



# MFIP Teen Parent Project

Johanna Rasmussen | MFIP/DWP Policy Analyst

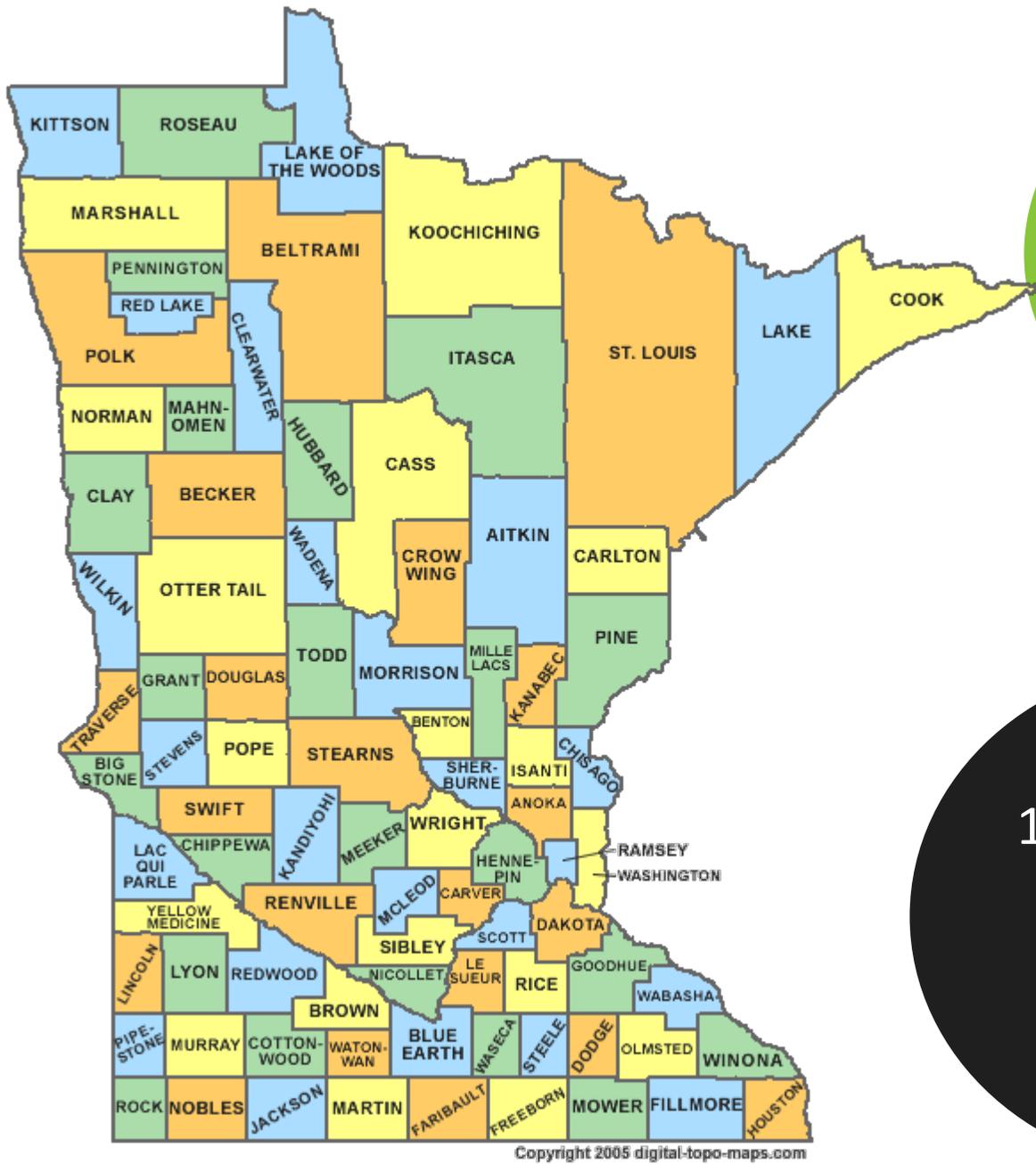
Mark Vilayrack | MFIP/DWP Policy Analyst

# The Goals of the TANF Program

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is administered in Minnesota through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and the Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

## The Goals of the program:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



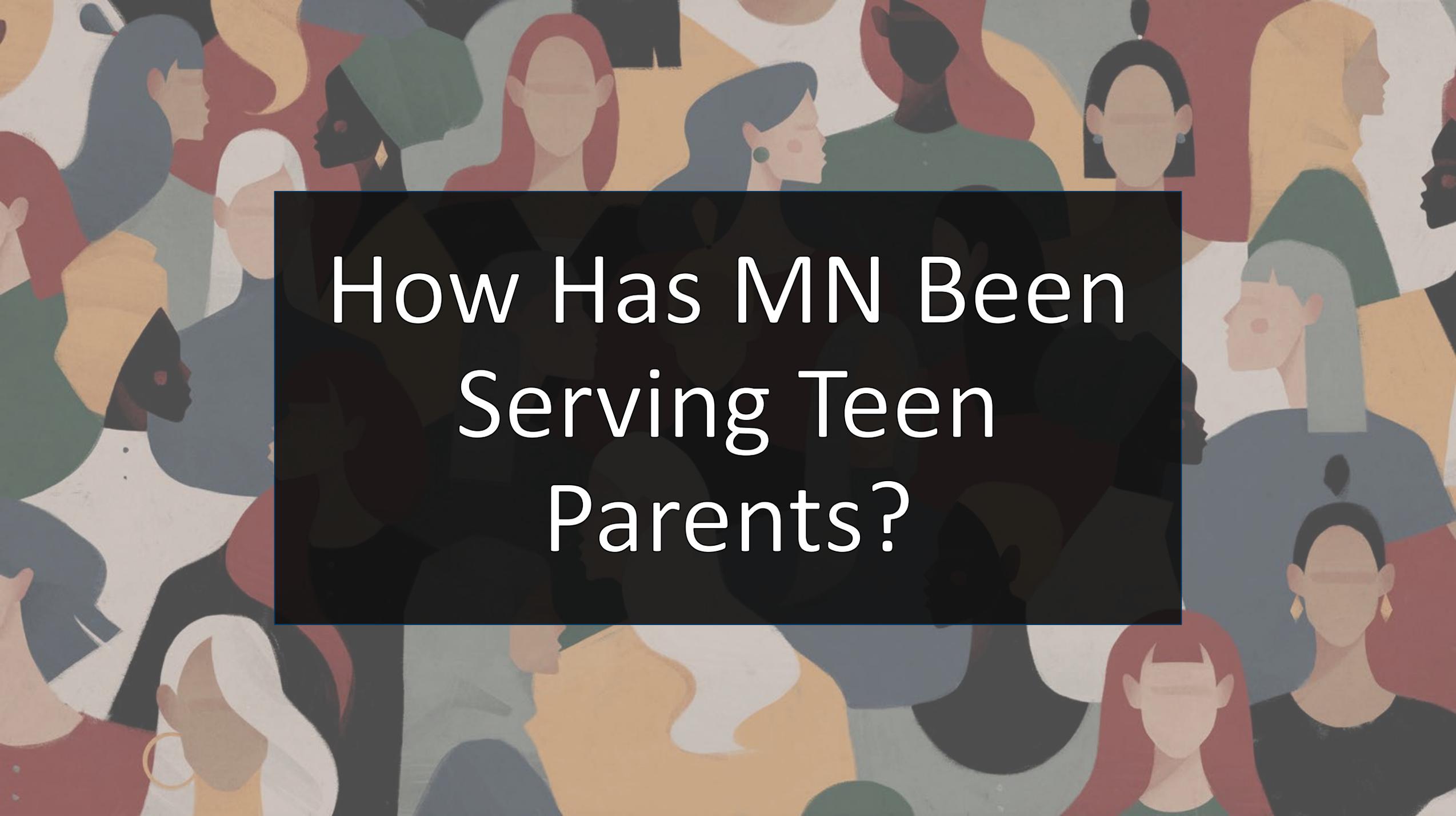
Copyright 2005 digital-topo-maps.com

As of  
September  
2025

Enrolled in  
MFIP/DWP

124 – Under 18  
1,104 – 18-21  
year olds

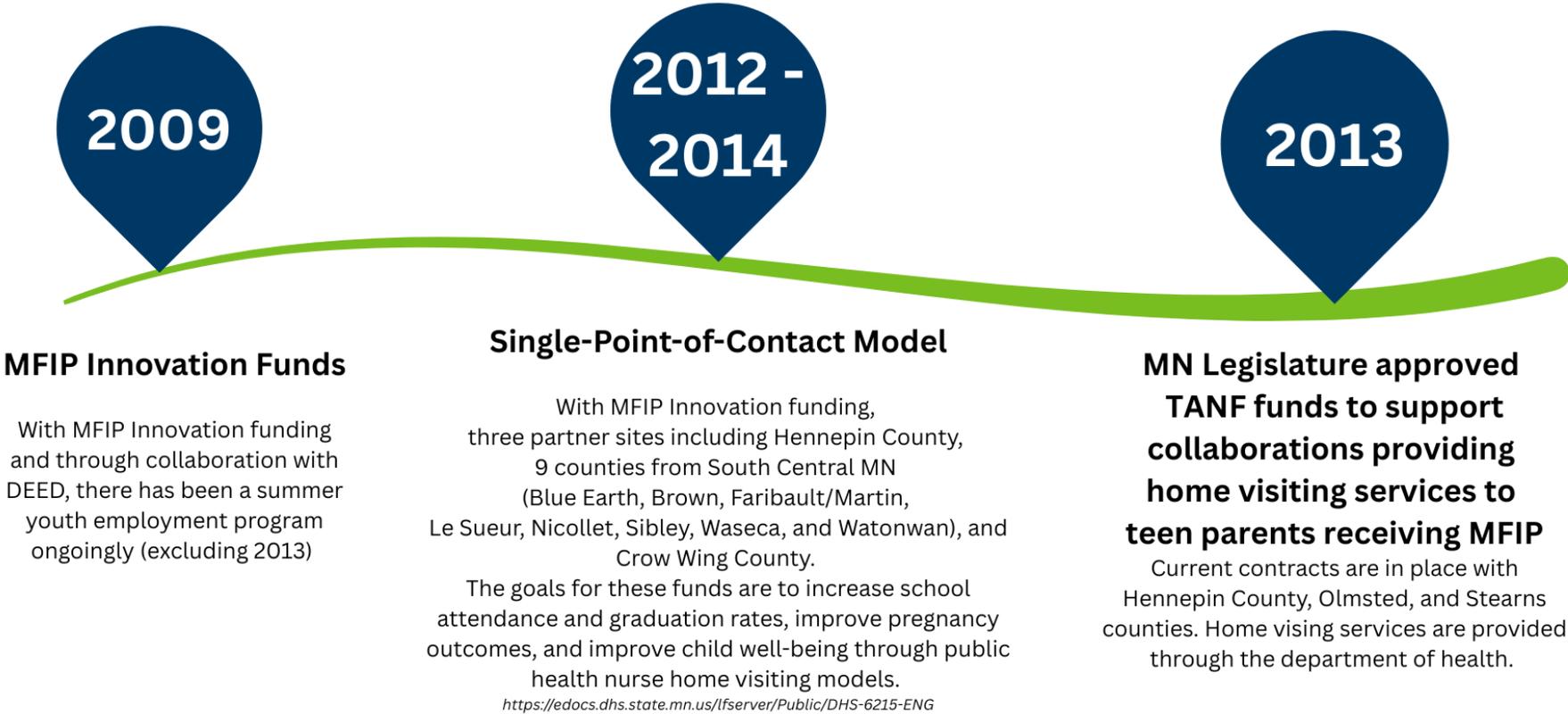
19,493  
All  
Adults



# How Has MN Been Serving Teen Parents?

# MFIP Innovations: Looking Back to Look Forward

## Reflecting Back: How MFIP Innovation Funds have been used over the years



# MN Teen Parents

What do we know about this population?

# Persistent Disparities Among the MFIP Teen Parent Population

- Prenatal care access
- Teen parents' educational success
- Racial disparities with birth rates



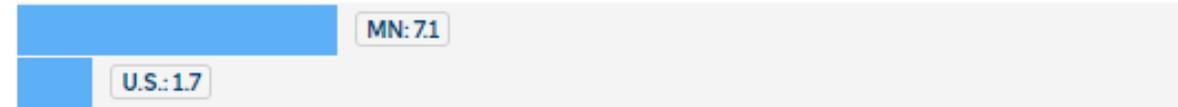
# MN Birth Rate Racial Disparities

Although Minnesota has one of the lowest rates of teen pregnancies in the country, rates vary dramatically between racial and ethnic groups.

Teen Births - American Indian/Alaska Native



Teen Births - Asian



Teen Births - Black



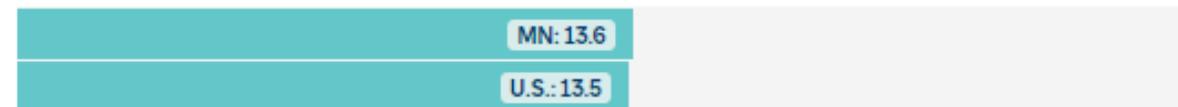
Teen Births - Hawaiian/Pacific Islander



Teen Births - Hispanic



Teen Births - Multiracial



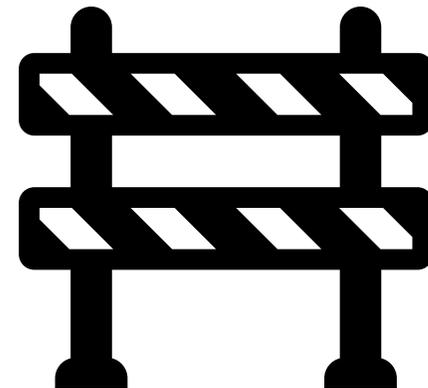
Teen Births - White



Births per 1,000 females ages 15-19

# Barriers Children of Teen Parents Face

- Lower school achievement
- More health problems
- Being incarcerated at some time during adolescence
- Giving birth as a teenager
- Barriers to employment later in life



# Teen Parent Needs

- A safe place to live
- A good education
- Caring and consistent mentor
- A plan for how to “finish growing up”
- Help caring for their child
- Food, cash, and other necessities
- Help interacting with fathers
- Intensive mentoring services
- Social work and nursing disciplines in a whole family approach
- Limiting service interruptions and case manager changes
- Commitment to multiyear funding.

## Goal of the RFP

The STATE hopes to develop a framework for services to teen parents on MFIP that considers the lived experiences of teen parents accessing these services now; and the available resources that can provide further insights on opportunities for a more impactful program and services to this population.

# Introducing our Partner

**M M Y A**

**CONSULTING**

# Timeline of the Initial RFP



**Host 2  
Engagement  
Sessions**



**Host 2 Loop Back  
Sessions**



**Develop a  
Summary of  
Learning Report  
and Draft Next RFP**

# Before Hosting Engagement Sessions

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application was submitted and approved.

- Study will include DHS/DCYF program participants for the purpose of research and program evaluation

AND

- Working with vulnerable populations



# Community Partners

- Oshkiimaajitahdah ★
  - Engagement was held 8/19/2025
  - 9 participants
- Connections to Independence ★
  - Engagement was held 8/22/2025
  - 10 participants



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

## Community Design Advisor



# Community Design Advisor

## What is a Community Design Advisor (CDA)?

A CDA is a member of our project team who shares the identities and experiences of those most impacted by our work. They ensure programs and services are shaped directly by the voice of experience.

## Why the CDA role matters

CDAs serve as a bridge between organizations and the community, ensuring engagement efforts and project outcomes are authentic, culturally relevant, and truly responsive to community needs.

## Our CDA is...

- **Directly connected** to teen parents and support networks across the state.
- **Has lived experience** with the issues being addressed.
- **Understands community** strengths, challenges, and cultural contexts.

# IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISOR ROLE

*THE COMMUNITY DESIGN ADVISOR ENSURES THAT...*

## **Program Design Reflects Real Life**

*Program designs are grounded in actual community experiences, shaped by community voices and lived experience.*

## **Trust and Strong Relationships are Built**

*Organizations develop authentic relationships with community members through direct, consistent engagement.*

## **Community Design Advisor**

## **Community Members Hold Real Power**

*Community residents actively shape decisions, have true influence over project outcomes, not just a seat at the table.*

## **Equity and Inclusion are Embedded from the Start**

*Equity is not an afterthought, it's baked into every step of the process, ensuring community members who have historically been left out have the power to shape our approach and products.*

# What we have heard from the community

Tired of  
repeating their  
stories

Not knowing  
what is done  
with information

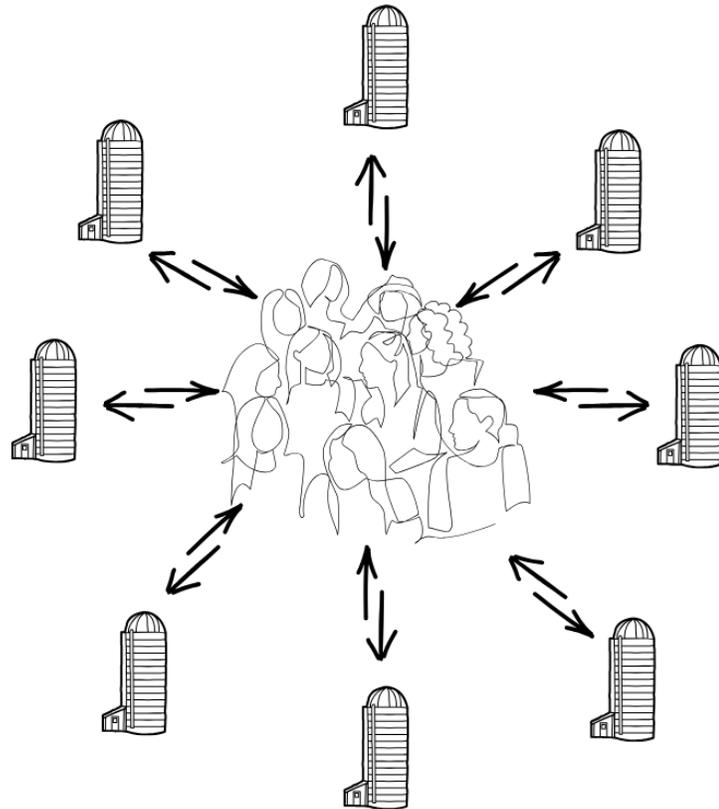
Loss of trust

# Cross Pollination, Innovation and Reflection Team

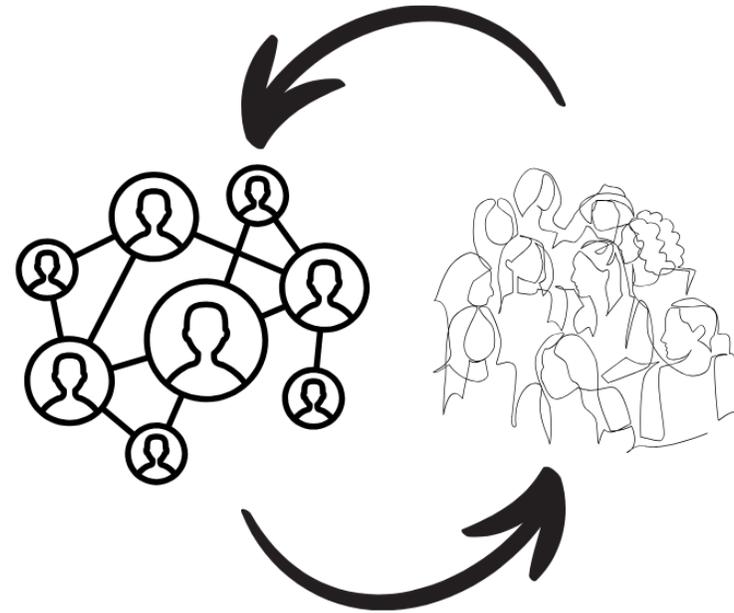


A place for professionals who support teen parents and professionals who do community engagement. The space will allow members to share learnings from the project and connect across policy and program areas.

# Breaking down the silos of our work



**Siloed State Programs =  
Siloed Learning and Engagement**



**Networked State, County and  
Community Programs and Partners =  
Shared Learning through Engagement**

A glowing lightbulb hangs from the top center of the frame. Below it, a group of people are seated around a table in a meeting room, but they are out of focus. The scene is dimly lit, with the lightbulb providing the primary source of light. The background shows a modern office environment with plants and a window.

# Engagement Insights

# Hopes and Aspirations

- Flexible career plans that allow for future growth.
- Reliable childcare that fits the family's schedules. This is not always full-time care.
- Deep need for sense of community and belonging.
- Assurance that children will have what they need every day so they can focus on growing their family's future.

# Bright Spots – Supports that are Working

---

Public Health Nurses

---

Programs like: Think Small, PICA, Head Start, and Young Lives

---

Caseworkers who communicate and act quickly, are proactive and listen.

---

Supportive family and friends

# Challenges with MFIP



COMMUNICATION



GRANT AMOUNTS



COMFORTABILITY  
ACCEPTING SERVICES

# Additional Barriers to Success

Childcare Barriers

Gaps in Education

Sense of Belonging

Realities of Co-Parenting



Focus Areas for Phase 2 of the Project.

---

Intentional, relational team hiring, training, and ongoing support

---

Career Advancement, future vision, and long-term economic mobility goal planning

---

Single Point of Contact approach for Teen Parents

---

MFIP as a conduit to broader State and Non-Profit Organization resources

---

# Social Capital Building



Connection and Convening (Virtually) for teen parents across Minnesota



Build connections between teen parents and established professionals with lived experience

# Data and Impact Measurement with Continued Participant Engagement

- Access to data bring power; the ability to know means the ability to make informed decisions
- Data Capacity and Impact Tracking Enhancements; Reporting Cadence and commitments to usage
- Ongoing engagement, feedback, adjustment, and share back with users for continuous improvement cycle; Facilitated by an external partner

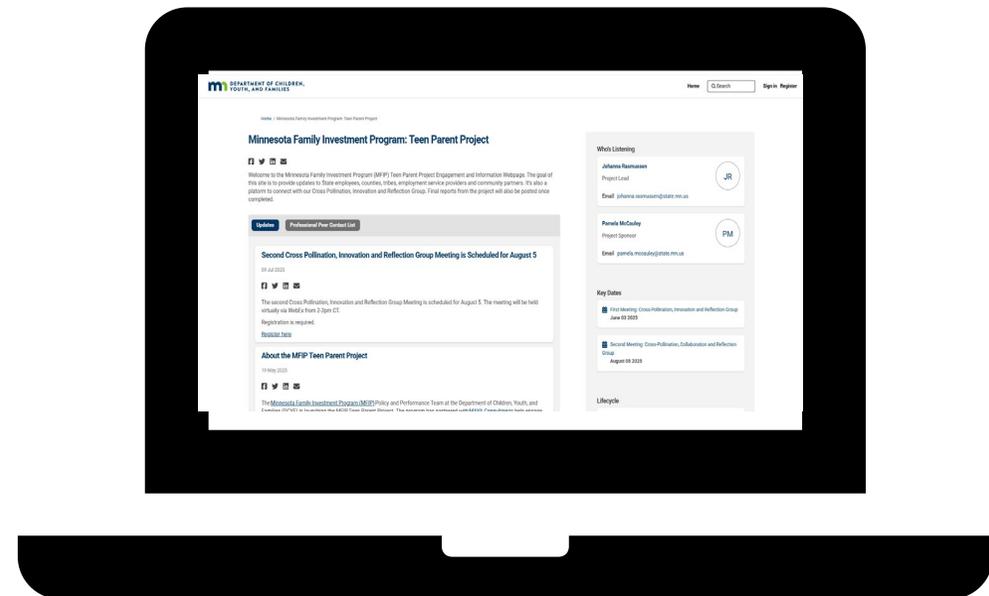
Summary of learning report will be shared out

Date: TBD

- Keep an eye out on Engagement HQ



- Stay informed with the MFIP Teen Parent Project Engagement HQ Page
- <https://minnesotadcyf.us.engage menthq.com/mfip-teen-parent-project>



# References

- [Minnesota Family Investment Program teen Parent Single Point of Contact Model DHS-6215](#)
- [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/TeenBirth\\_MCH/teenbirth\\_asian/MN](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/TeenBirth_MCH/teenbirth_asian/MN)
- [The Four Rs of Service Delivery for MFIP Teen Parents: Approaches of Eight MN Counties DHS-6517](#)
- <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/institutional-review-board/>
- [Proposal to Conduct Research on DHS Program Participants - Application for IRB Review DHS-3909](#)
- [Microsoft Word - FACT SHEET - Vendors and Contractors Insurance Requirements - Version 3 Includes Users .doc \(mn.gov\)](#)
- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/titlev/teenpregchildbirth.pdf>

# Thank You!

**Johanna Rasmussen**

[Johanna.Rasmussen@state.mn.us](mailto:Johanna.Rasmussen@state.mn.us)

**Mark Vilayrack**

[Mark.Vilayrack@state.mn.us](mailto:Mark.Vilayrack@state.mn.us)