

PROPOSED 2025 State Legislative Priorities and Platform (As Approved November 19, 2024)

HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA

Platform priorities

Housing

Increase state resources to support safe and stable housing for all individuals and families.

Healthcare

Ensure all residents have access to high quality, accessible, and culturally responsive healthcare. Promote long-term vitality and innovation at public safety net healthcare systems.

Solid Waste

Promote a zero-waste future to help the county meet its climate action goals and to ensure the timeline for closure of HERC between 2028 and 2040.

Full platform

Bonding

- Hennepin Avenue Suspension Bridge - \$8.6 million
- Hennepin Recycling Recovery Facility – \$26 million (repurposing previous authorization)

Climate and environment

Support legislation and policies that protect the environment, conserve resources, build equity and resiliency, and promote adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Promote and support state laws and programs that will help achieve the county’s greenhouse gas emissions and resilience goals.

Clean transportation

- Support state investments to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions, including, but not limited to, vehicle and transit electrification, electric vehicle charging stations, and infrastructure that connects people by all modes of travel.
- Promote the adoption of policies that support a pathway toward reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in alignment with Hennepin County’s goal to reduce VMT per capita by 20% by 2040.

Energy efficiency and renewables

- Support the transition from using carbon intensive fuels to 100% carbon-free, reliable, affordable and renewable energy, including geothermal and solar by 2040.
- Promote weatherization and energy efficiency for homeowners and renters, including education and assistance, and advocating for affordable homeowners insurance.

Natural resources

- Support legislation and state funding for local governments to protect and enhance community forests to mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce air pollution and manage tree waste.
- Respond to the loss of trees due to emerald ash borer and other invasive pests and pathogens.

- Support state funding for local administration of soil and water conservation districts.
- Support the recommendations of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) to fund the County's proposal for long-term natural resources protection.
- Support policies that prevent and treat aquatic invasive species and pollution and protect the state's water resources.

Waste management

- Accelerate a zero-waste future to help the county meet its climate action goals and accelerate the timeline for closure of HERC between 2028 and 2040.
- Fund a pre-processing facility in Hennepin County to recover reusable and recyclable materials from the trash before disposal.
- Support increased state funding for SCORE, expanding organics composting and anaerobic digestion initiatives, and promoting market development for recycled materials.
- Update e-waste and battery statutes to ensure cost coverage for collectors and to educate consumers on safe management.
- Adopt truth-in-labeling laws for recyclable products.
- Repeal the state preemption prohibiting local units of government from banning the use of single use plastic bags.
- Adopt a mandatory diversion requirement for construction and demolition (C&D) waste.
- Adjust pricing structures such as pay-as-you-throw to incentivize waste reduction, reuse, and recycling with no direct cost to residents.
- Support the Partnership on Waste and Energy 2025 legislative platform.
- Change organized collection process and hauler licensing.
- Adopt and enforce material bans at landfills for all materials that emit methane: food/organics, paper/cardboard, wood, and textiles.

General government

Partner with the State of Minnesota to improve government services delivery, reduce mandates on local government, re-prioritize government spending and promote effective management of county programs by allowing local control.

Elections

- Provide clarity and better access for absentee voting.
- Expand voter registration options for voters in jail.
- Support state-level standards and equipment for ranked choice voting.
- Protect and strengthen election security and integrity measures, particularly for election workers and storage and counting of absentee ballots.
- Require a disclaimer for non-official election mailings.
- Support technical changes to campaign finance and candidate filing laws.
- Support the efforts of others to modernize election judge duties to allow flexibility in polling places, reviewing absentee ballots, and performing other critical functions.

Operations and administration

- Update and modernize marriage license application and reporting statute language; clarify marriage officiant requirements, standardize marriage certificate forms and allow deputy registrars to make technical corrections to marriage licenses.
- Support modifying or increasing certain marriage license, motor vehicle, watercraft, off road vehicle, and driver's license filing fees to make deputy registrars' offices more self-sufficient and reduce administrative burdens for local registrars.
- Make permanent the ability for people to remotely apply for marriage licenses.
- Support revenue sharing with the state's Driver and Vehicle Services for online transactions.
- Support legislation that establishes a third-party board to explore compensation levels for local/municipal elected officials in Minnesota.

Data practices

- Oppose changes to the Minnesota Data Practices Act that require audit logs or audit trails that impose an undue financial or resource management burden on local units of government.
- Protect residents' personal information by making a person's address, phone number and email address private data.
- Support legislation that bases email retention policies on the information contained within the record and not on the file type to which it is stored; oppose legislation that requires government entities to retain emails that are not part of the official record and do not serve a business purpose.
- Update the Official Records Act to permit the digitization of all official records without prescribing the medium or technology.
- Support legislation changing notification of data breaches to only when the individual is at risk of harm. Reduce risk to counties by limiting monetary damages for alleged violations of the Data Practices Act to actual harm to an individual by an unauthorized disclosure of data.
- Protect data on minor children library users.

Broadband

- Increase broadband access and digital equity by enhancing infrastructure; by expanding broadband services with the redefining of the duties, title and goals of the state's Office of Broadband Development; by expanding the Border-to-Border program to provide continued state and federal funding to Hennepin County; and by updating state broadband goals.

Hennepin Healthcare System

Ensure access to the full continuum of health care services for all by addressing racism as a public health crisis through policies that reduce health disparities, increase equity, support the capacity of the health-care workforce, and create financial stability for Hennepin Healthcare System as the state's safety-net provider.

Increase the financial stability of Hennepin Healthcare System

- Maximize Medicaid reimbursement and supplemental funding sources to support the largest Medicaid provider system and safety-net trauma

hospital to manage the challenges of caring for a disproportionate share of medically and socially complex patients with unmet social needs.

- Strengthen value-based-payment arrangements, increase Medicaid direct payments, adjust rebasing and increase rates in Medicaid reimbursements, and protect the 340B drug discount program to improve outcomes and manage higher care costs associated with serving a disproportionate number of Medicaid patients.
- Preserve hospital capacity for patients who need inpatient care by ensuring patients can swiftly and safely discharge to an appropriate setting through streamlining processes and investing in the capacity of long-term care, children and youth mental health services in the community, and other higher acuity mental health settings.

Increase health equity and improve population health through innovation and reform

- Support state investments to reduce health disparities in mental health and maternal health care, including supporting birthing people experiencing substance use disorder during pregnancy, and expanding trauma-responsive health care. Support innovative public health and health-care delivery models that address social drivers of health; expanding the definition of the Community Health Worker care coordination under Medicaid and adding Collaborative Care through state plan amendments through Medicaid.
- Promote efforts to address the state's opioid crisis, including increased access to medication-assisted therapy, alternative pain management therapies, peer recovery supports, and Medicaid coverage while detained pre-trial, and ensuring Hennepin Emergency Medical Services are available to all residents.
- Support the safety of our communities, employees, and patients through preventative workplace violence efforts; policies that support healing after violence; and gun-violence prevention efforts through a state plan amendment to Medicaid to invest in sustainable funding for hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs.

Support the capacity of the health care workforce to ensure the delivery of exceptional care

- Promote policies that support increasing staff capacity in the health care workforce, including maintaining telehealth, improving licensing flexibilities and access to interpreters, and the licensure of Certified Midwives, and increasing loan forgiveness programs.
- Partner to ensure the evolution of academic medicine in Minnesota supports a strong health care ecosystem, creates a workforce reflective of patients and increase medical professionals of color, and addresses existing workforce and provider shortages in Minnesota, especially in the addiction and mental health-care system. Remove barriers to employment for justice-involved individuals and enact programs that create a pathway for youth of color to enter and stay in health-care professions.
- Support efforts to increase equitable access to medical education, including maintaining current state investment in Graduate Medical Education and health-care workforce development, including tax incentives for educators.

Health and human services

Ensure that mental health, substance use disorder, and disability services, and safety net and public health systems work to improve experiences and outcomes for all residents, especially the most vulnerable. Reduce disparities by supporting preventative models of care and early intervention services to avoid over-reliance on crisis response. Advance new policies and funding mechanisms that recognize racism as a public health crisis.

Systems reforms

- Improve technological systems to streamline and provide efficiencies and simplification to Health and Human Services Program requirements.
- Support changes to align and simplify program access and program rules.
- Maintain state support for local public health capacity to address health crises.

- Support the sustainability of Personal Care Assistant (PCA) services to eliminate service disruptions and ensure around-the-clock access for eligible families.
- Increase state financial, technological, and administrative support to address caseload demands across the human services continuum.
- Support legislation that bolsters supportive services for all veterans and their families.
- Address the social determinants of health by expanding state support for the integration of programs within county affiliated structures. Oppose policies that fragment these services or otherwise create barriers to access.

Invest in children and families

- Address the significant cost burden of child care for working families, a key factor in preventing communities from building wealth.
- Support state investment in and for community-driven solutions to improve maternal health, birth outcomes, and public health programming (e.g., Children and Teen Checkups, targeted home visiting, doula care), especially for communities of color.
- Strengthen the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act and Indian Family Preservation Act and advance legislation that reduces the disproportionate number of African American and American Indian children in the child protection system and increases frequency and timeliness of reunification.
- Support legislation to remove barriers created by current foster care licensing requirements that result in fewer kinship and culturally appropriate foster families.
- Ensure educational stability for youth in foster care or who may be unstably housed. Support the efforts of others to resolve structural deficits for school systems serving children with complex needs.

Invest in health through mental health and substance use disorder services access and improvements

- Increase state support to meet the needs of county residents with mental health and substance use challenges, including culturally responsive services, early crisis interventions, and services required for stabilizing residents in the community and primary care settings.

- Invest in preventive upstream services to reduce the harmful impact of substance use disorder and the opioid epidemic, including readily available opiate antagonists as an alternative to emergency crisis requests.
- Support efforts to integrate mental health, housing, substance use disorder, and criminal justice interventions, to improve residents' outcomes and reduce recidivism.
- Support integrated state-county funding and services model to comprehensively address the needs of children and families with complex behavioral health issues.
- Support legislation to end the sale of all menthol and flavored commercial tobacco products statewide.

Housing

Increase state resources to support safe and stable housing for all individuals and families.

- Increase accessible, affordable long-term housing for residents with up to 50% Area Median Income (AMI), prioritizing affordability up to 30% AMI.
- Increase housing and related services options for residents with disabilities exiting or diverting from institutional care who need on-site support to integrate their communities successfully.
- Provide sustainable operational funding to make safe, dignified, and housing-focused emergency shelters available to residents experiencing homelessness.
- Continue to reform the Housing Support Program to remove the financial disincentives that cause residents to choose unsheltered settings and ensure the program reflects real costs in the housing market.
- Support dedicated revenue to and reduce administrative burden on counties to meet affordable housing needs.

Law, safety and justice

Preserve and protect public safety through state-county partnerships that address funding challenges and support reform.

Increase funding

- Protect the current community corrections formula allocation and promote fully funding the formula to ensure adequate and ongoing state funding for supervision of individuals under court jurisdiction in the community.
- Support investments in community providers necessary to support successful reintegration of individuals in the criminal legal system into the community.

Remove barriers

- Support the unique needs of those involved in the criminal legal system who are female identified and/or juveniles by strengthening collaboration with and funding for trauma-informed and culturally specific community-based programming in support of corrections systems.
- Support statutory changes to remove barriers in housing and employment for the survivors of human trafficking and those formerly involved in the criminal legal system.
- Expand expungement statute to support individuals with housing or employment barriers who have demonstrated a commitment to rehabilitation and community.
- Expand notification requirements for the automatic expungement of certain cannabis related offenses to include corrections agencies that are in possession of any related records.
- Support state leadership to integrate human-centered design principles and to coordinate the efficient administration of public safety answering points (PSAP's) across jurisdictional lines.
- Support efforts to ensure that non-citizen residents are assured due process in the legal system, are free from harassment, and assisted in their efforts to remain in Minnesota and contribute to community.

Improve outcomes

- Improve licensing and certification rules for facilities and programs, in both human services and corrections, to advance reforms that strengthen the continuum of care and support healthy outcomes for youth and families involved in the system.
- Support regional, cost-effective, evidence-based solutions that deliver better outcomes and lower recidivism for youth under correctional supervision.
- Ensure expanded capacity and appropriate placement in state-funded facilities. Further reform the “48-hour rule” to facilitate greater access to behavioral health services and reduce racial disparities in the public safety and health systems.
- Support the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board 2025 legislative platform.

Taxes

Protect state funding for mandated services and assure flexibility to serve our residents without undue reliance on property taxes.

- Support County Program Aid (CPA) that funds county-mandated services and reduces reliance on property tax.
- Ensure veterans and their spouses/partners remain eligible for the veterans’ property tax exclusion.
- Modernize property tax regulations to improve equity for vulnerable populations, reduce disparities, and close loopholes.
- Support legislation that promotes adoption of conservation easements.
- Update state assessor duties to reflect modern guidance and standards provided by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and allow assessors to access data to ensure accurate and transparent assessments.
- Support efforts to make the property tax system more equitable by expanding homestead market value exclusion, property tax refunds, modifying classifications, modifying how special assessments are billed, and changing confession of judgment payment plan terms.
- Correct technical deficiencies in recently adopted Metro Housing Sales Tax.

- Repurpose Hennepin County Ballpark Sales Tax to support Level 1 Trauma Centers in Hennepin County, Hennepin County healthcare related operations and facilities, youth activities, library hours, and long-term capital needs of the public infrastructure of Target Field.
- Modernize the Tax Court petition and appeals process to ensure counties can defend property valuations in court while still protecting private taxpayer data.
- Ensure tenants in exempt nonprofit housing are not personally responsible for property taxes and remain eligible for property tax refunds.

Transportation

Strengthen the long-term value of neighborhoods and communities through strategic public investments in infrastructure that improve mobility and safety, connect people to jobs, reduce disparities, and reduce transportation carbon emissions.

- Support State funding and regulatory changes to implement recommendations from the Blue Line Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board.
- Support legislation that promotes the advancement of the Blue Line Light Rail Transit Project. This includes, but is not limited to, right-of-way acquisition, insurance, liability, interjurisdictional coordination, federal regulatory requirements, and funding.
- Support the Metropolitan Council's implementation of Arterial Bus Rapid Transit along various routes in Hennepin County to provide shorter transit times, increased ridership, and expanded mobility for communities along the proposed lines.
- Support state investments to implement and maintain infrastructure and Toward Zero Deaths initiatives that enable safe access for all users, including Active Transportation, Complete Streets and Green Streets, to provide modal options, improve quality of life and reduce unsafe driving practices that lead to traffic injuries and fatalities.
- Modify the special distribution of leased vehicle sales tax in the metro area to fairly include Hennepin and Ramsey counties.
- Oppose any increase in weight or size limits for commercial trucks and other motor vehicles.

- Support increased funding for the Local Bridge Replacement Program and the Local Road Improvement Program, including funding for the Hennepin Avenue Bridge reconditioning project.
- Support MnDOT's Corridor of Commerce program and funding to achieve the full corridor vision for projects in Hennepin County.
- Support state investments to reduce transportation carbon emissions, including, but not limited to, vehicle and transit electrification, electric vehicle charging stations, and infrastructure that connects people by all modes of travel.
- Support state investment in Advanced Transportation Management System including traffic management cameras, fiber optic communication, and advanced software.
- Support investments in safety improvements on the Washington Avenue Bridge with our partners.
- Support legislation that explores eliminating transit fares to boost ridership, remove cost burdens for lower-income riders, and speed up transit efficiency by improving boarding times.

Workforce development

Meet the future workforce needs of Hennepin County and other employers and address persistent disparities by, with stronger state support, connecting well-trained and qualified individuals to high-demand jobs in our region.

- Support efforts to raise and protect wages for residents at the lowest income levels to reflect regional costs of living.
- Support a permanent increase in state funding for the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP).

Nonprofit requests

Support the following nonprofit organizations by serving as the fiscal agent for state bonding proceeds.

- Avivo—\$26.7 million
- St. David's YWCA Renovation - \$7 million

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