

Hennepin County Progress Report

Pandemic Response Projects

October – December 2024



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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. In March 2022, the county board took action to use the dollars from ARPA-SLFRF for government services. Starting in 2022, the county has used 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.

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: connectivity, education, employment, health, housing, income and justice. In addition to the domain areas, overarching infrastructure and supports have been prioritized.

This progress report summarizes Hennepin County’s pandemic response projects from October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. 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: connectivity, education, employment, health, housing, income, and justice..
- 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.

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.



Project inventory

Hennepin County will continue to support residents through the pandemic and beyond as residents and communities work to recover. This progress report includes a summary of Hennepin County's pandemic response projects from October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Projects that have expended their full allocation amount prior to October 1, 2024 are no longer included in this report. Projects are presented by disparity domain area.

Project name

Allocation amount—This is the amount of funding allocated for the project. Minor allocation changes are included in this report. The allocation changes were approved through the budget process.

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.



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 and supports.

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 this reporting period, BDI continued device distribution for referred residents; these residents primarily live in neighborhoods with high rates of digital barriers. We partnered with five community-based organizations (CBOs), each incorporating varied service models which collectively allow them to provide services across the breadth of the county to meet residents where they are physically and conceptually, understanding and respecting their current situations. and support in multiple languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. These partnerships concluded on December 31, 2024. Results and metrics from those programs, along with a comprehensive evaluation of the partnership program, were collected and used in part to finalize ongoing training and legislative support work needed to continue reducing the digital divide in our community in the new year and beyond.

Resident training updates focused on internet safety and essential digital skills. Digital readiness trainings will be delivered in small cohorts as part of in-person device pick ups at our new location, with updated hours. Residents who are identified as advanced users will be able to pick up their devices through our continued partnership with a local device distributor, Free Geek, after they've completed the online safety course. All device recipients will receive follow-up surveys on the usefulness of digital navigation to ensure we're providing targeted, one-on-one support for residents while increasing their confidence in using their provided device to meet their stated goal(s). These changes ensure the focus is on the resident and their experience with technology while we're making meaningful changes in eliminating the digital divide.

Local legislative support included BDI's participation in finalizing the broadband component of the county's legislative platform. Legislative support for the 2025 session will include supporting changes to state programs to ensure urban, suburban and rural areas of Minnesota receive equitable state and federal broadband funding. BDI will also advocate for efforts to improve the quality and affordability of existing services within state administered broadband programs. Additionally, BDI is also identifying potential partners for future coalition building work. Due to the centrality of broadband in our increasingly digital world, achieving these goals serves as an important foundation for the county's goals related to improved healthcare, employment, education and civic participation.

At the federal level, we are using our participation with national advocacy groups to further federal government recognition of the importance of addressing the digital divide and its disproportionate impact on lower-income households, people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, and rural communities. Our focus will be to use local and national engagement and partnership activities to address persistent inequalities such as affordability, language barriers, and skills gaps through the digital navigation efforts.

On October 10, in celebration of Digital Inclusion Week, BDI facilitated a Digital Inclusion panel where county employees learned about digital inclusion work from internal and external partners. The discussions emphasized equitable access to technology, digital readiness, and effective use of digital tools. Additionally, the panel stressed the importance of cyber security and online safety. The event was attended by a diverse group of Hennepin County staff. In a follow-up survey, most participants expressed satisfaction in the panel presentation and their ability to apply the information shared in their own day-to-day work.

The hotspot lending program was wound down, and funding for phone access for residents participating in the Homeless to Housing program was transitioned to the Housing Stability department.

Future sustainability plans were finalized to ensure eligible residents continue to receive support for affordable broadband access, skills training, and equipment distribution. A pilot program will begin on January 1, 2025, for eligible MFIP and SNAP recipients to receive codes redeemable for broadband discounts of up to \$9.95 per month. This pilot is centered on the Internet Essentials service offering and is being managed by county's Well-Being group, part of Human Services. Informational postcards were sent to the initial group of residents that are eligible to participate in this program.

Key performance indicators

- 1,272 individual requests to support Hennepin County clients and library patrons were submitted to digital navigation team.
- 612 resident requests were completed during the period by the internal Digital Navigation team, who distributed 592 computers to residents in addition to other digital inclusion supports.
- Approximately 2,549 Hennepin County residents received digital navigation support or training through 5 contracted community partners.
- 32 phones were distributed for use by Homeless to Housing program members.
- Completed a broadband installation project with City of Golden Valley. This project included Wi-Fi access to park shelters within 10 city parks, and Wi-Fi access to 2,118 households within a three-block walking distance of each park.
- Online safety public awareness website (think2click1.com) with a new Artificial Intelligence education page: 10,862 clicks and 1,101,509 ad views across 8,681 visitors and 9,590 sessions.



Educational Services

Allocation amount: \$500,000

Project description

Hennepin County’s Education Support Services (ESS) department provides support and resources to youth who receive county services with a focus on student empowerment, skill building and collaboration with families, schools, and support professionals. Hennepin County Library (HCL) is a national leader of library service, innovation, and excellence. The 41 libraries, website and outreach services serve 1.2 million county residents over 611 square miles. Hennepin County Library’s mission is to inspire, facilitate, and celebrate lifelong learning.

For this collaborative project, ¡Aprendamos juntos!/Let’s learn together, the objective is to provide immediate educational support to youth and families in the Hennepin County family shelter system who are new arrivals to Minnesota. The project team from Education Support Services and the Library has focused on assisting families with school enrollment, helping with integration into Hennepin County schools, and identification of needed academics supports for youth. The team has also worked to identify and deliver needed education supports for parents and caregivers.

Hennepin County Education Support Services and Hennepin County Library are partnering with culturally responsive community organizations to provide education supports to Spanish-speaking youth and adults in family shelter. Through engagement with families at the family shelter in Bloomington, MN, the project’s initial focus has been to identify needs and barriers in literacy and education and respond with services and supports to meet the needs of the families and remove barriers.

Progress narrative

During this reporting period, ¡Aprendamos Juntos! continued to provide education and literacy support to families at Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park shelter sites, including virtual English and academic tutoring for youth, broadband and digital inclusion resources, on-site drop-in educational support, literacy supports, referrals for English Learning resources, educational excursions for families, and engaging activities on-site for youth. On-site activities have been delivered by ¡Aprendamos Juntos! staff and by staff from community partner organizations including the Osseo Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and The Works Museum.

The project invested in educational play and learning spaces, broadband and digital inclusion resources, books for the shelter collections and distribution, and both on- and off-site educational experiences. Additionally, families at the shelter locations were connected with resources at nearby libraries through tours and library-based activities. This connection helps ensure families learn about free library resources that are available to them even beyond their stay at the shelter sites.

The ¡Aprendamos Juntos! team focused on building relationships with families, shelter staff, and community partners to support and guide the work of this project. In addition, ¡Aprendamos Juntos! staff worked alongside shelter staff to support families in school enrollment and navigation.

Key performance indicators

In this reporting period, the following metrics represent instances of adults and youth receiving services. Individuals may have received services multiple times and therefore may be counted more than once:

- Number of contacts with youth and adults by ¡Aprendamos Juntos! staff: 341
- Number of youth and adult contacts with educational excursions: 36
- Number of adults connected to English classes: 7
- Number of youth contacts with youth engagement activities: 238
- Number of students receiving virtual tutoring: 17
- Number of youth and adult contacts for outreach, family engagement, and resource connections: 341
- Number of books distributed: 57
- Number of times ESS specialist connected with families to provide educational support: 128
- Number of parents / caregivers who have identified their own education needs: 13
- Number of computers and technology support contacts provided in living spaces or to families: 10

During this reporting period, ¡Aprendamos Juntos! staff conducted internal strategic planning sessions and consulted with evaluation experts and newly arrived families staying in the shelters to further develop programming and appropriate evaluation.



Employment Strategies

Allocation amount: \$9,280,000

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:

- Partner 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.
- Create 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.
- Create 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 (within six months), 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 Center’s Takoda Stability (AIOIC Takoda Stability) to provide low-barrier, supportive employment and training services to people experiencing or recently exited from homelessness. Hennepin County Housing Stability case managers and selected community-based adult shelter case managers and advocates assess individuals they serve for readiness and interest in employment and training services. If a person is deemed appropriate and interested, the case manager / shelter advocate submits a referral for one of two partner organizations chosen by the individual being served.

Workforce Development Roster Program (WDRP)

In October 2021, the Hennepin County Board authorized \$10 million for career pathways programming as an employment strategy to address the inequitable impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on Hennepin County residents, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. The strategy created a consortium of nonprofit organizations, able to provide just-in-time employment and training services leading to living wage jobs, by ensuring participants have the skills employers are seeking. To this end, the WDRP was created. The WDRP partnered with the Minneapolis Regional Chamber to connect training graduates with living wage jobs and to work with providers to both connect them to employers as well as strengthen existing business relationships. Since program inception, there have been a total of 23 WDRP contracts and two MOUs executed including multi-sector programs for IT, health care, manufacturing, finance / banking, transportation, and hospitality; youth programming (Youth Gun Violence Prevention and 38th Street Youth Initiative); Security Officer Pathway; extension of the Sheriff's Department HOPE program in partnership with the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR); and more.

Workforce Leadership Council (WLC)

The Workforce Leadership Council is a partnership between Hennepin County and 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 WLC provides space for critical conversations, learning, new partnerships, and collaboration.

By creating strategic business partnerships, the WLC is aligned to meet industry demands. Through the collaboration of regional employers, business leaders, and partners, members exchange experiences and know-how, as well as the expertise necessary to align resources and champion strategies that prepare residents for careers and meet employers' needs.

The WLC has identified various pain points in employee attraction, recruitment, retention, and advancement. Three work groups were created to dig deeper to foster a better understanding of their challenges and opportunities for collective solutions. The purpose of each work group is as follows:

1. **The Technology Work Group** focuses on the unmet technology needs of small to mid-sized businesses and its employees. This workgroup is advising and learning from two Elevate Hennepin pilot programs: 1) to assist employers in identifying appropriate technology solutions to enhance their business operations; and 2) to help employees gain a better understanding of the essential technology skills needed for successful employment. Additionally, the work group has added translation services to the Elevate Hennepin platform to allow employers to utilize available services where English is not their primary language.
2. **The Talent Pipeline Work Group** focuses on building career pathways into roles experiencing current and projected shortages in the private sector. The work group compares and analyzes high-demand, hard-to-fill occupations and seeks to better understand minimum qualifications, pay scales, and skill requirements to create opportunities to expand a potential hiring pool. The work group has implemented two cohort programs focused on creating career pathways for Mental Health (MH) workers and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) truck drivers respectively.
3. **The Barriers to Employment Work Group** focuses on helping businesses identify and implement promising talent attraction and retention strategies to become "employers of choice." The work group partnered with Elevate Hennepin to deliver cohort-based, targeted programming focused on connecting businesses to teams of subject matter experts in human resources, compensation, budgeting, and finance to develop implementable and scalable solutions. Programming focused on financial wellness, asset building, and potential financial subsidies that may come in the form of wages, childcare assistance, and savings, and will be offered to employees of businesses enrolled in the cohort.

Quarterly updates

During this time period, we surveyed the WLC members as to ensure we are within scope with our desired outcomes. We have learned:

- The discussions around collective pain points are beneficial to the businesses as they are able to identify root causes
- The work group pilots allow real time learning and solutioning to be possible
- Businesses are exploring ways to deploy the lessons learned within their own companies
- Members wish to meet more frequently and longer in duration because of the ability to collectively understand and implement talent solutions

Pilot learnings thus far include:

- The Talent Pipeline Management initiative should be explored as a scalable solution
- Economic Development and Workforce Development can and should collaborate as it relates to solving business needs in conjunction with employers
- As it relates to mitigating barriers to employment, we are seeing value in services such as employee resource funds, savings match programs, incumbent worker training, and human resource consulting

Key performance indicators

Employment and Training Services for People Exiting Homelessness initiative

Key performance indicators:

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

Fourth quarter results data:

- 51 new referrals have been received in total this quarter (36 to AIOIC and 15 to GWES); 49 of whom engaged in services
- 75 participants (53 from AIOIC and 22 from Goodwill-Easter Seals) received support services to overcome barriers to program participation and / or employment (e.g., housing /shelter, transportation, health, nutrition, clothing / hygiene, employment related needs, and more)
- Monthly case consultations meetings were held for cases with program participants who have barriers identified by Hennepin County Homeless to Housing case managers and AIOIC / GWES career navigators.
- Program refresher training sessions were conducted with external partners including Higher Ground, Simpson Shelter, and The Link. Additional shelter onboarding is underway for first quarter of 2025.
- A program evaluation continues to progress; all evaluation interviews are complete, and data is currently being analyzed
- 30 participants engaged in the stipend program

Evaluation efforts include:

Participant data has been gathered within Workforce One, a State of Minnesota workforce development case management information system. The data was pulled into a Power BI dashboard to assist the Hennepin County Workforce Development team in program monitoring and evaluation throughout the course of the programs. In addition, each contracted provider submitted monthly or bimonthly program reports that included qualitative and quantitative data. In addition, the Workforce Development team partnered with Hennepin County Strategic Planning and Initiative to conduct an in-depth program evaluation that included interviews with program participants, provider agency staff, referring housing case managers, and shelter

advocates to gain insight into the programs processes, services, outcomes, and areas where improvements are needed. The final program evaluation is expected to be complete February of 2025; learnings will be utilized to implement changes to program policies, procedures, and services.

Workforce Development Roster Program (WDRP)

Key performance indicators:

- Obtain employment
- Obtain education and / or training (credentialed and non-credentialed)
- Wage increase

Fourth quarter results data:

- Six WDRP contracts remained active and served a total of 54 individuals
- 18 WDRP contracts sunset, exiting 140 participants this quarter
- 33 participants received support services to overcome barriers to program participation and / or employment (e.g., housing / shelter, transportation, health, nutrition, clothing / hygiene, employment related needs, and more)
- 54 participants engaged in training
- Five of participants enrolled in education
- 31 participants completed training; five obtained credential / certifications
- 14 participants who obtained employment
- 11 participants obtained an increase in wages
- The final Roster Program Collaborative meeting was held October 31, 2024; 18 individuals participated

Evaluation efforts include:

Participant data has been gathered within Workforce One, a State of Minnesota workforce development case management information system. The data was pulled into a Power BI dashboard to assist the Hennepin County Workforce Development team in program monitoring and evaluation throughout the course of the programs. In addition, each contracted provider submitted monthly or bimonthly program reports that included qualitative and quantitative data.

Workforce Leadership Council (WLC)

Key performance indicators:

Fourth quarter results data:

- Employers are implementing solutions within their own companies as it relates to workforce planning, skill identification, incumbent worker training, and mitigating barriers to employment
- Five businesses are continuing to receive human resources consulting services via Elevate Hennepin Talent, and their employees are receiving training, financial wellness, and supportive services from a workforce development provider. The human resources element is proving to be a crucial resource for businesses. The WLC has supported the goal of sustaining these resources beyond this pilot.
- The Talent Pipeline Management has maintained the number of employers engaged. This is continuing to be proven as a viable solution for businesses and their talent needs. Hence the WLC is looking for ways to sustain the work long term.
- Our collaboration with the local chamber has also demonstrated success this past quarter as we have seen continued collaborations fostered between employers and community-based organizations to ensure talent needs are addressed and met.

Evaluation efforts include:

Workforce development services / solutions that directly address negative economic impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency, include a strong partnership with businesses, and align with the county's disparity reduction efforts.



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

December 31, 2024, brings the end of the final quarter and the end of project funding. 100% of programs have completed their project for the period and 91% have met or exceeded targets. All programs have finalized their contract terms and are wrapping up final reporting in preparation for closeout. Sustainability plans for programs that will continue beyond the funding end date are in progress to continue services using other funding.

The Expanding School Based Mental Health (SBMH) initiative remains just shy of 100% of public (non-charter) schools receiving services. School Based Mental Health is currently active in 200 schools representing every Hennepin County School District. During Q4 2024, this program conducted a district and agency data survey to understand the scope of school-based mental health services and the ratio of unstaffed to staffed positions.

Developing and Expanding a Network of Culturally Specific Mental Health Services served 12,756 residents in fiscal year 2024 with fifteen cultural groups represented (July 2023 – December 2024). This initiative finalized in Q2 2024 with all contracts marked are complete.

The Sustaining Family Home Visiting initiative finalized the training and onboarding for the Intake Specialist and Principal Office Specialist and the Intake, Referral and Outreach team is now fully staffed to support the referral volume moving forward into 2025. The data dashboard for Family Home Visiting was completed in Q4 and is fully functioning.

Caring Connections 4 Kids (CC4K) screened 139 children for a total of 143 mental health screenings resulting in 27 positive screening results (~19% positive screening rate). This is down slightly from screened children in Q3 (153 mental health screenings).

The Expanding Access and Hours at 1800 Chicago initiative facilitated one Resident Advisory Board (RAB) meeting to continue supporting open spaces for resident input and feedback to enhance the overall approach and service delivery model. In Q4, this program was awarded the 2025 – 2026 Mental Health Innovations grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to help further increase utilization of community mental health services and reduce Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center/ Behavioral Health Crisis Center hospitalizations.

For the final quarter of 2024, Expanding Family Response and Stabilization Service's (FRSS) application for the Mobile Crisis Response Services grant has been approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. This grant begins January 1, 2025. The FRSS phase is now a billable service, and the stabilization phase is billable for families with active diagnostic assessment.

Key performance indicators

The 11 Behavioral Health initiatives have separate KPIs based on their individual approaches to supporting the mental health and substance use disorder needs of Hennepin residents. The quarterly KPIs reported for the annual fiscal year report reflect that the following initiatives have met or exceeded their established project goal at this time:

- **Expanding School Based Mental Health:** 93% of target of Hennepin County schools receiving services. Further action needed to obtain 100%. An estimated 6,600 students in 200 schools.
- **Developing and Expanding a Network of Culturally Specific Mental Health Services:** Goal met and target complete. Final reporting: 12,756 residents were served with fifteen cultural groups represented (July 2023–June 2024).
- **Sustaining Family Home Visiting:** Secured \$2 million in funding for County Strong Foundations Family Home Visiting programs in 2024, and \$2 million in funding from the City of Minneapolis to serve city residents. Agreement is in place with funders through 2027. Expansion funds are being explored ongoing.
- **Expanding Caring Connections 4 Kids:** Annual goal of 500 children screened. As of Q4 2024, 637 children were screened in 2024.
- **Reforming 911** supported 22 cases opened Q4 2024 and two referrals were made for community supports. Alternative Response Pilot (ART) dispatched to 429 calls in Q4 2024.
- **Expanding Access and Hours at 1800 Chicago:**
 - 1,750 total visits
 - 480 unique residents were served
 - 1,156 referrals for services
- **Expanding Family Response and Stabilization Services:**
 - 158 families served who called FRSS for services
 - 52 served in stabilization
 - 158 families received services in under one hour
 - 32% of families were referred to stabilization services
- **Piloting a Family-Based Recovery Program:** Goal complete and target met. 76 families served to date. 29 index youth remain with family to date of children remained at home



Maternal Health

Allocation amount: \$9,500,000

Project description

This initiative 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 partner with the community to influence systems change, provide maternal and child 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 for those facing the worst disparities. This includes forging new partnerships and supporting a sustainable birth justice and maternal health infrastructure for systems change to get at the root causes of inequities.

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

Expanding access to care and services

The Maternal Health Initiative continued to work with contracted providers to deliver care and services in the community. Many providers have focused on social determinants of health and connecting patients to supportive resources to address the full range of patient needs. In October, staff from Hennepin Healthcare’s (HHS) doula on-call program presented a poster at the American Public Health Association conference where preliminary results of the program were shared. Plans are underway to compile the doula evaluation results into distributable formats such as presentations, a white paper, and possibly a journal article. HHS continued screenings for food insecurity, as well as wrapped up the second pilot of their Healthy Pregnancy Home-Delivered Meals program that engaged 68 high-risk pregnant patients up to four weeks postpartum. The Immediate Food Support Program distributed over 8,700 culturally congruent food bags to patients this quarter. HHS also continued to partner with The Family Partnership and Northside Achievement Zone to develop a culturally congruent infant mental health curriculum, with the goal of increasing capacity of home visitors to better support families. The project identified best practices for supporting families and promoting infant mental health: cultural humility, centering cultural assets, collaborative partnerships, reflective supervision, and advocacy and equity. Hennepin Healthcare’s East Lake Clinic continued embedding trauma-informed healing practices in the clinic with staff trainings that onboarded care team members to sustain the universal trauma-informed screenings and resources for pregnant and postpartum patients.

NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center (NorthPoint) continued integration of Clinical Services and Human Services to address the full range of patient needs and provide a seamless support system. This quarter, NorthPoint hosted 36 group education sessions focused on prenatal education, sharing wisdom, and celebrating participants' progress. Community Health Workers provided culturally tailored support to families with diverse needs, including navigation of complex healthcare systems. NorthPoint additionally distributed Pack 'n Plays, diaper bags, and car seats to families who did not otherwise have access.

Within Public Health clinical services, a Reproductive Health Educator has addressed reproductive healthcare needs for patients at the Red Door Clinic. The clinic saw more patients assigned female at birth coming in to receive services, particularly Spanish-speaking patients, and a recently hired nurse practitioner provided support for language barriers. The second clinical position supported through the initiative, a Maternal Child Health Nurse with Healthcare for the Homeless, addressed gaps in care and helped patients navigate maternal health resources and services, such as prenatal care coordination and education, lactation visits for breastfeeding support, and connections to additional resources.

Implementing the birth justice strategic plan

Collective Action Lab and the Birth Justice Collaborative (BJC) partners are leading implementation, oversight, evaluation, and emergent developments of the birth justice strategic plan. Implementation is ongoing for birth justice plan programs, and Hennepin County Public Health has sustained commitment to advancing the birth justice work into 2025. This past quarter, birth justice project activities focused on:

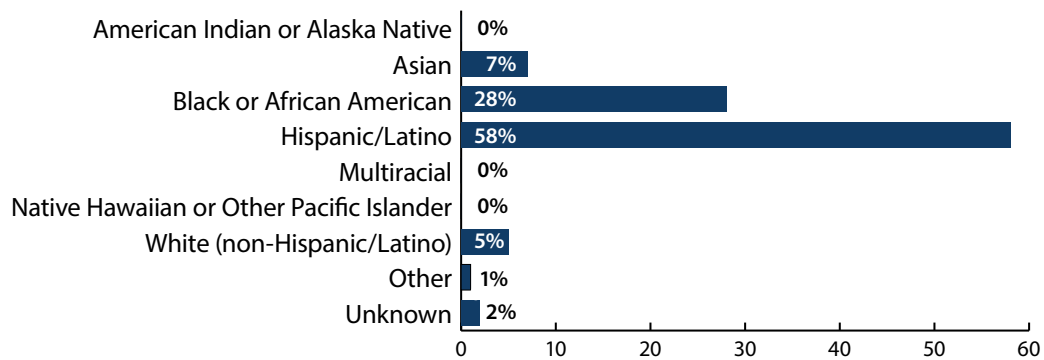
- **Acknowledging and addressing the impacts of racism** The postpartum support pilot program continued serving families and conducted a second survey with pilot participants and comparison group members. An interim evaluation report was completed for the postpartum support pilot.
- **Investing in a network of trusted cultural providers and resources** Planning work continued for the African American HomePlace and the American Indian Birth Center. BJC finalized contracts with the Minnesota Department of Health with approved budgets and workplans. The vision for HomePlace is a holistic retreat center for birthing families rooted in African American culture at Liberty's Northside Healing Space. HomePlace will surround families with culturally-responsive healing and support preventative practices in collaboration with responsive providers. HomePlace has begun pilot testing the model with families as they work toward a soft launch of HomePlace in the spring of 2025. The vision for the American Indian Birth Center is a perinatal retreat and birth center grounded in Dakota-based culture. The team developed additional recommendations for planning in 2025, including developing a business model with potential services and revenue streams, researching regulatory compliance, identifying site needs, and outlining partnership opportunities.
- **Creating and expanding culturally meaningful workforce pathways** BJC's partnership with Birth Equity Community Council (BECC) has provided supports for cultural providers, including offering trainings and doula business supports. BECC staff developed, tested, and finalized curriculum for a doula pathway toolkit. In November and December, they hosted two doula trainings that reached 25 doulas.
- **Supporting a system of anti-bias accountability** BJC has engaged Allina Health System in an obstetric racism scale (PREM-OB) pilot program centering Black women. This quarter, BJC executed all contracts and launched the pilot in December with a kickoff meeting.
- **Advocating for and radically reforming policy** The BJC finalized a shared policy agenda for 2025 and continued to pursue an administrative advocacy plan with emphasis on doula billing implementation, midwifery rates, and technical assistance needs.

Key performance indicators

- Number of individuals served through expansion of Public Health Clinical Services: 82
- Total number of individuals served through contracted providers Hennepin Healthcare NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center
 - 725

- Number of training and educational sessions offered, topics covered and attendance
 - 11 trauma-informed care trainings held
 - 36 education and group sessions held
 - 287 community members and health care professionals attended trainings and classes
- Number of individuals receiving referrals to supportive resources
 - 8,732 culturally congruent food bags distributed to patients experiencing food insecurity
 - 345 individuals received 561 referrals to social determinants of health resources, including behavioral health, nutrition, dental, social work, and human services
 - 59 individuals screened via East Lake Clinic trauma screening tool and referred to trauma responsive supports
- Number of visits completed with patients including prenatal and postpartum OB/Gyn, doula, and midwifery care
 - 579 visits with practitioners
 - 39 visits with Maternal Health RN
 - 67 doula visits

Demographics of patients and clients served through expanded services in Q4 2024



Develop and invest in community-initiated solutions to reduce disparities

- Hennepin County investments in birth justice strategies implementation: Over \$1,286,836 invested this quarter into:
 - Direct services, planning, and community education such as the postpartum support pilot program, African American HomePlace and American Indian Birth Center planning, anti-bias accountability pilot program, cultural provider business supports, and advocacy; and
 - Ongoing birth justice infrastructure, community governance and participation, coordination, project management, and cross-agency collaboration.

Data-informed decisions and evaluation efforts

The team leading the Maternal Health Initiative evaluation wrapped up evaluation activities this fall and drafted a summative report, which will be finalized by the end of January 2025. Evaluation recommendations will be made based upon findings across difference sources, including county staff interviews, contracted provider reports and interviews, focus group conversations with birth justice partners, literature for best practices in similar initiatives, and a community member survey. Evaluation report findings have already been leveraged in sustainability plans for the initiative in 2025 and will continue to inform the direction of the work.



Public Health

Allocation amount: \$9,700,000

Project description

This project focuses on rebuilding and strengthening critical public health capabilities and services that are essential to protect community health during the pandemic and in a post-COVID-19 era. 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-19 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

Public Health implements strategies 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: The Community-Based Infectious Disease response team (CBID) was formed to ensure a rapid, effective, and culturally-competent response to emerging infectious disease outbreaks. Now two years old, CBID continues to evolve and instill lessons learned. This past year, CBID helped maintain stable staffing levels in the Public Health Clinic (PHC) and Health Care for the Homeless sites to ensure delivery of immunizations, HIV medications, continuous infectious disease screenings, treatment of syphilis and TB, and continuation of suboxone services. This past quarter, CBID staff have also supported an increase in vaccines, including Mpox by continuing to staff the PHC immunization clinic. We have provided education on Mpox and assistance in scheduling appointments at outreach events in Hennepin County where HIV testing is offered. We partnered with the Minneapolis Mpox Taskforce in providing education and Mpox vaccines at Aliveness Project’s Met Gala event. We offered COVID-19 and flu vaccines at Hennepin Health’s Wellness Wednesday event. We initiated a Drug Related Infectious Disease (DRID) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) incentivized pilot in collaboration with Health Care for the Homeless. This pilot incentivizes adherence to antiretroviral treatment for HIV positive individuals and PrEP, for those at high risk of contracting HIV. We launched a partnership with MDH to support pregnant syphilis cases that are out of care and difficult to locate. We supported staffing in the TB clinic to allow for more case management availability for the increase in active and latent TB infections in Hennepin County. The team also supported the measles outbreak by offering contact tracing and preparing for vaccinations/IgG as directed.

Infection control in long-term care facilities (LTCF): The key strategies that have been implemented from October to December 2024 by the Long-Term Care Infection Prevention Unit include:

- Continued support for Hennepin County Long-Term Care Infection Prevention Coalition, planning and organizing meetings of the steering committee and subcommittees (antibiotic stewardship, education, and toolkit).
- Utilized evaluation results with Antibiotic Stewardship Committee of the Long-Term Care Infection Prevention Coalition to begin planning for 2025 activities.
- Conducted program strategic planning with an external consultant to develop a three-year plan to guide the work of the team.
- Hosted meeting #2 of LTC Connect of Hennepin County, a bi-monthly networking and collaboration virtual meeting of Infection Prevention staff from Long-Term Care Facilities, providing a forum to share successes and challenges and participate in guided discussions around topics of common interest.

Prepare and respond to emergencies

Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) program personnel continued to make progress on corrective actions relating to the COVID-19 After-Action Report and Improvement Plan. Four corrective actions received focus for the reporting period:

1. **Self-paced online learning module** Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) staff worked with Hennepin County Information Technology specialists on completion of the PHEPR self-paced e-learning module. Over the last year, PHEPR invested resources towards the ability of our program staff to develop and administer trainings internally, to allow for increased efficiency and accuracy of training content. PHEPR is currently adapting the drafted training to produce a product that better reflects the department's goal of preparing personnel to respond to future public health emergencies. The training objective remains unchanged, which is to provide department personnel with response expectations when activated for a public health emergency response role. The continued development of this training will resolve deficiencies and corrective actions that were identified in the COVID-19 After-Action Report.
2. **Emergency Response and Recovery (ERRP) plan revision** The ERRP Base Plan revision is complete, which included health and racial equity considerations and procedures resulting from collaboration with Public Health Strategic Initiatives. The Disaster Behavioral Health Annex, the Mass Care Sheltering Annex, and the Logistics Support Annex are currently being revised.
3. **Hennepin County Point of Dispensing sites** As of December 31, 2024, six Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) have been formally executed with Hennepin County school districts, which include Facility Use Agreements for just-in-time execution to govern specific use of facilities during public health emergencies requiring medical countermeasure dispensing or administration.
4. **Continuity of Operations Plan** Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response staff worked with other Public Health department programs to develop 17 program-level continuity of government plans that include considerations for future extreme disruptions to services. Focus of continuity planning includes the identification of critical functions and services, identification of key personnel, orders of succession and delegation of authority, identification of support systems and vital records, identification of alternate facilities / worksites, and the identification of communication systems and emergency contact information. Twenty-four Human Services program-level continuity of operations plans will be completed by April 30, 2025.

Promote healthy communities and healthy behaviors

Chronic disease Through a partnership with the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP), this initiative is funding four projects including community pop-up clinics to increase access to primary care, train-the-trainer models for mental well-being practices in communities of color, expanding referral networks for primary and mental healthcare, and increased access to dental care for youth without insurance. The four projects continued through November 2024. A second community RFP focused on reconnection to primary care, mental well-being, and other health promotion activities awarded to nine providers. Their contracts began December 1, 2023, and concluded at the end of November 2024. Projects include addressing delays and gaps in primary care, chronic disease management, support to expand Community Health Worker programs, mobile health screenings, and whole-person wellness initiatives. The initiative also supports a Community Health Worker (CHW) HUB project with Pillsbury United Communities and that work began in December. The goals are to support the infrastructure for expanded CHW roles in community-based organizations who can access reimbursement support for their services and thus increase longer-term sustainability. The initiative also supports projects with the Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health program to bring youth together to support connectedness, resiliency and joy. Contracted partners are working to complete their final reports and evaluations.

Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) The Hennepin County Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) funding initiative wrapped up in November 2024 and is currently reviewing final reports from the 16 community-led projects that were funded by CHIP to advance community mental well-being, or support connectedness in housing communities, in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis and the cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield. Examples of community-funded projects included: Connectedness activities in an affordable housing community that serves seniors and individuals with disabilities; grief groups at Black gathering spaces; a community engagement project at the Ecuadorian consulate in Minneapolis; working with multigenerational Somali mothers and caregivers. In last quarter's summary, CHIP's Housing Action Team had started work with two mobile home parkers in Dayton. They quickly realized that a more tailored cultural approach was needed and sought to partner with a Latine organization to do outreach and asset mapping. That work has progressed by partnering with two organizations in the community: COPAL, and Three Rivers Park District. In late October, the CHIP Evaluation Team completed a Ripple Effects Mapping session with the Community Mental Well-being Action Team to better understand the impact of the current CHIP 2.0 initiatives. Data analysis is underway, and will inform CHIP's evaluation of CHIP 2.0, and plan for CHIP 3.0. The Community Health Assessment, which is the foundation to the Community Health Improvement Plan, was completed in quarter four. Overarching themes and subthemes of the assessment were shared with community members at a community celebration December 4, 2024. Community members, CHIP members and partners weighed in on the priorities that CHIP should be considering moving forward. The top themes identified were mental health, barriers to health care, substance use disorder, access to basic needs, and social isolation.

Age friendly The Public Health Age-Friendly Coordinator and team continue to implement the countywide Age-Friendly Action Plan. The team was awarded an Age-Friendly Communities MN grant that focused on conducting a feasibility study for the CAPABLE model. CAPABLE helps older adults age at home with support from small home improvements and a coordinated care team. The team is now exploring how the program can be implemented at the county in partnership with NorthPoint Health & Wellness. A logic model and evaluation plan for Age-Friendly Hennepin are complete, and the team is tracking metrics related to community partnership, technical assistance, and long-term health outcomes. The team supported twenty-two organizations with small contracts to implement projects focused on social connectedness and reducing isolation among older adults. All projects have concluded, and the team is working on compiling a final report. As pandemic recovery funds come to a close, Age-Friendly is shifting to seek other sources of funding and focusing on closing out pandemic-specific activities.

Coordinate early childhood development strategies The early childhood (EC) coordinator, in partnership with the Well-Being area of Human Services, finished the preparation work for the two new Strong Beginnings (SB) sites to open January 2025. In addition, rates for SB childcare reimbursement were revised and communicated to providers, a crosswalk of the “value-add” of SB programs in comparison to other accreditations (Parent Aware, NAEYC) was completed, and performance measures were reviewed and will be edited in 2025.

Family Health facilitated a meeting of Hennepin County leaders involved with early childhood programs. This was the second meeting, and it was decided that there will be strategic planning in 2025 to enhance internal referrals and communication so there is “no wrong door” for families accessing support through the county. With this, the EC coordinator mapped all services at Hennepin County that serve families prenatally through age 5. This document allows us to better strategize how to provide opportunities for collaboration, learning, and interconnected working across many departments and teams. Strategic planning will begin with support of Hennepin leadership in 2025.

The EC coordinator resigned from the position at the end of November 2024, and the position is still in the hiring pipeline. In 2025, it is a top priority to refill the position with an experienced Early Childhood expert to continue the progress made. In the interim, the Family Health Operations and Early Childhood Supervisor are performing key duties.

Assure an 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 Public Health to provide data on the health status and factors that affect health for adults in Hennepin County that is used in planning, programming, and policy development. Project results are used to support health equity data analysis and surveillance of health disparities. Between October 1, 2023, and December 31, 2024, the SHAPE data was shared and presented to internal staff, community partners and stakeholders, and continued to support data needs. The Team also started planning for SHAPE 2026. The SHAPE 2022 survey results were used as a part of the department’s Community Health Assessment.

Increase planning and project management capacity During the fourth quarter of 2024, the Strategic Initiatives program area increased project management and planning capacity in several critical areas that support pandemic response and recovery as well as department strategic plan goals and activities. For example, as part of workforce development and quality improvement planning, staff completed a departmentwide survey to assess capacity regarding knowledge, skills, and abilities critical to success in public health. Committees analyzed survey results to begin development of multi-year plans related to workforce development and quality improvement, which are components of the department’s strategic plan. Also, racial and health equity leaders presented Public Health’s innovative work at a statewide conference in November and continued building on department racial and health equity plans. Community engagement leaders developed a training for staff focused on the different levels of community engagement. Activities such as these help Hennepin County Public Health fulfil the mission to “advance health and racial equity through science, and prevention-focused, inclusive, public health policies, practices, and services” and the strategic plan goals of:

- Goal 1: all residents and community environments are healthy and safe
- Goal 2: mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve problems
- Goal 3: use science, data, and a prevention-focused approach to guide and support health and racial equity

Finally, planning continued for multiple aspects of department wide strategic planning for the next (2026–2028) strategic plan. This includes robust attention to understanding our areas of opportunity and strengths related to racial and health equity to ensure the department is adequately prepared to address health disparities among Hennepin County residents.

Key performance indicators

Efforts are underway to meet all key performance indicators.

By December 31, 2024, 70% of HCPH patients of any race will be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

- COVID-19, Mpox and other infectious disease screening and vaccination progress is being captured internally using Power BI.

By December 1, 2024, foster partnerships with community and facility infection prevention and control (IPC) / antibiotic stewardship (AS) stakeholders to promote interorganizational communication and provide access to complementary community resources.

- Charter review completed and sent out to steering committee in December 2024.
- Antibiotic stewardship committee members met to begin prioritization of activities for 2025 workplan.

By October 31, 2024, provide coaching / education to guide best practice implementation.

- Developed transmission-based precautions educational toolkit and posted to website, November 2024.
- Reviewed infection prevention toolkit and updated information and URL links, December 2024.

By October 31, 2024, contribute to departmental quality improvement initiatives.

- Utilized quality improvement tools to guide committee and subcommittee work and educational training development, ongoing.

By December 31, 2023, 90% of HCPH staff will be trained in Emergency Preparedness.

- The Workforce Development Coordinator developed four trainings for Public Health Department staff and implemented a departmentwide communication strategy with the goal of increasing department personnel's knowledge of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response concepts and expectations of their role during public health emergency response activations.
- 81% of Public Health Department personnel (425 completed training of the 523 total department personnel) completed at least one of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) trainings that were offered. In total, 788 EPR courses were completed by department personnel in 2023.

By December 31, 2024, all health promotion community partners will have received technical assistance in implementing policy, system and environmental (PSE) changes to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the community.

- Age-Friendly Hennepin County completed a logic model and evaluation plan. Metrics include tracking awareness, number of new and emerging partners, technical assistance provided both to internal and external partners, and systemic changes made as a result of applying an age-friendly lens.
- Evaluation plans are complete for projects funded by the joint RFP with CHIP, the Chronic Disease Prevention RFP, and all other contractual partners. Partners receive support and technical assistance along the way to improve outcomes.
- All evaluation work is ongoing through the end of 2024.

By December 31, 2022, develop early childhood systems coordination strategic plan.

- The early childhood strategic plan was revised after some feedback from other Family Health staff members.

By December 31, 2024, implement key activities of early childhood strategic plan.

- The early childhood coordinator has been implementing service coordination activities, including building relationships across departments in Hennepin County, including Human Services and Community Corrections and Rehabilitation.

By December 31, 2024, the SHAPE 2022 project will have shared and presented the SHAPE data to internal staff, community partners and stakeholders, and continue to support additional data needs.

- The SHAPE team has made presentations to the county board, Hennepin County executive team, Hennepin County Public Health staff, Disparity Reduction Governance Group, Trusted Messenger Group, CAPI, Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council, Climate Action workgroup, Climate and Resiliency group, Hennepin County Library, Twin Cities Research Group, NorthPoint Health & Wellness staff, Highrise Health Alliance Leadership team, the Metro Public Health Analysts Network group, and Age-Friendly Hennepin. The SHAPE survey results were shared at the LGBTQ+ Health in Hennepin County: Data, Resilience, and Action Forum in April 2024. The SHAPE 2022 survey results were used for the Community Health Assessment.



Vaccine Incentives

Allocation amount: \$2,000,000

Project description

Hennepin County Public Health’s (HCPH) 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. By partnering with communities that have historically experienced medical exploitation, experimentation without consent and marginalization, authentic relationships are built, leading to decreased vaccine hesitancy. 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.
- Hosting a lottery program.
- Other incentives for individuals who get vaccinated as appropriate.

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 was 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 goal of more people getting vaccinated.

Progress narrative

In the fourth quarter of 2024, Hennepin County Public Health (HCPH) continued to partner with a community medical provider to hold immunization clinics providing both child and adult immunizations in the community and breaking down barriers to immunizations. The need for immunization clinics in the community increased with the introduction of measles into the community earlier in 2024. Outreach activities were carried out to educate the community about the importance of being up to date with immunizations and where to receive immunizations. Once measles was identified in the community, outreach and educational activities included information on measles being in the community and the signs and symptoms of measles. Several communication strategies were utilized to inform the public on the importance of childhood vaccines.

Key performance indicators

Immunization Clinics

October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

A total of 11 immunization clinics were held between October 1, 2024–December 31, 2024. 420 individuals received immunizations, and 1,255 immunizations were provided. Our immunization clinics are divided into four categories:

- New immigrant immunization clinics
- Community-based immunization clinics
- Community-requested immunization clinics
- School-based immunization clinics

New immigrant immunization clinics

The need to host immunization clinics for new immigrant arrivals continued in the fourth quarter of 2024.

- On October 5 a new immigrant immunization clinic at the Hennepin County Family Shelter in Brooklyn Park was held. At this clinic a total of 18 individuals received immunizations; 64 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 9, Varicella – 8, DTaP – 7, Tdap – 2, Hep A – 6, Hep B – 9, IPV – 12, Hib – 2, Meningococcal – 2, HPV – 4, Influenza – 3.
- On October 19 a new immigrant immunization clinic at the Hennepin County Family Shelter in Downtown Minneapolis was held. At this clinic a total of 40 individuals received immunizations; 155 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 20, Varicella – 25, DTaP – 11, Tdap – 15, Hep A – 12, Hep B – 19, IPV – 16, Hib – 5, Meningococcal – 3, Pneumococcal – 2, HPV – 4, Influenza – 13, COVID – 10.
- On November 9 a new immigrant immunization clinic at the Hennepin County Family Shelter in Brooklyn Park was held. At this clinic a total of 16 individuals received immunizations; 56 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 10, Varicella – 8, Tdap – 10, Hep B – 9, IPV – 4, Rotavirus – 1, Meningococcal – 3, HPV – 3, Influenza – 5, COVID – 3.
- On November 16 a new immigrant immunization clinic at the Hennepin County Family Shelter in Downtown Minneapolis was held. At this clinic a total of 12 individuals received immunizations; 44 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 9, Varicella – 6, DTaP – 2, Tdap – 7, Hep B – 9, IPV – 4, Hib – 1, Pneumococcal – 1, HPV – 1, Influenza – 2, COVID – 2.
- On December 7 a new immigrant immunization clinic at the Hennepin County Family Shelter in Brooklyn Park was held. At this clinic a total of 10 individuals received immunizations; 31 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 2, Varicella – 6, DTaP – 5, Hep B – 5, IPV – 6, Hib – 1, Pneumococcal – 3, Influenza – 3.

At the new immigrant immunization clinics, Baby Tracks Community Health Workers door knocked at the rooms of shelter residents who were identified as either needing one of the following immunizations: MMR, Varicella, or DTaP/Tdap or who did not have an immunization record in MIIC. Shelter residents needing immunizations and who we were able to connect with were encouraged to come down for immunizations. Shelter residents whose immunization records were not in MIIC but had immunization records were also encouraged to come down and have their immunization records added to MIIC and receive immunizations if needed.

Community-based immunization clinics

The need to increase access to immunizations in the community by bringing immunization to the community, reducing, or eliminating barriers to access and educating families about the importance of immunizations and the need to follow the CDC immunization schedule drives these community-based immunization clinics.

- On October 26 a community-based immunization clinic was held at the Hosmer Library in south Minneapolis. At this clinic a total of 81 individuals received immunizations; 232 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 26, Varicella – 32, DTaP – 10, Tdap – 25, IPV – 27, Hep B – 20, Hib – 3, Meningococcal – 29, Pneumococcal – 1, HPV – 11, Influenza – 30, COVID – 18.
- On November 23 a community-based immunization clinic was held at the Brookdale Library in north Hennepin County. At this clinic a total of 41 individuals received immunizations; 139 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 21, Varicella – 22, DTaP – 11, Tdap – 17, IPV – 22, Hep B – 22, Meningococcal – 8, Pneumococcal – 1, Influenza – 10, COVID – 5.
- On December 21 a community-based immunization clinic was held at the Hosmer Library in south Minneapolis. At this clinic a total of 33 individuals received immunizations; 83 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 11, Varicella – 13, DTaP – 5, Tdap – 6, IPV – 9, Hep B – 8, Meningococcal – 5, Hib – 1, HPV – 4, Influenza – 13, COVID – 8.

At all community-based immunization clinics information on registering for health insurance, a list of low-cost clinics, CDC parent friendly immunization schedules, and Baby Tracks program information was also provided. Due to the outbreak of measles in the community, increased education and outreach centering on measles was also conducted.

Community-requested immunization clinics

If a community partner makes a request for an immunization clinic, the request is taken into consideration and honored if possible.

- On October 13 an immunization clinic was held at the Kenyan Community SDA Church in Brooklyn Center. The Kenyan Community SDA Church made a request to have an immunization clinic at a community health fair they were having, and Hennepin County was able to fulfill this request. At this clinic a total of 13 individuals received immunizations; 21 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 1, Varicella – 2, Tdap – 1, Hep A – 1, Influenza – 10, COVID – 6.

School-based immunization clinics

Hennepin County partnered with the City of Minneapolis to provide immunizations at two school-based clinics.

- On October 11 a back-to-school immunization clinic was held at the Lake Country School in south Hennepin County. A total of 83 individuals received immunizations; 154 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 5, Varicella – 4, DTaP – 2, Tdap – 6, Hep A – 6, Hep B – 5, IPV – 4, Meningococcal – 1, Influenza – 63, COVID – 58.
- On October 22 a back-to-school immunization clinic was held at Hiawatha School in south Hennepin County. At this clinic a total of 73 individuals received immunizations; 276 immunizations were provided. Immunizations and number given included: MMR – 41, Varicella – 47, DTaP – 8, Tdap – 41, Hep A – 20, Hep B – 37, IPV – 44, Meningococcal – 11, HPV – 10, Influenza – 12, COVID – 5.

Flyers for vaccine clinics

For the immunization clinics listed above, the Hennepin County Public Health communications team created a series of flyers to advertise the immunization clinics. Flyers for the community-based immunization clinics, community-requested immunization clinics, and school-based immunization clinics were disseminated through partner organizations, posted at community sites, and distributed by school nurses. For the new immigrant immunization clinics, flyers were shared with new immigrant families by posting at the shelter, placing the flyers under the doors of the shelter / hotel rooms, and having shelter staff distribute.

Hennepin County Immunization Clinic website

The Hennepin County Public Health communications team created and maintains a website that lists all immunization clinics with the exception of the new immigrant immunization clinics. This website allows for community-wide distribution of immunization clinic locations, times, and dates.



Housing Recovery

Allocation amount: \$45,500,000

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. The pandemic exacerbated existing inequities from the very beginning, and while emergency response efforts in 2020 and 2021 ameliorated these impacts — keeping people fed and in their homes — the economic fallout continues to disproportionately impact those who already had less before the pandemic.

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 aimed to create or preserve approximately 2,000 units of affordable housing and support more than 100 households in buying homes by directly addressing both causes and symptoms of the economic fallout from the pandemic. Planned activities included:

- Investments to immediately increase affordable multifamily housing production, such as:
 - Gap funding to kick-start projects delayed by pandemic-related construction cost increases.
 - Financing to accelerate the development of affordable housing projects serving populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency: those most vulnerable to economic recessions.
 - 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.
- 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.
 - Homeownership programs targeting populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Progress narrative

Since Housing Recovery funds were authorized in August 2021, Housing and Economic Development (HED) has successfully accelerated development of affordable housing and surpassed impact goals. In a typical housing development, the county does not spend funds until 2–3 years after a funding award, and units become available another year after that. HED used Housing Recovery funds to implement new tools and strategies to drastically shorten this process while focusing the impact. Expediting development meets county goals to open doors faster.

Housing development finance progress

HED awarded \$38.2 million to 31 affordable housing development projects through competitive selection processes and programmed remaining funds to acquire and rehabilitate properties to create single room occupancy housing. In the last quarter, HED executed funding agreements for the final two projects, which will create or preserve 2,492 units of affordable rental housing and create 60 homeownership opportunities.

Program component	Number of project awards	Award amount	Project agreements executed	Affordable units funded
Affordable Housing Accelerator	15 projects	\$26,970,348	15 projects	1,059
Homeownership	5 projects	\$2,748,000	5 projects	60
NOAH Preservation	4 projects	\$5,080,520	4 projects	986
Pandemic Cost Increase	7 projects	\$3,492,314	7 projects	447
TOTALS	31 projects	\$38,291,182	31 projects	2,552

Single room occupancy housing strategy progress

HED and Facilities Services partnered to use \$5.3M to purchase and rehabilitate properties for Single Room Occupancy housing (SRO). This effort has completed rehab, conversion, and sale of the University Inn and Metro Inn Motel to experienced affordable housing operators with long-term affordability restrictions and awarded the Aqua City Motel land and Stevens Square Residence to affordable housing operators. The Robin continues rehabilitation, and the Federal Plaza is ready for its next use.

Key performance indicators

Financing goals

Housing Recovery goals were to finance the creation or preservation of 2,000 units of rental housing, and 100 homeownership opportunities, while meeting the county's ongoing goals to maximize affordability. HED surpassed the rental goal with multifamily projects containing 2,721 affordable rental units, but fell short of the homeownership goal with 68 units.

Affordability goals

Progress also surpassed the county's and Housing and Redevelopment Authority'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)

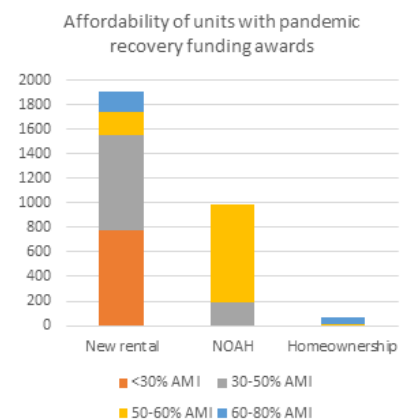
- Outcome: 45% of new units financed through Housing Recovery are affordable at or below 30% AMI

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

- Outcome: 89% of new units financed through Housing Recovery are affordable at or below 50% AMI

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

- Outcome: 24% of homeownership opportunities financed through Housing Recovery are anticipated to be affordable at or below 60% AMI



Production goals

Creating affordable rental housing typically takes 5–7 years. With HED’s Housing Recovery goal of accelerating production, measures show that production has doubled from average years.

	Number of projects closed	Number of affordable units in those projects
Average (non-pandemic) annual	11	615
Last 12 months (October 2023–September 2024)		
Pandemic recovery-funded	10	546
Projects without pandemic recovery funding	10	629
Total	20	1,175

HED is partnering with Integrated Data and Analytics to evaluate impact of single room occupancy housing on people exiting homelessness in order to demonstrate social return on investment; and used lessons learned from Affordable Housing Accelerator and Pandemic-Related Cost Increase Assistance to inform the county’s Metro Sales and Use Tax for Housing Implementation Framework.



Services for People Experiencing Homelessness

Allocation amount: \$35,495,000

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 there are 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 OHS staff have emphasized a laser focus on quick connections to housing. Even with thoughtful and impactful investments in shelter, 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 team is collecting data so that not only the needs of unique encampments are known, but the housing priorities and barriers for each person staying there.

Progress narrative

Homeless to Housing

Pandemic response funded Homeless to Housing (H2H) staff housed 186 people experiencing literal homelessness during the fourth quarter of 2024. The average length of time between assignment to housed was 106 days.

In addition to carrying caseloads and housing folks, the two pandemic response funded social workers specializing in unsheltered homelessness partnered with Metro Transit’s Homeless Action Team (HAT) to provide housing-focused outreach to those frequenting public transit. Those social workers also partnered with a low-barrier shelter to help create a pathway for folks to move into permanent housing from unsheltered settings and participated in a pilot project to immediately connect with families discovered to be staying in places not meant for habitation.

H2H case aides obtained countless vital documents for clients, stocked the storage room, built move-in kits, transported clients to housing-related tasks and performed other vital tasks to help people move towards permanent housing. A look at program data from December 2, 2024, showed that 84% of H2H clients secured a state ID and 66% had a copy of their Social Security card with 118 in progress.

Case aides continued to do engagement at the largest singles shelters in the county and began a pilot project to look for H2H clients who have lost touch with their assigned housing case managers in unsheltered settings as well.

The short- and long-term units have stabilized, and turnover has been zero during this reporting period which allows us to assign the maximum number of cases. 320 people were assigned to the pandemic response units of H2H for location, engagement and possible enrollment into the program. Case managers maintained caseloads of 15–17 people each.

A national technical assistance agency, Community Solutions/Built for Zero, released a short documentary called 'Keep Showing Up' (available on YouTube) featuring a social worker from the Homeless to Housing team and her successes in housing people with some of the highest barriers, using a person-centered, trauma-informed approach and progressive engagement.

The program purchased a van during this reporting period that has been instrumental in helping our case managers and case aides transport families to housing appointments and delivering the larger move-in kits.

Encampment response: Streets to Housing

Streets to Housing consists of six System Navigators in a street- and site-based engagement model.

This quarter our team met to identify key areas where the program is having the greatest impact and set performance goals around those areas. We also identified the need to look at performance measures—housing and shelter outcomes—for those that have a 'date of engagement' in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), to have a way to better manage and report on those objectives.

Streets to Housing was part of a year-long evaluation in partnership with the University of Minnesota. Recommendations from this evaluation will be part of continuous improvement going forward into 2025. Recommendations include:

- Invest in mid-level and senior leaders to maintain and sustain staff involvement.
- Increase and implement training to enhance fidelity to coordinated entry assessments and data input accuracy to enhance equity across the program.
- Invest in relationships with other county programs in the homelessness and housing sector to clearly identify unique program goals.
- Increase transparency around Coordinated Entry Assessments.
- Manage and consider ways to support continued client engagement with Streets to Housing.

Shelter diversion: Hennepin Shelter Hotline

- Hennepin Shelter Hotline staff report an increased call volume regarding domestic violence, coordinated entry, and youth (over and under 18) seeking help with emergency shelter
- Hennepin Shelter Hotline staff toured local emergency shelters to gain a better understanding of the system and services available to callers
- Diversion navigators work with clients to identify safe overnight alternatives when single adult beds are unavailable
- Service area leads and Hennepin Shelter Hotline management continue to meet regularly to identify trends and improve system performance
- Diversion has become the front door for access to emergency shelter, community resources, coordinated entry, domestic violence, and youth services

Board and lodge capital improvements

In this quarter, the three remaining capital improvements projects reached completion and expended their funding.

- At Missions Inc., the Missions Lodge cafeteria renovations were completed. These renovations included new booths for dining with increased space and dividers between them. It also included the renovation of a floor at Missions Lodge, converting a shared bedroom with curtains into multiple private bedrooms. In addition, the library area and television lounges were also renovated.
- At 180 Degrees, the Clifton Place site was renovated to increase space in the kitchen and dining areas for staff and residents. Bathrooms were also renovated on each floor. A new common space was added, replacing the small garage that had previously been used for gatherings.
- At Pursuit Hometel, the bathrooms were renovated, replacing bathtubs with showers and upgrading to automatic flush toilets to increase cleanliness. In addition, new laundry rooms were installed so that each building has its own laundry facilities. These projects are in addition to the landscaped outdoor gathering space that was completed in late 2023.

An architect from the county's facilities staff conducted a site visit at each of these organizations to ensure the project was completed and in accordance with the county's standards for construction project. In addition, the county's project team visited these sites to view the work as well and learn how these projects have impacted the lives of residents at these sites.

24/7 emergency shelter

- Four agencies have funding to operate 24/7 emergency shelter for single adults (18+ without dependents).
- Most funded programs have been at or near full capacity, operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while providing shelter guests with meals, housing-focused case management, access to laundry, and more.
- Funded programs continue to enter their data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- There is a software transition ongoing for the Statewide Homeless Management Information System. Providers worked to learn new software, workflows, and processes. Full functionality of the system is not yet restored.
- Shelters work with Adult Shelter Connect (ASC) to use an equitable bed reservation system.
- Funded programs had access to more new housing and housing barrier funds to help breakdown financial barriers to housing, which has contributed to an increase in positive exits to permanent housing.

Low-barrier shelters

AICDC Homeward Bound

- Continued to work with staff at AICDC Homeward Bound to ensure accurate data quality
- AICDC continues to provide highly needed shelter resources to the American Indian community with a housing-focused mindset

Avivo Village

- Avivo village is working to increase transparency and equity of access
- Avivo has connected participants to housing through coordinated entry and providers with housing opportunities outside of coordinated entry

Harbor Light Center eliminated self-pay

- Harbor Light Center continues to shelter all guests without requiring payment.
- Capacity is now 104 in the emergency housing programs where self-pay was eliminated. The program serves 52 men and 52 women daily.
- Shelter guests in this program are consistently connected to housing-focused case managers, Coordinated Entry assessments and referrals, as well as other vital resources such as employment and medical services.

Key performance indicators

Homeless to Housing

- 186 people housed during this reporting period
 - average days from assignment to a case manager to housed is 106
- 75% of clients identify as people of color and 75% of people housed identify as people of color (statistically equitable)
- 84% of clients have photo ID at closing; 66% have SS card
- 88% of client satisfaction surveys have been positive
- 94% of those housed are not back in the homeless response system currently (housing retention rate)
- Data is reviewed biweekly to ensure positive progress and to make program adjustments and invest in continuous improvement.

Encampment response: Streets to Housing

Streets to Housing served 552 unduplicated households in the date range:

- 309 or 56% male
- 227 or 41% female
- 9 or 2% nonbinary, transgender or multiple genders
- 245 or 44% Black/AA
- 120 or 22% White
- 81 or 15% American Indian/Indigenous
- 72 or 13% Multiracial
- 11 or 2% Hispanic/Latinx
- 4 or .7% Asian
- Average age 37 years old

262 households exited during the reporting period; 78 have documented destinations:

- 27 or 35% exited to emergency shelter
- 7 or 9% exited to jail, prison, or juvenile detention
- 33 or 42% exited into rental / permanent housing
- 5 or 6% exited to friends / family
- 2 or 3% exited to a substance abuse facility
- 2 or 3% other
- 2 or 3% place not meant for human habitation

Streets to Housing continues to make an impact engaging with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in both site- and street-based engagements providing housing triage and system navigation.

Shelter diversion: Hennepin Shelter Hotline

- 8,731 calls received by the diversion line
 - representing a decrease of 345 calls (4%) compared to Q3
- 32,170 total calls received by the diversion line in 2024
- 27 households received bus tickets to reunite with family in other locations
- 25 households were diverted from emergency shelter and entered directly into permanent housing with the assistance of diversion navigators in Q4
- 73 total households were diverted from shelter directly into permanent housing throughout 2024
- 2,013 households were served (3,007 clients)

Board and lodge capital improvements

The key performance indicators for the board and lodge capital improvements project were to complete all projects awarded capital funding at four board and lodge congregate housing facilities and to expend all \$5 million in awarded funds by the pandemic recovery funding deadline of December 31, 2024. This quarter, these performance indicators were met. The awarded projects were selected for funding based on the size of impact as well as their ability to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

24/7 emergency shelter

Due to an ongoing transition within the HMIS system, there is limited data.
1,543 people served in Q3 by the 24/7 shelters.

Low-barrier shelters

AICDC Homeward Bound

- 47 new enrollments for Q3

Avivo Village

- 86 new enrollments for Q3

Harbor Light Center eliminated self-pay

- 39 new enrollments for Q3



Economic Recovery

Allocation amount: \$13,680,000

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 were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Economic impacts of the pandemic were most deep and long-lasting in low-income communities and communities of color. In addition to small business impacts, many nonprofit organizations based in deeply impacted communities have been leading effective response and recovery efforts and providing services critically important to economic recovery. In some cases, the same nonprofits that faced the most acute financial hardship from the pandemic have been called upon to increase programming to meet higher levels of need in the communities they serve.

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 million in ways that build wealth in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Progress narrative

Since 2022, the Hennepin County Housing and Economic Development Department has executed concurrent strategies to achieve three interrelated economic recovery objectives:

1. Build the long-term capacity of small businesses to recover, succeed and grow
2. Accelerate investment in, and driven by, disproportionately impacted communities
3. Explore innovative ways to advance economic mobility

In early 2024, the allocation of funds for economic recovery was reduced by a total of \$1.1 million to reflect the completion of a short-term pilot working capital loan fund for emerging contractors. This pilot strategy involved providing \$1.1 million to a nonprofit community-based lender to originate short-term loans to contractors, enabling the contractor to successfully complete a larger construction project than they would have been able to support without additional funds. The financing program resulted in two successful loans to contractors, and the program concluded with the repayment of the two loans, and the nonprofit lender's full repayment of \$1.1 million in program capital to Hennepin County. Due to low levels of demand, the pilot financing strategy was discontinued and the total economic recovery allocation reduced accordingly to \$17.9 million.

In the final quarter of 2024, it was determined that the small business seed capital strategy described below would be more appropriately resourced by non-pandemic funding. Therefore, the economy recovery allocation was further reduced by \$4.22 million in recognition of alternate funding sources for the seed capital strategy, and the total economic recovery allocation was adjusted accordingly to \$13.68 million.

To date, Housing and Economic Development (HED) has fully expended the revised allocation.

Small business-focused economic recovery strategies

Housing and Economic Development’s small business-focused economic recovery strategies have gained increasing visibility and interagency support in part due to the successful branding of a suite of programming under the banner “Elevate Hennepin.” Activities over the past year have increased the depth and breadth of Elevate Hennepin’s core offerings: in-depth technical assistance, “back-office” support, access to capital, and specialized expertise available at no-cost to small businesses in Hennepin County. To achieve an unprecedented level of inclusive access to resources, HED has invested in three critical strategies:

- An innovative web platform at www.elevatehennepin.org that curates and filters 133 business resources provided by city, county, state, and federal agencies
- Providing easy access for entrepreneurs to book appointments with Hennepin County’s Business Navigators who can offer customized recommendations and referrals to the wide range of business consultants available
- Access to live interpreters who speak over 200 languages enabling business owners who speak languages other than English to benefit from county-funded one-on-one business consulting in multiple areas of expertise.

A series of new cohort learning opportunities have launched to address specific needs and recovery challenges identified by business owners through early focus groups, ongoing discussions, and client feedback surveys. Systematic improvements were made to the online small business resource platform, generating measurable results in our ability to reach and serve entrepreneurs from specific cultural communities and business owners of color.

In 2024, Housing and Economic Development took the final steps to implement a capital strategy to accelerate small business growth post pandemic. Under this strategy, Hennepin County will invest \$4.22 million as seed capital to launch two new self-sustaining funds, the Elevate Hennepin Small Business Fund, and Elevate Hennepin Commercial Ownership Fund, in collaboration with a local nonprofit community-based lender. These low-barrier funds will provide access to capital for a wide range of under resourced businesses, advancing economic growth well into the next decade.

Highlights of ongoing small-business-focused economic recovery strategies include:

- Expansion of the network of business advisors under contract to provide no-cost technical assistance and specialized expertise now includes a total of forty-one (41) organizations
- Certified Access Academy, cohort-based program to build capacity among women business owners of color to contract with government and corporate entities
- CEO Now, new cohort-based training for growth-minded businesses to build systems and scale
- Elevate Tech Essentials, offering training and support to meet small businesses’ technology needs and help tackle the digital divide among many microbusinesses
- Elevate Hennepin Construction Advising providing technical assistance for smaller scale local construction businesses, with an emphasis on providing support for contractors of color (in collaboration with Purchasing Department)
- Elevate Nonprofits, providing customized consulting for nonprofit organizations that are currently under contract with Hennepin County (in collaboration with Purchasing Department)
- Elevate Hennepin Talent, new cohort-based training designed to tackle the challenges of attracting and retaining talent through in-depth support in Human Resources.

Community-focused economic recovery strategies

To accelerate investment in communities that experienced disproportionate economic impacts of the pandemic, Hennepin County launched the Community Investment Initiative (CII) in 2022 awarding \$10 million to eighteen (18) redevelopment projects that create new affordable commercial space, business incubators, or support nonprofits critical to economic recovery in Hennepin County. In early 2024, developers leading five (5) of the projects updated county staff that their projects would be unable to move forward by the end of 2024, the timeframe required to utilize pandemic-recovery funds.

In keeping with the original intent of the Community Investment Initiative, Housing and Economic Development (HED) proposed reallocating the funds associated with these projects to the Elevate Hennepin Commercial Ownership Fund described above, which will provide capital to business owners to acquire and renovate commercial property. As designed, the Commercial Ownership Fund will enable business owners to own their commercial space, fix their overhead costs at an affordable level, and build transferable equity value over time. In mid-2024, the Hennepin County Board authorized a total of \$3,120,000 in funds from the five rescinded CII projects to establish the Elevate Hennepin Commercial Ownership Fund. With a unique equity enhancement financing product, the Fund creates equitable pathways to affordable commercial space and an opportunity to build generational wealth. Over the long-term, this type of financing model will help businesses stay in business districts and communities that may experience rising real estate costs, preventing displacement.

As of fourth quarter 2024, all thirteen (13) remaining Community Investment Initiative projects have closed on financing or are under construction. Of those 13 projects, 85% are located in low-income communities or communities of color, exceeding our goals. The table shown below under the section entitled “Key performance indicators” shows the projects funded and their outcomes.

Economic mobility-focused recovery strategies

Housing and Economic Development (HED) implemented two innovative initiatives to advance economic mobility. Hennepin County teams collaborated with Economic Supports and other departments to plan the Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) pilot, including a Hennepin University Partnership (HUP) Collaborative Research Assistantship- to bring in additional expertise to guide program design. Economic Recovery funds were allocated to implement a mixed-methods evaluation, including focus groups, surveys, and interviews with GBI participants as part of an overall evaluation framework for the pilot. The evaluation work is near completion and has gathered important insights into participants’ lived experience.

A feasibility study funded in part with Economic Recovery allocation resources explored national models and the readiness of the local landscape to create or expand social impact investing. The study recommended steps to activate private capital among local investors to support local small business growth. A second phase of the work to expand social impact investing and activate private capital is underway with funding provided by other organizations.

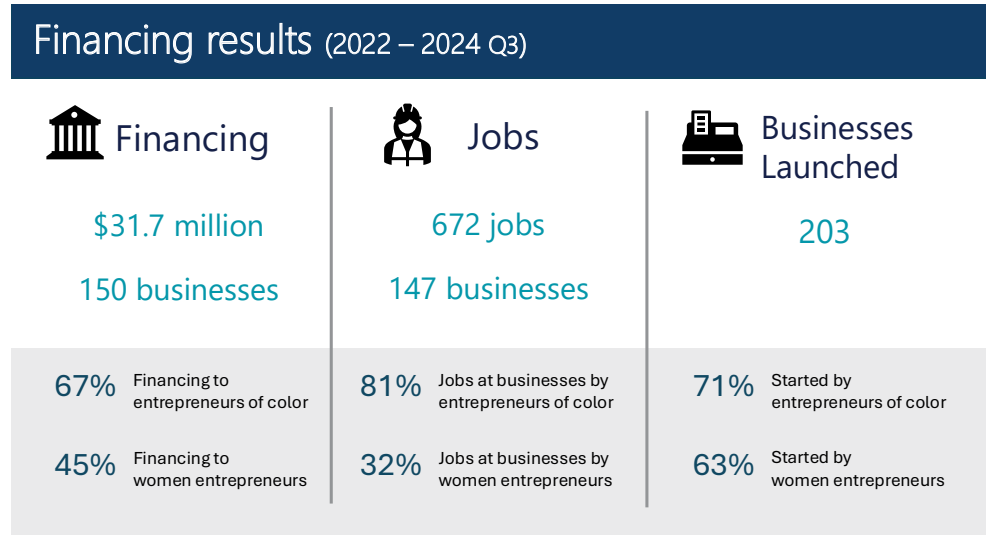
Housing and Economic Development (HED) launched a new cohort-based program, CEO Start™, for idea-stage entrepreneurs in late 2023. This new program activates the strategy to increase access to entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic prosperity by supporting emerging entrepreneurs at the earliest stage of starting a business. CEO Start™ helps entrepreneurs developing a business concept to adequately test, refine, and validate their business idea at the pre-launch stage. Four sessions of the program took place in 2023–2024, hosted in collaboration with the cities of Bloomington and Brooklyn Park.

Key performance indicators

To date, Housing and Economic Development’s multifaceted Economic Recovery strategies have supported a combined total of over 3,500 businesses and stimulated investments valued over \$220,000,000 in low-income communities and communities of color, far exceeding our goals. Over 75 new contracts have been executed and closely monitored. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of these contracts have resulted in total of over 100 amendments to ensure timely spending and satisfactory deliverables.

Small business-focused economic recovery strategies

Hennepin County's strategies to support small businesses, promoted under the banner of Elevate Hennepin, have led to significant growth in entrepreneurship, many new businesses, and hundreds of jobs as shown below. Through third quarter of 2024, Elevate Hennepin has provided over 39,000 hours of specialized, expert consulting to 3,111 businesses.



Community-focused economic recovery strategies

Outcomes generated by CII funded projects are shown below. Projects shown in bold text have closed on financing, are under construction, or are complete.

Hennepin County Community Investment Initiative (CII)

Project	Grantee	Located in low-income community	Hennepin County CII Investment	Total Development Cost (TDC)	Affordable commercial/business incubator spaces	Jobs Created or Retained*
Brooklyn Park Small Business Center	Brooklyn Park EDA	X	\$ 500,000	\$ 8,529,000	60	65
3030 Nicollet	Project for Pride in Living	X	\$ 750,000	\$ 57,388,591	4	60
Abyssinia Cultural Center	Ibyss LLC	X	\$ 375,000	\$ 6,884,590	9	34
Build JXTA	Juxtaposition Arts	X	\$ 300,000	\$ 14,195,695		31
The Coliseum Building	Seward Redesign, Inc.	X	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 29,876,653	25	120
Midtown Global Market	Neighborhood Development Center	X	\$ 450,000	\$ 1,750,000	37	125
Mikwanedun Audisookon Center for Art and Wellness	Indigenous Peoples Task Force	X	\$ 750,000	\$ 10,028,785		13
Minneapolis American Indian Center	Minneapolis American Indian Center	X	\$ 550,000	\$ 30,000,000		45
Northrup King Building	Artspace Projects, Inc.		\$ 500,000	\$ 51,526,350	350	
Regional Apprenticeship Training Center	Northgate Development LLC	X	\$ 250,000	\$ 3,780,139		20
Studio Technical Arts Campus	Pillsbury United Communities	X	\$ 300,000	\$ 5,428,026		5
TAP IN	New Rules	X	\$ 275,000	\$ 1,400,000	4	12
SLP Affordable Commercial Space	St. Louis Park EDA		\$ 380,000	\$ 3,071,000	7	21
Total		85%	\$ 6,880,000	\$ 223,858,829	496	457

* Jobs created or retained by nonprofit projects not included in total.

Economic mobility-focused recovery strategies

A total of 41 entrepreneurs participated in four cohort sessions of CEO Start™ and have successfully completed the program, advancing their business ideas closer to reality. CEO Start™ generated several success stories, including Abby Allen, founder of Gluestick, a beta application that provides creative projects for kids. Gluestick was among ten companies to reach the semifinalist level in the education division of this year's MN CUP competition in which entrepreneurs compete for a share of over \$400,000 in case prizes. Another CEO Start™ graduate, Katie Ross, founded The Arts Creative and successfully opened a brick-and-mortar location in Bloomington in 2024.



Raise the Baseline — Empowering Families with Guaranteed Income

Allocation amount: \$2,500,000

Project description

Hennepin County's Raise the Baseline pilot is a cash transfer program that provides monthly payments to residents who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and who meet the pilot's eligibility criteria. The pilot gives recipients agency to decide how they would like to use the money to meet their family's needs and plan for their futures. Participants also have access to optional supportive services throughout the 15-month pilot period. Raise the Baseline differs from most public assistance programs, which commonly tie benefits to parameters such as fluctuations in recipients' earned income, and which restrict how recipients can use the money.

This pilot is intended to coexist with other public assistance programs, not replace them. Programs that are not carefully designed risk causing harm to recipients who unexpectedly lose their eligibility or receive a reduction in public assistance benefits on which they depend. It may also not be effective if it simply supplants the benefits a participant had been receiving prior to the pilot.

The pilot is expected to serve approximately 175 very low-income Hennepin County residents with dependent children under age 5. A pool of potential participants was identified through analysis of benefits enrollments gaps and calculations of who is least at risk for facing a reduction or loss in public assistance benefits.

The pilot will explore the impact of payments on participant's economic mobility, housing stability, employment outcomes, health and education factors, and quality of life. Pilot findings will help inform future policy and program decisions to better support working families.

Progress narrative

- This quarter Raise the Baseline served 153 families
- All participating families received monthly payments
- Participants in each of the three enrollment cohorts received their final full payments in the third quarter and transitioned to three months of partial payments as the pilot came to an end. Participants received communication reminding them of the schedule and allowing them time to plan for the transition
 - Cohort 1: first Raise the Baseline payment August 2023
 - Received final payment in October
 - Cohort 2: first Raise the Baseline payment September 2023
 - Received partial payments in October and November
 - Received final payment in November
 - Cohort 3: first Raise the Baseline payment October 2023
 - Received partial payments in October, November, and December
 - Received final payment in December
- The PowerApp IT solution built to support Raise the Baseline has been enhanced by adding additional features to support the pilot closeout.

- Project for Pride in Living (PPL) connected with participants to offer supportive services
 - PPL's outreach coordinator connected with 72 of the 157 participants from the August and September enrollment cohorts to offer PPL services. Families were offered supportive services such as home ownership counseling and career coaching.
 - 45 participants indicated an interest in supportive services. PPL program staff connected with 20 of these families to discuss services.
 - As of December 31, 11 families were receiving services from PPL.
- Quantitative analysis planning with internal Hennepin County Data and Analytics staff continued. Evaluation will take place once the pilot has ended.
- The Improve Group began work on Rounds 3 and 4 of their mixed methods evaluation:
 - Participants in the first two enrollment cohorts were contacted after receiving their final Raise the Baseline payment for Round 3 of the evaluation
 - 35 participants completed surveys
 - 15 participants completed interviews
 - 15 participants registered for a ripple effects mapping workshop to take place in 2025
 - Participants receiving their final payment in December will be contacted in January 2025
 - Planning for Round 4 of the evaluation began with staff from The Improve Group and Hennepin County. This round will take place six months after the participants' final payments.
- Leadership shared Raise the Baseline information at the Association of Minnesota Counties FUTURES session and the Whole Family Systems / 2-Generation Policy Network statewide event.

Key performance indicators

- Number of families participating:
 - 153 families fully enrolled
- Payment:
 - 100% of payments were received on time by pilot participants
 - Due to a file error, many November payments were initially incorrect. The corrections were addressed in the same business day. Overall accuracy for the pilot payments is 96%.
- Quantitative analysis planning with internal Hennepin County Data and Analytics staff continues to move forward. The team is researching methodology and determining how to structure the evaluation. Evaluation will take place once the pilot has ended, and data is available in state systems.
- The Improve Group completed Round 2 of their mixed methods evaluation and began Round 3:
 - Round 2, midpoint evaluation
 - Consultants shared emerging findings with participants and staff to discuss findings and collaboratively interpret and contextualize findings
 - The group synthesized input from the preliminary findings meeting discussion into the findings document to finalize learnings from Round 2
 - The Improve Group began conducting Round 3 of their mixed methods evaluation with participants at pilot exit
 - Planning began for Round 4, which will take place six months after the families receive their final payments.



Anti-Hate Initiative

Allocation amount: \$1,000,000

Project description

The Anti-Hate Initiative supports community providers in raising awareness about hate crimes and bias-related incidents, encouraging reporting, and accessing services. It also aims to improve data collection to understand the extent of hate-based violence. Funds were allocated to hire a program coordinator responsible for fostering a common understanding among community providers and managing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to support local organizations addressing hate-based violence.

Progress summary

In the last quarter, Anti-Hate funds supported programs focused on education, awareness, and capacity-building. The Anti-Hate Coalition, formed by participating organizations, continues to grow in size and impact. Additionally, StopHateMN.org continues to experience increase in traffic, showcasing its role in raising awareness and sharing educational materials.

Organizations hosted events, recruited staff, delivered training, and shared best practices. RISE Home expanded its reach through anti-hate events within the Liberian community. Partnerships resulted in social media videos addressing Asian hate, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and allyship. Collaborations with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights enhanced anti-bullying initiatives.

The coalition's growth reflects a significant step forward in fostering unity and combating hate, discrimination, and bias.

Key performance indicators

- 180 hours dedicated to engagement workshops
- 80+ hours of community outreach and seminars
- 270+ hours spent on campaign awareness
- 250+ hours facilitating law enforcement-community discussions on reporting hate incidents
- 11 new organizations joined the Anti-Hate Coalition, representing Asian American, African American, African Immigrant, Latine, Muslim, East African, Liberian, and Jewish communities
- Over 14,000+ visited organization website or resources.



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 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 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 increased workloads created by the attempts of the County Attorney's Office and Public Defender's Office to address and reduce the backlog of cases created during the pandemic.

Progress narrative

During the fourth quarter of 2024, the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office (HCPD) began to wind down the backlog project. HCPD contracted with four attorneys (2.75 FTE) and one legal office assistant (1.0 FTE) to handle adult felony cases. HCPD continued to fund one attorney (.2 FTE) who staffed mandatory child protection calendars and represented children in these child protection cases.

Key performance indicators

HCPD was able to provide caseload relief to attorneys and allow them to focus more time on their older cases set for trial. In addition, the contract attorneys handle trial cases as part of the caseload relief. As the backlog project was coming to an end, the number of new cases handled by contractors also decreased. The Adult Contractors handled 86 new cases during the third quarter of 2024. The attorneys in Juvenile Court handled 15 separate half-day calendars and four new child protection cases. In addition, the contract attorneys continued to work on and close their previously assigned cases.



Violence Prevention

Allocation amount: \$12,500,000

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 2022, the county board authorized an additional \$5 million to support continued and new programming, and a final \$2.5 million was added in third quarter of 2023.

Hennepin County is committed to reducing community and gun violence through a holistic approach that identifies drivers of the violence, addresses risk and protective factors, and adopts evidence-informed policies and programs and effective strategies that improve outcomes for communities impacted by community violence, with particular focus on young people.

All of the programming falls within one of the three pillars of the Community Violence Prevention framework developed by the Centers for Disease Control: 1) Creating protective environments, 2) Connecting young people to caring adults and activities, and 3) Strengthening young people's skills.

Progress narrative

During this quarter, the 45 Community Violence Prevention (CVP) providers continued providing programming across the three pillars throughout the county. Violence intervenors began meeting regularly to compare strategies and coordinate efforts. Some examples of the work across the county includes monthly meetings with youth and their families, offering education across a variety of health, personal well-being, and parenting topics; mental health first aid training to support young people impacted by community violence and prevent staff burnout, and customized healing circles.

The CVP providers met with others doing similar work to have deep conversations about the work and strategize how to leverage relationships and resources. The entire cohort met for a final time as a Community Violence Prevention Network for a half-day convening to share best practices and challenges.

Key performance indicators

- Number of youths served: approximately 2,300
- Hours of mental health services provided: 500+
- Hours of mentoring services provided: approximately 900
- Hours of life skills services provided: over 800
- Number of community events held: over 175

OTHER/DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

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 Department 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, 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 Department 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

Digital Experience (DX), and its DX Model partner teams, Website Communications and Web Infrastructure team in the Communications and IT departments respectively, continues to make progress and achieve accomplishments in the fourth quarter of 2024. This DX quarterly report is organized to reflect the work done that supports the DX three strategic directions at each of the community, organization, and team levels: 1). drive an equitable and inclusive digital experience for Hennepin County community members; 2). build and foster a culture of User Experience (UX) across Hennepin County; and 3). establish DX structures, processes, and culture founded in our values.

Drive an equitable and inclusive digital experience for Hennepin County community members

DX is developing a plan to ensure Hennepin County meets the Department of Justice (DOJ) Accessibility ruling. The DOJ ruling requires state and local governments' web content and mobile apps meet the technical standard Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA. Hennepin County must meet this requirement by April 24, 2026. Planning is underway to connect development and web content teams throughout the county with training and resources to meet this deadline. The ADA.gov Fact Sheet provides more information about the rule, including guidance and resources.

Progress continues in partnership with the Facility Services department to build out a space that will serve as a usability testing space as well as a team collaboration space. DX worked closely with the architect as well as experts from the IT and Communications departments to ensure technology and communications standards are met. There will be an RFP for construction firms to bid on the building phase of the project.

A major milestone was achieved on the HennepinCounty.gov project this reporting period. The project team delivered wireframes to the Website Infrastructure, or development team. Team members from Website Communications and DX worked together gathering insights from user testing to create the wireframes to be developed. This transition is a critical step in the design process.

Build and foster a culture of User Experience (UX) across Hennepin County

DX convened the last DX Stakeholder meeting of 2024 during this reporting period. Stakeholders from all lines of business came together to both showcase and learn about ways the DX model is working across the organization to advance a consistently positive digital experience for all users. This is one way to connect service delivery teams and development teams to learn from each other about finding innovative ways to deliver accessible content and experiences.

DX worked with contracted vendor, Pira Consulting, to develop templates for common user journeys. Journey mapping is an effective way to understand a customer's experience. A workgroup evaluated different scenarios when the templated journey maps might be most useful for the business area to understand pain points and how digital touchpoints could be a solution. The work with Pira Consulting ended at the end of 2024.

Additionally, DX contracts with a local accessibility organization, WeCo, to provide digital accessibility consulting services. These consulting services are available for all county lines of business and departments to leverage to improve the organization's ability to meet its commitment to providing accessible content and applications on the public-facing website. DX coordinated with WeCo to complete digital accessibility audits for two departments as well as a live presentation on the DOJ ADA web rule.

In November, DX won the Golden GovIT Service Award for the Hennepin County Design System as recognized at the GovIT Leadership Summit and Symposium. The GovIT Symposium is the nation's longest-running government technology conference. The Hennepin County Design System represents a transformative effort to create a unified, accessible digital experience for both county employees and the public. Launched in February, the design system addresses the need for consistency in design across the county's online services, ensuring that users have a seamless, intuitive experience when interacting with government services. This is the second Golden GovIT award for DX during the funding period.

Establish structures, processes, and culture founded in DX values

The DX management team participated in monthly facilitated day-long workshops to continue to build trust and align the direction of the department into 2025. The workshops allowed management team members to name challenges encountered throughout the year and identify how each other's Strengths complement each other. The team also worked to define a new role on the team, the Product and Service Manager.

Just as in the previous reporting period, DX continued to evaluate internal work management in this reporting period as well. Using a continuous improvement lens, a departmentwide work management retrospective provided space for team members to share their experiences and insights on existing work management processes and offer suggestions on how to improve processes.

DX gathered in December to celebrate all the work that has been accomplished because of pandemic response funding. Each team member contributed milestones on timeline and shared successes.

Key performance indicators

- Ensuring Hennepin County's web content and applications meet the federal standards makes information available for all, regardless of ability. The ruling creates an opportunity for even more employees to receive role-specific training on how to make things accessible online and reinforces the county's digital accessibility policy already in place.
- Having a dedicated physical space for users to engage and interact with county digital prototypes and applications allows users to provide feedback that drives the accessibility and usability of the county's public-facing website.
- Reaching the development milestone on the HennepinCounty.gov website project is critical in being able to achieve the website launch date in 2025.
- The opportunity to bring together stakeholders from across the organization is one of the many benefits of the DX Stakeholder meetings. Every line of business was represented at this meeting, which offers low-risk and peer learning opportunities.
- Hennepin County does not have the resources available internally to meet the ADA web rule. Leveraging relationships with contractors, like WeCo, is the only way meet federal requirements, while also investing in new and ongoing training for internal employees.
- Receiving a Golden GovIT award for service reinforces the importance of having a shared resource for content creators in Hennepin County.
- Investing in time together as a department allows for deeper understanding of each other's experiences and provides a space for team members to share their experiences and build trust with each other. Aligning DX work to continuous learning and research creates a foundation for organizational success in taking meaningful actions to meet residents' needs.
- Creating time to be intentional with reflection and work accomplishments continues to build rapport throughout the DX department. DX has grown tremendously with the support of pandemic response funding, and it is important to pause to name all the success during this funding cycle.

OTHER/DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Engagement Services

Allocation amount: \$3,180,000

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 Messenger Program

- Continuing monthly meetings, sending reports, and invoicing
- Shared and communicated information about county program / services
- Shared consultation and feedback with departments / service areas

Community Engagement Roster Program

- Continued to consult with other departments and promote contracts / agreements via the roster program
- Managed and added new organizations to the roster
- Reviewed new RFPs, projects, agreements, and work orders for internal departments

Translations

- Translation policy at leadership for review

Engagement vans

- Maintenance: Each of the three vans were completely cleaned, reorganized, and parked in their designated secure winter parking site — HC Public Works Facility Medina.
- Winter access: One Dodge Grand Caravan was parked at a Hennepin County facility, NorthPoint Conference Center for easy access for winter engagement activities. This van is fully stocked with promotional items and current handouts.

- **Evaluation:** An evaluation meeting of the use of the engagement vans and their reservation systems was held with van users and Fleet Services. This year we were able to problem solve for Hennepin County key card access to key valet kiosks, access to charging stations for the Ford e-van, and promotional items restocking during a busy engagement season. Overall, the Hennepin County employees that used the vans were appreciative of this resource to serving our residents. In addition, there is an interest in growing the use of the vans for 2025.
- **Systems update:** The internal SharePoint website for Outreach and Community supports was updated with current information about van reservations and requirements. The Engagement Van Operations Manual was updated with new information about charging stations for the Ford e-van. A comprehensive van checklist was created for future van coordinators.
- **Equipment:** Collapsible banners have been ordered for each of the vans along with restocking promotional items.

Healing circles / community building

Our goal in hosting these healing circles is to promote the health and well-being of our communities. Each healing circle focuses on a certain community, and the facilitators from those communities guide them on their journey to healing.

Throughout October, we held six healing circles:

- Saturday, October 5: Inner Well-being with Fanny Fernandez
- Monday, October 7: Sound Bath Healing with Nancy Xiong and Pagnia Xiong
- Saturday, October 12: Free the Body with TC
- Monday, October 14: Sound Bath Healing, virtual with Nancy Xiong
- Saturday, October 26: Exploring Animal Migration through Linography, a youth event, with Lynda Grafito
- Saturday, October 26: Free the Body with TC

These healing circles focused on our priority populations: Asian American, African American, Latino, and Youth. We had a diverse background of practitioners who facilitated the healing circles through singing bowls to mindful body movements, to block printing, and to traditional music and dance.

Our last healing circles were in November, and we celebrated Native American Heritage month by hosting a two-part workshop on Spirit Doll Making with facilitator Mariah McCoy on Friday, November 1 and Friday, November 8.

Materials distribution

- Monitoring masks and test kits requests
- Met with Public Health and transitioned the masks and test kits request process to them

Key performance indicators

Trusted Messenger Program

- Monthly meetings with large group
- Check-in meetings with Community Engagement Liaisons
- Communicate and ensure Trusted Messengers are billing monthly and utilize full funding by end of year
- Contracts ended November 30, 2024
- Ensure organizations complete their work and send in final report
- Ensure organizations invoice their last invoice timely
- Work on strategies and work plan for the 2025 Trusted Messenger Program

Community Engagement Roster Program

- 297 individuals and organizations registered
- Nine principal agreements executed
- 17 work order agreements executed
- One RFP administered — Growing Communities with the Climate and Resiliency Department

Translations

Continued to support work with the Translation Policy Project committee.

Engagement vans

The three community engagement vans continued to be a crucial strategy in serving community where they gather, with a focus on communities of color, to provide essential information about Hennepin County programs and projects:

- The use of the engagement vans continues to increase, and the Ford e-van expanded its use across Hennepin County departments.
- Eleven Hennepin County departments used the vans in 2024 to directly engage residents on their programs and services.
- Systems are in place for successful use of the vans: operations manual, van reservations, users guide for equipment, and van coordinator checklist.

Healing circles / community building

Participants were asked pre- and post-survey questions on how they would describe their experience. A few mentioned:

- “It was my first experience with this session, and it was really nice. I felt a sense of peace after the healing session.”
- “I would love to see cross racial healing events” in the future.

For other healing circles, participants felt a lot of stress and anxiety before coming to the healing circles. After the healing circles, participants mentioned:

- “It felt good to center myself. I was holding stress in my shoulders and by the end, the ache was gone.”
- “I am still amazed how setting some time to slow your breath and lean in more into your body—how that can release trauma / pain and bring room for light.”
- “Refreshing. Much needed.”

For the sound healing circles, it was the first time for many of the participants to go through this type of healing. Many folks brought with them negative energy, stress, anxiety, and childhood trauma and wanted to regain a sense of self again.

- "I came in with a painful and sharp pressure migraine but left without it. I seriously cannot express my gratitude for you and offering this healing session for free. Not only did I leave physically better, but mentally and emotionally as well. So much releasing I still need to do, but it was so transformative."
- "It was amazing to feel my body in sync with the frequency that the vibrations of the sounds and the vocals were emitting. It allowed for a body awareness and body connection that doesn't get enough attention when I'm in the hustle of what Tricia Hersey calls grind culture (which causes the disconnect in the first place)."
- "It was my first time and exceeded my expectations. Nancy and Pagnia, amazing healers."
- "It felt good to acknowledge and let go of old past pains and trauma."

Other healing circles and spaces participants wanted to let go of their fears, recognize their pain, and learn how to relax themselves.

- "This was a safe space. Loving and healing."
- "Many found emotions."
- "Something new and it helped me be more aware."
- "Beautiful experience for me and my daughter."
- "It was a new experience. But it felt very personal for what I am living through. I loved it."

The feedback of the healing circles from participants will be used to determine 2025 healing circle programs and work with the facilitators.

Materials distribution

Since November through the end of 2024, there has not been any masks and test kits requests from organizations. The bulk of the work was to train and transition the masks and test kits request process over to our Public Health department.

OTHER/DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Enterprise Integrated Data System

Allocation amount: \$3,000,000

Project description

The Enterprise Integrated Data System aims to integrate data from across county systems to discover summary insights that enable the county to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, reduce disparities, and support key strategic initiatives. The project includes 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 leverages modern data infrastructure tools to bring county data together effectively and iteratively to meaningfully create summary reports and analytics.

Summary analytics entails the development of a variety of summary reports that provide ongoing holistic insights into county services. Analyses focus on the county's ability to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts; how 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 strategic data insights while ensuring data security, privacy, and the ethical use of data. This work is 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 includes 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

In the final quarter of this effort, the team made additional progress on each of the project's four components. As this quarter marks the last period of this project's initial development phase, planning has also begun for the second phase of this effort with a focus on scaling lessons learned for analytics work across the county. Work on the integrated data infrastructure entailed ongoing continuous improvement efforts, substantial improvements to a graph-based entity resolution model, and updated documentation. Ongoing progress continued to be made on each of the summary analytics efforts underway along with a strategic review of projects and their impact. Ensuring this system is carefully governed and highly secured has and continues to be a critical component of this effort; ongoing continuous improvement efforts to ensure efficient and effective governance continued during this quarter. Lastly, the data literacy program developed as part of a framework for data use continues to be carried out, which included the county's second annual data week event.

Ultimately, work on the underlying integrated data infrastructure continues to focus on ensuring a robust and systemic approach to ongoing data ingestion and integration. This quarter marked significant progress on a graph-based approach to entity resolution. The team's data engineers and data scientists have been working together to both test and implement this approach as improved entity resolution results in higher quality summary insights. Internal benchmarks showed an increase in the total number of matches with similar or better accuracy rates to the current method. In addition, the data engineers continue to work on our DataOps practices.

Initial work on data quality metrics was completed with an eye towards scaling across the enterprise.

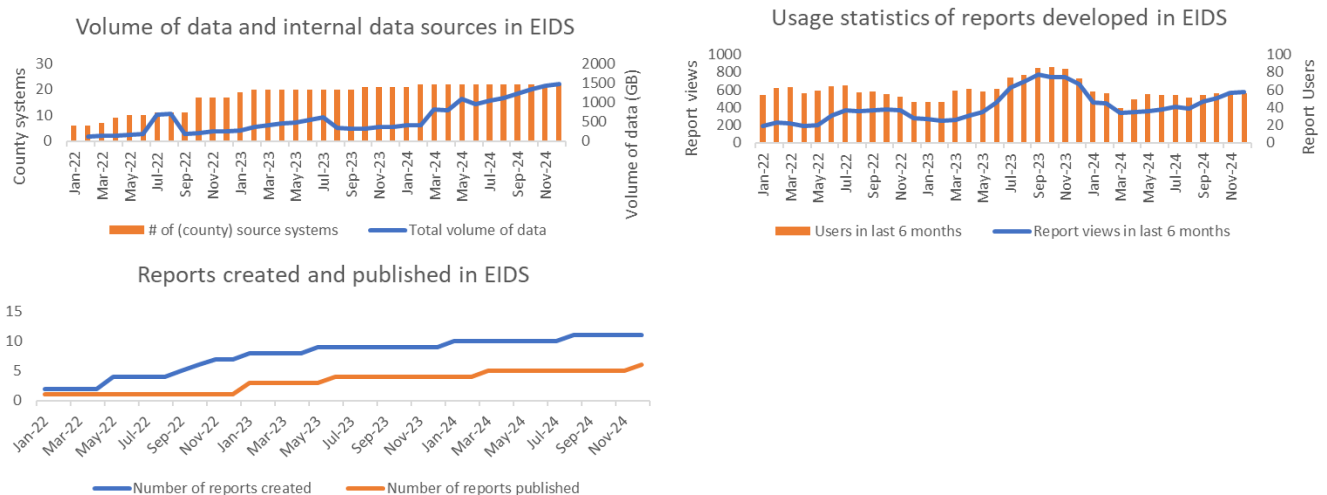
Meaningful progress was made on all active summary analytics efforts. In the prior quarter, one effort reached the completion of its first phase with two additional projects awaiting their final review. Substantial progress was made on the second iteration of the Who We Serve report along with ongoing updates. As noted in the prior quarter, work continues to ensure all summary analytics projects are conducted in adherence to the systems principles of partnership, data security, and careful governance. This has resulted in improved coordination with line of business subject matter experts and ongoing work to embed data literacy insights into the process. No new projects were initiated in the prior quarter as the team seeks to wrap up all analyses started in the development phase of this effort.

Ongoing collaboration with the County Attorney’s Office and responsible authority continued with the aim to ensure this system remains highly secured and carefully governed. Revisions were completed to the overall governance framework that helped clarify areas of uncertainty and refine the timing of key steps. As no new projects were taken on in the prior quarter, the overall governance timeline for new projects remains at 44 days (inclusive of non-business days).

While a substantial amount of ongoing work related to the county’s data literacy work continued in the prior quarter, Data Week and preparation for a data-informed decision-making session for directors were the prominent focal points of this period. The county’s second annual Data Week—an event that aims to help all staff effectively use data in their work—was a success. This year’s program featured 17 events that was attended by 1,044 live participants (not unduplicated), and 303 unique live participants. Feedback from staff was highly positive with one person commenting, “Data week was excellent. . . These sessions and the data literacy work in general has really helped to demystify data.” The data-informed decision-making session for directors was fully developed and will be conducted in January as the original event was rescheduled due to heavy snow.

Lastly, the team continues to work on documenting lessons learned from the development phase of this effort. This includes both leveraging the feedback the team has gathered to date and ideas about how best to collect and integrate feedback ongoing. Moreover, the team is working to ensure the continuation of this work by incorporating lessons learned and the plans for the second phase of this system into the department’s strategic plan. This includes strategies focused on the analytics project life cycle, advancing the modern data stack, data literacy, and data governance models.

Key performance indicators



Monitoring of key performance indicator data continues to be formative in nature and geared towards the post-pandemic response phase of this effort.

Total volume of data continues to increase with just over 1.4 TB of data as of the end of the year. The upward trend in the volume of data continues to be from adding additional data from existing source systems. The total number of county systems contributing data to the Enterprise Integrated Data System remains flat at 22.

Fifteen analytics projects have now leveraged this system. Six have been made available to stakeholders based on business need, two are very near completion, one has been put on hold, and six are in active development.

Usage statistics continue to trend upward, although quite slowly. The total number of users interacting with reports increased slightly along with total usage. Much of this increase is being driven by the Who We Serve report suggesting that more timely data does have an impact. As the report is updated regularly, the team will continue to monitor this for additional insights. Staff in Integrated Data and Analytics will continue to use these data and other feedback to drive towards more and more effective summary data insights.

Data pipeline success rates continue to improve. In the recent quarter, pipeline success rates averaged over 98% per month, safely above the target of 95% per month.

The current average length of time for an analytics effort to go through the governance process has remained constant at 44 days. This was expected as now new efforts went through this process in the prior quarter.

OTHER/DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Information Technology

Allocation amount: \$10,000,000

Project description

The IT Department 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 IT 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 is 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

Twenty-six projects have used pandemic response funds. The full \$10 million will be spent as of December 31, 2024.

Progress during Q4 of 2024 included:

- Initial implementation steps of inspection and licensing application modernization in Public Works
- Proof of concept for system modernization in Human Services
- Completed build-out of teams rooms for Facility Services

Key performance indicators

Some notable accomplishments include:

- Completed proof of concept for system modernization of Human Services interfaces to state systems. Project will replace BlueZone scripts that Eligibility Supports area uses to automate various functions pertaining to the state's MAXIS mainframe
- Modernizing system used by in Public Works for environmental health, hazardous waste, waste reduction and recycling food waste inspection and licensing functions. Includes a civic portal, streamlined workflows and, enhanced data sharing.
- Modernization and migration to Azure for secure, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible provision of services
- Backfile conversions that reduce off-site storage costs and make records more accessible to both the public and county employees. These efforts support decision making, data integrations, remote working, and resident services.
- Key valet for motor pool vehicles available at multiple locations
- 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. 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
- Modernized 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
- Purchase and installation of digital signage at the drop-off facilities in Brooklyn Park and Bloomington
- Enhancements to workforce management system used by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office

OTHER/DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Voter Participation

Allocation amount: \$3,312,000

Project description

The Elections Department 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 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 in avoiding the necessity of issuing 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 is 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

From October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, Hennepin County Elections staff have continued to implement two key outreach and engagement strategies: contracting with community organizations for voter outreach and education services and a tailored voter outreach media campaign focused on registration and voting. The reporting period includes the state general election on November 5, 2024.

Hennepin County Elections continued to support organizations contracted to conduct voter engagement activities. Hennepin County Elections contracted 22 organizations to do sustained voter outreach work from January 2024 until November 2024. Contract work focused on engaging communities who face the highest barriers to voting, encouraging voter registration and voter participation.

Additionally, Hennepin County Elections contracted 13 organizations to do one-time voter engagement activities between August and November 2024. Examples of these one-time events include a voter engagement picnic with homeless youth, a civic engagement hip hop concert, door knocking, art installations, and candidate forums. Contracted organizations attended or hosted over 160 events, had more than 72,900 conversations with residents, and reached 442,000 people via voter outreach media campaigns.

Hennepin County Elections continued to work with an advertisement agency in developing content and placing ads with the goal of educating residents on voter registration and upcoming elections. The media placements focused on reaching communities with historically low voter engagement, including Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC); people experiencing homelessness, disabilities, or language barriers; seniors; renters; and veterans. Digital media channels for this advertisement campaign include Facebook, Instagram, Google, Snapchat, Nextdoor, Twitch, and YouTube. The ad campaign placed voter outreach messaging in Metro Transit buses and light rail trains and stations, as well as billboards around Hennepin County. The paid advertisement campaign received a total of 36,843,596 impressions in a total of 845 spots during this reporting period.

During this reporting period and in preparation for the November 5, 2024 election, the voter engagement staff attended / hosted 28 events. Events included Hennepin County New Employee Orientation, a voting workshop with the Minnesota Autism Society, a neighborhood association meeting, National Federation of the Blind, and a training for Catholic Charities shelter staff.

The Elections Department designed and implemented a post-election survey to better understand barriers to the voting process. Elections staff received survey responses through paid and earned social media posts, tabling at five libraries, and through community partners. Nearly 300 Hennepin County voters responded to the survey providing information about their experience voting this year. 97% of respondents reported they did not find it difficult in the November 5, 2024 election.

Key performance indicators

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

- Increased institutional knowledge of election process among contracted and partner organizations
- Number of toolkits developed, translated materials, and other voter education materials produced and distributed
- Number of community organizations contacted and engaged with Hennepin County
- Number of people reached through targeted media campaigns
- Number of trainings for community organizations and service providers

Contract organizations submitted final reports in December 2024. Work and accomplishments were described in terms of the following:

- How many people organizations 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



Hennepin County

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