing food, meals and personal protective equipment (PPE). This builds upon the initial funds allocated through ARPA-SLFRF in 2021.

In most instances, Hennepin County has extended agreements with community organizations from 2021 into 2022. This strategy is largely based on the organizational success in defining roles in food distribution. Organizations continue to use the funds to support work at their sites and at pop-up distribution sites, and for home delivery of groceries and meals.

These partnerships allow a level of nimbleness in how communities are served. Each organization is acknowledged for knowing and understanding the residents they serve, providing a food strategy that is based on the uniqueness of the communities served (culturally specific, seniors, disabled, homeless, etc.). Organizations distribute food weekly, monthly and at times daily, emphasizing resident choice in what foods they would like (and most likely consume), and what is culturally appropriate. Acknowledging the expertise of our community partners helps to ensure that food insecurity issues are resolved at a community level rather than needing to develop a county infrastructure.

County staff have supported this work by amending current contracts, allowing for a 7% increase to account for inflation, providing technical support to community organizations, expediting payments, and streamlining the process for budgeting.

Organizations continue to distribute of food with an emphasis on healthy choices. They have also developed new ways of extending food options/opportunities to the communities they serve by expanding hours of operation, offering mobile options, developing online ordering, and delivering meals to homebound and vulnerable individuals.

Key performance indicators

- Communities served (Black, Indigenous, people of color, seniors, disabled, homeless, etc.), pounds of food distributed, number of distribution events, number of people served.
- Each organization is asked to submit a final report outlining the following:
 - Total events held
 - Total meals served
 - Total persons served
 - Pounds of food provided
 - Services provided (summary)
 - Event locations (ZIP codes)
 - Persons served (demographic information)
 - Neighborhoods/communities served (names and ZIP codes of neighborhoods where persons were served)
- A final report was prepared in January 2022 and was previously shared.

Next steps

During July through December funds will be distributed under the current agreements and additional requests will be reviewed. Work is underway by project staff to meet as a broader food insecurity workgroup to prepare a request for proposals for publication in 2023. This will outline strategies for food distribution throughout various communities.

Maternal Health

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

This project focuses on strengthening and expanding existing services, partnerships, and resources to improve maternal health outcomes for Black, Indigenous and birthing people of color. The resources will expand Hennepin County Public Health's (HCPH) capacity to provide and assure maternal and child health surveillance (data gathering, monitoring, assessment) and health education, and promote access to health care in the community. To facilitate community-driven solutions to maternal health, HCPH is using these funds to invest in community-based efforts and providers focused on improving outcomes. This includes forging new partnerships and developing contracts and grants for community-based services.

The project activities include:

- Expanding existing programs focused on improving maternal health outcomes for Black and Indigenous persons and people of color affected by disparities.
- Developing and implementing a birth justice plan to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.
- Investing in community-initiated solutions and culturally congruent and innovative practices to reduce disparities.
- Increasing departmental capacity for data collection, reporting and analysis to support measurement strategies.

Progress narrative

The maternal health initiative is focused on improving maternal health and birth outcomes for Black and Indigenous persons and birthing people of color affected by disparities, and centers community-driven solutions. In this first phase of funding, the strategies include:

- Expanding existing county services to increase access and increase positive maternal health and birth outcomes for birthing Black and Indigenous persons and people of color affected by disparities
- Executing contracts with NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and Hennepin Healthcare System
- Offering public health clinical services, including family planning and reproductive health
- Identifying and contracting with an evaluator to develop an evaluation framework and increase capacity for ongoing data collection and reporting
- Engaging community partners to understand needs, build relationships, and connect to existing efforts

Contracting with NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and Hennepin Healthcare System expanded access to services already in place. Funding at NorthPoint expanded obstetric care coordination and wraparound services such as social worker support to address social determinants of health (\$1.3 million total). Hennepin Healthcare funding expanded support for the Redleaf doula program and increased food security efforts, trauma-informed care and wraparound services to prenatal and post-partum care at East Lake Clinic (\$2.3 million total). An additional contract with a local community birth center serving North Minneapolis will support services such as education sessions, home and office visits, and resource alignment throughout the perinatal period for birthing individuals who are Black, Indigenous and people of color affected by disparities.

Key performance indicators

Contracts were fully executed with NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and Hennepin Healthcare to expand access to existing maternal health services. To increase project management capacity and assessment capabilities, the following positions were hired and onboarded: maternal and child health program manager (1FTE), maternal and child health project coordinator (1FTE), maternal and child health data analyst (1FTE), and early childhood coordinator (1FTE). After releasing a request for proposals in March 2022, contract negotiations are underway for a maternal health consultant to convene and facilitate a birth justice collaborative intended to begin in August. Additionally, contracting is in process for a project evaluator who will lead the development of a process-and-outcomes evaluation for the initiative. The project evaluator will further define specific indicators for assessing progress and improvement in health care services, access, resources and overall maternal morbidity and mortality outcomes. While each of the contracted service partners will have independent program activities and services, the internal Maternal and Child Health team is collaborating with each partner and the contracted evaluation consultant to identify and select a limited number of shared measures for evaluating impact and progress.

Next steps

Once the contract is fully executed for the maternal health consultant focusing on people affected by disparities, the initiative's birth justice collaborative will start work to develop a birth justice strategic plan, intended to kick off in August. Initial steps include conducting a review of literature and promising practices to provide to Hennepin County and the community partners that will be engaged in the process for developing the birth justice plan. Next, the birth justice collaborative will recruit 6-10 community champions to join the leadership coalition that will work to convene community to inform and co-create the strategies.

Contract finalization for a project evaluator is in process. Draft evaluation plans for the project evaluator include establishing baseline de-identified clinical and nonclinical data on death and near misses to the extent data is available and accessible; collecting information on broader social determinants of mortality and morbidity; and facilitating the creation of identifying and selecting measures of structural racism in maternal health for ongoing data collection, reporting, and analysis. Additionally, the contracted evaluator will provide analysis and findings on implementation fidelity for participating service providers and development of the birth justice plan, barriers to and facilitators of success, and the extent to which the process was informed by community input.

Public Health

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

This project focuses on rebuilding and strengthening critical public health capabilities and services to protect community health. This work is vital as we continue to respond to COVID-19 and its effects as well as other disease outbreaks, while also providing basic public health prevention services for residents of all ages. Efforts focus on bolstering public health infectious disease response and coordinated immunization outreach and delivery; increasing and enhancing capacity to respond to public health emergencies; strengthening health promotion programming to mitigate the impacts of COVID in the community; and coordinating early childhood development strategies to improve access to early childhood services for families. Foundational to these efforts will be expanded assessment capabilities and increased project management capacity with the aim to address long-standing and newly emerging public health challenges. Project activities include:

- Investing in community-initiated solutions and culturally congruent and innovative practices to reduce disparities.
- Increasing departmental capacity for data collection, reporting and analysis to support measurement strategies.

Progress narrative

Hennepin County Public Health (HCPH) has strategies underway in all aspects of this project. Embedded in the project are community-initiated solutions and a commitment to utilize data to drive activities.

Prevent the spread of communicable diseases

Infectious disease response: Public Health has focused on bolstering infection disease response. In June 2022 it began partnering with a community organization to offer COVID vaccine to children ages six months to five years. The vaccine was offered at seven community locations to 1,528 children. Hennepin was the first county in Minnesota to offer vaccines to this age group. In addition to the COVID-19 related work, the Community Based Infectious Disease Outreach Team is fully staffed (one community-based nurse supervisor, four registered nurses, and three senior community health workers).

Infection control in long-term care facilities (LCTF): Supporting infection control in congregate living facilities has been another focus of Public Health's communicable disease efforts. During the past year, the Infection Control in Congregate Living Facilities Team has focused on:

1. Providing infection prevention technical assistance to LCTFs.
2. Developing an infection prevention coalition with facilities and community partners. In October 2021, the program began a Long-Term Care Prevention Coalition to bring together a community of professionals with an interest in promoting a culture of infection prevention and control in Hennepin County LTCFs.
3. Coordinating a vaccine equity communications campaign with LTCFs.

Prepare and respond to emergencies

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the need for a more robust public health emergency preparedness and response program. A COVID-19 After Action Review (AAR) is underway to identify ways to improve workforce capacity to respond to public health emergencies. Findings will be included in the COVID-19 Improvement Plan. Additionally, Public Health is hiring two positions dedicated to workforce capacity development and implementation, including a robust assessment of workforce training needed and development of strategies to address AAR findings.

Promote healthy communities and healthy behaviors

Chronic disease: To start exploring potential strategies to address chronic disease due to COVID, a newly hired staff person dedicated to this work has initiated an environmental scan to better understand issues and become familiar with what other departments throughout the county are pursuing related to chronic disease recovery efforts.

CHIP: Public Health is expanding the work of the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP). In February 2022, CHIP hosted a large virtual community workshop that was attended by 75 CHIP partners and community members to celebrate past work and discuss ways community members would like to be involved in the future, and how to move that work forward. The CHIP executive committee approved funding for 33 community organizations and residents in the form of mini-grants. All projects created and managed by communities are kicking off in July 2022 and are supportive of CHIP's priorities of community mental wellbeing and housing stability. Finally, a staff person has been hired to support CHIP efforts.

Healthy aging: Implementing healthy aging plans is another priority focus. In March 2022, Public Health presented the Age-Friendly Hennepin County Action Plan to the Board of Commissioners. The action plan was well received, and elected leaders are embracing efforts to ensure county residents of all ages can live healthy, fulfilled lives. In June 2022, a healthy aging coordinator was hired to lead the countywide healthy aging initiative and is focused on identifying initial projects, engaging the assessment team to identify long-term data needs, and developing an evaluation plan. Age-friendly efforts are part of the county's disparity reduction efforts and will be included in a dashboard to track progress and help tell the story of the healthy aging work.

Coordinate early childhood development strategies: An early childhood coordinator was hired in June 2022 and will conduct outreach across Hennepin County programs that serve families with young children to assure coordination. Additionally, the coordinator will build on work that is underway as part of the federal Preschool Development Grant in Hennepin County to engage community providers and stakeholders to assure access to early childhood services. The coordinator will work with county program leaders and community providers to develop a strategic plan to coordinate early childhood programs and services. The strategic plan will be developed using family and provider input.

Assure adequate local public health infrastructure

Expand assessment capability and SHAPE survey: SHAPE (Survey of the Health of All the Population and the Environment) is an ongoing project of Hennepin County Public Health to provide data on the health status and factors that affect health for adults in Hennepin County, for use in planning, programming, and policy development in a range of government, community, and health organizations. A second goal is to provide baseline data to help measure changes in health indicators and status over time. In addition, results of the project are used to support health equity data analysis and surveillance of health disparities. Data collection for SHAPE 2022 began in May 2022. Approximately 40,000 households were randomly selected for the project; as of July 5 households have received two survey packets at their homes.

Increase planning and project management capacity: A new strategic initiatives staff person will be hired to increase planning and project management capacity across Public Health and to lead the department's continuous quality improvement efforts. The focus will be on incorporating health and racial equity into continuous quality improvement and ensure a thriving quality improvement culture in the department.

Key performance indicators

Efforts are underway to meet all key performance indicators. Data and results will be reflected in future reports.

- By December 31, 2023, 70% of HCPH patients of any race will be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- By December 31, 2023, 90% of HCPH staff will be trained in emergency preparedness.
- By December 31, 2023, all health promotion community partners will have received technical assistance in implementing policy, system and environmental changes to mitigate the impact of COVID in the community.
- By December 31, 2022, a strategic plan for Hennepin County's early childhood systems coordination will be developed.
- By December 31, 2024, key activities of the early childhood strategic plan will be implemented.
- By March 2023, the SHAPE 2022 project will have achieved a goal of 700 completes per for each of the 10 geographic reporting areas.

Next steps

Public Health will build on strategies currently underway. A sample of upcoming strategies are below.

- Communicable disease efforts will include transitioning some work to other infectious disease outbreaks such as HIV, syphilis, and monkeypox; and LTCF infection control work will expand to four visits by the fall of 2022.
- Staff will be hired for two new positions dedicated to emergency preparedness workforce capacity development. They will develop strategies to respond to the COVID-19 After Action Review (AAR).
- Efforts to promote healthy communities and healthy behaviors will include completion of an environmental scan and the initiation of projects to address chronic disease issues related to COVID. CHIP will provide additional mini-grants as well as a request for applications for four to five large-scale projects over a one-year period. The focus of the early childhood coordinator's work will be to partner with other county program leaders and community providers to develop a strategic plan to coordinate early childhood programs and services. Additionally, the healthy aging initiative will grow the implementation team from nine to approximately 15 members to ensure representation from all departments. The team will also launch the first two to three projects, and assist in completing the first draft of a dashboard
- Assuring an adequate public health infrastructure will include further rollout of the SHAPE survey and data collection. The new strategic initiatives staff person will develop a quality improvement work plan including a new quality improvement inventory for departmentwide rollout.

Vaccine Incentives

Allocation amount: \$2,000,000

Project description

Hennepin County Public Health's response to the COVID-19 pandemic includes significant efforts to provide vaccines to communities. The vaccine incentive program uses funds for the provision of incentives and stipends to support those efforts. The research is mixed on the overall effectiveness of vaccine incentive programs, but a widely accepted strategy to increase vaccination uptake involves a focus on rebuilding trust in communities: partnering with communities that have historically experienced medical exploitation, experimentation without consent and marginalization is most effective at decreasing vaccine hesitancy¹¹. The vaccine incentive program is designed to build trust between Hennepin County and its residents with the goal of increasing vaccination rates.

The vaccine incentive program includes:

- Partnering with trusted community groups to host vaccine events and support the provision of free meals, groceries, and/or entertainment.
- Distributing “Thank You” packs to residents who receive vaccinations, with contents tailored to the targeted population and event location. Community-based businesses may be prioritized for the contents of the “Thank You” packs, (e.g., gift cards to local businesses and youth-specific contents such as sports-related items and technology-focused gifts).
- Hosting a lottery program; or
- Other incentives for individuals who get vaccinated, tailored to the needs of the communities served.

In July 2021 the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners authorized funds to distribute incentives to our community partners and organizations to plan and host COVID-19 vaccine events in their communities. Each organization is eligible for a \$3,000 stipend for an individual event, or up to \$5,000 for two events in one calendar year. Public Health has simplified the approval process to remove barriers in allocating stipends, with the ultimate goal of more people getting vaccinated.

Progress narrative

Public Health has implemented numerous strategies to encourage the use of incentives and stipends to improve vaccination rates. Partnerships with community organizations to promote and support vaccination opportunities and provide the organizations with stipends to offset their costs has been a hallmark of the effort. Community groups use funds in ways that meet their communities' needs, such as offering gift cards, books and transportation for those experiencing barriers. In one instance, a stipend was used to support improved heating in a church during the winter months. Some community groups used the stipends for food giveaways — and many provided food staples such as bags of rice and loaves of bread. Partners shared that in these cases, stipends and incentives both helped get community members vaccinated as well as help meet some basic needs.

Key performance indicators

Below is a summary of highlights indicating project results.

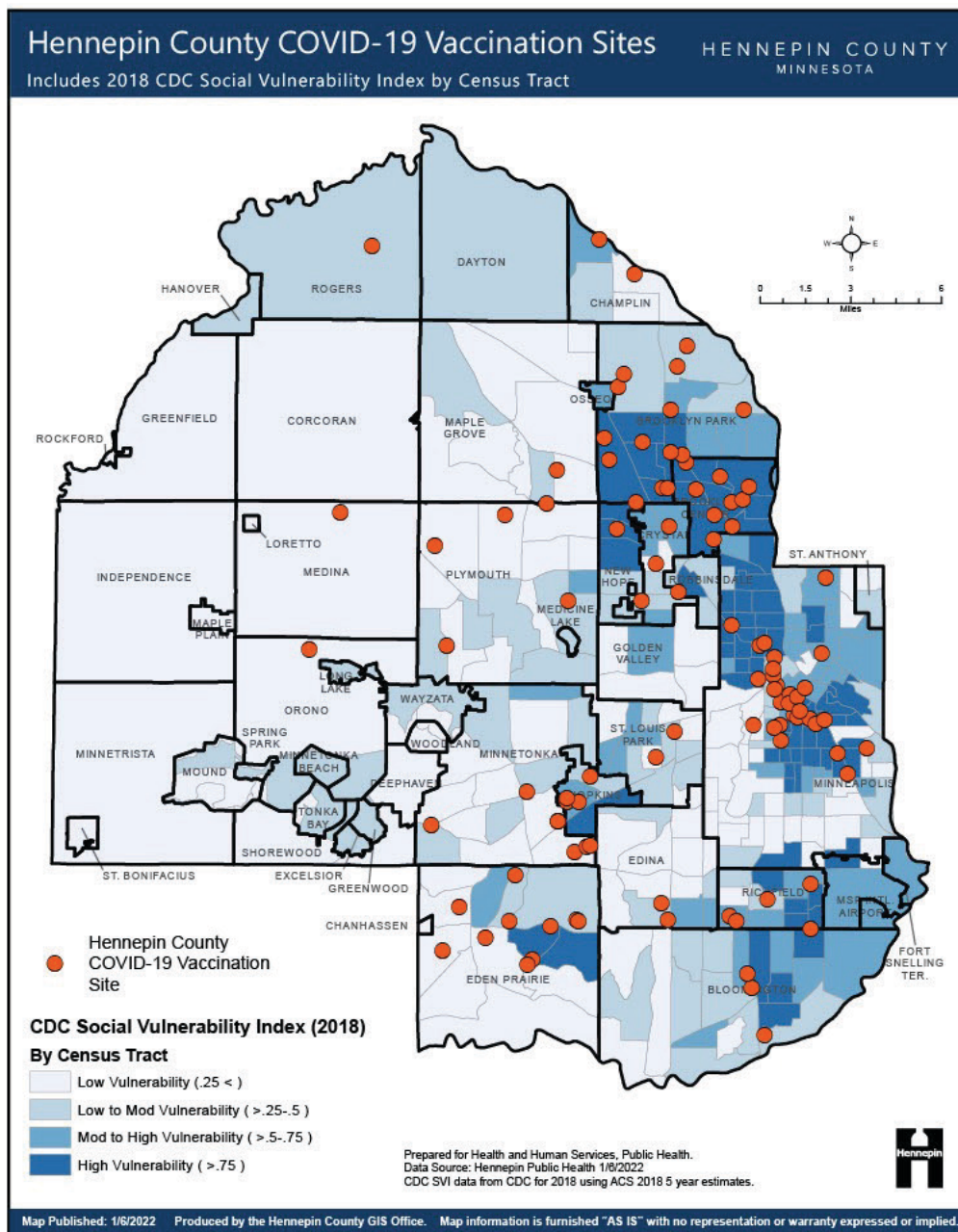
- To date 22,547 gift cards in the amounts of \$25 and \$50 have been distributed to vaccine recipients.
- Approximately 174 community organizations have provided hundreds of events and received stipends ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 for their contributions to Hennepin County vaccination efforts, including hosting vaccination clinics at their locations where community members are familiar and comfortable, providing cultural meals to volunteers, and hosting vaccinations at work sites.

¹¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine. National Academies Press; 2020.

A survey was conducted in March 2022 with stipend recipients to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the program. Among the findings:

- 63% said participation in the program increased their ability to address COVID vaccine education in their community
- 75% said the stipend program improved access to COVID vaccine in their communities
- The most helpful uses of stipend funds were to provide gift cards, promotional materials (flyers, social media posts, etc.), stipends for volunteers, and food/drink at events.
- Respondents also generally agreed that support from Hennepin County Public Health was helpful, timely, organized and professional, and that communication was sound.

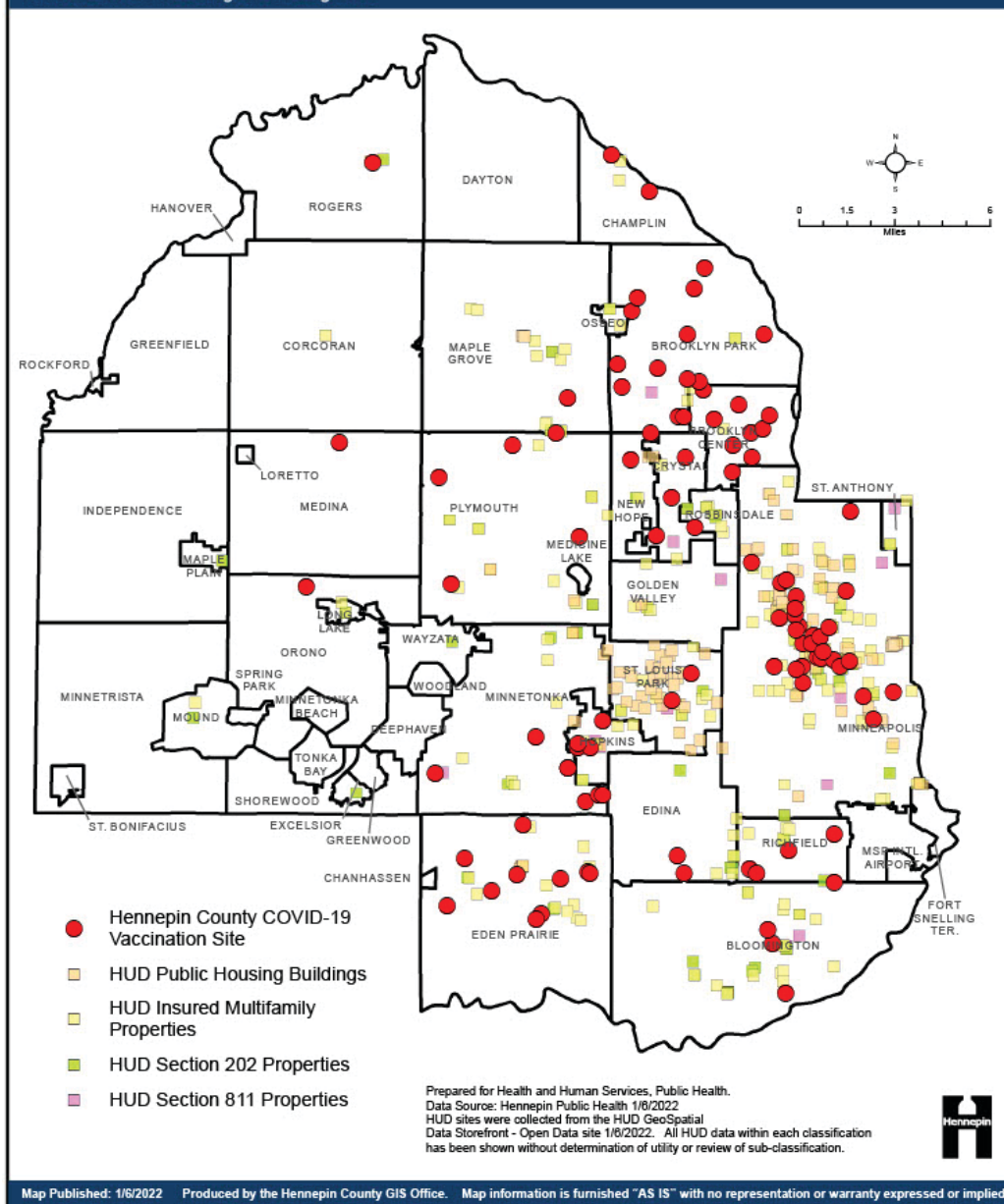
Below are two maps that indicate the locations of Hennepin County COVID-19 vaccination sites. One map is overlaid with the CDC Social Vulnerability Index and the other with the HUD Housing Site Categories.



Hennepin County COVID-19 Vaccination Sites

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Includes HUD housing site categories



Next steps

Hennepin County Public Health will continue the effort to reduce vaccine disparities while leveraging trusted community leader influence. These efforts will include providing community organizations with vaccination support stipends, outreach support and information, and linkages to other partners with similar goals in the community. The community stipend program has been quite successful.

Emergency Shelter Facility

Allocation amount: \$3,500,000

Project description

The existing Simpson emergency shelter is operated at the Simpson United Methodist Church building in Minneapolis. However, the building's deteriorating condition means that Simpson's ability to continue operating the shelter safely there will soon be seriously affected. Simpson's plan to re-develop the site of the church building will address that with a new five-story building, comprising a new shelter designed to support person-centered services for at least 70 individuals in addition to 42 units of permanent supportive housing for persons who have experienced homelessness, and community and service space to provide intensive services to both shelter and permanent housing residents.

Hennepin County is contributing funding for construction of the new shelter component of this project. Transferring the county funds to the city allows the city to manage this project. Funding also comes from private gifts and pledges from the community to support the project. This ensures that Simpson can continue providing emergency shelter as part of the homeless response system, which has been a critical resource during the pandemic.

Eviction Reduction

Allocation amount: \$2,200,000

Project description

The COVID-19 public health emergency caused many Hennepin County households to suffer a dramatic loss of income due to underemployment and unemployment. This placed residents at high risk of losing their housing. While evictions were suspended during the eviction moratorium, it was a short-term solution to what is now a broad issue of housing instability for our most vulnerable renters. Large overdue rental balances are making it nearly impossible for renters to gain stability in this tight housing and rental market.

The Eviction Reduction project was developed to provide legal representation to tenants facing eviction and to connect those facing eviction with economic and social services that will prevent their eviction or otherwise help them achieve housing stability. This project reflects a strong partnership between two Hennepin County departments: Housing Stability and Adult Representation Services (ARS). The two departments work in concert to provide wraparound services to tenants both in and out of Hennepin County Housing Court. Through this effort, the agencies have hired navigators, attorneys and support staff to aggressively work together to keep tenants housed.

Progress narrative

More than 85% of tenants in housing court face eviction for the nonpayment of rent. A recent two-week snapshot of clients who appeared in court revealed that tenants owed a range \$857-\$23,200 in rent. The average amount of rent owed per tenant is approximately \$4,100. The average monthly rental amount is approximately \$1,200. Most tenants live well below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. As predicted, the eviction filings went up dramatically after the moratorium was lifted. The court has expanded calendars to accommodate this large influx of cases.

Importantly, since August 2021 all clients who appear in housing court are offered an attorney and tenant navigation services. Most tenants appearing accept both services. The tenants facing eviction are approximately 72.5% Black and Indigenous and people of color affected by disparities and experiencing extreme poverty. Tenants who reach out prior to court for legal or navigation services are immediately connected with resources as well.

With the addition of four new tenant resource navigators in the Housing Stability department, 100% of tenants in housing court who seek rental assistance and navigation services have been served. Navigators staff every court calendar and are available by phone outside of court hours to respond to the high demand for rental assistance. Navigators partner with the Economic Supports department to secure the maximum financial support for tenants as well. These expedited processes have yielded funding approvals within a week of a tenant's application.

Tenant outreach has played a key role in the success of this project. The Housing Stability department has created an online renter's help tool which not only provides information and resources, but links individuals to the application process for assistance. ARS and Housing Stability have each established a phone help line and ARS has created an email contact box to triage emergency issues as they arise. Both departments commit to a fast response time, recognizing the stress that tenants facing eviction are under.

The coupling of legal and navigation strategies has been the key to success for this project. Attorneys representing tenants facing eviction advocate to:

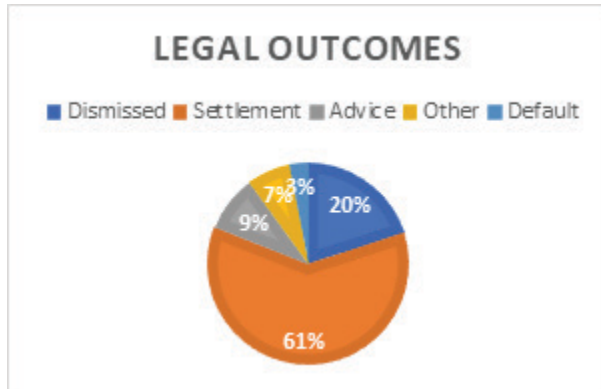
- Secure more time to pay outstanding rent balances
- Secure more time to vacate the premise in order to find alternative housing
- Defend against allegations of material lease violations
- Improve housing conditions
- Expunge eviction records

Tenants resource navigators:

- Coordinate financial resources
- Assist tenants with applications
- Connect tenants with community resources
- Field tenant concerns about their housing
- Partner with the legal staff to accomplish tenant goals
- Respond to court inquiries about rental assistance issues

Key performance indicators

Since August 1, 2021, ARS has served 1,274 families facing eviction. Importantly, from August-December 2021 to January-June 2022, ARS saw a 200% increase in the number of clients represented, which correlates to the lifting of the eviction moratorium. The legal outcomes for the families served in this reporting period are as follows:

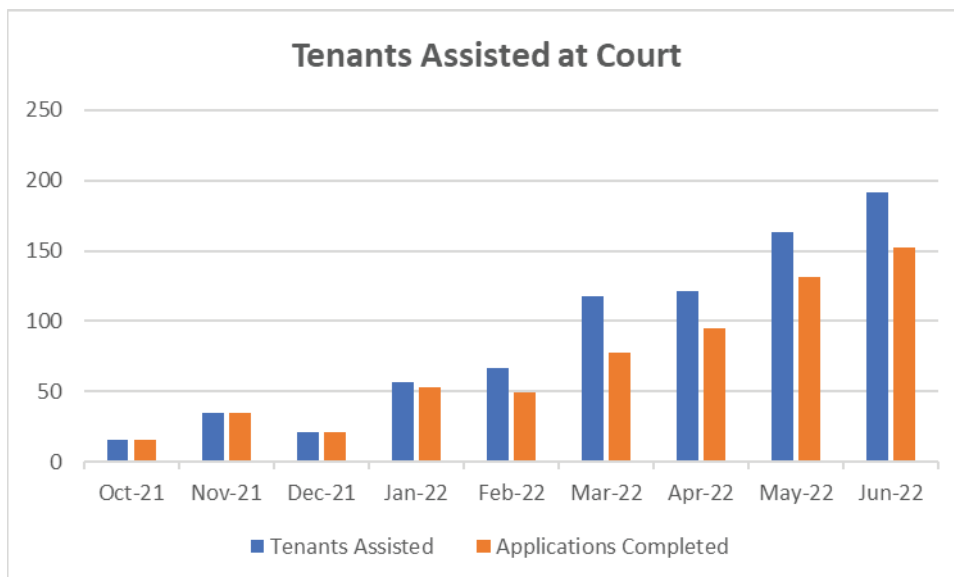


Tenants who are represented by counsel in eviction proceedings have dramatically better outcomes in key areas than unrepresented parties, such as:

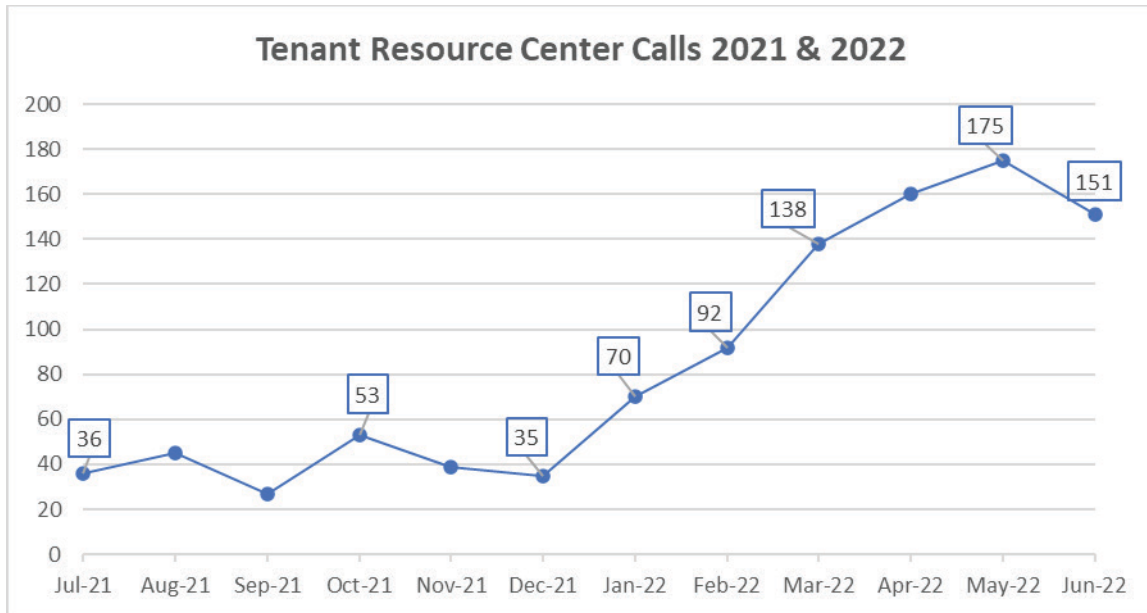
- 117% higher rate of dismissal
- 60% more expungements
- 77% more time to move out

ARS regularly examines case intake numbers, outcomes and the demographics of the clients served. As this work expands, ARS continues to implement new evaluation strategies. This will require technology enhancements to examine data in a more granular fashion, which may include property locations and financial data for correlative analysis.

Similarly, from October 2021 through June 2022, navigators have assisted 789 tenants in court with rental assistance applications and completed an astounding 630 applications in that same time period.



In addition to their work in court, navigators have fielded approximately 1,021 intake calls on the hotline despite the dramatic increase in monthly volume since October 2021. Sixty-nine percent of the calls are for rent assistance, followed by housing resource issues and requests for legal assistance.



The Housing Stability department maintains a robust eviction dashboard so that stakeholders have quick access to key data points regarding evictions in Hennepin County. As the work expands, so will the evaluative data collected in order to efficiently target populations with the greatest need.

Next steps

Now that the eviction moratorium has ended and most of the tenant protections are gone, Hennepin County is looking to build a sustainable model for tenants to gain housing stability. This includes:

- Building a long-term model with permanent and adequate staffing for ARS and Housing Stability.
- Increasing efficient virtual communication between internal economic support programs and community providers' financial assistance programs.
- Streamlining application processes and access to resources for tenants.

The collaborative and efficient partnership between ARS and Housing Stability serves to ensure that clients in Hennepin County who are at the greatest risk of being unhoused gain stability. The foundation has been laid for a sustainable model of eviction prevention for years to come.

Housing Recovery

Allocation amount: \$46,000,000

Project description

The economic impacts of COVID-19 were felt most heavily by people with low incomes, and by Black and Indigenous people and people of color. Of individuals requesting pandemic-related emergency rental assistance in Hennepin County from 2020-2022, nearly two-thirds had incomes below 30% of the area median income (AMI), and 80% were Black and Indigenous people and people of color affected by disparities.

As Hennepin County moved from emergency response to long-term recovery, the county board approved \$46 million in funding to support equitable housing recovery strategies. These strategies aim to create or preserve approximately 2,000 units of affordable housing and support more than 100 households in buying homes through the following activities:

1. Investments to immediately increase affordable multifamily housing production, such as:
 - Gap and acceleration funding for affordable housing projects serving populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - Investments to address a backlog of deferred rehab needed in naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) properties and support for additional nonprofit preservation acquisition of at-risk NOAH properties, which are a primary source of housing for populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.
2. Acquisition of properties supporting affordable housing along the housing continuum, especially for single adults who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency and are now struggling with homelessness and housing instability.
3. Homeownership programs targeting populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Progress narrative

Since Housing Recovery funds were authorized in August 2021, the Hennepin County Housing and Economic Development Department has allocated or awarded \$37.8 million of the allocated \$46 million. This has required legal analysis in partnership with other jurisdictions; conversations with developers, service providers, and Hennepin County Human Services partners about needs and opportunities; and other activities to maximize the impact of the funds in creating a more resilient affordable housing infrastructure. Staff completed these strategies simultaneously to expedite results.

From November 2021 through April 2022, staff completed four requests for proposals to support housing recovery:

- November 2021: Projects delayed by pandemic-related construction cost increases
- December 2021: Preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)
- January 2022: Coordinated Affordable Housing request for proposals, including funding from the Affordable Housing Incentive Fund and HOME Investment Partnership Program and Housing Recovery funds for:
 - Affordable Housing Accelerator: Projects which could open more quickly with strategically sized awards, prioritizing projects with developers who are Black Indigenous or persons of colors affected by disparities, and/or projects in areas impacted by the civil unrest of 2020
 - Homeownership assistance: Projects to create new homeownership opportunities for people disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and system homeownership barriers
- April 2022: Second round of Affordable Housing Accelerator
- By May 2022, Housing and Economic Development had awarded or allocated \$37.8 million of the \$46 million.

Pandemic-related construction cost increase assistance: \$2,000,000

Project	Developer	Units
3301 Nicollet	Alliance Housing	64
Bloom Lake Flats	Project for Pride in Living	42
The Crest	Aeon	171
Rise on 7	CommonBond Communities	120
Sound on 76th	Aeon	70
Total		467

NOAH preservation: \$4,605,924

Project	Developer	Units
Alliance properties	Alliance Housing	12
Carrington Drive	Aeon	128
Huntington Place	Aeon	834
Next Step Housing	Ascension Place	12
Total		986

Homeownership assistance: \$3,100,000

Project	Developer	Units
Homebuyer Initiated Program	City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT)	10
Homes within Reach	West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust	12
Harrison Townhomes	Habitat for Humanity / CLCLT	17
Minnetonka Boulevard	Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation	8
Portland Place	Project for Pride in Living / CLCLT	9
Tax-forfeiture conversion	Partnership with City of Minneapolis	17
Total		73

Affordable housing accelerator: \$23,100,000

Project	Developer	Units
3030 Nicollet	Project for Pride in Living	110
Calvary Apartments	Trellis	41
Emerson Village	Beacon Interfaith	40
Plymouth Avenue Apartments	Matrix Development, LLC	63
The Resolute	Riverfront Development Company / Trellis	71
Wadaag Commons	Seward Redesign / Noor	38
Wangstad Commons	JO Companies	54
Blake Road - Bldg A	Alatus	116
Currie Commons	Wellington Management	187
MIWRC Housing	Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center	22
MPHA Scattered Site	Minneapolis Public Housing Authority	84
Union Park Flats	Project for Pride in Living	60
Vista 44	Beacon Interfaith	50
Total		936

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing: \$5,016,000

Project	Developer	Units
Acquisition and rehabilitation	HCHRA and Facility Services	61

Key performance indicators

Housing Recovery goals were to create or preserve 2,000 units of rental housing, and 100 homeownership opportunities, while meeting the county's ongoing goals to maximize affordability.

Current progress has already surpassed the rental goal, with 2,450 units, and is close to the homeownership goal with 73 units.



Current progress is also surpassing the county and HRA's affordability goals.

30% AMI rental goal: 25% of new units financed are affordable to households with incomes below 30% of the area median income (AMI).

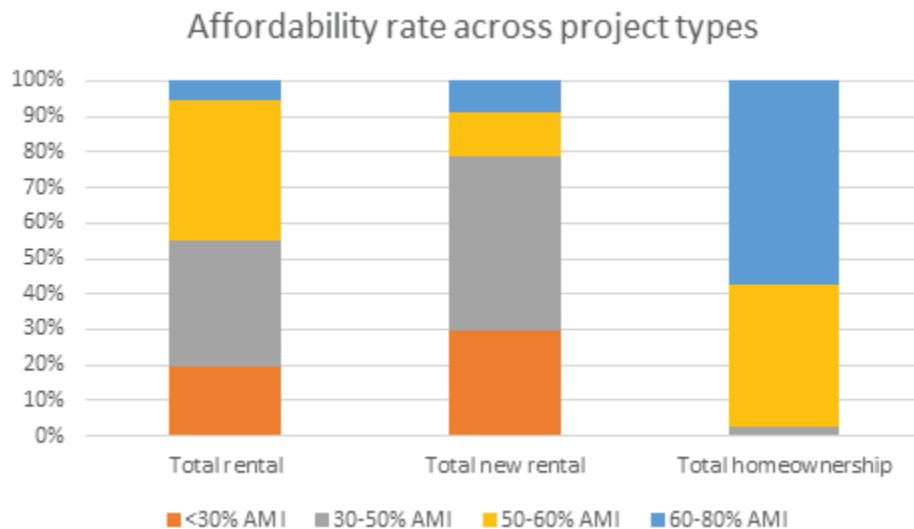
– Outcome: 30% of new units financed through Housing Recovery are affordable at or below 30% AMI.

50% AMI rental goal: 75% of new units financed are affordable to households with incomes below 50% AMI.

– Outcome: 79% of new units financed through Housing Recovery are affordable at or below 30% AMI.

Homeownership goal: 25% of homeownership opportunities financed are affordable to household incomes below 60% of the area median income.

– Outcome: 42% of homeownership opportunities financed through Housing Recovery are affordable at or below 60% AMI.



Next steps

In the next three to six months, Housing and Economic Development will release additional requests for proposals and explore additional SRO housing acquisitions and conversions to allocate or award remaining funding.

Protective Shelter and Isolation

Allocation amount: \$900,000

Project description

Hennepin County's quick action in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented deaths and widespread illness among people experiencing homelessness. The Protective Shelter and Isolation project was primarily supported by federal funding from CARES. Pandemic response funds were added to support the effort. The project objectives were twofold: to reduce risk of serious illness and death for the most vulnerable of shelter residents, and to deconcentrate shelters to reduce risk of transmission more generally.

Through previous work, Hennepin County had entered relationships with hotels and learned how to offer supports needed in the event of a mass evacuation of people experiencing homelessness into hotels. The big difference during COVID-19 was that the county decided to lease entire hotel sites and staff them as shelter. This program was devised and implemented in a matter of days. Hennepin County case workers collaborated with staff at five agencies running contracted single-adult shelters to identify people whose age and physical health indicated that they would benefit from the move. From the beginning, Hennepin County took a lead role in providing funding and convening partners to make this project a reality.

This project, which phased out in 2021, was overwhelmingly successful and has received a National Association of Counties (NACo) award.

Services for People Experiencing Homelessness

Allocation amount: \$36,070,000

Project description

There are multiple projects involved under this umbrella project description including (but not limited to) housing-focused case management (Homeless to Housing team), system-wide shelter diversion, low-barrier shelters, shelter and board and lodge capital, 24/7 shelter, eliminating self-pay in shelter and encampment response (Streets to Housing).

Hennepin County's Office of Housing Stability (OHS) has an existing strategy in place that guided funding decisions to ensure that this influx of vital and never-before-seen funding will create concrete results to make homelessness as brief as possible for anyone experiencing it in Hennepin County. Hennepin County believes that homelessness is unacceptable and that we have solutions for it. The focus of the Services for People Experiencing Homelessness was to infuse national best practices that will simplify and improve the system for the people in crisis who are accessing it, such as system-wide diversion. There was also intent to actively work to lower barriers for people who are accessing emergency shelter so that more people would be willing to seek the safety of our emergency shelter system and thereby gain access to housing resources and services. The project team has accomplished this by bringing culturally specific low-barrier shelters online and investing in much-needed infrastructure that will improve the day-to-day experience of people experiencing homelessness. Throughout we have emphasized a laser focus on quick connections to housing. Even with thoughtful and impactful investments in shelter we know there are some people who simply will not come inside. Using "housing first" principles, the encampment response program — called Streets to Housing — will focus on quick connection to resources including housing. The program will collect (or is collecting) data so that we know not only the needs of unique encampments, but the housing priorities and barriers for each person staying there.

Progress narrative

The funding for Services for People Experiencing Homelessness funding was the first-ever investment at this scale. Since July 2021 significant progress has been made in data-informed use of funding with existing strategies.

Housing-focused case management — Homeless to Housing team

As of June 30, 2022, 197 individuals have been housed by this new team. Since October 2021 a 23-person team has been hired and onboarded (12 case managers, eight case aides, two supervisors and one program manager). The team created goals and purposes for each team and chose concrete data points to track over time, including equity-focused data points such as housing outcomes by race. The need in the community for housing-focused case management was great as this is the first team of its kind in our community that operates based on progressive engagement, person-centered and low-barrier principles. A low-barrier referral process was established as well as an outward-facing webpage with referral decision trees, eligibility, and other helpful resources. Single adults who are experiencing homelessness and staying in shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation in Hennepin County who are not already working with a housing-focused case manager would be eligible for a referral. Individuals who would benefit from this service may also be identified through data, so someone could receive needed services without even needing to request them. All services are voluntary and focused on securing permanent housing and breaking down any barriers. The team is not a crisis response team but a skilled housing focused case management team, joining with each client on their housing journey. An advocacy group with lived experience of homelessness, Street Voices of Change, is regularly engaged to advise on new policies, new hires, and procedures to ensure we are meeting the need of the population we are serving. The team began assigning cases in November 2021 and had to pause and re-work the waitlist at the beginning of June 2022. The team is reassessing best practices about how to manage taking in new referrals in an efficient way that doesn't create a backlog. At all times, the team prioritizes their resources to achieve housing for as many people as possible as efficiently as possible.

System-wide diversion

In July 2021 Hennepin County had two diversion programs online; however, they were siloed based on population and not placed at the front door of the entire system — which is a national best practice. Since then, the Office of Housing Stability system planners put together a thoughtful project description and request for proposals that focused on providing diversion services in support of people who need a quick resource connection or have safe options outside of shelter, so that only the people who have no other option are referred to a shelter bed. It was also important that the program be focused on customer service, breaking down population silos and rooted in data. There was considerable community outreach prior to releasing the request to learn from other successful communities, to speak to internal and external stakeholders and to engage people with lived experience of homelessness for guidance and feedback. The request was released in May 2022. Submissions are being evaluated by a panel that includes people with lived experience of homelessness and stakeholders from the youth, families, and singles homeless response systems.

Low-barrier shelters

In November 2019 Hennepin County adopted a vision for shelter that laid out specific priorities for future investment. One of those priorities was adding shelter capacity for culturally specific populations — namely Indigenous people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Funding for Avivo Village and American Indian Community Development Center (AICDC) Homeward Bound Shelter was provided by Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota. By January 2021 both shelters began filling their beds with single adults who traditionally have not sought or accessed shelter. Both shelters have been housing-focused from the start and employ housing case managers. They currently have the best housing outcomes in the entire single-adult shelter response system. Since July 2021 the team has finalized the Avivo Village contract and is coordinating with partners at the State of Minnesota to take over funding AICDC Homeward Bound once the allocation ends.

Shelter capital

In coordination with the State of Minnesota and the City of Minneapolis, the county leveraged the total amount of funding available for shelter capital improvements to make as big an impact as possible. All providers who requested viable projects were funded. The result was a vital youth shelter program relocating to an updated and dignified building on the light-rail line; renovation of two floors of the largest shelter for single adults in Hennepin County; and an updated HVAC system for a family shelter.

24/7 shelter

24/7 shelter was funded in the single-adult shelter system starting in 2020 through federal funding. Hennepin County committed to continuing 24/7 access using pandemic relief funding, based on the increased connection to on-site housing-focused services, increased dignity, and opinion of people with lived experience of homelessness. A request for proposals was issued for existing shelters that were housing- and data-focused to continue to expand shelter hours. A review committee made up of people with lived experience of homelessness and state and county staff made final determinations and providers were informed in July 2022. Funding will start in September 2022.

Board and lodge capital

The county for the first time, was able to allocate \$5 million specifically for capital improvements in board and lodge facilities. Since this effort was able to leverage the shelter capital funding through other local government partners, it was possible to support many more board and lodging capital projects than would have been possible otherwise. In addition, in partnership with the Hennepin County's Disparities Reduction line of business, Hennepin County Housing Stability was able to leverage an additional \$250,000 in funds for these projects. The county is currently finalizing contracts for these capital improvements. Over the next three to six months, many of these projects will begin construction. The county will monitor their progress. This was the first-ever request for proposals for capital improvements for board and lodge providers, so it was incredibly impactful to improve those permanent housing facilities for people moving out of shelter and off the streets.

Eliminating self-pay

Prior to the pandemic there was only one single-adult shelter program that was available 24/7 and had on-site housing case management. For budgetary reasons the provider charged 30% of shelter guests' income. Once the pandemic hit, and through intentional funding with pandemic relief funds, all shelters had housing case management and were 24/7. This program was also funded to specialize in serving people with a disability, so the 30% payment requirement created an equity issue in the system. Funding was used to cover the portion that was previously funded through client contribution. This has increased use of the program and allowed the system to fill all available beds.

Streets to Housing (encampment response)

Since the beginning of the pandemic there has been a growing number of encampments in Hennepin County, but a lack of commitment from community providers to be data-informed and housing-focused to quickly resolve them. The Streets to Housing program is focused on bridging the gap in our community between street outreach teams providing lifesaving one-time support, and housing case managers with specific clients and caseloads. There was a competitive request for proposals, but no provider was able to meet the intended goals, so Hennepin County brought the program in-house as a two-year infrastructure-building program. The program's first phase was a thoughtful build-out of policies, procedures and scope led by people with lived experience of homelessness. One supervisor and four navigators will be hired on a limited-duration basis.

The Office of Housing Stability has an articulated strategy in place and pandemic relief funding was used to further these strategies and priorities.

1. Help people access community-based resources as an alternate to shelter:
 - a. System-wide diversion — This intervention will establish a true front door to the homeless response system that asks people exactly what their needs are and has the programming, resources, and best practices in place. The intent is to use a person-centered approach to solving people's issues and using all available resources and creative problem-solving to try to make a person's homelessness as brief as possible.
2. Lower barriers to emergency shelter:
 - a. 24-hour shelter — Paired with housing-focused services, 24/7 shelter allows guests to access services during the day while also avoiding the stress of having to be outside during the day.
 - b. Elimination of self-pay — Prior to the pandemic there was one single-adult shelter program that specialized in serving people with a disability. Due to budgetary constraints it had to charge people 30% of their monthly income to stay in the program. Prior to the pandemic it was also the only 24/7 shelter program with case management in the system, which to clients justified the additional cost. Once all shelters were 24/7 with case management on site, funding was dedicated to eliminating self-pay so as to not create a barrier or a disincentive to access a quality shelter space.
 - c. Low-barrier shelters — The shelter providers, Avivo and AICDC, are trusted providers in the Indigenous community and are skilled in quickly securing housing that people want. These shelters increased capacity in the system for a specific and underserved population since the people going to Avivo Village and AICDC Homeward Bound Shelter tended to not access other traditional shelters.
3. Provide person-centered support focused on urgently moving to housing:
 - a. Homeless to Housing — Homeless to Housing has operationalized best practices in housing-focused case management. The team is low-barrier, accepting self-referrals or community referrals with a simple one-page form, and serves people in both shelter and in unsheltered settings. Team members are trained thoroughly before entering the field, and case managers are assigned dedicated caseloads so people know who their worker is and what they can expect from them. Housing goal plans are co-created by the client and case manager. The program utilizes available funding to break down housing barriers, gather vital documents and make sure that no one moves into an empty apartment.
 - b. Streets to Housing — People experiencing unsheltered homelessness (and all homelessness) have often experienced significant trauma and have distrust of the "system." By using progressive engagement and person-centered service delivery, the team will assess encampments and the people staying there, attempting to resolve their homelessness quickly by moving as many people as possible directly into housing. This is particularly needed for people who do not come into shelter to receive resources, connections to the Coordinated Entry System and housing assistance.

Homeless to Housing

Below are examples of work performed by the Hennepin County Homeless to Housing (H2H) team. Staff are tasked with meeting clients where they are at, joining with them to break down housing barriers and eventually stabilizing them in housing. Below are specific examples of the work being done:

- An H2H case manager had a client who was initially staying at a temporary homeless shelter for people at high risk from COVID, which was based in a hotel. The client had a lot of involvement with law enforcement and their criminal background was a barrier to housing. The client was the victim of violence as a part of that lifestyle, suffering a traumatic brain injury, loss of vision, and some paralysis. The case manager worked with the client around needs and background. She assisted him to reconnect with supportive medical services (Community Access for Disability Inclusion waiver). She applied for and received a reasonable accommodation with a landlord which allowed for modifications to be made to an, where he is currently housed via a voucher and getting reestablished with services to assist with his disabilities.
- An H2H case manager had a client with a \$14,000 debt to a previous landlord due to property damage. This seemed like an insurmountable barrier, but neither the case manager nor the client gave up. They worked to apply for an apartment. When the client was denied, the case manager put in an appeal and reasonable accommodation request to ensure the apartment was going to work and be safe once the client moved in. They worked out a plan with the landlord to address the debt and the appeal went through. The client is now housed and doing well in an apartment that she almost certainly would not have been able to secure on her own.
- An H2H case manager had a client who was involved in violent behavior on a light-rail train. The case manager advocated strongly and was able to secure an apartment just days before the client's voucher expired.
- An H2H case manager worked with a transgender youth who was experiencing domestic violence. The case manager made two appeals with the voucher to get the rent limit increased as well as appealing the rent amount with the landlord to decrease what they were asking. The client is now housed in a place where she feels safe and supported.
- 56% of all Emergency Housing Vouchers utilized in Hennepin County have been used by people who were homeless in a shelter or on the streets in partnership with a H2H worker.
- The H2H case aids have cumulatively completed 490 tasks, such as moving someone into an apartment, applying for vital documents, accompanying a person to a housing appointment and filling out housing applications.
- Since November 15, 2021, 31 veterans experiencing homelessness were housed by H2H staff and remain stably housed.

Staff prepared thoughtful request for proposals that resulted in quality funding decisions which move Hennepin County's overarching vision forward (i.e., system-wide diversion, 24/7 shelter, shelter capital, Streets to Housing).

- Staff conducted a thorough community engagement process for each request to understand the landscape of our nonprofit partners and ensure that people with lived experience of homelessness believed these were the right priorities to focus on.
- Each evaluation process included people with lived experience of homelessness from the start and wouldn't settle for programming that didn't meet the goals and priorities established for this funding.
- There was excellent cooperation between the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and State of Minnesota partners to leverage the impact of available funding for the betterment of the people we serve and the system they operate within.
- The opinions of people with lived experience of homelessness regarding the initial proposals, funding decisions and implementation was paramount to the success of these programs.

Low-barrier shelters

Avivo Village

- Has served 230 people to date.
- 49% of people served identify as Native or Indigenous.
- 161 people met the HUD definition of chronically homeless.
- 46% of the people (65) who have left Avivo Village have successfully transitioned into permanent housing.

AICDC Homeward Bound

- Has served 483 people to date.
- 91% of people served identify as Native or Indigenous.
- 213 people met the HUD definition of chronically homeless.
- 17% of people (73) who left Homeward Bound have successfully transitioned into permanent housing.

Key performance indicators

1. Number of people experiencing homelessness
2. Length of time people experience homelessness
3. Percentage of people exiting homelessness to permanent destinations

Homeless to Housing — evaluation

- The team has tracked key data points since the project's start.
- The team meets bi-weekly to review data, identify pain points and adjust accordingly.
- The supervisors often do data quality checks to ensure H2H data is accurate and consistent.
- The team utilizes a client satisfaction survey to garner consistent feedback from people who have been served by H2H to raise up the voice of clients and improve service delivery continuously.

Low-barrier shelters

A Hennepin County planner assigned to both shelter contracts has developed housing-focused performance measures to track the program and evaluate it yearly. Both shelter providers are in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which tracks all shelter stays, exits to permanent housing and guest demographics.

Streets to Housing

Although it launched just in mid-June 2022, the team will be data-driven, tracking all progress and client engagement in HMIS. Reports will be pulled regularly to check data quality and ensure follow-through on service delivery. Streets to Housing will track specific data points to ensure programming is moving in the right direction.

Homeless to Housing

- A total of 717 referrals received
- 197 people successfully housed since November 2021
- An average of 9.5 people housed per week
- There is a goal to secure vital documents for all clients:
 - 75% of clients have a photo ID (24 in progress)
 - 51% of clients have a Social Security card (43 in progress)
 - 44% of clients have a birth certificate (33 in progress)

Next steps

Housing-focused case management — Homeless to Housing program

- Continue to fill open positions with the intention to become fully staffed.
- Refine waitlist to be more efficient and person-centered, and re-open in a thoughtful and transparent way in consistent intervals moving forward.
- Continue to track data; create a dashboard to track and zero in on specific data points.
- Implement quality assurance survey to gather consistent feedback on service delivery from people we serve.
- Future goal (once fully staffed) to achieve at least 1,000 housing outcomes each year.

System-wide diversion

- Complete evaluation process for proposal submissions.
- Choose provider and enter contract negotiations.
- Work with provider to phase in program, including working closely with the Adult Shelter Connect and Hennepin County Family Shelter Team.
- Implement system-wide shelter diversion program.

Low-barrier shelters

- Finalize Avivo Village contract.
- Finalize AICDC Homeward Bound contract.
- Work with providers to fully integrate into Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track housing outcomes, case management outcomes and updated client profiles.
- Analyze and evaluate data to help improve processes.

24/7 shelter

- Enter contract negotiations with all funded providers.
- Meet with providers who weren't funded to review proposals as requested.
- Finalize contracts.
- Establish contract performance measures that focus on housing outcomes.

Streets to Housing

- Hire, onboard and train full team.
- Engage with current and emerging encampments to enter in HMIS to broker resources and services.
- Create infrastructure within system to be able to quickly survey an encampment for needs and broker services to make available in a low-barrier way with the hope of resolving homelessness quickly and resolving the encampment by housing everyone.
- Develop a public-facing GIS feature to track progress for reducing encampments and thus overall unsheltered homelessness.

Economic Recovery

Allocation amount: \$19,000,000

Project description

The pandemic devastated Hennepin County small businesses, with disproportionate impacts to very small businesses, minority-owned businesses, and businesses in low-income communities. As a result, the number of businesses open in early 2021 declined by 22% over early 2020. Race- and gender-based disparities in business ownership and access to capital pre-date and were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Many nonprofit organizations provide services critically important to the economic recovery of disadvantaged communities. In some cases, the same nonprofits that faced the most acute financial hardship from the pandemic are now called upon to increase programming to meet higher levels of need in the communities they serve. Some organizations have physical space constraints in light of increased capacity needs, and face challenges accessing capital to expand or renovate.

Hennepin County economic recovery strategies are designed to address these challenges and promote an equitable economic recovery that will rebuild more inclusive, prosperous business districts and communities over the long term, and help tackle long-standing disparities in income and wealth, business ownership, and economic mobility exacerbated by the pandemic.

Economic recovery investments will assist the recovery of over 1,300 small businesses and nonprofits and stimulate investment of over \$30,000,000 in ways that build wealth in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Progress narrative

Economic recovery activities in the fourth quarter of 2021 focused on gathering data, engaging community members and stakeholders, and designing preliminary approaches to economic recovery strategies centered in racial equity and addressing both place- and race-based disparities. More than 65 participants representing Hennepin County's diverse cultural and geographic communities provided input through listening sessions and interviews.

In the first half of 2022, Hennepin County redoubled efforts to support small businesses through the multi-faceted Elevate Business strategy designed to build long-term capacity of pandemic-impacted local businesses to succeed and grow. Components of this strategy completed or underway during this reporting period include:

- Investments in an expanded network of 23 business advisors which began providing free in-depth technical assistance, “back-office” support, and specialized expertise to small businesses in Hennepin County.
- A new digital platform with one-stop access to business support resources.
- Cohort learning to support disadvantaged businesses.

Economic recovery efforts designed to accelerate community investment underway include a new \$10 million pilot program, the Community Investment Initiative, that launched in March 2022 seeking redevelopment projects that support business incubators, long-term affordable commercial space, or nonprofits providing economic recovery services to disproportionately impacted communities.

In addition, work began on two studies exploring innovative ways to advance economic mobility:

- A graduate-level “capstone” research project in partnership with the University of Minnesota to assess benefits and identify ways to avoid unintentional pitfalls of economic mobility efforts, such as guaranteed basic income strategies
- A study to explore the feasibility of launching a local impact investing hub as a means of activating private capital among local investors to support local small-business growth

Key performance indicators

Key performance indicators for Economic Recovery strategies include:

- Businesses assisted through economic recovery efforts, including:
 - Hours and types of technical assistance provided
 - Number of small business loans, and amount of financing facilitated and leveraged
 - Number of small businesses that achieved long-term affordability and affordable commercial spaces or ownership created
 - New business formations assisted
- Total investment value generated in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic

Performance indicators will be disaggregated by race to the extent possible to track the effectiveness of strategies in reducing racial disparities and place-based impacts in low-income communities and communities of color.

Next steps

Economic recovery efforts that will launch during the next reporting period include multiple programs within the Elevate Business strategy:

- cohort learning to tackle the digital divide among microbusinesses and spark growth-oriented businesses
- working capital with wraparound support for emerging contractors

The Community Investment Initiative will commit \$10 million to specific projects that will provide affordable commercial space and assist local businesses and nonprofits in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Anti-Hate Initiative

Allocation amount: \$1,000,000

Project description

Due to a number of barriers, current data collection for instances of violence motivated by hate is limited within Hennepin County.

The primary goal of the Anti-Hate Initiative is to reduce those barriers, enhance data collection efforts to determine the scope and prevalence of hate-based violence, and conduct community engagement activities to reduce the occurrence of hate-based violence. Our program efforts will include the hiring of a research intern, director and program coordinator to manage the research phase of the project and seek to gain a more concrete understanding of the instances of hate crimes/incidents in Hennepin County. We intend to make policy recommendations based on the results of that research.

Progress narrative

- The county board authorized up to \$1 million in funds for eligible costs, operations, staffing and services to support an analysis of hate and bias-motivated incidents in Hennepin County, and make recommendations for reporting, data collection, investigation, system support, increased awareness, and outreach.
- A Safe Communities Department was created within the county to facilitate long-term strategy to address violence (including hate crimes and incidents).
- A director and anti-hate program coordinator were hired for Safe Communities Department.

- The program coordinator will lead efforts around hate crimes/incidents within Hennepin County and inform our work across lines of business. This position oversees a Hennepin-University Partnership graduate student through a research project, gathering data and examining it under a local lens. Post-research, the focus will include developing recommendations for how to effectively provide public education, anti-hate campaign strategies and methods for building local community capacity to effectively respond to and prevent acts of hate. This position could include the management of grants.
- A Hennepin-University Partnership intern was onboarded for a summer research effort, currently underway.
- The new program coordinator will be onboarded mid-July.

Key performance indicators

- No evaluation efforts have been conducted as of Q2 2022.
- Performance indicators include:
 - Flyers distributed, meetings hosted/attended, participants reached, social media impressions, hate incidents reported and policy recommendations developed, among many others.
 - Future evaluation efforts will be in line with performance indicators.

Next steps

- Intern research will continue to develop.
- New coordinator onboarding in the next quarter.
- Evaluation methodology will continue to be developed.

COVID-19-Related Court Backlog

Allocation amount: \$4,511,066

Project description

The Hennepin County Public Defender's Office hopes to use contract positions to divert cases away from attorneys with a disproportionate number of backlogged felony trials. This allows the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office to maintain vertical representation while also freeing attorney time to focus on the oldest cases which can only be resolved through a trial. In addition, it provides the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office with the flexibility necessary to respond to any increased filings as a result of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office processing its backlog of referred but uncharged cases.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office hopes to use the contract positions to address the large backlog of charged and uncharged felony cases and address the large and excessive caseloads handled by Hennepin County attorneys. The additional contract positions will allow the Hennepin County Attorney's Office to fill vacancies and hire additional attorneys to meet the demands of the increasing and excessive caseloads handled by attorneys. Additionally, the contract positions will also provide necessary caseload relief by providing additional staff to meet the demands created by the backlog and the increased caseloads.

The work of the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office, Hennepin County Attorney's Office and Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) are all interconnected. Therefore, attempts by the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and Hennepin County Public Defender's Office to address the backlog of cases created by the pandemic will directly affect the DOCCR and its caseloads. The DOCCR will use the contract positions to address the backlog and manage the increase workloads created by the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and Hennepin County Public Defender's Office attempts to address and reduce the backlog of cases created during the pandemic.

Progress narrative

The DOCCR has begun the process to prepare for the increased pre-sentence investigations and general supervision associated with the felony backlog by hiring a correctional unit supervisor who began in the position in April 2022.

During July 2021-June 2022, the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office has had a contract with eight attorneys (five FTEs) and one support staff (one FTE) in the various adult units, and three attorneys (1.15 FTEs) in the juvenile unit. The attorneys in adult court are on trial teams, handling cases from arraignment through trial, which has helped draw down the backlog. The lawyers in juvenile court are staffing twice-weekly calendars and handling delinquency cases from first appearance through trial. The juvenile contracts have allowed the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office to avoid the need to transfer multiple attorneys from the adult division to backfill earlier vacancies. During this period, \$337,899 of allocated money has been spent on these contracts, with an additional \$366,325 earmarked for existing contracts from July 1-December 31, 2022.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office has identified the most efficient placement for seven FTE staff to be hired to address the backlog. In addition, the Hennepin County Attorney's Office has quantified the number of backlog cases. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office has also begun meeting with grant partners to coordinate backlog responses and strategies.

Key performance indicators

The key performance indicators that will be used to track and calculate each group's efforts will be the reduction in the amount of backlog cases created due to the pandemic and the overall caseload relief created by adding additional staff.

The DOCCR has started the process to hire probation staff for both central intake and felony investigation. The DOCCR's Adult Pre-Adjudicated Services continues to move through hiring processes for a corrections unit supervisor. Since then, five of seven probation officers have been hired to complete work in the pre-sentence investigation and central intake units. Incoming referrals for investigations and intake have been steady and manageable. With these added resources, client services for sentencing preparation and probation services have not been interrupted. The goal of the pre-sentence investigation and referral intake work is to connect with clients, work through preparing for sentencing and connect with the court on their sentencing timelines. There have been no delays in meeting this goal; cases have been assigned and the work has been completed. Felony level PSI referrals increased 53% from January 1 — June 30, 2021 to January 1 — June 30, 2022. Central intake Hennepin County court referrals increased 31% in the same period.

The Hennepin County Public Defender's Office has been able to provide caseload relief by diverting new cases away from trial attorneys to allow them to focus on the backlog of trial settings. The adult court contractors have handled 506 cases during the 12-month period. The juvenile court contractors have staffed 60 calendar days and handled 58 child protection cases from those calendars. In addition, one juvenile contractor has handled 41 additional delinquency cases during the life of his contract.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office has completed internal structural reorganization to more efficiently deploy staff to reduce the backlog. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office has also met with District Court leadership to develop strategies for reducing the existing felony backlog.

Next steps

The DOCCR will hire two central intake probation officers and five felony investigation probation officers.

The Hennepin County Public Defender's Office has one contractor who was .5 FTE, who is increasing his contract to 1.0 FTE. In addition, the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office is in final negotiations to bring an additional contractor into the adult division. The Hennepin County Public Defender's Office is also continuing to work with the private bar to identify additional qualified contracts to handle adult felony cases through the end of 2023.

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office will hire and place staff into the 7.0 FTE funded positions. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office will continue to work with District Court leadership to measure the reduction of backlog cases and backlog referrals for new charging. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office will continue to coordinate with grant partners regarding case reduction responses and strategies.

Violence Prevention

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

In June 2021, the Hennepin County Board authorized \$5 million for efforts intended to prevent, reduce, and mitigate gun violence in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The initial \$5 million was allocated for short-term efforts focused on getting resources into the community for violence interruption and intervention strategies, and for wraparound support services utilizing providers that had capacity and programming ready to provide immediate services. In March 2021, the county board authorized an additional \$5 million to support continued programming and the expansion of and/or creation of new programming and funding for a coordinator to support the ongoing violence reduction and community engagement strategies, a formal evaluation process and development of a long-term proposal for future services aligned with other county programming focused on reducing disparities.

Youth and young adults, particularly those in communities of color, are disproportionately impacted by violence. Black and African American residents of Hennepin County are disproportionately impacted by gun violence, with firearm-related death rates that are more than twice that of White residents. Hennepin County is committed to reducing gun violence through a holistic approach that identifies drivers of the violence, addresses risk and protective factors, and adopts evidence-based policies and programs and effective strategies that improve outcomes for communities impacted by gun violence.

Progress narrative

Within the past year, Hennepin County has completed the following:

- Board allocation totaling \$10 million dollars to prevent and respond to gun violence across Hennepin County
- Execution of 55 contracts with community providers
- Creation of a Safe Communities Department within the county to facilitate long-term strategy to address violence (including gun violence)
- Hiring of director and coordinator for Safe Communities Department
- Partnership established with the Minneapolis Office of Violence Prevention to align response efforts and discuss strategy
- Data collection and tracking system built; building analytics to monitor effectiveness and outcomes
- Creation of an interactive map to outline where services are delivered

The strategies used to accomplish the above include:

- Funding Hennepin County's Next Step Program, a hospital-based violence interruption service for victims ages 12-28 who are hospitalized due to violent injury. The program provides wraparound services including basic needs, food and transportation, safe housing, job training and employment, and access to crime victim resources.
- Funding gender-specific violence intervention services 24/7 tailored to the immediate needs of young persons up to age 24 and their support system through credible messengers in Hennepin County's most impacted communities.
- Funding violence interruption/intervention and outreach services by community providers in neighborhoods experiencing high levels of crime and violence.
- Funding trauma-informed services and programming for adult probation clients who are Black, Indigenous or persons of color affected by disparities.
- Increasing resources in law enforcement forensics to support investigations of violent crime cases.

- Building community capacity by funding violence intervention programs, neighborhood revitalization efforts, youth programming and mentoring, and services and restorative practices for those experiencing trauma in communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence.
- Creating partnerships and communication channels with the Minneapolis Office of Violence Prevention and the State of Minnesota to align efforts, maximize resources and strengthen impacts.
- Creation of a Safe Communities Department to support long-term efforts.

Hennepin County staff and contracted providers performed a variety of work during this reporting period. Examples of this work include:

- The supervisor oversees the day-to-day operations and supervises direct reports within the Criminal Intelligence Division. This position also supervises the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program which includes the opioid response strategy in collaboration with public health personnel.
- Two trainees were hired in October 2021 and began their training program.
- The criminal information analyst continues to provide crime analysis services and specialized investigative case support, primarily for violent crime (homicides, assaults, shootings, carjackings and robberies).
- The Community Mental Health Advocate Outreach Team provides community patrols to promote mental health awareness and crime reduction and prevention to Black and Indigenous youth within Hennepin County.
- Outreach services are offered at communitywide educational meetings within Somali communities throughout Hennepin County. This provides a forum for youth and their parents/guardians to engage with other community members to discuss topics related to community violence.
- Community-based workshops are offered that address the risk of gun violence and efforts to promote safer communities.
- Culturally competent immersive violence prevention training is designed to empower participants to deter, detect and de-escalate threats to themselves and in their community. It includes permit-to-carry certification. Fellowship for Freedom Fighters Programming, which includes topics such as goal planning, financial literacy, leadership styles, city/county leadership structure, opportunities to identify inspirational people and media literacy is offered to Black American youth and young professionals ages 20 and older within North Minneapolis.
- Short-term case management services by licensed social workers is offered to individuals and families who are victims of gun violence or have been negatively impacted by gun violence.
- Mothers Against Gun Violence prevention programming is designed to prevent gun accidents, suicides, thefts and misuse of guns by distributing gun safety educational messages, materials, training and free gun safety kits to 1,000 families who are disproportionately impacted by gun violence within North Minneapolis.
- Outreach programming (offered by staff who represent the same cultural neighborhood as those being served) is provided to youth up to age 24. It includes recreation, arts, education, training and mentoring, including peer-to-peer activities and opportunities designed to cultivate shared positive experiences.
- Internship programming for at-risk youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who are from the Camden, Near North, Jordan and Riverside neighborhoods to offer career counseling and mentoring.
- Street outreach patrol services are offered via the Gang Reduction and Intervention Program (GRIP). The program includes positive community presence and outreach to youth within North Minneapolis in areas identified as “hot spots” for criminal activity; youth engagement opportunities for positive messages of hope for a positive future; information about staying in school and the consequences of drug and criminal activity; and assisting youth to obtain resources available from other community partners.
- Six-week summer Imhotep Freedom School programming serves low-income areas of North Minneapolis who are at risk of experiencing violence, and children aged 6 through 12 who are court-involved and/or have incarcerated family members. Imhotep Freedom School programming focuses on reducing exposure to community violence, family trauma and negative peer relationships, using mentors to teach positive decision making and goal setting. Imhotep Freedom School programming is strengths-based, culturally meaningful and supportive of literacy, and offers youth a sense of purpose and contribution. Imhotep Freedom School includes transportation, meals, structured curriculum, independent reading time, parent engagement and recess.

Key performance indicators

Here are the key performance indicators for the project. Data and results will be reflected in future reports.

- Number of youth served
- Hours of mental health services provided
- Hours of mentoring services provided
- Hours of life skills services provided
- Hours of diversional programming provided
- Number of people receiving trauma intervention services
- Hours of crisis or drop-in services provided
- Number of community events held
- Amount of funds spent of direct assistance
- Hours spent on violence interruption patrol
- Number of staff assigned to violence interruption patrol
- Number of individuals that received violence interruption intervention
- Hours of group mental health services provided

There has not been a formal evaluation completed for the effort to date. Several items have been completed or are in process, including:

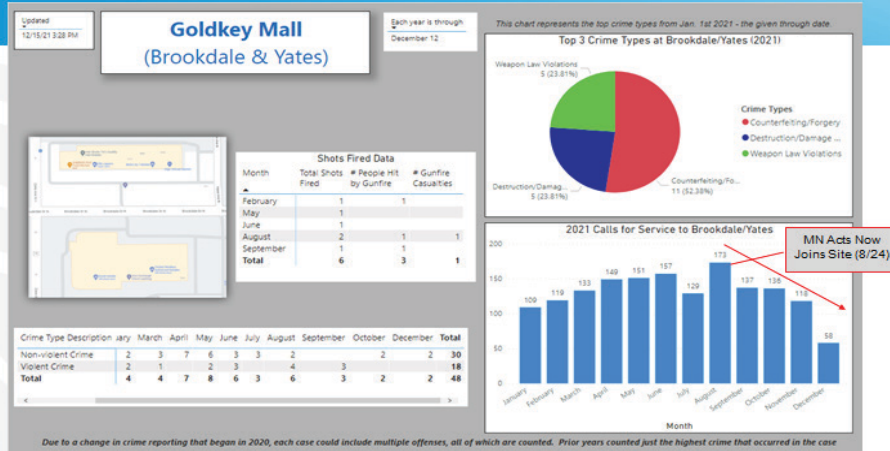
- Reviewed reports based on provider outputs
- Solicited responses from providers about the barriers and opportunities
- Developed a community engagement plan to assess what's working, what's not, what's needed
- Created a line item in budget for program evaluation
- Assessed gaps and needs for long-term strategy

Some results have been shared from organizations that Hennepin County is contracting with. Examples of these results are outlined below:

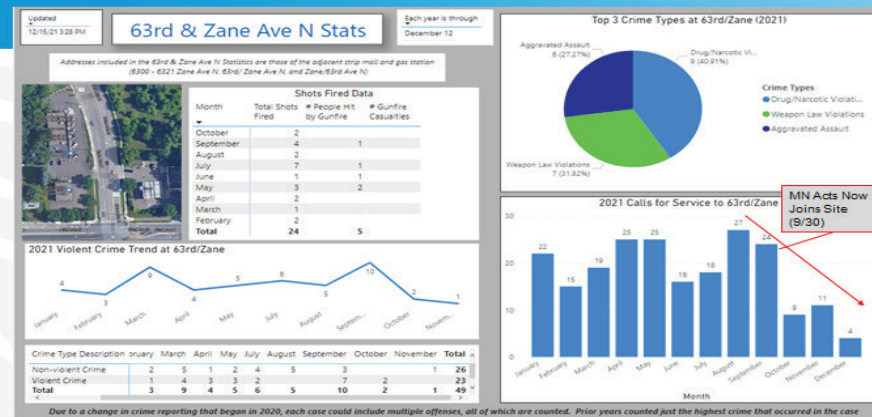
MN Acts Now (MAN)

In the City of Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County engaged with MAN to assist the city in providing “on the ground” violence interrupters at two hot spots in the community where gun violence had escalated. The following visuals provide a picture of the impact MAN had on the areas they patrolled.

North – Gold Key Mall (Brookdale/Yates)



South – 63rd/Zane



Next Step Program

Hennepin Healthcare’s Next Step Program is a partnership between North Memorial Health, Abbott Northwestern Hospital, the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota.

Next Step offers wraparound support services to young adult victims of violence and their families. Hospital navigators and case workers meet with survivors in the hospital to offer support during their stay and after they are discharged to help with transition back into the community. Care starts in the ER with the immediate goal to prevent retaliation. Violence prevention specialists follow their cases in the community. There is no discharge plan; program participants can come back for services at any time. Next Step currently has eight full-time and five part-time staff serving more than 100 individuals and their families each year. Total participants served since inception of the program is around 840.

Results show a significant drop in recidivism to 3% for program participants, down from a 36% recidivism before the program.

Next steps

- Develop and further build out ongoing violence prevention strategies as the work transitions into the Safe Communities Department.
- Develop a request for proposals based on current needs.
- Assess current contracts and develop the long-term vision for community contracts.
- Implement the community engagement plan.

Broadband and Digital Inclusion

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

The mission of the Office of Broadband and Digital Inclusion is to build and promote safe access to technology so that all residents of Hennepin County are empowered to thrive in the digital world. This funding continues the most successful parts of the Connecting Hennepin initiative; to ensure all county residents have access to, and can easily and safely use, modern technology to help realize their life goals. Research on digital inclusion identifies three aspects of the digital divide — computer access, internet access, and lack of digital skills — and this program includes programming in all three areas.

Data from the American Community Survey and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, among other sources, show geographic, racial and economic disparities in digital equity. Households that are Black, Indigenous, Hispanic or other people of color are less likely to own PCs and have home broadband. There are geographic, racial, housing and economic disparities in access to technology, which, among other effects, cause an inherent disparity in the awareness of new public programs. To overcome these barriers, this project plans to invest funds in community engagement, public and nonprofit partners and multimedia communications to ensure that all residents in need are aware of and able to engage with the programs. It also includes infrastructure projects to resolve broadband gaps in underserved communities, areas with limited providers, and low-income neighborhoods with low broadband uptake rates. The office also coordinates with federal, state and local government partners, internet service providers and community organizations to develop and implement a digital equity plan for Hennepin County.

Progress narrative

During the reporting period, an intake form and process to respond to needs identified by Hennepin County staff was developed, including the creation of a digital skills assessment launched in May 2022. Referrals of county residents who need technology support are made by staff throughout the organization, including librarians, social workers, case workers, paralegals and probation officers, among others.

The digital navigation team includes two full-time digital navigators, who respond to these referrals. They work to remove technology barriers by providing computers, information, and hands-on support. This includes information about free or low-cost internet options, and support enrolling in the Affordable Connectivity Program or a hot spot loan. The digital navigators conduct a digital skills assessment with each person and make training recommendations based on that person's digital readiness. An online safety course is required for all technology recipients.

Devices provided include Windows laptops for most clients, Chromebooks for youth, and computers in the Public Safety Facility for GED classes through the Helping Others by Providing Education (HOPE) program. Through a partnership with Hennepin County Housing Stability, a continuum of technology and navigation support to people transitioning to permanent housing is being developed. Flip phones are provided as a temporary support for the Homeless to Housing program. Once clients are housed, case workers will submit a referral to the office for additional technology supports.

There is a complementary effort to partner with community-based organizations to help meet the needs of residents in the community with a range of culturally appropriate digital navigation and training services. Data about the digital divide shows the importance of trusted messengers in digital inclusion efforts. A request for proposals is complete; as of late June, five contracts have been signed and others remain in negotiations. Additional partners may be solicited if gaps emerge.

The strategy also focuses on consumer choices for connectivity. This includes a focus on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). ACP promotional materials are available in libraries and used by community engagement staff and trusted messengers. An evaluation of what messages and channels are most effective for broadband adoption is underway; the findings will inform future promotion. A hot spot lending initiative complements this work; hotspots are loaned with a goal of stabilizing the household's access to internet service and eventually transitioning to a home broadband plan. The hot spots are made available through a partnership with the Hennepin County Library using Emergency Connectivity funds, and program staff supporting the work are funded with pandemic relief dollars.

Multiple pilot efforts are underway to test different broadband models to fill access gaps. This includes the Minneapolis Wireless Internet project, the Minnetrista fiber deployment, and broadband projects in different multi-tenant properties.

Key performance indicators

Technology support to households: 306 individual households, 759 total household members supported by digital navigation team. Of 478 total referrals, 64% are complete; remainder are in progress, duplicates, or ineligible.

- 192 people received a Windows computer
- 43 people received a Chromebook
- 92 hot spots have been loaned
- Remainder have received support with ACP enrollment or digital navigation
- 113 digital skills assessments conducted
- All clients all receive information about online safety practices; clients are offered technology skills training based on their digital readiness as determined by the skills assessment

Based on data collected from the staff making technology referrals, the typical client is low-income (defined as 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines, or \$40,626), unemployed, and requested technology in order to use county digital services or for look for employment.

Clients have a range of backgrounds; more than half identify as Black or African American. Based on information gathered during the digital skills assessments, clients usually lack access to their own computer and have limited internet access, either relying on public-access Wi-Fi or experiencing performance issues. They have a range of digital skills; many have fragmented skills based on their limited experience using technology.

Evaluation efforts:

- Participating in Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) library patron tech survey led by Wilder Research
- Developing an evaluation to gather stakeholder feedback and adjust services based on staff and client input
- Developing feedback loop evaluation process

Broadband infrastructure

Work continues with PCs for People on the Minneapolis Wireless Internet Service pilot project, which will serve 240 low-income households in North and South Minneapolis. Initial site preparation and testing is completed.

A partnership was developed with the City of Minnetrista to work with Midcontinent Communications to build out fiber optic cable to the home broadband infrastructure and provide high-quality internet service to nearly 500 unserved and underserved homes in Minnetrista. The work is underway and anticipated to be completed in 2022.

Other:

- \$50,000 in initial startup costs for the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office HOPE program. The program includes 70 computers and supporting equipment.
- 150 phones to Homeless to Housing.

Next steps

Technology support to households:

- Expand access to intake form for community partners and explore client self-service in newly re-opened county human service centers.
- Complete an evaluation of broadband adoption messaging and scale up ACP promotion based on lessons learned.
- Execute additional contracts with community-based organizations to deliver culturally appropriate digital navigation and training.
- Add additional contracts for refurbished computers for low-income residents.

Broadband infrastructure:

- Pilot different approaches to bringing high-speed internet to multi-unit housing.
- Develop solicitation process for municipalities to initiate fiber-optics-to-the-home projects with the goal of funding projects for the 2023 construction season.

Evaluation:

- Expand feedback loop evaluation to assess services and impact.
- Engage stakeholders and communities to refine strategies and identify additional opportunities to leverage county systems to eliminate digital barriers for clients.
- Evaluate of wireless internet pilot project.
- Report on and assess contracted service providers' digital navigation services.

Countywide HVAC COVID-19 Response

Allocation amount: \$5,000,000

Project description

As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and based on recommended best practices per the Centers for Disease Control and the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, Air-Conditioning Engineers for providing safe buildings to the public, Hennepin County made improvements to the ventilation system in its facilities to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This project will maintain this safe level of ventilation while improving operational efficiency and reducing energy use. By providing safe buildings the county is protecting the health and wellness of staff and residents who visit the facilities. Priority will be given to 24/7 facilities such as correctional institutions, plus other key buildings serving residents such as the Hennepin County Government Center.

Funding will be used to study and implement needed improvements to building heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and control systems in county facilities. This will allow better management of energy use and reduced operational costs associated with maintaining pandemic-level ventilation requirements.

Progress narrative

Over the past year, county staff have solicited proposals to acquire a consultant to study county facilities operating under pandemic conditions. A consultant, Erickson Ellison and Associates (EEA) was selected and a work authorization for \$95,000 issued on January 6, 2022. Scope, site visits and schedule were discussed at a kickoff meeting. Drawings of the sites were provided to EEA and reviewed. Site visits are currently in progress with 14 site visits planned over the summer.

Due to an immediate concern at the Adult Correctional Facility relating to COVID transmission throughout the area housing COVID-positive inmates, a separate study has been completed for this facility. A work authorization has been issued to Victus Engineering to evaluate and design a system that will reduce the spread of COVID at the Adult Correctional Facility, which is a 24/7 facility. During the first half of 2022, the evaluation was done and bid documents were completed to make modifications to the HVAC system and controls.

Finally, Hennepin County is using MERV 13 or higher filters in the air handling units, which have been effective in reducing the spread of COVID via the HVAC system. Since Jan 1, 2022, a total of 542 filters were ordered and received, and invoiced by June 30, 2022.

Key performance indicators

Efforts are underway to meet key performance indicators. Data and results will be reflected in future reports.

Next steps

Over the next six months, it is planned to have EEA finish up with their site visits, followed by discussion and review of their recommendations for pandemic improvements. A final report will be completed and an implementation plan will be discussed. For the Adult Corrections Facility HVAC modifications, the contract for the construction work will be issued and work will be started and possibly finished in the next six months. More filters will be purchased and installed as needed to assure safe operation of the county's buildings under a pandemic.

Digital Experience

Allocation amount: \$5,700,000

Project description

From the beginning, the COVID-19 pandemic required Hennepin County to rapidly shift to providing services to residents from in person to online. When physical locations closed to the public, the ability to serve digitally was critical to meeting ongoing resident needs. To date, the ongoing pandemic continues to fundamentally shift the county's service approach, making clear our need to build on these initial changes and provide a consistently positive and accessible experience for residents. This project is using funding to sustain and advance the digital transformation that has been required to respond to the pandemic by piloting a scalable, repeatable digital experience delivery model.

The Digital Experience team in the Operations line of business will lead this work in partnership with Hennepin County's communication and engagement teams, the IT community, and departments delivering resident services. This model will join key business, technology, and communication and engagement partners together to deliver a digital experience that meets residents' varying digital needs. Funding will also support increasing digital content, user experience, and web infrastructure work for the county's digital service platforms, including the Hennepin.us and HCLib.org websites. Teams will address both technical debt and continuous improvement needs to keep pace with increasing digital delivery.

The Digital Experience team will manage rapid change with an agile mindset and principles, determine long-term staffing and resource needs to support the model, and drive identified digital priorities that support Future Ready Hennepin. These efforts create digital equity and engagement for Hennepin County residents.

Progress narrative

The Digital Experience (DX) pandemic recovery project has seen a lot of progress in the past year. Most notably are four focus areas: 1) establish DX model, 2) foster intentional DX culture, 3) establish resident listening program, and 4) demonstrate DX value.

Establishing the DX model by having the right people in place to do the work is at the core of what makes this project successful. In the past year, a large portion of time and resources went to posting available positions to adequately staff the model. Ten positions have been filled and the remaining five positions are on track to be filled by the end of 2022. Additionally, the DX Advisory Committee has been re-engaged to bring awareness of this work to executive-level leadership. The advisory committee prioritizes future experiments based on organization needs and direction.

There are several ways in which this project is helping foster a positive DX culture in the organization. Hennepin County understands the importance of residents being able to access information and services online, and values accessibility. This is demonstrated by the creation and adoption of the digital accessibility policy in the county's administrative manual. A digital accessibility coordinator position was created to coordinate digital accessibility training for all county employees, with a focus on specialized content for developers, designers, and content creators as well as the average user. Hennepin County is contracting with a local organization who employs people living with disabilities to develop and deliver accessibility training. In addition to creating accessible experiences, the DX team is also working to strengthen direction, processes and supports to ensure equity-focused practices in the work. This is happening through intentional facilitated discussions to identify opportunities for informing processes with an equity-focused lens and for using Hennepin County's Racial Equity Impact Tool.

To provide a consistently positive and accessible digital experience, the DX team must understand the digital needs of residents. In partnership with the engagement services and IT strategic planning groups, the DX team is working to establish a resident listening program. In this joint effort, #DigitalNeeds, feedback from staff was collected through surveys and conversation to understand how business areas are listening to residents and understanding what they are hearing, and how they are using that understanding to take meaningful actions. The DX team learned from surveys and conversations that business areas often gather resident feedback to inform improvements to a service, project or program, but lack a process to share insights at a more strategic level.

One example of how this project is demonstrating DX value is through Hennepin County's Resident and Real Estate Services (RRES) chat experiment. This chat experiment is part of the larger engagement with the Real Property Group (RPG) in RRES to improve residents' digital service navigation experience. The goals of this experiment are to increase trust and accessibility, reduce disparities and ultimately exceed residents' expectations for digital services. DX is working with leadership in RPG to identify how their services add value for residents and center resident needs to create new or improved current digital service offerings. One way to improve the digital service navigation experience in RRES is by partnering with staff to experiment with improvements to their live-chat service, which was launched in response to office closures due to COVID-19.

Key performance indicators

The DX team is nearly fully staffed, a major accomplishment to date. The staffing model for the Office of Digital Experience is made possible by pandemic response funding.

A contracted vendor has been selected to begin developing digital accessibility training for employees. The training, scheduled to start in the fourth quarter of 2022, will help the organization ensure employees understand the importance of making content and web applications digitally accessible for all and empower employees to play a role in creating digitally accessible content and experiences.

This project has also supported the development of the web standards and pattern and component library. These resources are available to all web developers, designers, and content creators to ensure all content and web applications meet federal law, leading industry standards, and county policies. These artifacts support how we are intentionally creating an accessible and equitable digital experience culture.

Next steps

The planned activities and milestones in the next six months and how they align with the four focus areas are outlined below:

Establish DX model

Staff will continue planning and conducting experiments within departments and lines of business and apply lessons learned to future experiments, following a continuous improvement process. Staff will also be working to strengthen partnerships and identify opportunities to include community and use equity-focused practices.

Foster intentional DX culture

The Office of Digital Experience will begin a strategic planning process that will center values of equity and inclusion of the resident voice while aligning with Hennepin County's core values. Staff will also begin a digital touchpoint environmental scan, an effort to understand our baseline and identify opportunities to grow and areas where services are not effectively meeting the needs of residents.

Demonstrate DX value

A contracted vendor has been selected to develop digital accessibility training. Staff will work closely with the vendor to develop content and training materials for county employees. In addition to digital accessibility training, staff will develop procedures that support the digital accessibility policy. The next six months will also start the planning process for the multi-year and multi-discipline project of transitioning the current web presence from hennepin.us to HennepinCounty.gov. This will be a combined effort of the Office of Digital Experience, Information Technology, and communication and engagement teams, along with many other departments and supportive resources.

Establish resident listening program

Staff will continue to partner with engagement services and Information Technology to operationalize #DigitalNeeds strategy outcomes to better understand how efforts are meeting residents' needs through a listening and feedback loop program.

Engagement Services

Allocation amount: \$1,680,000

Project description

The Engagement Services project will increase and enhance engagement staffing, services and programs as part of the county's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response. The community will be connected to new and expanded programs and services, including continued mask distribution and education about the importance of getting vaccinated, as well as a variety of human services, housing, economic development, and employment resources.

With a focus on disparity reduction, these efforts will demonstrate the county's commitment to our residents along with providing Hennepin County's Engagement Services area the capacity to advance engagement systems and practices while sustaining community relationships. While this work is foundational to the county and will require long-term funding strategies to support continued development, immediate resources are needed now to continue the county's response to COVID-19.

Progress narrative

Trusted messengers

- Extended trusted messenger contracts through the end of 2021.
- Finalized and execute trusted messenger contracts for 2022.
- Conducted biweekly check-ins and large monthly meetings with trusted messengers.
- Connected the community to COVID-19 resources, services, and programs available at Hennepin County.
- Engaged individuals, families, and community organizations to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Promoted and created community vaccination sites/pods along with booster shots.
- Provided mask and test kit distribution from the county to organizations, individuals and schools due to increasing variants.

Community engagement roster program

- Worked on community engagement principal agreements language with the county's Purchasing and Contract Services, as a foundation to launch the umbrella contract program.
- Worked on community engagement principal agreements language with Purchasing and Contract Services.
- Implemented a communication and training plan for internal staff and external community partners.
- Held information/training session for internal staff and external organizations.

Translations

- Continue to work on establishing the translations program and process countywide.
- Assigned translation project to the community engagement leadership cohort to:
 - Identify which areas are most impacted by access and translation services, and who in the community the county should work with to address these barriers; and do research to identify other counties or cities who are leading this work.
 - Provide recommendations/next steps on a translation program countywide.

Engagement vans

- Engagement Services implemented the use of two mobile engagement vans during July 1, 2021 — June 30, 2022, to ensure that Hennepin County was directly engaging residents who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic with a focus on low-income communities of color. To support these engagement efforts, vans were equipped with Hennepin County information on emergency relief resources along with contact information on Hennepin County supportive resources such as food and cash assistance, housing, mental health, legal, probation, and other important Hennepin County service areas impacting our residents.
- During these mobile engagement van activities, Hennepin County was able to have direct conversations to inform and consult with residents, especially those from low-income communities and communities of color, to learn about issues, concerns and opportunities for future engagement.

Healing circles

- In 2021, in support of Hennepin County's declaration of racism as a public health crisis, Engagement Services hosted nine virtual healing circles for the following priority populations: African American males 18+, African Americans, African Immigrants, American Indians, Young adults 18-24, people of Asian descent, and Latino/ Latinx people and allies.

Materials distribution

- Direct engagement was conducted with 2,500 Hennepin County residents, providing them with masks, hand sanitizer and COVID testing kits. At events, the team provides residents with relevant program handouts and information about Hennepin County's areas of service. In addition to these Hennepin County handouts, we also provided communities with giveaway items such as hand sanitizer, tote bags/drawstring backpacks, information magnets, rice paddles, pens and other items.

Key performance indicators

Trusted messengers

- 36 trusted messenger organizations contracted.
- Biweekly check-in and large monthly meetings with trusted messengers, including ongoing monthly reports — showing summary of contracted services provided, results, and output (how many members reached).
- Enhanced involvement, strengthened relationships with multijurisdictional engagement partners, expanding the trusted messenger model across jurisdictions.

Community engagement roster program

- More than 150+ organizations registered since implementation in April 2022.

Translations

- Continue to work with the community engagement leadership cohort team to establish the translations program and process countywide.
- Recommendation anticipated 2023.

Engagement vans

- During this time, the two mobile engagement vans were deployed to 28 in-person gatherings such as vaccination events, community-sponsored events, schools, resource fairs, and government-sponsored events. 22 of these events were community-sponsored. At these events Engagement Services staff partnered with nine divisions of Hennepin County: Commissioners office, Office of Multicultural Services, Neighborhood Probation, Public Health, Child and Teen Checkups, Library, Transportation, Blue Line LRT Project Management Team, and Environment and Energy. Direct engagement was conducted with 2,500 Hennepin County residents, providing them with masks, hand sanitizer and COVID testing kits.

Healing circles

- So far in 2022, Engagement Services has held five events focused on different ways of cultural healing, wellness tips and learning. On January 18, Hennepin and Ramsey counties and the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Brooklyn Park held two multijurisdictional events for the National Day of Racial Healing. A daytime event was held for government staff, and an evening event for community members from these jurisdictions. On February 23, Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park hosted a Black History Month event focused on Black health and wellness. On May 21, in celebration of Asian Heritage Month and Minnesota American Indian Month, the team hosted a wellness panel and healing circles. On June 22, the team offered another intergenerational event for Black men of all ages, a liberation celebration for Juneteenth.

Materials distribution

- From July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, the team distributed 484,860 masks to more than 70 community organizations through monthly deliveries.
- In the first quarter of 2022, the team distributed 18,780 rapid self-test kits (which were received from the Minnesota Department of Health) to more than 30 community organizations. The team didn't receive any kits to distribute during the second quarter.

Next steps

Trusted messengers

- Finalize and execute amendment to trusted messenger contracts.
- Meet with community engagement cultural liaisons on ways to implement and improve the program.
- Possibility of a competitive selection/request for proposals using the community engagement roster program.
- Final evaluation report due December 31, 2022.
- Work on 2023 contracts and finalize/sign by December 31, 2022.

Community engagement roster program

- Promote the roster program internally and externally via multiple streams of communications (email, intranet article, etc.)
- Increase the number of applicants/folks who are registered.
- Provide information session for registered organizations.

Translations

- Create countywide work group/committee to include interpretation.
- Explore tools that are available to use (mobile applications, e.g. Talking Points).
- Collaborate and work with engagement standards group and their findings.
- Research/review current bilingual pay rate and work with Human Resources on increasing the rate and hours.
- Look into the possibility of creating a Hennepin County interpreter/translator registry.
- Potential hire of translators for the top three languages (Spanish, Somali, and Hmong) in Hennepin County.

Engagement vans

- To expand on this successful effort, Engagement Services has ordered an electric Ford Transit van equipped with solar panels for a computer, printer, and flat-screen TV; shelving for engagement supplies; and Wi-Fi hot spot. This addition to the current mobile engagement vans would help to meet the needs of a wider audience in Hennepin County. Staff will educate community about Hennepin County programs and services and collect community viewpoints to inform county work. With a focus on low-income communities and communities of color, Hennepin staff will be able to connect with residents regarding county services and activities with culturally competent staff who are coordinated across county divisions.
- To move beyond a reactive approach, a community engagement calendar is being assembled for use by all engagement staff in county lines of business. This calendar will provide a valuable reference point for proactively planning future engagement activities within strategically focused community geographies, reserving vans to support in-person engagement, cross county collaborations, and documenting direct engagement numbers along with what the team has learned.

Healing circles

- The team anticipates hosting at least three more healing circles this year.

Materials distribution

- Engagement Services has masks available for monthly distribution. When this supply is exhausted, we are not currently planning to order more masks this year unless COVID circumstances change.
- The team has asked the Minnesota Department of Health for 18,000 more COVID self-tests to distribute through the remainder of this year, and is awaiting confirmation of availability.
- Engagement Services will continue to provide program handouts, hand sanitizer, tote bags/drawstring backpacks, information magnets, rice paddles, pens, and other items.

Enterprise Integrated Data

Allocation amount: \$4,000,000

Project description

The Enterprise Integrated Data System aims to use meaningful integrated data from across county data systems to discover summary insights that enable the county to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, improve its disparity reduction efforts, and support key county strategies and enterprise initiatives. The project is framed around four key components: integrated data infrastructure, summary analytics, governance and security, and data use. The integrated data infrastructure entails the development of the technical infrastructure required to integrate county data and modernize county data systems safely and securely. This work would leverage modern data infrastructure tools to bring county data together effectively and iteratively in ways that meaningfully support ongoing reporting and analytics. The analytics component entails the development of a variety of summary reports that provide ongoing and holistic insights into county services. Analyses would focus on the county's ability to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts; the ways in which residents navigate county services across lines of business; the impact of county services on the well-being of residents, and county disparity reduction efforts, among others. The governance and security component entails the development of a robust and transparent governance structure that supports the development of robust strategic data insights while ensuring data security, privacy, and the ethical use of data. This work will be done in coordination with existing data governance activities including the county's responsible authorities, legal counsel and IT and data security staff. Lastly, this effort will also include a framework for data use that is intended to provide support for how the summary data insights created from this system can be used for effective decision-making.

Progress narrative

Over the past year, substantial progress has been made towards the development of an enterprise integrated data system. The underlying technical infrastructure and initial processes to integrate data have been established. Data from more than 10 internal sources along with data from over 20 external sources (e.g., Census Bureau) have been incorporated into this system. Processes to adhere to the underlying design and standards have been established and are currently being implemented. A governance process has been established that includes an executive review, legal review, and equity review. This process has been communicated to county leadership and analytics teams to ensure transparency and meaningful incorporation of feedback to ensure the enterprise integrated data system is carefully governed and highly secured. To date, seven analytics projects have been initiated and successfully reviewed through the governance process. While the analytics projects are still underway, early insights have been shared with key business partners as an integral part of the development of these analytics insights. We expect some of these projects to near completion by the end of 2022. The underlying staffing resources, IT resources, and related processes have matured as the project has progressed in ways that have enabled all of the achievements to date. An initial data-informed organization framework has been developed and supplemental materials and support for the ongoing use of data are currently being developed.

This project has leveraged several key strategies:

- Clearly communicate the ways in which this system is carefully governed, highly secured, and done in partnership with relevant county staff. This strategy has helped establish transparency and awareness of the governance structure, demonstrate the ways in which data are carefully governed and highly secured, demonstrate how each effort is carefully reviewed by county leaders and legal counsel, and illustrate the ways in which the team developing this system is working with county staff and leaders in partnership.
- Utilize key county initiatives to guide the development of this system. This strategy helps ensure that the summary data insights produced are tightly aligned with county strategies to help maximize the impact of summary data insights.

- Leverage an iterative approach to the underlying technical infrastructure and development of analytics. Work cycles have been implemented to enable rapid iterations and a faster timeline to the creation of initial data insights. This has enabled us to achieve short-term results while still ensuring the system is developed under a broader framework and long-term plan.
- Increase staff capacity to leverage modern analytics and data tools. As many of the underlying technology is new to county staff, we have effectively developed internal training mechanisms to ensure relevant staff have the skills and resources they need to support the development of this system.

County staff working on this are performing a wide array of work. To give a few examples, data engineering staff are developing processes to securely integrate data from county source systems into the enterprise integrated data system. They work to design quality assurance checks to ensure fidelity with underlying systems and definitions. Data scientists work to analyze these data and prepare summary insights in support of key county strategies and initiatives. The chief data officer at Hennepin County sets the strategies for how this project is developed in conjunction with the Integrated Data and Analytics team. In conjunction with county leadership and legal counsel, the chief data officer also helped develop and implement the governance structure. The county's data strategists have developed the initial framework for data-informed decision-making.

Key performance indicators

The key performance indicators for this project include:

- Total volume of data incorporated
- An evolving set of QA metrics related to data quality and fidelity with established definitions
- The number of analytics projects utilizing this system
- Number of days it takes for a project to go through the governance process
- The number of report views as a proxy for utilization

No evaluations of this project have been done to date as it is still in its initial development phase.

Key results from the past year include:

- Seven projects utilizing this system in this reporting period
- 180 GB of data have been incorporated in this reporting period
- Governance process from start to finish takes an average of 49 days in this reporting period
- Other key results are noted above in relation to the development of this system. Additional metrics will be available during the next reporting period as it is too early to report on them.

Next steps

In the next three to six months, the following efforts are expected:

- Refine and establish updates to the underlying design architecture
- Establish initial DataOps procedures, metrics and reporting
- Continue to develop the audit capabilities to demonstrate and further secure the data in this system
- Establish ongoing data pipelines for the initial ad-hoc data inputs
- Continue to iterate upon the underlying data model
- Review and update the governance process based on feedback and performance metrics
- Continue to develop materials to support the effective use of data by county staff
- Establish mechanism to ensure public data can be more broadly leveraged by county staff
- Refine processes for coordination and feedback between data engineering and data analytics functions
- Make meaningful progress on all analytics projects in adherence to our principles of partnership, careful governance, and data security

Information Technology

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

The Hennepin County Information Technology Department (IT) will partner with all business lines to develop and deliver solutions to technology needs resulting from the pandemic. By engaging with each line of business, IT is identifying numerous applications and technology solutions that will significantly advance the county's ability to deliver services digitally. Funds will support work in four areas:

Improving the design and execution of health, public health and relief programs

Improvements include modernizing systems, automating manual transactions, and gathering and using data to make informed decisions to support public health and relief programs.

Modernizing hardware and software

Future Ready Hennepin includes working and delivering services remotely. IT seeks to ensure staff will have the necessary technology to work in any approved county location and residents will be served by upgraded hardware for new or updated service offerings and provided with additional technology for public use. A modernized technology infrastructure allows for greater agility and faster innovation.

Protecting our critical infrastructure

To help protect county and resident data, IT will need to ensure our hardware and software are as up-to-date and secure as possible.

Modernizing business processes

IT created new solutions to connect residents with health care and services during the pandemic. These solutions and the relief programs they support now need to be operationalized and improved so Hennepin County can continue to dedicate resources to provide care to impacted persons, improve health outcomes for residents and build a healthier environment for all.

Progress narrative

More than 20 projects have been identified that fit under the four areas listed above. Most projects are in the initial planning and development stages. Some notable accomplishments this year include:

- Progress towards foster care referral system enhancements for initial placement matches with family whenever possible, and in family foster care when relatives are not available. Hennepin County Children and Family Services has prioritized stability for children and youth.
- Training and review of ADA website design to make online material more accessible.
- Investment in continuous deployment tool to accelerate application deployment and manage complexity.
- Modernization of central services equipment to respond to pandemic-related and other special printing and mailing needs.
- Partial funding of hardware placed in collaborative work centers to enhance hybrid workforce and service delivery capabilities.

Next steps

Prioritized projects continue to proceed through IT intake to coordinate resources and ensure efficient use of enterprise tools. Projects have been identified across all lines of business including major back-file conversions to digitize paper files, implementation of kiosk solutions for residents, improvement of online payment options, and location technology improvements in the jail.

Information Technology: Community Connectivity

Allocation amount: \$4,000,000

Project description

The IT Community Connectivity project aims to meet the growing need for high-speed broadband by establishing secure, reliable, and redundant high-speed broadband connections to county facilities and equipment. The project partners with the State of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Council, cities and school districts within Hennepin County, and other public agencies to share fiber assets and provide mutual benefits. This project supports critical public-service program needs such as 911 dispatch, libraries, human services and public health regionalization and data redundancy. The project works closely with the county's Public Works line of business to leverage existing fiber infrastructure for traffic management programs, and to share fiber planning, funding, and maintenance services. This project is the backbone that provides the foundation for future expansion of the county's fiber infrastructure.

Progress narrative

Pandemic response funding will move the Community Connectivity project forward in two areas:

- Accelerating plans to connect county facilities to fiber.
- Working closely with Public Works to increase fiber connections and expand the Advanced Traffic Management System.

During the first half of 2022, the Public Works line of business bid \$1.5 million of work to add over 25 miles of fiber to connect 35 intersections in Hennepin County. This work will also provide fiber redundancy in multiple south and southwest Hennepin cities. Additional infrastructure is also being purchased for a new video management system for the Traffic Management Center.

Next steps

Fiber connections will be constructed in 2023. Additional county facility fiber projects are in the planning stages.

Voter Participation

Allocation amount: \$3,312,000

Project description

The Hennepin County Elections Division will:

- Support a countywide voter registration campaign and an absentee voting education campaign, building on the successful absentee voter outreach campaign that was conducted in 2020. Investing in pre-registering voters prior to election day and in ensuring that absentee voters do not make mistakes on their absentee voting materials is cost-effective. Processing voter registrations prior to election day saves in time and materials as compared to processing election-day registrations, and reduces wait times in polling places. Helping absentee voters complete their paperwork correctly the first time saves time and materials costs by avoiding the need to issue replacement materials to correct mistakes.

- Upgrade poll book hardware. The poll book system is used in all polling places during every election conducted in the county. This system upgrade is critical to the county’s ability to maintain useability of the poll book system and directly impacts the county’s ability to administer accurate and secure elections.
- Replace the current central ballot scanners with new upgraded models. Absentee voting rates increased significantly in 2020, to approximately 70% of voters compared to 30% in previous years, and are expected to remain high for upcoming elections. New upgraded central ballot scanners will enable the county to continue to effectively manage the increase in absentee ballots. New models feature hardware upgrades that improve the efficiency of ballot processing, ultimately supporting timely results reporting despite the larger volume of absentee ballots.

Progress narrative

In 2021, the Elections Division worked with seven community organizations. The organizations were selected through a request-for-proposals process and awarded up to \$10,000 in community partner contracts. Some of the work performed included:

- ANIKA Foundation shared their voter guide with over 35,000 people electronically and in print. The foundation also worked with youth at Patrick Henry High School to register them to vote.
- CAPI USA led a coalition of six organizations to reach immigrant and refugee communities and communities of color through language-specific phone banks. They registered 715 voters.
- FairVote MN Foundation hired Somali and Latino community organizers who had over 1,200 direct conversations with Somali voters and over 8,200 with Latino voters. They also reached an additional 30,000+ voters via community-specific TV and radio.
- Open Access Connections trained nine volunteers to complete 100 shifts of nonpartisan voter registration and recruited six more volunteers to be door captains at their low-income housing facilities to talk to their neighbors about voting. They made follow-up calls to those who registered and pledged to vote to answer questions about voting by mail, voting with a felony, and same-day voter registration.
- Somali Community Resettlement Services reached 120 people through door knocking, and about 1,000 people through voter outreach and weekly before Friday prayer at 24 Somali Mall. They registered over 700 people to vote and worked with people who came into their office for other services. They had volunteer drivers available to bring voters to their voting locations.
- NACDI registered 432 Native American voters at pop-up events in high-traffic areas. They also provided education to former felons about their voting rights and registered 18 people.
- COPAL created Spanish-language-specific videos and hosted a Spanish language podcast talking about civic education and voting education. They reached out to voters through door knocking, phone banking, and community events as well.
- Hennepin County elections and communications teams worked with a digital media agency and radio, print, and community media organizations oriented to Black and Indigenous people and people of color to reach broad audiences, providing outreach information in multiple languages related to voter registration, absentee voting by absentee and voting on election day.

In 2022 we continued to build on the success of outreach and education tactics used in 2021. We established contracts with community partner organizations for voter outreach and education services. We prepared training and support for community partner organizations with 2022 election information, resources and strategies. We will continue to establish contracts and implement a planned media campaign (digital advertising, print and radio advertising, on-air programming) focused on voter registration and absentee voting education.

Our two key outreach and engagement strategies are establishing community partner contracts for voter outreach and absentee voting education services, and a focused media campaign on voter registration and absentee voting education.

The community partner contract program was the first to use Hennepin County Community Engagement's newly established roster program. Use of the roster program expanded the number of community organizations eligible to support this outreach and engagement work. We contracted with 23 community organizations representing a broad range of communities that experience disparities in voter registration and turnout. Election staff provide weekly space for education and collaboration. Contracted organizations plan to do a wide variety of outreach including in-person events, social media campaigns, educational materials and phone banks.

Key performance indicators

The contracted organizations will evaluate their accomplishments and include this information in future progress reports due. Their accomplishments will be described in terms of the following:

- How many people they talked to or registered to vote
- Materials developed, translated, distributed
- Media utilized and engagement
- Events held or attended and materials shared
- Other quantitative or qualitative information or stories and other activities and accomplishments

Key performance indicators for Hennepin County lead outreach and engagement may include:

- Increased institutional knowledge of election process among contracted organizations
- Number of toolkits developed, translated materials and other voter education materials produced and distributed
- Number of community organizations HCE contacts and engages
- Number of people reached through HCE's targeted media campaign
- Number of trainings for community organizations and service providers

Next steps

- Contracted organizations will continue engaging their communities through a diverse set of tactics including events, social media campaigns, educational material development and distribution, and phone banks.
- Contracted organizations will submit both midpoint and final project reports and invoices.
- HCE will host trainings for contracted community organizations to increase organizational knowledge of the election process.
- HCE will continue to work with community partners to educate communities that experience disparities in voter registration and turnout.
- HCE will continue work on the targeted advertising campaigns to ensure voters have the knowledge and resources needed to support participation in 2022 elections.
- HCE will continue to develop, translate, and distribute voter outreach materials.



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