

Children and families: Investing in families' well-being, increasing resources and support for providers and partners

Critical investments approved in 2021 will bolster Minnesota families who experienced hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. Improved economic supports will promote their stability and well-being for years to come, while other changes will make it easier for individuals and families to get and keep the public benefits they qualify for.

Providers will benefit from spending and policy changes that reinforce their mission to lift up Minnesotans in need. The state will increase resources for child care providers while modernizing child care licensing regulations and raising rates for child care assistance.

Meanwhile, funding for a new tribal child welfare training institute will train child protection workers to employ culturally responsive practices to better serve American Indian children and families in the child protection system. Measures related to foster care will help preserve families and, when placement is necessary, promote placement with relatives, while ensuring that parents involved in the child protection system have access to legal counsel throughout their cases. Changes to background studies will align the licensing requirements for foster care and adoption, addressing a barrier that disproportionately affects communities of color.

2021 legislation

One-time payment and cost-of-living increases for the Minnesota Family Investment Program. A one-time payment of up to \$435 per family will provide additional resources to support about 32,000 families, including 64,000 children, as they address economic challenges related to the pandemic. Beginning on Oct. 1, 2021, DHS will make annual adjustments to MFIP cash assistance benefits based on the [Consumer Price Index](#), resulting in incremental increases that reflect the cost of living. Another change will allow families in crisis to complete MFIP applications, interviews and orientation over the phone. *FY2022-23: \$28 million*

Tribal access to food shelf funding. Federally recognized Tribal nations are now eligible for state food shelf funding. *FY2022-23: Budget neutral*

Better access to shelter and housing for people experiencing homelessness. A significant funding boost for Emergency Services Grants will provide resources for more shelter beds, hotel/motel vouchers, staff for shelters and other services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. A new Emergency Shelter Grant program will be used to renovate existing shelters or expand shelter capacity. Additional funding will go to counties and Tribes to assist people experiencing homelessness through Community Living Infrastructure grants. *FY2022-23: \$26 million*

Higher rates for the Child Care Assistance Program and resources for child care providers and workers. Updated maximum rates for providers in the Child Care Assistance Program will increase access to affordable, quality child care and reduce families' need to pay out-of-pocket expenses. Families on the wait list for CCAP will receive assistance sooner. Meanwhile, Child Care Stabilization Grants for providers will support the stability of

the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Workforce grants for economically challenged individuals will help expand the child care workforce by providing job skills training, career counseling and job placement assistance for careers in child care. *FY2022-23: \$101.9 million*

Child care licensing resources and modernization. A new ombudsperson will assist family child care providers with licensing compliance and other issues, while Minnesota will develop a web-based resource network for providers. The state will work with independent consultants to develop proposals for updated licensing standards for both family child care and child care centers, including risk-based models for monitoring compliance and eligibility for abbreviated inspections. *FY2022-23: \$5.7 million*

Updated child support guidelines and policy. Minnesota's child support guidelines will be updated based on more recent data about the costs of raising children. The state will no longer charge interest to those in arrears with child support. *FY2022-23: \$461,000*

Indian Child Welfare Act training. Aabinoojiiyag-Wakanheza Un Thantanhanpi, the Tribal Training and Certification Partnership at the University of Minnesota Duluth, will train child protection workers to use culturally responsive practices to better serve American Indian children and families in the child protection system. *FY2022-23: \$2 million*

Foster care background studies. Requirements for family child foster care licensure will be aligned with those for adoption, reducing the number of disqualifications. *FY2022-23: \$601,000*

Related information

- [DHS 2021 session fact sheets](#)
- [Facts about Minnesota Family Investment Program \(PDF\)](#)
- [History of the Minnesota Family Investment Program \(PDF\)](#)
- [Minnesota Food Shelf Program \(PDF\)](#)
- [Homelessness in Minnesota: helping to connect people to the services they need \(PDF\)](#)
- [Child care assistance: Facts and figures \(PDF\)](#)
- [Foster care: Temporary out-of-home care for children \(PDF\)](#)
- [Minnesota's Out-of-home Care and Permanency Report, 2019 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Child support in Minnesota: Facts and figures \(PDF\)](#)
- [What you need to know about the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act \(PDF\)](#)

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