



Hennepin County

Race Equity Advisory Council

Annual Report 2024-2025

Hennepin County Race Equity Advisory Council
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Introduction and membership

Introduction

In 2025, REAC focused on critical priorities in health and wellness, juvenile justice, education, income, and housing—areas especially vulnerable to federal cuts, executive orders, and increased scrutiny of diversity, equity, and inclusion programming. These focus areas remain central to advancing racial equity and eliminating disparities across Hennepin County.

Committee chairs

Mental Health and Wellness	Adjoa E Kusi-Appiah
Juvenile Justice	Cedric Dildy and Erikka Ryan
Education	Natalie Kirk
Income	Raquel Jarabek
Housing	Taiwo Giwa

Each committee played a vital role in shaping recommendations, strengthening partnerships, and guiding the County toward meaningful and sustainable structural improvements.

In 2025, we also made key organizational advancements: establishing a new Education Committee, elevating visibility of existing resources, ensuring data and research are disaggregated and accessible, and fostering collaboration between county and community partners to address widening gaps left by federal funding cuts—particularly in health and housing.

Closing statement

As we conclude this year’s report, we extend our deepest gratitude to Hennepin County staff, leadership, Commissioners, county officials, and community partners for their unwavering commitment to advancing racial equity. Your dedication has been central to the progress we’ve achieved together.

This year, our work focused intentionally on areas where disparities remain most pressing: mental health and well-being, child and male health, healthcare access, juvenile justice, education, housing, and support for Indigenous communities. These priorities were not chosen lightly. We recognize the importance of being specific in our recommendations, especially at the time we find ourselves in. Our research was data-informed, targeted, and intentional, ensuring that every effort contributes meaningfully to dismantling the barriers facing communities of color.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to build on this momentum. By working collaboratively with all stakeholders, we can continue addressing systemic inequities and move closer to creating a more inclusive and equitable Hennepin County for every resident. Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to this vital work.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The purpose of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee is to bring awareness to mental health issues from an intersectional perspective. We will address issues of gender identity, substance use, and maternal wellbeing, through a culturally competent lens. We will support our recommendations with data to provide an updated context for the racial disparities that emerge in this area.

Chair: Adjoa E Kusi-Appiah

Overall health

Delays and gaps in medical care significantly impact health outcomes. According to the 2022 SHAPE survey, nearly one in four residents reported delayed or unmet medical care, with cost and insurance most often cited as reasons. Among Black residents, however, the rate was higher at 33%, and fewer identified cost or insurance as the main barrier. This points to additional, unmeasured barriers that disproportionately affect Black communities and require targeted solutions beyond affordability.

Group	Delayed/No Care	Identified Cost/Insurance as Cause
Countywide	25%	48%
Black Residents	33%	40%

Recommendation: Expand SHAPE survey

Expand the SHAPE survey to include additional follow-up questions about delayed care before the next survey is distributed in 2026 (urgent). Other barriers might include transportation, availability of providers, trust, and language/cultural barriers.

Child health

Minnesota’s Title V 2025–2029 action plan prioritizes equitable access and pathways for children with special health needs. Yet national research shows Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian children are less likely to receive Early Childhood Special Education, with disparities worsening during the COVID-19 pandemic—especially for Black children. In Hennepin County, data on families with special needs and their access to resources remains limited, leaving local gaps unclear.

Recommendation: Track and report equity in Early Childhood Special Education

Direct staff to develop and implement metrics that track access, utilization, and delays in Early Childhood Special Education services—such as *Help Me Grow*—and report findings disaggregated by race/ethnicity to identify and address disparities.

Sources:

- Minnesota Department of Health. 2025. “2025-29 Action Plan.” <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/titlev/titlev2529actionplan.pdf>.
- Friedman-Krauss, Ph.D, Allison. 2023. “New Study Finds Unequal Access to Services for Young Children with Special Needs.” Rutgers Graduate School of Education. https://nieer.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Puerto-Rico_SE_PR2023.pdf.

Male health

Cancer disparities among Black men in Hennepin County are widening. Prostate cancer incidence is 62% higher than the countywide average, with a 34% higher mortality rate. Colorectal cancer shows similar patterns, with a 46% higher incidence and a 70% higher mortality rate among Black men. Barriers such as limited awareness of screening, lack of access, and medical mistrust contribute to these disparities, while trusted community networks and cultural traditions can help encourage screening and treatment.

Cancer Type	Incidence (Black men vs. countywide)	Mortality (Black men vs. countywide)
Prostate Cancer	62% Higher	34% Higher
Colorectal Cancer	46% Higher	70% Higher

Recommendation: Funding and expansion

Hennepin Healthcare's Mobile Health program offers a unique opportunity to provide convenient care within the community. Direct resources to expand and increase funding for Hennepin Healthcare's Mobile Health program, with a focus on providing prostate and colorectal cancer screenings in Black communities disproportionately impacted by these diseases.

Recommendation: Community partnership

Establish formal partnerships with Hennepin Healthcare's cultural navigators to actively promote cancer screening, provide trusted education, and connect residents with available resources.

Source

- Zaire, P J, E Miller, A P Ewing, J Hefner, K Wright, and L H Smith. 2024. "A Socioecological Taxonomy of Determinants to Colorectal Cancer Screening in Black Men: Insights from a Mixed-Methods Systematic Review." *Preventive Medicine Reports* 49, no. 49 (December): 102954–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2024.102954>.

Healthcare

The anticipated changes to Medicaid and Medicare will have a significant impact on the community within Hennepin County. As Healthcare access and quality is named as one of the social determinants of health in the US Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2030; this transition puts vulnerable populations at even higher risk of widening health disparities. Specifically, individuals with limited English proficiency or those hesitant to seek care due to immigration status or financial barriers are less likely to access and use healthcare services. Hennepin County is uniquely positioned to bridge these gaps through strong communication and outreach. The change in funding, requirements (like more frequent re-certifications), and restrictions will require more transparent sharing of information.

Recommendation: Culturally relevant information sharing

Develop a plan for accurate and timely information-sharing. Partner with community organizations for culturally appropriate messaging and accessible settings for information-sharing. Special attention to underrecognized populations like mixed immigration status families, those who no longer qualify for asylum/other protected status, and families whose children qualify but parents may lose coverage.

Recommendation: Contingency plan development

Establish a contingency plan for residents at risk of losing coverage, including clear communication of alternatives and next steps.

Recommendation: Re-enrollment support

Expand support services to assist residents with Medicaid/Medicare re-enrollment, including navigation assistance, application support, and follow-up to prevent coverage gaps, collaborating with state initiatives to employ these resources in relevant spaces.

Juvenile Justice

The Juvenile Justice Committee is dedicated to prevention, education, and providing resources for justice-impacted youth. This year, the committee prioritized the expansion of accessible, high-quality support related to domestic violence and immigration. The committee also took a proactive approach to addressing future challenges, including the development of long-term rehabilitation facilities and gathering reliable, comprehensive data.

Chairs: Cedric Dildy, Erikka Ryan

Domestic/intimate partner/teen dating violence resources

In 2024, domestic violence accounted for 5% of juvenile prosecutions in Hennepin County, ranking among the top ten crime categories. It is projected to increase both in case volume and overall percentage of juvenile crime by 2026. These cases carry some of the highest rates of felony charges and re-offending, making domestic violence a significant entry point into the justice system for BIPOC youth.

Domestic violence is significantly underreported, with estimates suggesting that as many as 80% of cases go unreported. This underreporting may place domestic violence among the top five juvenile crimes. People of color are disproportionately less likely to report domestic or dating violence due to limited access to legal representation, housing support, financial resources, mental health services, and education.

Unlike other types of youth crimes that are more difficult to prevent, such as traffic violations, property damage, or credit card fraud, domestic violence can be significantly reduced through target education and prevention efforts. Both perpetrators and victims are often unaware of what constitutes domestic violence, the scope of legal consequences, and the resources available to support youth and their families.

The current domestic violence resource pages on the Hennepin County website lacks clarity and accessibility in explaining what domestic violence is, how to recognize its signs, and what legal steps and support options are available, particularly for youth. Both victims and advocates often find the language difficult to understand, with guidance that is insufficient and incomplete.

While the Hennepin County Court is responsible for filing orders of protection and handling convictions, Hennepin County has an essential role and responsibility in providing accessible, up-to-date resources.

Sources:

- Hennepin County Attorney's Office. 2025. "Data Dashboard." Hennepin County, Minnesota. 2025. <https://www.hennepinattorney.org/about/dashboard/data-dashboard>.
- Safe Haven: Shelter and Resource Center. 2025. "Facts and Figures." Safe Haven. March 16, 2025. <https://safehavenshelter.org/learn/educational-resources/domestic-violence/facts-and-figures/>.

Recommendation: Update and simplify domestic violence resources for youth and families

Direct staff to make following changes and/or updates to the resources under the Domestic Abuse Service Center and/or be added as separate topic under the 'Prevention' section pages under the Hennepin County Attorney's website:

- Create graphics designed for a sixth grade reading level that include
 - A glossary of key domestic abuse language (ex: domestic, abuse, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence)
 - Warning signs to recognize abuse

- Legal terminology (ex: Orders for Protection/OFPs), and
- General 'know your rights' language for youth and families
- Include high level domestic abuse statistics pulled from county dashboards, including arrest and prosecution rates for youth
- Clarify the legal process by:
 - Using plain language when possible and including visuals to help explain the process
 - Outline what to expect throughout the legal process
 - Audit the current website and update broken links
- Add best practices for argument de-escalation, tailored to teens and youth

Currently, much of this information is buried in various drop downs and language that a teen, parent, or advocate may not be able to easily find or understand. Many of those experiencing domestic violence hesitate to file OFPs because they are worried about retaliation, safety, confidentiality and not knowing what will happen next.

REAC hopes updating these pages will make it more accessible for youth to understand and identify when they are experiencing relationship violence, clarify their legal rights, increase transparency in what the legal process may look like, and empower youth and families to utilize the Domestic Abuse Service Center resources.

Youth immigration resources

Immigration concerns heavily relate to juveniles who are immigrants and children of immigrant parents. While several resources are identified in Hennepin County and the website concerning juveniles and some immigration support, which help young people with immigration and legal needs, there appears to be a gap around accessible, child-centered pathways to legal documentation, especially during emergencies such as the detention of a parent or guardian by ICE. While these services offer critical support, a gap exists in the ability to find resources that guarantee immediate, coordinated care for minors left without adult supervision. In such crisis situations, reliable guidance on who children should turn to for support, legal care, or reunification is unclear.

Recommendation: Expand immigration legal resources for youth on county website

REAC recommends Hennepin County add a link to resources on the Hennepin County webpage, under Resources for Youth, in the 'Safety and legal help' section that include:

- How to seek legal support as a youth immigrant or child of an immigrant when a family is facing detention or deportation
- A 'know your rights' section for youth interacting with ICE or other federal agencies around immigration concerns
- Collaborate with the Office of Multicultural Services and Outreach and Community Supports to compile and publish on its website a list of community support partners, including community-based legal support providers that serve youth immigrants and immigrant families.
- Ensure accessibility for limited English proficient (LEP) speakers by simplifying language, offering translations, and providing a prominent website link to the Office of Multicultural Services and its language access resources.

REAC finds immigration resources for juveniles incredibly important and timely for this year's report. While we have included it in Juvenile Justice recommendations for this year, there are plans to expand support into its own committee for future reports. We urge you to consider minors left in vulnerable circumstances receive timely and compassionate legal care with pathways for reunification and legal representation.

Juvenile treatment and rehabilitation

REAC met with Mary Moriarty and shared the difficulty with addressing the long challenges of Hennepin County losing its only long-term juvenile treatment/rehabilitation facility in 2021. Currently, all youth are sent out of county (ex: Anoka) or out of state. A significant number of studies show that BIPOC youth have more successful rehab and post rehab outcomes when they are geographically located close to support systems and family.

The state of Minnesota is optimistic about prioritizing person centered care and its results.

The [DHS website](#) states that Minnesota strives to make sure everyone who receives long term services can live in the most integrated setting possible.

Also, according to a [2019 NIH focus group study](#), families wanting to stay connected to their juvenile during incarceration is a top 6 concern of families and that family-based interventions are effective in addressing recidivism.

Sources:

- Lori.Miller. 2022. "Person-Centered Practices / Minnesota Department of Human Services." Minnesota Department of Human Services. 2022. <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/program-overviews/long-term-services-and-supports/person-centered-practices/>.
- Amani, Bitu, Norweeta G. Milburn, Susana Lopez, Angela Young-Brinn, Lourdes Castro, Alex Lee, and Eraka Bath. 2018. "Families and the Juvenile Justice System." *Family & Community Health* 41, no. 1: 55–63. <https://doi.org/10.1097/fch.0000000000000172>.

Recommendation: Prioritize planning for a long-term youth rehabilitation space in Hennepin County

REAC recommends the county work toward opening a long term, not for profit, in-county facility appropriate in size and scope of county needs that is focused/named as a rehabilitation space.

Over the next year, we hope the county will explore and collect data on the impacts of out-of-county and out-of-state facilities, the benefits and resources needed to build a facility, and barriers to completing such a project. Data collection should be thorough and comprehensive and begin to address the following questions:

- How many juveniles have been sent out of Hennepin County since the closure in 2021?
- What are the re-offending rates of those in-state vs. out state?
- Which specific communities would benefit from this type of facility and what challenges might those communities, as well as Hennepin County residents in general, experience by this type of facility?
- What are the barriers that would prevent this type of facility being built and run?
- What funding is needed for this type of project?
- What could a realistic timeline look like for this project?
- What are current local facilities that this space could be modeled after?

REAC hopes that by collecting the data, the County will be ready to prioritize and advocate for a new rehabilitation space as emergency need, funding, or grant opportunities arise.

Income

The Income Committee aims to address income disparities, promote wealth building, and advocate for economic equity among residents. By focusing on income-related challenges faced by historically marginalized communities, the committee will collaborate with partners to develop strategies, recommend policies, and support community outreach. Through its work, the committee seeks to reduce income inequality and advance racial equity throughout Hennepin County.

Chair: Raquel Jarabek

Recommendation: Publish results from the GBI Pilot

Review & Publicize Data from the Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) Pilot Program. As this program has concluded, it is important to share data and results with the public. Early findings and national research suggest that GBI programs can support financial stability, mental health, economic mobility, and cost efficiency. We recommend publishing the full evaluation results, including 6-, 12-, and 24-month survey data on financial security, housing stability, employment, and well-being. Results should also be disaggregated by race, gender, ZIP code, and income to better understand equity impacts and help guide future program planning. and income to assess equity impacts and guide the future of this program.

Recommendation: Engage independent evaluators for the GBI pilot results

Continue partnerships like the one with The Improve Group to ensure rigorous, mixed-methods analysis and engage thorough independent evaluators. This will lead to better evaluation and more trustworthy results to aid in deciding about continuation of the program or restarting the program with changes.

Recommendation: Expand the GBI program

Following full evaluation, consider expanding the program if results show clear benefits. Expansion could include serving more families, increasing funds per family, adding wraparound services, and extending the program's duration.

Source:

- "Results of Saint Paul Guaranteed Income Pilot Show Increased Employment, Improved Outlook | Saint Paul Minnesota." n.d. www.stpaul.gov. <https://www.stpaul.gov/news/results-saint-paul-guaranteed-income-pilot-show-increased-employment-improved-outlook>.

Reparations research task force request

A recommendation related to this same topic was requested in the report from 2024. This current set of recommendations for 2025 is more specific and detailed. The goal is to make progress and movement in the direction of establishing and documenting historical injustice to Black and African American people in Hennepin County. The task force or county commissioners could decide to expand the research into all people of color or specifically focus on descendants of formerly enslaved people and Indigenous people.

Recommendation: Establish the Reparations Research Task Force

The establishment of a Reparations Research Task Force in Hennepin County is a necessary and courageous step toward acknowledging past harms and building a more equitable future.

REAC urges the County Board to act in alignment with its commitment to racial equity and disparity elimination. Many locations around the country are investing into the research of reparations and harm by multiple entities committed against different populations of color. Inspired by successful models in Saint

Paul, Evanston, and other municipalities, this task force would provide a foundation for informed, community-driven recommendations to address the enduring impacts of slavery, segregation, redlining, and systemic racism on Black and Indigenous communities in Hennepin County. In Minnesota, St. Paul is doing ongoing research into reparations, and Hennepin County has the opportunity to expand this work to a larger area and population on the county level, size, and scope.

Hennepin County, like many jurisdictions, has a documented history of racially discriminatory policies, including housing covenants, exclusionary zoning, and unequal access to public services. These policies have contributed to significant racial disparities in wealth, health, education, and housing that persist today. Residents and community leaders have increasingly called for reparative justice, especially in the wake of the racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd.

Recommendation: Conduct historical analysis and investigation into racial harm by the Reparations Research Task Force

The Reparations Research Task Force should conduct a historical analysis and investigate the county's role in policies and practices that contributed to racial harm and partner with academic institutions and community historians to document local impacts.

This work has already been completed in housing through the Mapping Prejudice project, but additional areas need further exploration and analysis, including criminal justice, education, transportation and displacement, employment and labor discrimination, healthcare access, environmental justice, land use policies and property taxation, and cultural and historic erasure.

Source:

- "Covenants of Yesterday Still Haunt Families Today." 2016. Hennepin County Climate Action. 2016. <https://www.hennepin.us/en/disparity-reduction/stories/old-covenants>.

Recommendation: Community engagement by the Reparations Research Task Force

The Reparations Research Task Force should engage community voices, including members with lived experience of racial harm and representatives from Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and host public forums and listening sessions to gather input and build trust.

Recommendation: Review reparations best practices by the Reparations Research Task Force

The Reparations Research Task Force should focus on identifying best practices from other cities (Saint Paul, Evanston, Asheville, and California's state task force) and frameworks, such as the ARC model, to guide the development of policies including housing restitution, educational investment, economic development, and direct compensation.

Sources:

- Bram Wispelwey, Michelle E Morse, Zeyu Li, Cassandra Georges, Lauren A Eberly, Artair Rogers, Michael Wilson, et al. 2025. "A Healing ARC for Institutional Trustworthiness: Evaluating a Clinical Decision Support System to Redress Racial Inequities." *NEJM Catalyst* 6, no. 7 (June). <https://doi.org/10.1056/cat.25.0104>.

Recommendation: County Action Report regarding support of Indigenous people

The Racial Equity Advisory Council recommends that Hennepin County develop and publish a single, accessible County Action Report to advance meaningful support for Indigenous communities, building upon the Land and Water Acknowledgment adopted in 2022.

This report should:

- Outline specific commitments, timelines, and measurable goals for strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities.
- Demonstrate commitment by expanding current efforts—such as the Tribal Flag Lending Library and Native American Heritage Month recognition—into a broader, transparent, and accountable framework that ensures long-term engagement with Indigenous communities.

Education

The Education Committee aims to address educational disparities and promote equitable learning opportunities for all students in Hennepin County. By focusing on educational challenges faced by historically marginalized communities, including achievement gaps, disciplinary disparities, and access to quality educational resources, the committee will develop recommendations that advance educational equity. Through its work, the committee seeks to eliminate racial disparities in educational outcomes and ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed academically throughout Hennepin County.

Chair: Natalie Kirk

REAC provides education domain recommendations across 3 areas:

1. Education Collaboration Task Force
2. Educational professional development
3. Community engagement on education

1.) Education Collaboration Task Force

Getting school districts to work together is critical to decreasing racial disparities across a county. This task of decreasing racial disparities in education cannot be accomplished by school districts alone. The county can bring together school districts to work effectively to counteract racial disparities in our educational system. This work by the county is needed now more than ever with the decreasing federal involvement of the Department of Education.

Recommendation: Education Collaboration Task Force

Create a countywide Education Collaboration Task Force that includes representatives from each school district inviting school board members or their representatives, community organizations, parents, and students. This task force should host regular forums or summits to share best practices, data, and strategies for reducing racial disparities in education. The county can bring together school districts to work for effectively to counteract racial disparities in our educational system. This work by the county is needed now more than ever with the decreasing federal involvement of the Department of Education.

2.) Educational professional development

Due to the variety in school districts within Hennepin County, only some of the school districts currently provide or give equal access affordable and timely training related to anti-racism, culturally responsive teaching, and implicit bias.

If the county were to provide this training, then all K-12 educators and administrators would have access to culturally appropriate training.

Recommendation: Invest in equity training to reduce educational disparities

REAC recommends that Hennepin County provide training on anti-racism, culturally responsive teaching, and implicit bias for K-12 educators and administrators across school districts that fulfills professional development requirements.

Educational disparities significantly contribute to broader racial inequities throughout Hennepin County, making equity-focused professional development for educators a critical component of the county's strategy to reduce disparities. When educators lack training in anti-racism, culturally responsive teaching,

and implicit bias awareness, these gaps perpetuate achievement disparities, disproportionate disciplinary actions, and unequal educational opportunities.

3.) Community engagement on education

Community engagement and additional educational programs will empower families and students of color through leadership development, advocacy training, and meaningful participation in educational decision-making processes.

Recommendation: Provide programming and resources for families to navigate and advocate in education

Provide programming and resources for community engagement and educational programs for parents and caregivers that include navigating educational systems, advocating effectively for school improvements, understanding school choice options, and accessing college preparation resources including application processes and funding opportunities.

For budgetary effectiveness, the county should prioritize offering education programs in school districts and zip codes experiencing the most significant educational racial disparities, ensuring that families most impacted by inequities receive targeted support.

Housing

The Housing Committee's mission is to collect and analyze housing-related information from diverse sources and propose solutions to the Commissioners to address and alleviate housing disparities.

Chair: Taiwo Giwa

Advancing housing equity and wealth-building for communities impacted by historical injustice

Hennepin County has started making strides in acknowledging and addressing racial disparities within housing. However, the legacy of racially discriminatory housing policies—such as redlining, exclusionary zoning, and unequal access to credit—continues to specifically impact Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in Minnesota and Hennepin County specifically.

Federal, state, and county housing policies have systematically excluded communities of People of Color from homeownership and wealth-building opportunities. These policies have led to significant racial gaps in homeownership, housing stability, and generational wealth. The state government of Minnesota documents, "While 77% of white/non-Latinx households own their homes, only 51% of all households of color own their homes. For Black households, the rate is 32%." Indigenous communities also face disproportionately high rates of housing instability and homelessness.

Sources:

- Minnesota Housing. 2021. "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion." Mnhousing.gov. 2021. <https://www.mnhousing.gov/about-us/equity-.html>.

Recommendation: Increase housing reparations

Increase housing reparations through down payment grants, housing revitalization grants, government subsidized mortgages with low interest and little to no down payment and include formal apologies for historical injustice.

Recommendation: Apply the Racial Equity Impact Tool

Apply the Racial Equity Impact Tool to all housing-related decisions to assess and mitigate unintended consequences.

Recommendation: Revise eligibility criteria for housing assistance programs

Revise Eligibility Criteria for housing assistance programs to prioritize people in zip codes with lower home ownership, those who are the descendants of enslaved people, anyone who claims English as their second language, Indigenous People or Native Americans, adults with a close relative who is or was incarcerated, and anyone who is a single parent, along with those from low income households and first generation homebuyers.

Prioritizing people from the groups listed above includes people of all races and follows federal guidelines. The people groups mentioned above also include higher percentages of people of color as compared to the percentage of people of color in the total American population.

Sources:

- Bram Wispelwey, Michelle E Morse, Zeyu Li, Cassandra Georges, Lauren A Eberly, Artair Rogers, Michael Wilson, et al. 2025. "A Healing ARC for Institutional Trustworthiness: Evaluating a Clinical

Decision Support System to Redress Racial Inequities." *NEJM Catalyst* 6, no. 7 (June). <https://doi.org/10.1056/cat.25.0104>.

- Gowder, Paul. 2019. "Benefits for Native Americans." PowWows.com - Native American Pow Wows. August 7, 2019. <https://www.powwows.com/benefits-for-native-americans/>.
- Hennepin County. 2016. "Covenants of Yesterday Still Haunt Families Today." Hennepin County Climate Action. 2016. <https://www.hennepin.us/en/disparity-reduction/stories/old-covenants>.
- Hermann, Alexander . 2023. "In Nearly Every State, People of Color Are Less Likely to Own Homes Compared to White Households | Joint Center for Housing Studies." [Www.jchs.harvard.edu](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu). February 8, 2023. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/nearly-every-state-people-color-are-less-likely-own-homes-compared-white-households>.
- Minnesota Housing. 2021. "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion." Mnhousing.gov. 2021. <https://www.mnhousing.gov/about-us/equity-.html>.

Estimated quantitative risk to Hennepin County housing due to federal cuts

Program / funding source	Cut or risk	Estimated impact
HOME Investment Partnerships Program	\$1.5M eliminated	Loss of ~114 housing units (based on leverage formula)
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	\$175K reduction from \$2.92M	Lower neighborhood development & rehab funds
Housing Choice Vouchers	~5% leasing drop	~725 households lose assistance
Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV)	Potential lapse in funding	~464 households lose assistance
Homeless System (MN-500 CoC)	\$17.4–\$17.9M annual funding at risk	Stress on Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Coordinated Entry, and shelters

Supplementing HOME and CDBG Funds via the HCHRA Levy and AHIF expansion

The federal FY26 budget proposal eliminates the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and reduces Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. For Hennepin County, this represents a loss of \$1.7 million annually, including \$1.5 million in HOME funds—26% of the County's HUD entitlement resources. Without action, affordable housing production and rehabilitation pipelines will stall, undermining five-year housing goals.

Recommendation: Backfill federal cuts by expanding HCHRA levy and AHIF

Hennepin County should increase the Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HCHRA) levy and expand the Affordable Housing Incentive Fund (AHIF) to replace lost federal funds. This approach

is fully within the Commissioner's authority and will sustain the pipeline of deeply affordable housing units. Acting in FY26 will prevent costly multi-year project delays.

Eviction prevention and legal aid stabilization fund

Reductions in federal funding for legal aid, fair housing, and housing voucher support will increase eviction risks for renters across Hennepin County. Prevention costs are substantially lower than shelter and homelessness response, and eviction filings are a leading indicator of household instability.

Recommendation: Invest in eviction prevention to keep families stably housed

Hennepin County should establish a \$2 million dollar eviction prevention and legal aid stabilization fund to provide rental assistance, mediation, and legal representation for households at risk of eviction. This fund would expand on existing county contracts for emergency assistance and legal aid services, ensuring families remain stably housed and reducing downstream costs to health, human services, and corrections.

Sources:

- Arriaga , Xavier , and Saumya Mutatkar. 2025. Review of Senate Advances FY26 Housing and Community Development Spending Proposals. Enterprise Community. July 30, 2025. <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/blog/senate-advances-fy26-housing-and-community-development-spending-proposals>.
- Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, Submission of HUD 2025–2029 Consolidated Plan, Resolution 25-0192 (May 20, 2025).
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). 2023. Minnesota Minneapolis/Hennepin County CoC (MN-500) FY 2023 CoC Awards by Component. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_Dash_CoC_MN-500-2023_MN_2023.pdf

Emergency planning and contingency strategy for housing stability

Federal and state housing policy changes, coupled with the expiration of pandemic-era aid, pose a significant threat to housing stability in Hennepin County. Looming federal cuts, depleted emergency resources, and the termination of Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) due to widespread fraud have created a critical challenge that, without proactive and coordinated action, could leave thousands of vulnerable residents—including low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities—at heightened risk of eviction and homelessness.

Recommendation: Strengthen housing stability through emergency funds, program reform, and development

To address these pressing threats, Hennepin County should adopt a three-pronged contingency strategy:

1. Establish a flexible emergency housing fund using local resources such as Metro Sales Tax revenues or ARPA reserves would provide rapid rental assistance and support urgent public housing repairs.
2. Advocate for a redesigned HSS program that balances fraud prevention with accessibility, while exploring a county-level pilot or bridge initiative to fill service gaps.
3. Accelerate the development of deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing, in partnership with nonprofit developers and leveraging state bonding, will strengthen long-term housing stability and reduce reliance on unpredictable federal funding streams.

By combining immediate relief measures with systemic investments, Hennepin County can mitigate the risk of displacement today while building a more resilient, sustainable housing infrastructure for the future.

Sources:

- Minnesota Department of Human Services. 2025. "DHS moves to terminate Housing Stabilization Services program." Mn.gov. August 1, 2025. <https://mn.gov/dhs/media/news/>.
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Rent to Own Program: Pathways to homeownership in Hennepin County

Hennepin County and the broader Twin Cities region have several effective programs aimed at promoting affordable housing and homeownership. However, none are designed as a direct, county-administered rent-to-own model. The current system relies on a combination of affordable housing, home buying education and traditional homebuyer down payment assistance.

Recommendation: Create safe, equitable on-ramps to homeownership for disparity-impacted communities

Direct Hennepin County to launch a Lease-Purchase Pilot Program spanning 24–36 months and serving 25–50 homes across suburban and urban neighborhoods. The pilot would allow residents to lease homes for two to three years while building rent credits toward a down payment. At the end of the lease term, participants could transition into ownership by combining these credits with the County's Homeownership Assistance Fund, affordable mortgage options, or HCV Homeownership where available.

The program can be implemented through partnerships with Community Land Trusts and nonprofits such as NeighborWorks, adapting proven models like Your Pathway and Coldwell Banker Premier Move, while embedding homebuyer counseling, financial coaching, and consumer protections such as "do not exceed" home price and interest rates to keep families within a reasonable debt to income ratio.

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Medication-assisted group homes for addiction recovery

Hennepin County provides outpatient Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) through clinics like Hennepin Healthcare's Addiction Medicine Clinic and NorthPoint. Residential programs such as RS EDEN, Transformation House, and Wayside Recovery include MAT. However, there is no dedicated housing that combines stable, long-term group living with on-site MAT, leaving individuals in recovery with limited options for both stable housing and medication support. Without integrated group homes, residents risk disrupted care, relapse, and housing instability.

Recommendation: Pilot MAT-Integrated group homes to address addiction and housing stability

We recommend that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners direct staff to develop and fund a pilot program for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)-integrated group homes. This should include:

1. Identifying 1–2 pilot sites by partnering housing providers (e.g., Housing Support, AHIF-funded developments) with existing MAT providers (Hennepin Healthcare Addiction Medicine Clinic, NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center).
2. Requiring staff to return with an implementation plan within 12 months that includes:
 - a. Budget framework
 - b. Partnership structure
 - c. Metrics for evaluating outcomes (e.g., housing stability, treatment adherence, reduced ER utilization, overdose prevention).

Sources:

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