



STATE OF MINNESOTA
L'Étoile du Nord

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

A Better Place to Live for All of Us

Budget for a Better Minnesota

When Governor Dayton took office, he promised to build a Better Minnesota for everyone. Under the Governor's leadership, Minnesota employers have added 286,500 new jobs, and unemployment is at its lowest level in 17 years. But too many people, including many Minnesotans of color and some people in Greater Minnesota, are not sharing as much in our state's growing prosperity.

We need to do more to ensure all our policies, the investments in our state budget, and the way we run state government includes and represents the interests of every Minnesotan, everywhere in Minnesota. This year, Governor Dayton's Budget for a Better Minnesota would make investments – including in health care choices, world-class educations, and rural infrastructure – that would help ensure every Minnesotan, in every corner of the state, have better access to opportunity.

Giving Minnesota Kids a Great Start

Policy	Description
Continued Early Learning Opportunities for Minnesota Kids	<p>For decades, Minnesota has faced persistent educational achievement gaps among students of color. As Governor, Mark Dayton has been committed to investing in early learning programs aimed at narrowing those achievement gaps, and helping all students get a great start in school and in life.</p> <p>Under the Governor's leadership, Minnesota has invested \$262 million in early learning opportunities, securing free all-day Kindergarten, investing in Early Learning Scholarships, and beginning to offer free, voluntary preKindergarten to Minnesota families in school districts around the state. This school year alone, nearly 80,000 kids are enrolled in all-day Kindergarten or high quality early learning programs, thanks to those investments.</p> <p>In 2017, Governor Dayton proposed enough permanent funding to ensure every Minnesota child had the option to attend free, school-based preKindergarten. Unfortunately, the Minnesota Legislature only agreed to provide \$50 million in new one-time funding. Approximately 6,100 four-year-olds are now attending free, school-based preKindergarten this year in communities all across Minnesota because of this investment.</p> <p>This year, Governor Dayton's Budget for a Better Minnesota would make voluntary preKindergarten permanent funding for schools that</p>

	<p>already offer it, ensuring thousands more Minnesota four-year-olds are given the opportunity to attend free, school-based preKindergarten in the future. Fifty-nine of the 109 school districts that currently offer voluntary, school-based preK programs would lose state funding for their preK programs if the Legislature does not pass the Governor’s proposal.</p> <p>To learn more about which school districts and charter schools would lose funding for free, voluntary preKindergarten if the Legislature does not support the Governor’s proposal, CLICK HERE.</p>
<p>Homework Starts with Home</p>	<p>Approximately 167,000 Minnesota households with children face housing instability. Research shows that homeless and mobile children are more likely to be absent from school, perform worse on math and reading tests, and eventually drop out. The Homework Starts with Home program provides rental assistance to Minnesota families with children to ensure that students have stable housing throughout the school year. This year, Governor Dayton’s budget includes \$4 million for the Homework Starts with Home program to help find stable housing for an additional 500 families and 1,000 Minnesota kids.</p>
<p>Help Me Grow Initiative</p>	<p>Governor Dayton’s budget would invest \$1.5 million in the Help Me Grow initiative, which provides critical child development information to parents and childcare providers. The program helps identify young children with developmental and emotional concerns, to connect them with the services they need to succeed in school and life.</p>
<p>Helping Kindergarten Students with Disabilities</p>	<p>All children deserve excellent educations, regardless of background or ability. Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota would fix a problem in the school funding formula that currently provides less funding for Kindergarten students with disabilities than their peers. The Governor’s budget would resolve this gap by investing \$153,000 for Kindergarten students with disabilities, ensuring they get the support they need to get great starts in school and life.</p>
<p>Helping Minnesotans Finish College and Career Training</p>	<p>Minnesotans who start, but do not finish, college and career training programs often miss out on better economic opportunities and higher wages, while struggling to pay off student loan debt. The Minnesota Reconnect pilot program encourages former college students who have completed a minimum of 15 credits of their college degree or career training program, but did not graduate, to return to school. Minnesota Reconnect provides financial assistance and one-on-one support to help these students complete their educations. Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota would provide \$1.4 million to support the ongoing operation of Minnesota Reconnect.</p>

Investing in Greater Minnesota Communities

Policy	Description
<p>Another, More Affordable Choice for Health Insurance for an Estimated 100,000 Minnesotans</p>	<p>Governor Dayton’s MinnesotaCare Buy-In proposal would allow all Minnesotans the choice to purchase their health insurance through MinnesotaCare – a state program that for 26 years has provided eligible working Minnesota families a more affordable option to purchase their health care. By giving every Minnesotan this option, MinnesotaCare Buy-In would expand health care choices for Minnesotans everywhere in the state, increase competition in the individual health insurance market, and save Minnesotans money.</p> <p>MinnesotaCare Buy-In would reduce costs and improve access for about 100,000 more Minnesotans who purchase health insurance on the individual market. Unlike traditional MinnesotaCare enrollees who receive subsidized coverage, individuals who choose MinnesotaCare Buy-In would pay their own way – meaning the cost of their premiums would pay for their coverage.</p> <p>To learn more about the MinnesotaCare Buy-In proposal, including the five most important things you need to know about how this plan will provide high-quality, affordable health coverage for Minnesotans, CLICK HERE. To learn more about how MinnesotaCare Buy-In would provide an estimated 100,000 Minnesotans another, more affordable choice for health insurance, CLICK HERE. To take a look at 15 of the most frequently-asked questions about the MinnesotaCare Buy-In proposal, CLICK HERE. To learn more about some of the myths circling about the Governor’s MinnesotaCare Buy-In proposal, CLICK HERE.</p>
<p>Ensuring Access to Credit for Minnesota Farmers</p>	<p>Many Minnesota farmers face the perfect storm of low commodity prices and high costs, which can create cash flow problems as they review their finances and restructure debt ahead of the growing season. Governor Dayton’s Public Works bill includes \$20 million for Minnesota’s Rural Finance Authority to ensure it can continue offering eligible Minnesota farmers affordable financing and terms and conditions not offered by other traditional lenders.</p> <p>In addition to helping farmers secure financing, the Rural Finance Authority also offers a variety of other programs to strengthen Minnesota farm families and communities. These programs are designed to help farmers restructure debt, invest in farm improvements, finance livestock production facilities, and to help new farmers purchase land.</p>
<p>Providing Mental Health and Other</p>	<p>After years of low commodity prices and high costs, many Minnesota farmers are experiencing significant stress, both financial and emotional. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture recently launched the Farm & Rural Helpline, a free, confidential service to</p>

<p>Resources for Minnesota Farmers</p>	<p>help connect callers to financial assistance programs, health and mental health services, and legal help. In addition, the agency held a series of “Down on the Farm” seminars this winter to help people who work with farmers on a regular basis recognize stress, anxiety, depression, and other challenges.</p> <p>As many farmers continue to grapple with these challenges, Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota would build on the Department of Agriculture’s efforts by providing \$200,000 to help Minnesota State hire an additional mental health specialist to better support struggling farmers and their families.</p>
<p>Expanding Access to Reliable, Affordable High-Speed Internet</p>	<p>Since taking office, Governor Dayton has secured \$85.6 million for investments in high-speed internet infrastructure. This funding expanded access to broadband for 33,852 households, 5,189 businesses, and 300 community institutions, and leveraged \$110 million in matching investments</p> <p>Today, thanks in part to the Governor’s investments, 88 percent of Minnesotans have access to broadband speeds that meet the 2022 goal. In 2011, only 56 percent of Minnesotans, largely in urban areas, had access to those speeds.</p> <p>This year, Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota would invest an additional \$30 million to help another 11,000 households, businesses, and community institutions gain high-speed internet access so they can compete economically alongside other Minnesota communities in the 21st Century.</p>
<p>Combating Minnesota’s Opioid Crisis through Prevention, Treatment, and Law Enforcement</p>	<p>Governor Dayton has proposed a slate of bipartisan legislative proposals that would invest in high-impact strategies to treat and prevent opioid abuse, especially in communities disproportionately impacted by opioid addiction. Included in those legislative proposals is a new Opioid Stewardship Program, which would fund opioid abuse prevention and treatment strategies across the state. After implementation, the Stewardship Program would raise approximately \$20 million a year to be used exclusively for treatment and recovery, prevention, and emergency response services in every corner of Minnesota. To learn more about the Governor’s bipartisan proposals to combat the opioid crisis and save lives across Minnesota, CLICK HERE.</p>
<p>Investing in Clean, Affordable Water for Minnesotans</p>	<p>In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, Minnesotans expect clean, affordable water, no matter where they live. But over 40 percent of Minnesota’s waters are listed as impaired or polluted. Experts estimate that our communities will need \$11 billion in water infrastructure upgrades over the next two decades to replace and upgrade aging treatment facilities and expand systems to accommodate economic growth and increased demand.</p> <p>Governor Dayton’s Public Works proposal would invest \$167 million in our water treatment infrastructure and \$30 million in the</p>

	<p>Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This investment would protect our water resources, protecting them for future generations of Minnesotans. To learn more about how Governor Dayton’s Public Works proposal would invest in clean, affordable water for Minnesotans, CLICK HERE. To see a list of clean water infrastructure projects that could be funded as a result of the Governor’s Public Works proposal, CLICK HERE.</p> <p>In addition to the clean water investments included in the Public Works proposal, the Governor’s Budget for a Better Minnesota also includes \$25.7 million in needed investment through the Clean Water Fund. These clean water projects were recommended by the state’s Clean Water Council and include grants to: protect and improve the quality of our drinking water; support locally led implementation of management of our state’s watersheds; fund needed clean water research; and conserve Minnesota’s working forest lands to meet the state’s future recreation, economic, and ecological needs.</p>
<p>Connecting the Northstar Commuter Rail Line to Saint Cloud</p>	<p>Northstar Commuter Rail, which began service in 2009, connects Minneapolis to Big Lake, stopping 28 miles short of Saint Cloud. The decision to cut the line short has hampered the success of Northstar. This year, Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota includes \$850,000 to study the engineering costs and projected ridership for a possible Northstar extension to Saint Cloud.</p>
<p>Investing in World-Class Colleges and Universities</p>	<p>Minnesota’s public colleges and universities are training the next generation of Minnesota workers for good jobs and bright futures, while supporting economic opportunity for communities all across our state. This year, Governor Dayton’s Public Works proposal would invest \$542 million in public higher education classrooms and facilities statewide. These investments would help ensure that all Minnesotans can access a world-class education no matter where they live. To learn more about how Governor Dayton’s Public Works proposal invests in world class colleges and universities, CLICK HERE.</p>
<p>Improving and Repairing State Buildings and Other Critical Infrastructure</p>	<p>Delaying needed maintenance projects can have damaging impacts on the state’s long-term finances. Costs only increase as older buildings deteriorate further, while new items are added to the growing list of repair and improvement projects. Governor Dayton’s Public Works proposal would begin to reverse the underinvestment in basic state infrastructure. The Governor’s proposal would invest \$998 million to improve and repair state buildings and other critical infrastructure, helping to reduce needed deferred maintenance at aging facilities across the state. To learn more about how the Governor’s Public Works proposal would improve and repair state buildings and other infrastructure, CLICK HERE.</p>

Expanding Equity and Opportunity for Minnesotans

Policy	Description
<p>Fostering Greater Understanding Between State Government and Tribal Nations</p>	<p>In 2013, Governor Dayton issued an executive order directing state agencies to implement policies that improve relationships and collaboration with Minnesota’s eleven Tribal Nations. Following the Governor’s direction, the Minnesota Department of Transportation developed an award-winning tribal training program to teach state agency staff about American Indian tribal governments, histories, cultures, and traditions, and to help state employees to work more effectively with tribal governments and American Indians.</p> <p>As part of his Budget for a Better Minnesota, Governor Dayton has proposed \$200,000 to improve the state’s communication with tribal nations. It also would be used to better educate agency staff on legal and cultural frameworks for working with sovereign Tribal Nations.</p>
<p>Making College More Affordable for Minnesota Dreamers</p>	<p>The Minnesota State Grant Program helps students afford the higher education they need to succeed. Since taking office, the Governor has made major new investments in the State Grant Program. As a result, about 287,000 students have received State Grants to make their higher educations more affordable, and all State Grant recipients have seen increases in their State Grants, averaging \$927. These grants help students build better futures for themselves and their families, by making two-year schools, four-year schools, and technical school training programs more affordable.</p> <p>Governor Dayton’s budget would help further extend the promise of higher education to Minnesota Dreamers, many of whom have lived in our state for most of their lives. The Governor’s proposal would invest \$1.1 million to provide additional State Grant assistance to 568 Minnesota Dreamers to fill in for federal Pell Grants they would be eligible to receive, but-for their legal status. The average eligible student would receive an average increase of \$2,010 under this proposal to help pay for tuition.</p>

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To learn more about other proposals included in Governor Dayton’s Budget for a Better Minnesota, [CLICK HERE](#).