



## **S.F. No. 2197 – Driver’s Education financial assistance pilot program**

**Author:** Senator Ann M. Johnson Stewart

**Prepared by:** Tim Greenfield, Senate Counsel (tim.greenfield@mnsenate.gov)

**Date:** April 7, 2025

---

**S.F. 2197** establishes a financial assistance pilot program for certain youth to attend driver’s education, complete the process to acquire a driver’s license, and pay any outstanding fines or fees that would normally prevent the person from applying for their license.

**Section 1** establishes the pilot program.

**Subdivision 1** defines key terms, including “eligible entities,” “eligible youth,” “driver’s education” and “driver’s license”

**Subdivision 2** establishes the pilot program in the Department of Public Safety to award grants to eligible entities to expand access and availability to driver’s education courses and driver’s licenses.

**Subdivision 3** establishes the driver’s education financial assistance account in the special revenue fund. Money in the account may only be used to award grants to eligible organizations and reimburse the department’s reasonable costs and expenses for administrative and staffing purposes.

**Subdivision 4** specifies eligibility criteria for both a participating eligible entity and a person seeking financial assistance under the pilot program. The pilot program must be conducted in diverse communities across Minnesota and coordinate across entities to ensure a community-driven approach. A person seeking financial assistance for driver’s education or driver’s license must meet one of the specified criteria, including a youth experiencing homelessness, a child placed in foster care, a foster child, a participant in a juvenile diversion or restorative justice program, a MFIP recipient, a child who is no more than 16 years and enrolled in a workforce program, or is a youth with demonstrated and evidenced financial hardship, lack of a driver’s license, and inability to secure driver’s education.

**Subdivision 5** creates program administration parameters. The pilot program must be administered on a referral system, administered by an intermediary selected by the commissioner. The referral system must identify a community-driven approach to ensure eligible youth have access to the program. Specifies that assistance awarded under this section an eligible youth must not exceed \$2,000, of which \$700 may be used to pay all or a portion of previous fines or fees that prohibit an individual from receiving a driver's license.

**Subdivision 6** requires a participating eligible entity to keep financial records of assistance awarded and all expenses associated with appropriated money.

**Subdivision 7** specifies uniform data collection to be provided to the commissioner to support program outcomes.

**Subdivision 8** specifies reporting requirements by participating entities and requires a legislative report by the commissioner on program activities by January 15, 2027.

**Subdivision 9** convenes a work group between the commissioners of education, public safety, employment and economic development to study driver education availability in Minnesota. Specifies work group administrative parameters and requires a legislative report. Requires the commissioner of education to provide staff support, administrative resources, and convene the first meeting of the work group.

**Subdivision 10** sets the expiration date of the pilot program as June 30, 2028.

**Section 2** appropriates \$3,850,000 in fiscal year 2026 from the general fund to the commissioner of education for the pilot program.



Senate Counsel, Research, and Fiscal Analysis provides nonpartisan legislative, legal, fiscal, and analytical services to the Minnesota Senate. This document can be made available in different formats upon request.

[www.senate.mn/scrfa/home](http://www.senate.mn/scrfa/home) | 651-296-4791  
95 University Ave. W., STE 3300, Saint Paul, MN, 55155