

**A Needs Assessment Survey for a  
Resource Center for African Immigrants  
and Refugees in St. Paul, Minnesota**

A report prepared for the African Refugee Support Services

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January 2003

**A publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an all-University applied research and technology center at the University of Minnesota that connects faculty and students with community organizations and public institutions working on significant public policy issues in Minnesota.**

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## **Introduction**

The United States prides itself on welcoming people of all colors, creeds, religions, and nationalities to live within its borders and enjoy equal opportunity and prosperity. The Statistics Division of the Office of Policy and Planning (2002) estimated that in 2001, a total of 53,948 immigrants from African countries entered the United States, which was 5.1% of all immigrants admitted that year. With such a small percentage coming from one continent, one can imagine what an impressive number of people came from the rest of the world in 2001.

Immigrants come to the United States for many reasons. African immigrants often cite a desire to escape dangerous conditions. For example, Somalis usually come to the United States “to escape civil unrest in [their] homeland” (Kamanda-Kosseh 2002) caused by a non-functional government; many Somali women come to the United States with their children to join family already here, often because their husbands were casualties of civil war (Minneapolis Foundation 2002). Others leave their country to escape poverty and earn enough money to send back to Africa to support any family who remain. No matter what the reason, the United States offers refuge and new beginnings to those who claim it as their new home.

After employment preference, “U.S. immigration policy places a high priority on reuniting families, so a large portion of immigrants are admitted to the United States in order to join close relatives” (Wilder Research Center 2000, p. 4). By coming to live with family members, African immigrants and refugees can rely on their family to help them deal with resettlement issues. At the same time, the government also admits Africans sponsored by groups, and these immigrants unfortunately face more serious issues of

survival, such as finding adequate housing, adjusting to culture shock and isolation, finding sources of steady income, and learning English (Minneapolis Foundation 2002).

Africans who settle in Minnesota, as opposed to other states, have a number of reasons for choosing one of the coldest states in the union. Leslie (2002) quotes John Borden of the International Institute of Minnesota as saying that “family ties, good jobs, educational opportunities, and a strong social-service network that resettles a high number of refugees combine to attract more Africans to Minnesota.” With a surge of African immigrants moving to Minnesota, the state and local governments, as well as social service agencies and other non-profit organizations, must respond adequately to accommodate these new residents.

Unfortunately, many gaps in service to African immigrants remain ignored throughout the state. This report focuses on Ramsey County, located in southeastern Minnesota, and its treatment of African immigrants and refugees. The first section of this report attempts to show how many African immigrants and refugees live in Ramsey County. The next section describes the employment trends and issues African immigrants face. The third section discusses the education system and how well it meets the needs of African immigrant students. The next section describes organizations that provide various services to Africans. Finally, the last section assesses whether existing Ramsey County services and programs actually provide for the needs of African immigrants and refugees and help them in their transition into mainstream U.S. society. The report concludes that there is a pressing need for an all-inclusive resource center in St. Paul that opens its doors to any African immigrant or refugee.

It is important to note that throughout this report, some generalizations are made regarding how African immigrants in Ramsey County feel about certain issues and subjects. To protect the confidentiality of the African and African American residents interviewed during the course of this needs assessment project, statements have been compiled into generalizations that illustrate the arguments made in this report. All other data and references are taken directly from the sources listed in the bibliography.

### **Demographic Details: Who Lives in Ramsey County?**

Ramsey County, along with Hennepin County, houses a high percentage of Minnesota's population. Ramsey County houses the state's capitol, St. Paul, which has become an increasingly desirable place for African immigrants and refugees to live during the last 10–20 years. As one commentator notes, "Most of the state's foreign-born residents live in the two most populous counties—Hennepin and Ramsey" (Williams 2002). In contrast to the 1980s, which saw a flood of Asian immigrants to Minnesota, during the 1990s, there was a surge of immigrants coming from African countries.

The 2000 U.S. Census offers the most recent counts of how many and what types of people live in Ramsey County. Unfortunately, sifting out how many African immigrants live in the county proves difficult, as they are grouped together with African Americans. In addition, some African immigrants check "Other Race" to differentiate themselves from African Americans, especially if they are from Arabic-speaking countries on the northern part of the continent. Table 1 details the African American and Other Race populations in Ramsey County in relation to the total population in 1990 and 2000. Table 2 reveals how many people reported in 1990 or 2000 that they

were born outside of the United States, as well as when they entered the country and how they would characterize their ancestry.

**Table 1. Ramsey County Population, 1990 and 2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Black/Af-Am</b>	<b>Other Race</b>
1990	485,765	22,674	6,113
2000	511,035	38,900	12,536

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990 and Census 2000

**Table 2. Selected Characteristics of Ramsey County Immigrant Population, 1990 and 2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Foreign Born</b>	<b>Entered U.S. within Last Decade</b>	<b>Born in Africa</b>	<b>Sub-Saharan African</b>	<b>Other Ancestry</b>
1990	27,449	16,159	—	1,569	80,991
2000	54,263	28,277	6,017	8,815	133,850

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990 and Census 2000

Note: All figures are based on the total Ramsey County population

As Tables 1 and 2 illustrate, the number of foreign-born residents doubled in 10 years, and more than seven thousand new immigrants identified themselves as Sub-Saharan African. Unfortunately, many Census respondents identified themselves as Other Race or Other Ancestry, making it difficult to know how many of them are African immigrants or refugees. In addition to the almost nine thousand Sub-Saharan respondents to the Census, it is safe to assume that at least twice as many, if not three or four times as many, other African immigrants and refugees live in Ramsey County.

A great majority of African immigrants live in St. Paul rather than the surrounding suburbs. Table 3 identifies how many residents live in the various cities located in Ramsey County. St. Paul houses about 56% of Ramsey County's population and 86.5% of the documented African Americans in the county. This is to be expected, considering most of the county's social service agencies and community centers aimed at immigrants and refugees are located in St. Paul, as will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

**Table 3. Ramsey County Population by City and Township, 2000**

<b>City or Township</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Black/African American</b>	<b>Other Race</b>
Arden Hills	9,652	127	52
Blaine (part)	0	0	0
Falcon Heights	5,572	187	74
Gem Lake	419	5	3
Lauderdale	2,364	116	9
Little Canada	9,771	410	88
Maplewood	34,947	1,236	256
Mounds View	12,738	306	130
New Brighton	22,206	738	186
North Oaks	3,883	12	22
North St. Paul	11,929	313	102
Roseville	33,690	945	256
Shoreview	25,924	261	113
Spring Lake Park (part)	105	0	0
St. Anthony (part)	2,348	105	40
St. Paul	287,151	33,637	11,021
Vadnais Heights	13,069	194	62
White Bear Lake	23,974	262	85
White Bear Township	11,293	46	37

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

Although the census does not identify how many African immigrants make up the African American category of residents, the Minnesota Department of Health does track how many refugees arrive in Minnesota directly from another country and apply for various government services upon arrival. Table 4 shows the number of refugees coming from various Sub-Saharan countries in the years 2000 and 2001. Almost half of all the immigrants arriving in Minnesota come from Somalia, followed by immigrants from Ethiopia and Liberia. In all, Sub-Saharan African immigrants make up about 78% of all documented immigrants in 2000 and 76% in 2001. This supports many claims that African immigrants have dominated the immigrant influx of late. Yet, one must keep in

**Table 4. Country of Origin for Refugee Arrivals to Ramsey County from Sub-Saharan Africa**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Cameroon	1	0
Congo	1	0
Eritrea	1	10
Ethiopia	110	80
Kenya	1	0
Liberia	54	33
Nigeria	7	10
Sierra Leone	24	17
Somalia	205	116
Togo	0	1
Uganda	0	5
<b>All countries</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>360</b>

Source: Minnesota Department of Health Refugee Health Program, 2000 and 2001.

Note: This table only includes only those emigrants who arrived in Minnesota directly from another country; it does not include those who emigrated to another state and then moved to Minnesota later.



mind that the above results from the Minnesota Department of Health include only those immigrants who emigrated to Minnesota from another country, and excludes those who emigrated from somewhere else in the United States.

Another way of determining how many immigrants live in Ramsey County is in the language counts (counts of the primary language spoken at home) taken by school districts during enrollment. These numbers are recorded and analyzed by the Department of Children, Families, and Learning. As of October 1, 2001, there were 87,125 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in Ramsey County schools (Department of Children, Families, and Learning, 2002). Table 5 shows how many students from each school district in Ramsey County spoke African languages at home.

Based on the language-count data, 1,539 students speak an African language at home, which represents a little less than 2% of all students in Ramsey County. According to the U.S. Census results mentioned before, this percentage seems quite small. Many immigrant students of African origin may speak English at home some or most of the time and may therefore have indicated English as their primary language. Unfortunately, this fact skews the table's results for our purposes.

In light of all the demographic data cited, one can at least assume that there are a significant number of Sub-Saharan immigrants in Ramsey County. The fact that they have been grouped along with African Americans for data collection and U.S. Census purposes suggests that they assimilate into U.S. society more easily than they actually do; their needs and experiences prove very different from those of African Americans as a whole, as will be described in more detail later in this report.

**Table 5. Languages Spoken by Students at Home by Ramsey County School District, 2002**

District	"African"	Afrikaans	Amharic	Cutchi	Hausa	Ibo	Oromo	Somali	Swahili	Tigrinya	Yoruba
Mounds View	13	3	0	16	0	0	0	16	0	0	0
N. St. Paul/ Maplewood	9	8	2	4	0	0	7	23	2	0	4
Roseville	29	3	2	9	0	0	1	4	1	1	1
White Bear Lake	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
St. Paul	338	3	91	29	1	5	118	506	18	58	22
Comm. of Peace Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	12	0
Acorn Dual Language Comm Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
St. Paul Family Learning Center	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Higher Ground Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	114	0	0	0
Twin Cities Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Minnesota Institute of Technology Charter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Minnesota Int'l Middle Charter	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	32	0	0	0
East Metro Integration Dist. 6067	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning 2002

## **Employment Trends and Issues**

When African immigrants come to the United States, only a small portion come for employment preference reasons because they have certain skills needed by U.S. employers (Ronningen 2000). Recently, however, some employers have been trying to convince policy makers to allow more low-skilled and unskilled workers to fill jobs, such as healthcare positions and nursing home staff, where more workers are required because of rising demand (Ronningen 2000).

African immigrants who come to Minnesota have the option of applying for government assistance or welfare. One of the most popular programs is the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Participants receive money, social services, and job training and possible placement from the government, and there is a 60-month time limit on their participation. About 30% of the African Americans enrolled in MFIP are foreign-born (Urban Coalition 2002). Of that 30%, Somalis represent one of the largest immigrant groups to receive MFIP. However, in comparison to other ethnicities, there are not very many African immigrants on welfare (Urban Coalition 2002). Those who do receive assistance usually appreciate the help they receive from the government, though many wish to achieve better working and living conditions in the future.

There are a number of shortcomings to MFIP for African and other immigrants. Many of the job training programs offered by the government do not take into account cultural and linguistic competence and do not provide resources such as Limited English Proficiency courses (Urban Coalition 2002). This hinders the immigrants' ability to reach levels of English literacy necessary to get good jobs, meaning many end up with low-paying and low-skill jobs. The Wilder Research Center (2000) did a survey of

immigrants in the Twin Cities area and found that 44% of the workers in the survey held unskilled labor or service jobs, compared to 24% in the general Twin Cities workforce. In addition, many of the jobs offered to MFIP recipients, as well as immigrants in general, do not offer benefits.

In Ramsey County, the total labor force amounted to 291,654 in 2001, with an unemployment rate of 3.3%, according to the Minnesota Department of Economic Security's Research and Statistics Office. In 1999, the largest industries in the county were services, non-durable goods manufacturing, and state and local government (Child Defense Fund of Minnesota 2002b). Also, the average earnings for families of color are 40 to 68% of those of their White counterparts (Minnesota KIDS COUNT 2002). These statistics indicate the nature of the job market Ramsey County's immigrants face as they attempt to achieve financial independence. Not only does the job market in Ramsey County offer limited opportunities and income to its residents of color, the average workplace in Ramsey County creates hardships for immigrants in particular.

Many African immigrants come to the U.S. to find better opportunities than they had in their own countries, and they often send a great portion of their disposable income to their families left behind. As immigrants try to fill whatever positions they can find, they face many hardships along the way, including discrimination and isolation. For example, some employers turn down Somali women due to their dresses and head coverings. Traditionally, many African women have no workplace skills whatsoever because, back home, men worked while women took care of the household so women did not have to hold jobs. Although men may have some skills, many have little education to help them achieve better job placements.

Once past the horror of discrimination during the interviewing process, immigrants experience barriers in the workplace. One of the biggest barriers is lack of fluency in English. According to the Urban Coalition (2002), “Recipients and providers [of MFIP] alike report personal and systematic discrimination against limited English speaking populations” (p. 6). This obstacle in particular hinders position advancement for immigrant workers, even if the employer documents them as being productive and successful over years of service (Urban Coalition 2002).

This brief discussion suggests the many problems immigrants encounter establishing themselves in the United States. Offering better services that target African immigrants could solve many of the problems described here. Social service agencies and non-profit organizations that attempt to fill these gaps in service will be described later in this report.

### **Descriptions of Ramsey County Schools and Education**

As stated before, there were 87,125 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in Ramsey County schools as of October 1, 2001 (Department of Children, Families, and Learning 2002). Of these students, 1,539 reported that they speak an African language at home. The Children’s Defense Fund of Minnesota (2002a) also found that, in Ramsey County, there were 22,677 children aged 5 to 17 who spoke a language other than English at home. Table 6 shows the U.S. Census 2000 data of how many people under 18 years of age live in Ramsey County and St. Paul, including how many of them reported their race as African American or Other Race. Again, these numbers place a great majority of the residents of color in St. Paul instead of in the surrounding suburbs.

**Table 6. Population in Ramsey County and St. Paul under Age 18, 2000**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Black or African American</b>	<b>Other Race</b>
Ramsey County	130,684	15,128	4,546
St. Paul	77,827	13,180	3,996

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Given the data in Table 6 and the data from the Department of Children, Families, and Learning, it appears that more than 40,000 children of school age are not in school. One may assume that a large number of these children have either graduated already, attend private schools, or are under the age of five. However, a high dropout rate is another likely factor. In Ramsey County, the percentage of children not graduating on time or dropping out of school was 26% in 1996 and 23% in 2000 (Children’s Defense Fund of Minnesota 2002b). Although many explanations have been offered concerning why so many children fall out of the school system, one of the more significant is that the school system does not cater to the needs of the diverse children living in Ramsey County.

Many African immigrants come to the United States with limited education. Some are completely illiterate upon arrival, so taking courses to learn English and other skills is a painstaking ordeal. In addition, a number of issues make education difficult for immigrant children (and at times adults), including “lack of culturally competent teachers and school staff; lack of school staff of color; family difficulty in securing stable housing (making school attendance and consistency difficult); mistrust due to historical discrimination by educational systems. . . ; inadequate support and funding for students with limited English skills; immigrant teenagers entering secondary school with limited

previous educational experience; and communication barriers between schools and families” (Minnesota KIDS COUNT 2002, p. 29). Given these obstacles, immigrants have a difficult time becoming knowledgeable, literate, and linguistically independent.

Compared to African countries, the United States fares quite well in adult literacy and education as a whole. For example, the adult literacy rate in Somalia is about 24% (Minneapolis Foundation 2002), compared to a literacy rate in the United States of about 97% (Central Intelligence Agency 2002). Unfortunately, the U.S. education system does not prove very sensitive to its immigrant populations. For example, almost all the public, magnet, and charter schools in Ramsey County offer English as a Second Language (ESL) or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) courses and services to their students and communities, yet many African immigrants complain of the poor methods the teachers use in their classrooms. Some immigrants claim that the English classes are geared towards teaching language through literature, but for everyday activities, immigrants do not feel prepared and cannot communicate effectively.

In addition to ESL and LEP courses, all the public schools and some charter schools in Ramsey County offer family learning programs and continuing adult education classes where adults can study for their high school diploma or GED, acquire basic job or computer skills, and learn about subjects of personal interest (Innovations for Minnesota Schools 2002). A few schools—such as the St. Paul public schools, ACORN Dual Language Community Academy, and Minnesota International Middle Charter—have specific programming geared to immigrants, including culturally driven instruction (Innovations for Minnesota Schools 2002). Although all of these schools try to provide culturally appropriate education for their immigrant students, many ignore

cultural activities that would foster cultural expression within the greater student population. Of all the schools in Ramsey County, only a couple had events showcasing African immigrant history or culture for the community. In addition, none of the schools in the county had extracurricular activities for children to experience the culture of their foreign-born classmates. Perhaps the lack of such programs could help to explain why the drop-out rates mentioned above are so high.

### **Available Services to African Immigrants and Refugees**

Ramsey County and the state of Minnesota offer health, employment, and social services to African immigrants and refugees through their welfare and medical assistance programs. Most notably, MFIP and the Refugee Assistance Program provide cash assistance, job training and placement, and healthcare access (Urban Coalition 2002; Resettlement Programs Office 2002). However, these programs have a reputation for not being culturally appropriate in their approach. To receive low-cost or free healthcare, one has to go to the Ramsey County Human Services Department or the Ramsey County Department of Public Health in St. Paul. Other clinics that offer low-cost health services with interpreters include a number of centers owned by the Catholic Charities (Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota 2002c). Unfortunately, those clinics listing interpreters only have Somali language interpreters available to clients; anyone needing an interpreter for another African language would have to find help on their own. Also, low-cost clinics with interpreters available are all located in St. Paul, which presents transportation problems for those African immigrants living in the suburbs.

With so many clinics not having African language interpreters on staff, another implication arises regarding the limited number of places LEP immigrants can go for



health care. As the Urban Coalition (2002) reports, “Some immigrants and persons of color prefer a practitioner that is from their specific culture while others choose to have one outside their community for increased confidentiality. At the same time, there are similar struggles that most people of color, immigrants and refugees share including conflicting perceptions of physical and mental illness from the dominant culture” (p. 23). This happens not only in the field of healthcare, but also with other services African immigrants need, such as citizenship acquisition, housing, civil rights/social/legal action, social services, and senior/childcare.

Minneapolis and St. Paul house a number of nonprofit community organizations that cater to immigrant populations living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Because Minneapolis has a larger number of residents, a majority of the organizations that help African immigrants and refugees are located there. As a result, the residents of Ramsey County have only a handful of organizations on which to rely. Table 7 lists organizations located in Ramsey County and which services they provide.

As can be seen in Table 7, most of the organizations specialize in certain types of services, focusing on legal matters or social services, for example. Many offer services to all immigrants, including Asians and Latinos. A few, Women Venture and Working Opportunities for Women, focus on women. Two, Ummunne Cultural Association and Ethiopians in Minnesota, attempt to focus on only African immigrants from specific countries, Nigerians and Ethiopians, respectively. Although the majority of these organizations cater to African immigrants, many of them work with African Americans as well. Following the Urban Coalition’s (2002) claim above, African immigrants do not have many options for receiving help from organizations that employ people like them.

Table 7. Nonprofit Organizations and Services in the Twin Cities for African Immigrants and Refugees

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Citizen-ship</b>	<b>Education and Training</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Civil Rights/Social Action</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Seniors</b>
International Institute of Minnesota									
Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services									
Women Venture									
Umunne Cultural Association									
St. Paul Urban League									
Working Opportunities for Women									
Ethiopians in Minnesota									
Martin Luther King Center									
Neighborhood House									
Jewish Family Services									
Catholic Charities									
Migrant Legal Services									

Table 7 (continued)

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Citizen-ship</b>	<b>Education and Training</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Civil Rights/Social Action</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Seniors</b>
St. Paul NAACP									
St. Paul Youth Service Bureau									
Inner City Youth League									
East African United Social Services									
Central Trust									
Somali Family and Youth Association of Minnesota									
Hope International Health and Social Services									

Very few organizations provide aid for attaining American citizenship or for civil rights or social action. Like the schools in Ramsey County, few organizations have cultural activities for youth or adults or services for the elderly. Of those that claim to have educational opportunities, only a small portion included ESL courses. Only one organization (the Martin Luther King Center) offers daycare to its participants, and only one (the Neighborhood House) possesses a food shelf that provides free groceries to the poor, a service many Africans in Ramsey County have no knowledge of or access to if they live outside the metro area (Urban Coalition 2002). Again, like the health clinics mentioned above, all of these organizations are located in St. Paul, which makes them of limited use to immigrants living in surrounding cities.

Although legal and social services prove important and crucial to the proper assimilation of African immigrants and refugees in Ramsey County, assimilation into U.S. society must also encompass their social lives. African immigrant youth complain that places where they could play sports or practice cultural activities with others like them do not exist. African immigrant seniors say they would like to see more recreational programs geared toward them. At the moment, the only services available to immigrant seniors are “Meals on Wheels,” volunteer transportation from most of the Ramsey County schools (Innovations for Minnesota Schools 2002), and referral and placement services from the Martin Luther King Center, Neighborhood House, and East African United Social Services.

There exists no organization that unifies a variety of extremely useful services, which African immigrants and refugees sorely need upon arrival to facilitate their resettlement in the United States. At the same time, no organization in St. Paul tries to

attract a variety of African immigrants, specifically, to create a sense of community among them. Although grouping people of the same nationality creates a sense of solidarity that would prove beneficial to most African immigrants just arriving in the United States, it still alienates them from people of other nationalities. When one thinks about how few African immigrants actually live in Ramsey County (compared to the number of other immigrants and citizens), creating solidarity among different groups of Africans could create a better, more expansive network with which they can collaborate and establish a prosperous community for all.

### **Key Findings and Assessment of Need for Resources**

Since the 1990s, Ramsey County has grown in population size and diversity, following the same path as most of the state of Minnesota. In the 10 years between the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, the foreign-born population doubled, and one can see from the other data presented earlier that the number of Sub-Saharan Africans rose dramatically during that time. With so many new residents in the area, the State of Minnesota, Ramsey County, the cities in Ramsey County, and the communities within those cities have an obligation to respond adequately to the needs of these new residents.

The current state of affairs in Ramsey County is less than desirable with regard to its treatment of African immigrants and refugees.

- The fact that no organization or agency—whether federal, public, or private—tries to count how many African immigrants live in the county leaves them grouped with African Americans, when African immigrants have very

different needs. Knowing who these immigrants are and where they come from would help all organizations respond to their needs better.

- Although African immigrants and refugees have access to such government programs as MFIP and the Refugee Assistance Program to help them gain independence (financially, professionally, and otherwise), these programs do not have the cultural sensitivity for dealing with African immigrants. To avoid the obstacles created by inadequate job training, low levels of English proficiency, and discrimination, African immigrants settle on low-skill and low-paying jobs with little chance of professional advancement.
- Throughout Ramsey County, the public, magnet, and charter schools offer ESL and LEP co-curricular programs to immigrant students. However, these programs are plagued by culturally insensitive teachers and curricula. Adults and families of students have access to continuing education and adult enhancement programs, but many African immigrants complain of the inapplicability of these courses to their day-to-day life. Also, most of the county's schools do not support cultural outreach through the community.
- Because most nonprofit organizations offering help to African immigrants and refugees are located in Minneapolis, the few organizations located in Ramsey County are in St. Paul, reducing their accessibility to people living in the surrounding suburbs. Many organizations provide specified services and may cater to either all types of immigrants, all people of color, or certain nationalities. As stated before, African immigrants have very different needs

than African Americans or Asian immigrants, so they need to receive as much help as they can together and work together to create a strong community.

The many obstacles African immigrants face in the United States can be reduced with the appropriate resources, but to access those resources, immigrants have to feel like they deserve them and have the right to become a part of U.S. society. They need a place with people who can tell them exactly what they need to know on how to assimilate more easily, what they need to do to reach their goals, and who they can reach out to for anything they need along the way.

The purpose of this report is to assess the need for an African resource center in St. Paul, which would provide the following:

- Youth programs including after-school programs, sports, and cultural activities
- Culturally appropriate English as a Second Language courses, citizenship education, and job skills training
- Employment services
- Family and teenage counseling
- Library services

What would distinguish this resource center from others in St. Paul? This African resource center would consolidate a variety of services needed by Africans while accepting any African who wishes to use its services so as to create solidarity among the nationalities. African immigrants and refugees need a place that incorporates all of these needs under one roof and opens its doors to them. To feel welcomed, they must feel like

they belong and have as many opportunities as anyone else around them, no matter where they come from, what they look like, or what they believe. Youth and elderly alike should have access to recreational activities, enrichment programs, and skills improvement courses. When establishing themselves in Ramsey County's labor force, youth and adults should have culturally sensitive ESL, citizenship, and job skills training. They should receive employment services that actually place them in beneficial positions where they will not experience the discrimination and restraint many American employers impose on their immigrant workers. African immigrants of all ages should have social services and counseling performed by the same people with whom they identify and who they respect. They all live in the same communities and experience some of the same hardships, so they should be able to seek the help of those like them. An African resource center should encompass all of this and more so that African immigrants can experience the positive aspects of the "melting pot" of the United States of America.



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