

MAXIMIZING SAINT PAUL EMPLOYMENT ASSETS: CONNECTING THE WORKFORCE WITH JOB-RICH SECTORS

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT

About the Partner

Saint Paul is the capital of Minnesota and the county seat of Ramsey County. The city is divided into seventeen neighborhood planning districts and its estimated population is 316,000 residents.



Project Description

Per the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, industrial land in Saint Paul will "remain adaptable, relevant and supportive of well-paying jobs with low barriers to entry ..." Therefore, the City seeks to maximize its employment-based land use efficiency and job availability in order to maintain a diversified economy and improve economic resiliency and opportunity for its residents.

To achieve this, the City has identified two needs for this project. First, plan for, support, and attract traditional and emerging employment-rich sectors and second, make sure residents can access those jobs. Stronger connections between our workforce and jobs is especially urgent considering recent increases in unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exacerbated income disparities for city populations of color. Based on initial research by the County about growing employment trends among various industry sectors, this project seeks to implement various policies of the 2040 Plan which include:

- supporting family-sustaining jobs and enhancing workers' skills to excel at those jobs;
- facilitating business creation, attraction, retention and expansion;
- supporting business, real estate and financial models that keep more money locally, such as locally-owned businesses, local - prioritized employment, employee-owned businesses and commercial land trusts;
- retaining and protecting current industrial land from conversions to residential or institutional uses;
- encouraging investment in new employment uses, such as medical technology, maker space, and small-scale or custom production.

How Student Work Will Be Used to Build Community Resilience

- To advance policy and/or program changes to address the current and future job market, especially in industrial sectors and in ways that are replicable across metro cities.
- To ensure the City has a supply of accessible family-supporting jobs that will make progress to reduce the persistent income and employment racial disparities faced by communities of color in Saint Paul.

Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas to Explore

1. **Determine Existing Conditions and Inventory Resources:** Which sectors provide the highest number and projected growth of jobs and quality employment (family-sustaining wages and benefits) for Saint Paul residents?
2. What are characteristics of people hired by various industry sectors (nationally, regionally, locally), and how do they compare to current and projected demographics in Saint Paul?
3. What training and career pathway programs exist to help Saint Paul residents access these employment-rich sectors (apprenticeships; associates and technical degree programs, technical certificate programs, business-specific training, nonprofit/private workforce developers, etc.)?
4. Seek to better understand the personal experiences of residents and business owners:
 - a. What have been the particular challenges to residents and businesses during the pandemic? Have they taken advantage of any employment resources? Have they helped? What is lacking? What changes have businesses seen that impacts their workforce needs and how have they adjusted? Do you see any of those changes as permanent?
5. Case Studies: How have similar municipalities addressed these issues and better connected employment-rich sectors/employers to the workforce - particularly populations of color?
6. **Analysis:** Based on the characteristics of employment sectors, local workforce, and available resources, which employment-rich industry sectors should be recruited or protected by policy or ordinance?
7. Based on research and local experiences, what are the gaps in employment-rich sectors? In local workforce skills or other attributes? In workforce and employer support resources? Are there resources available to businesses and residents who are struggling and they aren't aware of them, or are there gaps in resources?
8. **Implementation:** What are some strategies to address issues identified in #6 and 7?
9. How can the City and its partners support private business recruitment and workforce developer efforts to better match and connect city residents to available jobs? For example, how could access to training or career resources for residents be improved and/or better promoted?

Potential Community Partners or Stakeholders

Existing Plans & Reports

- Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and Workforce Innovation Board
- Center for Economic Inclusion
- Workforce and business development community partners (e.g. Merrick Community Services; CLUES; Hmong American Partnership, African Economic Development Solutions, Asian Economic Development Association)
- GreaterMSP
- Saint Paul Port Authority (SPPA)
- Saint Paul's 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Plans and Data Sources at the State, Regional, County and City Levels
- Workforce and Neighborhood Nonprofit Plans and Reports

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