

Budget strengthens critical human services for Minnesotans

Governor Tim Walz's revised supplemental budget makes investments to stabilize, strengthen and improve essential programs and services across Minnesota. The proposals support the Minnesota Department of Human Services' mission to help people meet their basic needs so they can live in dignity and achieve their highest potential. The Governor's budget will result in more effective and equitable supports for Minnesotans.

Revitalizing Minnesota's caring professions with incentives for workers

- An incentive program for essential workers in direct support, housing and behavioral health professions recognizes their importance during a critical workforce shortage. The Workforce Incentive Fund will help providers offer new and current workers retention payments, bonuses, loan reimbursement and more.
- Higher payment rates for Personal Care Assistance and Community First Services and Supports will help attract and retain qualified workers in the home- and community-based service industry.
- New resources for behavioral health providers will strengthen training, increase cultural and ethnic minority infrastructure grants and help mental health providers cover costs for trainees.

Stabilizing child care providers, improving families' access to child care

- Higher maximum rates for the Child Care Assistance Program will improve financial stability for child care providers and benefit 15,000 families with 30,000 children who rely on the program each month.
- Eliminating waiting lists for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance will allow families to get child care assistance without delay, benefiting about 16,000 more families when fully implemented.
- Continuing financial hardship grants will support child care providers to weather the pandemic after federal funding ends. Services such as technical assistance and training will also continue.

Improving access to comprehensive, affordable health care coverage

- A MinnesotaCare buy-in option will offer Minnesotans the option to purchase the most comprehensive health care coverage available on the market, with premiums based on income.
- Improvements to Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare will make it easier to maintain coverage and apply for coverage. MinnesotaCare premiums will remain at reduced levels. Undocumented children from low-income families will become eligible for MinnesotaCare.
- Continuous Medical Assistance coverage for children and youth for 12 months will prevent unnecessary churn on and off the program and improve access to care such as well-child visits and immunizations.
- Resources and temporary changes will minimize disruption for public health care program enrollees when standard renewal processes resume after the federal COVID-19 public health emergency ends.
- Grants to culturally informed community providers and organizations will fund outreach to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations, answer questions and address misinformation.

Expanding housing services, strengthening efforts to address homelessness

- Increased funding will expand the capacity of emergency shelters and services across Minnesota, with support for providers to cover higher costs, renovate facilities and improve safety and sanitation.
- Capital improvement grants will enable local and Tribal governments to renovate existing emergency homeless shelters and acquire land and build new emergency shelter facilities.
- Additional investments will strengthen supports and housing units for youth experiencing homelessness, with an emphasis on young parents and LGBTQ+ youth.
- Higher base funding for the Community Living Infrastructure program will ensure ongoing support for outreach and transition support for people experiencing homelessness.

Ensuring better access to food, enhancing Minnesotans' food security

- Resources for Tribal Nations and American Indian organizations will support better access to food security programs, culturally relevant food supports and food sovereignty for Tribal Nations.
- Grants will be available for food shelves to upgrade and expand their facilities, addressing issues including safety improvements, freezer and storage space, and deferred maintenance.
- Food and meal programs will receive support to get food and COVID-19 supplies, and outreach will help eligible Minnesotans enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Expanding access to behavioral health care for children and adults

- Funding will support more beds in children's inpatient mental health and psychiatric residential treatment facilities, with resources to expand acute psychiatric care for children.
- A permanent funding increase will strengthen mobile crisis services and improve access.
- Intensive treatment in foster care will become available to children who are at risk of out-of-home placement, with services including therapy, family psychoeducation and crisis assistance.
- Programs that offer supportive services for people with serious mental illnesses who are homeless will expand to include people with substance use disorders.
- New resources will address Minnesota's opioid crisis by aligning rates for opioid treatment providers and supporting prevention activities and culturally relevant practices and approaches in American Indian and other disproportionately impacted communities.

Strengthening families and reducing the need for out-of-home placements

- Upstream investments to promote family well-being and prevent unnecessary trauma will aim to reduce the number of children entering the child welfare system. Funding for prevention programs will expand.
- New staff trained in the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) will help expand prevention and early intervention efforts to keep American Indian children from entering the child welfare system.
- The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe will receive funding to implement Minnesota's American Indian Child Welfare Initiative, offering culturally based services for child welfare and other human services.

Stabilizing economic relief for Minnesotans with low incomes

- The Minnesota Family Investment Program and General Assistance will calculate benefits to offer more consistent financial support, moving to a six-month income reporting period in line with SNAP and Housing Support.
- The maximum monthly General Assistance benefit will go up to \$355 from \$203 to offer people living in deep poverty more support to meet basic needs. This will be the first increase since 1986.
- Community services and supports will become available to Minnesotans who have experienced the pandemic's economic impact but don't have access to other forms of economic assistance.
- The Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota program, which helps people build assets, will raise financial match limits and let participants contribute to savings accounts for college and emergencies.

Improving compliance, regulation and human service delivery

- The state will support IT systems work to continue to transform the delivery of human services into an integrated, person-centered experience.
- Adding licensing staff will lower waits for home and community based services visits and make foster care reviews more timely, while helping DHS meet statutory timelines for maltreatment complaints.
- More auditors and contract staff will help DHS meet demands for compliance, auditing and reporting.
- Providers will receive credit for their costs for emergency background studies during the pandemic.
- Investment to continue building an electronic health record system for Direct Care and Treatment will improve access to medical records and clinical coordination across the DCT system.