

Two-year human services budget invests in Minnesotans

Economic supports, health care coverage, community services enhanced

Historic investments in the 2021 session will reinforce the Minnesota Department of Human Services' mission of helping people live in dignity and achieve their highest potential. The FY 2022-23 budget passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Tim Walz will benefit individuals and families who rely on economic supports, health care programs, child care providers, behavioral health treatment programs, and Home and Community Based Services. Rate increases will strengthen access to child care assistance, dental care, culturally informed substance use disorder treatment and personal care assistance. After temporary changes adopted during the state COVID-19 peacetime emergency, many telehealth services will continue on an ongoing basis.

Supporting children and families with new resources

- A one-time payment of up to \$435 will support families in the Minnesota Family Investment Program as they address pandemic-related issues. Annual cost-of-living increases for MFIP cash assistance benefits will begin in October. The additional resources will benefit 32,000 families, including 64,000 children.
- Higher rates for the Child Care Assistance Program will lower out-of-pocket costs for families while reducing the program's wait list. Child care providers will be in line for stabilization grants, and workforce grants will help bring more child care workers into the field. A new ombudsperson for family child care providers will offer assistance with licensing and other issues.
- Two grants will help improve access to shelter and housing for people experiencing homelessness.
- A tribal training 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.

Strengthening health care coverage for Minnesotans

- People with low incomes who rely on MinnesotaCare will benefit from lower premiums through 2022, and easier access to coverage for family members if employer-sponsored coverage is unaffordable.
- Mothers will keep Medical Assistance coverage for a full year after giving birth, helping prevent and treat birth-related and postpartum complications. This change will support African American and American Indian women, who experience disparate health outcomes during this medically vulnerable period.
- Integrated Care for High Risk Pregnancies, a successful program for pregnant African American and American Indian women and their babies, will expand to improve overall health, social and economic outcomes through culturally specific services and resources.
- Access to telehealth will continue for Minnesotans in public health care programs, with many of the emergency modifications made during the pandemic adopted on an ongoing basis.
- Higher payment rates for dentists will make dental care more accessible for people served by public health care programs.
- Medical Assistance enrollees will have easier access to public transit passes, reducing barriers to care.

Making behavioral health care more culturally informed and accessible

- Higher payment rates will support more culturally specific and culturally responsive treatment services for substance use disorder, as well as SUD treatment services responsive to people with disabilities. The state will seek to extend its federal substance use disorder demonstration project for five years.
- A task force convening in summer 2022 will make recommendations for more culturally informed and culturally responsive mental health services statewide.
- Video and audio access to treatment for mental health, substance use disorder and case management will remain available, while study of the impact of telehealth on coverage and services will continue.
- School-linked behavioral health grants will support both mental health and substance use disorder services for more children and youth.
- Mobile crisis teams that respond rapidly in crisis situations and link people to services will expand.
- One-time appropriations will hold counties and two Tribes harmless for past DHS payment errors related to substance use disorder treatment and medication-assisted treatment.

Increasing resources for older adults and people with disabilities

- A significant boost in federal funding for Home and Community Based Services through March 2024 will strengthen services for older Minnesotans and people with disabilities.
- Rates will increase for disability waiver services, home health and home care nursing services, and services on the Elderly Waiver, Alternative Care, and Essential Community Supports programs.
- Payment rates for Personal Care Assistance services will rise as the state launches Community First Services and Supports in fall 2021. The rate increase and other reforms will raise the professional standing of personal care assistants and attract more people to this essential work.
- The second phase of Waiver Reimagine will empower people with disabilities by consolidating four waivers into two and implementing an individual budget methodology based on a person's needs.
- Grants to HCBS providers statewide will help build capacity so that people can receive services from providers with shared histories, languages, cultures and norms.
- Up to 100 counties, Tribes and community organizations will receive grants to enhance structures, services and community features to support older residents as Age-Friendly Communities.
- A task force will recommend how to phase out subminimum wages paid by disability service providers, while grants will support providers to move beyond subminimum wage work for people with disabilities.

Updating background studies to meet current needs

- After conducting emergency background studies during Minnesota's COVID-19 peacetime emergency, the state will have a full year to transition back to fingerprint-based background studies by July 2022.
- Changes to background studies will help the state comply with federal requirements for receiving FBI data and removing disqualified staff from direct contact with children in regulated child care settings.
- DHS will begin to conduct background studies for new teachers and first-time administrators, providers of autism services, and MNsure navigators, in-person assisters and certified application counselors.
- A task force will review background study eligibility and disqualifications and make recommendations.

Strengthening fraud prevention, sustaining state-operated services

- DHS will have more capacity to investigate Medicaid fraud. Funding for fraud prevention grants for counties and Tribes will increase, while training and resources will expand for attorneys who pursue recoveries for Minnesotans on public health programs.
- Minnesota's state-operated services, including inpatient mental health facilities and home and community based services for people with disabilities, will get increased funding after persistent shortfalls caused by rising staff expenses and third-party reimbursements that often don't cover the cost of care.

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