

One Minnesota Budget



INVESTING IN MINNESOTA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are investing in Minnesota's economic future by recruiting and retaining workers, empowering employers to grow their businesses, and making sure Minnesota is creating the jobs of the future right here at home. The One Minnesota Budget invests in everything from agriculture to workforce training to clean energy jobs to make sure Minnesota continues to be competitive in a global economy. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor's plan will ensure that Minnesota is a destination to live, work, and raise a family.



WORKING MINNESOTANS

Providing Paid Family and Medical Leave

Too many Minnesotans, especially those in lower-wage jobs, must make the unfair choice between a paycheck and taking time off to care for a new baby or a family member with a serious illness. This leads to significant economic instability for families during some of their most challenging times. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan's budget creates a paid family and medical leave insurance program to support businesses, ensure more equitable economic opportunities for all Minnesotans, keep more women in the labor force, positively impact the lives of children, and make Minnesota a more attractive state at a time of historic workforce challenges.

*Taking time off to bond with a new baby, recover from illness, or care for a loved one who is sick is not optional. At a time when our economy is strong and our businesses need a reliable workforce, **this is a bold, responsible step we can take to support workers and families** and to ensure no one has to choose between their health or family and their financial security.*

Increasing Access to Earned Sick and Safe Time

Many Minnesotans don't have access to earned sick and safe time and are forced to choose between going to work sick and not being able to pay their bills. This proposal would ensure workers can accrue up to 48 hours a year of earned sick and safe time for when they need to recover from an illness, go to a medical appointment, care for a child during a school closure, or get care and assistance due to domestic abuse, stalking, or sexual assault. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor's budget includes funding to support enforcement and compliance activities, as well as outreach and engagement efforts.

Expanding Unemployment Benefits to Hourly School Workers

Many hourly workers in our K-12 schools – like bus drivers and support professionals – aren't eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits during summer break. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend removing this limitation during summer breaks to make these K-12 school workers eligible to collect UI benefits. This shift will help these school workers support themselves and their families, while also countering challenging trends in recruitment and retention for these critical roles in our schools.



BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Small businesses are at the heart of communities across the state and drive economic growth. The One Minnesota Budget bolsters small businesses and helps Minnesota's economy grow and thrive.

Competing for New Business Development

Competition for business development has never been more intense, yet Minnesota's toolbox to win business expansions to create jobs is severely outdated – current incentive programs do not provide the authority and flexibility necessary to compete with other states on a national and international scale. That's why Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend a one-time investment of \$150 million for the Minnesota Forward Fund – a revitalized toolbox that would be used to make grants, loans, forgivable loans, or grants for infrastructure or large-scale economic development projects in existing, new, and emerging industries.

Encouraging Startup Businesses with the Angel Tax Credit

The Angel Tax Credit, which has already resulted in over \$500 million in private investment in Minnesota startups, will help communities across the state create wealth by incentivizing investment in companies with founders that are women, veterans, people of color, Native people, and those headquartered in Greater Minnesota.

Revitalizing Minnesota Main Streets

The Main Street Economic Revitalization Fund is one of the ways Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are reinvesting in Minnesota communities that were hit hard by the events of 2020. By partnering with local economic development nonprofits, DEED has provided \$80 million since 2021 to catalyze investments in business corridors – neighborhoods and main streets – where they can make a big difference for individual businesses and communities as a whole. The One Minnesota Budget includes nearly \$85 million in new funding to multiply the positive impacts of this program across the state.

Supporting Small Businesses

Minnesota's small business ecosystem employs three out of every four workers in the state. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend new funding for the Small Business Navigation Program, Small Business Development Centers, and the Small Business Partnerships Program. These programs provide the funding, coaching, and consulting small businesses deeply need – and the programs target communities facing systemic barriers to growth. All of these programs are proven ways to help Minnesota's small businesses thrive.

Empowering Entrepreneurs

Launch Minnesota empowers and elevates the innovation ecosystem to make Minnesota the best place to start and scale new ventures – including a series of initiatives focused on growing our innovation economy to keep our state competitive nationally and globally. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose significantly expanding Launch Minnesota's work connecting start-ups to capital, expanding entrepreneurial expertise, and cultivating collaboration with business leaders. This proposal includes commercialization funding to help startups take that next step towards viability with much higher success rates, building the pathway to become our state's next Fortune 500 companies.

Expanding Opportunity for Small Businesses

Small business owners and entrepreneurs are often unable to obtain the loan capital they need to start or expand their businesses – a critical miss for job creation as the state emerges from the pandemic. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend \$40 million for an Expanding Opportunity Fund, which will vastly accelerate capital into small businesses through partnerships with nonprofit lenders. The fund would provide additional capital for nonprofit lenders so the state can maximize its access to federal funds and benefit over 1,000 businesses with access to capital.

Rehabilitating Communities and Supporting Economies

The State Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit is a proven development tool that encourages investment in historic buildings and generates a return on investment of nearly \$10 of economic impact for every \$1 of credit in Minnesota communities. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend reinstating the state tax credit, which sunset in 2022 and pairs with the federal tax credit to support construction and economic development in communities across the state, to revitalize commercial corridors and increase housing while preserving the historic fabric of Minnesota communities.

Modernizing Outdoor Recreation Experiences

Outdoor recreation is central to Minnesota's identity, fundamental to the economy, and essential for health and quality of life. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in renewing and evolving our aging state outdoor recreation system. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan know that whether you fish, hunt, hike, camp, or paddle, the Get Out MORE proposal will create transformative improvements to ensure the outdoor recreation needs of Minnesotans are met long into the future.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*The One Minnesota Budget **builds on the successes of our vibrant workforce and low unemployment rates by building pathways between new workers, accessible job training, and high-skill, high-demand jobs.***

Growing Minnesota's Workforce

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend investing \$30 million next biennium to support the Drive for 5 Workforce Fund. This initiative will prepare a workforce to enter five of the most critical occupational

categories in the state with high-growth jobs and family-sustaining wages: technology, caring professions, education, manufacturing, and trades. The Drive for 5 Workforce Fund will create a pipeline of workers who are skilled and prepared to enter high-growth and high-wage employment and begin to address Minnesota's high job vacancy rate. The Drive for 5 Fund is rooted in targeting populations that face the biggest barriers to employment: people of color, people with disabilities, and those that face other systemic barriers.

Creating Pathways from Prison to Employment

Data and research over several decades confirm that when people find stable, meaningful employment upon release from prison they are less likely to reoffend and return to prison. The One Minnesota Budget builds and expands connections to public and private employers, the trades, and community colleges and other post-secondary institutions to connect incarcerated individuals with jobs upon release.

Decreasing Disparities

Minnesota is experiencing the highest number of job vacancies in state history, and the state's unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the nation. However, the unemployment rates for Black Minnesotans and Hispanic or Latino Minnesotans are much higher than white Minnesotans. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend investing \$60 million for employment services and training to bring workers typically overlooked, particularly people of color, into the workforce at family-sustaining wages. This is a critical initiative to bring all Minnesotans into the workforce, ensure employers have the staff to help their businesses thrive, and move Minnesota's economy forward.

Establishing an Office of New Americans

Minnesota's new Americans create robust businesses, offer extraordinary cultural contributions, and meet labor needs in many greater Minnesota communities. However, there are multiple barriers to getting established in Minnesota. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose establishing an office explicitly focused on supporting immigrant and refugee integration, reducing barriers to employment, and improving connections between employers and job seekers.

Preparing More Youth to Enter the Workforce

To identify a workforce to fill historic job vacancies, Minnesota needs to expand who is served by workforce training programs and to invest in populations that have multiple barriers to employment. Youth are particularly important for filling current and future vacancies. Expanding Minnesota's high functioning and results-driven Youth at Work, Minnesota Youth Program, and YouthBuild programs will prepare more youth to enter the workforce focused and work-ready. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend doubling the existing funding for youth workforce development – which would serve at least 38,000 young people.

Creating Inclusive Workplaces

Minnesotans with disabilities are key contributors to keeping the state competitive in a global economy – but are often overlooked as a talent pool, even during this historic workforce shortage. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend creating a Minnesota Reasonable Accommodation Program, which will reimburse small- to mid-sized Minnesota employers for expenses tied to providing reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. During this historically tight labor market, the Reasonable Accommodation Program is a critical tool to help Minnesota employers create disability-inclusive workplaces.

Revitalizing Minnesota's Health Care Workforce

Minnesota's health care sector has been facing severe and persistent workforce shortages exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, as is the case in many parts of the country. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor's budget includes an array of financial supports, incentives, and research to help address this challenge. Strategies include new and expanded clinical training opportunities, research on status, causes, and distribution of workforce shortages, new programs to improve providers' mental health, and funding to develop new rural provider recruitment tools.

Continuing the Next Generation Nursing Assistant Training Program

The Next Generation Nursing Assistant program addresses staffing shortages in the health care field by providing Minnesotans with free training and materials and covering the cost of their certification exam. Since launching in January 2022, over 2,000 people have enrolled in training through the program. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend continuing the program, which will support the health of our state and ensure Minnesota hospitals, veterans homes, and long-term care facilities have access to highly skilled workers.

Increasing Rates for Home Care Workers

Home care workers play a key role in helping people live in the dignity and comfort of their home rather than in an institutional setting. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend funding to implement the tentative contract agreement between the State of Minnesota and SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa. This proposal provides a historic rate increase for over 20,000 home care workers in Minnesota, provides funding for agencies to reward workers for years of experience, includes a \$1,000 recruiting and retention incentive for some workers, and creates an orientation program that provides a foundation of the supports available to those entering into and continuing in the home health care worker profession.

Increasing Rates to Serve Older Adults in Their Own Homes

Services provided to older adults in their own homes are vital in assisting older adults to remain in their own communities. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor recommend significant and ongoing investments to increase rates for home and community-based services delivered to older adults in the community and in assisted living settings. The One Minnesota Budget also increases funding to help people hire their own workers.

Increasing Wages for Workers with Disabilities

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor's budget includes a comprehensive package of investments and policy reforms to increase wages and create more inclusive workplaces for people with disabilities. Potential benefits also include addressing workforce shortages and increasing workforce participation by people with disabilities. These changes will align the state's disability service system with Employment First laws, while renewing Minnesota's commitment to competitive and integrated employment for people with disabilities.

Stabilizing and Expanding the Long-Term Care Workforce

Higher rates and other system changes in the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's budget will stabilize and expand the long-term care workforce, making it easier for people with disabilities to find and hire direct support workers to meet essential daily needs. The One Minnesota Budget increases rates for services, increases inflationary updates for waiver disability providers, and raises hourly limits for parents and spouses who are paid to provide community-first and consumer-directed community supports.

Additionally, two permanent grant programs will address Minnesota’s long-term care workforce shortage by expanding the depth and diversity of the workforce while improving recruitment and retention. Ongoing funding will support provider capacity grants for rural and underserved communities and a new grant program focused on recruiting and retaining immigrants, refugees, and new Americans for vital long-term care positions.

Recruiting and Retaining Caring and Qualified Educators

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor’s budget will expand Grow Your Own programs to recruit teachers of color and Indigenous teachers while also addressing teacher shortages in early childhood education, special education licensure, and other content areas. The One Minnesota Budget will also provide a stipend to student teachers to reduce financial burden and remove barriers for aspiring educators. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor also propose expanding teacher mentorship opportunities across the state to support and retain new educators.

Helping More Students Become Teachers

Teachers of color and American Indian teachers serving in Minnesota’s teacher workforce have a positive impact on the success of all students in Minnesota and particularly on the success of students of color and American Indian students. Grants for student teachers and loan repayment for teachers working in shortage areas help fill critical job vacancies in rural Minnesota and ensure more teachers of color enter the workforce. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan’s budget will expand these grants to ensure more students receive the financial support they need to realize their dreams of becoming teachers.

Making Higher Education More Accessible

From the Direct Admissions program that helps high school seniors apply to colleges for free, to increased funding for the State Grant, to loan repayment assistance and student supports, Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are breaking down financial barriers to higher education and ensuring postsecondary is an option for all Minnesota students.



COMMUNITIES

*From our largest urban centers to our smallest townships, everyone in Minnesota should be able to live in a community that is **connected, resilient, and ready for the future.***

Increasing Access to Broadband

The Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program expands broadband service to areas of Minnesota that are unserved or underserved in pursuit of the state’s goal that all homes and businesses have access to broadband by 2026. Since its inception in 2014, the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program has provided nearly \$230 million to connect 90,000 Minnesota homes and businesses to high-speed internet. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend \$276 million in new funding to expand the reach of this vital program.

Marketing Minnesota

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are revitalizing the state’s tourism and marketing budgets to ensure Minnesota remains competitive and visible to travelers, talent, and business through expanded marketing, industry partnership programs, tribal nation engagement, and sustainability initiatives. Tourism funding will increase inclusivity through focused investments in outreach and marketing, while new Explore Minnesota for Business funding will develop comprehensive and integrated talent attraction and workforce development programs.

Diversifying Transitioning Economies

As power plants across Minnesota plan for closure, communities surrounding them face economic uncertainty. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend \$10 million in new funding to support impacted areas by providing resources for these communities to diversify their economies and find new opportunities for quality jobs and economic growth.



CLIMATE

Because of innovative businesses, skilled workers, and entrepreneurial spirit, Minnesota is well positioned to create thousands of high-paying jobs and develop the next generation of climate-smart technologies.

Fighting Climate Change

Clean energy is the right and responsible choice for future generations. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor will move Minnesota to 100% clean energy in the state’s electricity sector by 2040 – a policy they have supported for years. Minnesotans have the ingenuity and innovation needed to power this future, and the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are ready to work with Minnesotans to pioneer the clean energy economy. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan know Minnesota can – and should – be a state that continues to lead on clean energy.

Leveraging Federal Clean Energy Investments

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose nearly \$114 million for the State Competitiveness Fund to unlock billions of dollars in federal funding available through the Infrastructure Act and Inflation Reduction Act. The One Minnesota Budget provides critical state resources to match federal funds, provide technical assistance, and provide grant-writing help for rural, tribal, and disadvantaged communities so Minnesota can compete for multiple energy-related federal grants. These historic opportunities to leverage federal, state, and local investments will transform Minnesota’s clean energy economy.

Weatherizing Homes and Training Workers

The pre-weatherization and workforce training program invests in improving homes to be safe and warm and to grow the clean energy workforce trained to make these important home improvements. The program will cover costs to repair homes with health and safety problems, so that those homes can then qualify for the federally funded Weatherization Assistance Program to make the homes more energy efficient and permanently reduce

the homes' energy costs. This proposal will help meet the state's Climate Action Framework goal of weatherizing a quarter of low-income Minnesotans' homes by 2030.

Growing Clean Economy Apprenticeships

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan's budget includes \$3 million to grow apprenticeship opportunities for clean economy occupations. This funding will enable registered apprenticeship programs to purchase equipment and provide training to grow apprentice skills and upskill incumbent workers in clean technologies.

Fortifying Public Health Resilience

From air quality and weather-related concerns to the emergence of new diseases, a changing climate means new health challenges. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor's budget fortifies public health resilience against the human health impacts of climate change and supports interagency efforts around climate change. Activities include grants and technical assistance to local organizations and local public health to plan for the health impacts of extreme weather events as well as data analysis and reporting to implement, strengthen, evaluate, and track public health resiliency efforts in the face of climate change across the state. This proposal replaces CDC funding that ended in 2021.

Strengthening Minnesota Homes

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor will help Minnesotans be more resilient to changing climate by providing grants to protect homes against extreme weather events. Modeled after successful programs in other states, this proposal will save Minnesotans money on homeowner insurance premiums and prevent damage from the increasing number of storms and extreme weather.

Expanding Solar for Schools

The One Minnesota Budget will expand the popular Solar for Schools program to provide the opportunity for solar power to be added at every school in Greater Minnesota outside of the Xcel Energy service territory. Up to 723 additional schools in 187 school districts across Minnesota could each add an up to 40 kW solar system to help reduce school energy costs and offer students hands-on learning about clean energy and pathways to clean energy careers.

Increasing Access to EV Charging Infrastructure

Transportation is the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota and is a major contributor to climate change, air pollution, and ecosystem degradation. The One Minnesota Budget includes requiring electric vehicle charging infrastructure within or adjacent to new commercial and multi-family buildings to provide Minnesotans with more access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and increase the feasibility of EV use for Minnesotans.

Lowering Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions in the commercial building sector have increased by 15% since 2005, partially driven by higher heating and cooling demands caused by a changing climate. The One Minnesota Budget includes an adoption framework for the statewide commercial building energy code that ensures all new commercial and large multi-family construction is net-zero by 2036.

Modernizing Regional Parks and Trails

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose \$12 million in one-time spending – matched with \$2 of Metropolitan Council funds for every \$3 from the state – supporting capital improvements for the Metropolitan Regional Parks System. These spaces are cared-for places to connect, build health, and access nature for millions of Minnesotans, and the need for repairs and upgrades have grown as more people used parks and trails during the pandemic, and as climate and weather events have continued to impact parks, trails, and structures.

Enhancing Community Forests

Trees benefit Minnesota communities in many ways, including providing carbon storage, improving air quality, decreasing stormwater runoff, and adding natural beauty. Our community forests are threatened by tree pests and diseases and climate change adds to the problem. The One Minnesota Budget includes the ReLeaf program to help communities address urban and community reforestation needs and inequities in tree coverage created by emerald ash borer and other tree pests and disease.

Restoring Streams and Modernizing Water-Related Infrastructure

More intense rains combined with land use changes are causing more flooding and road washouts, degrading streambanks, and overwhelming water control structures. This impacts fish, waterfowl, and recreation opportunities. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor’s budget will replace culverts and bridges to improve stream ecology, selectively remove dams and restore habitat to enhance fish passage, and renovate other water control structures to address the impacts of climate change.

Preparing Communities for Climate Changes

More than 85% of Minnesota communities have reported experiencing at least one extreme weather event caused by climate change, preventing businesses and farmers from getting their products to market. To help communities better prepare for extreme weather events and strengthen their local economies, Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are expanding the resilient communities grant program to help communities upgrade aging infrastructure with climate-smart design, combat flooding and heat island effect, and create local jobs.



WATER, SOIL, & RESOURCES

*As the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesota’s most precious resources are our water and our land. This budget invests in **protecting, preserving, and rehabilitating habitats and waterways** in every part of the state.*

Enhancing Habitat Landscapes

The Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (HELP) provides financial and technical assistance to establish or enhance areas of diverse native vegetation to support declining populations of bees, butterflies, dragonflies, birds, and other wildlife species essential for ecosystems and food production. The HELP proposal includes 3 components of funding for homeowners, neighborhoods, and pollinator-friendly utilities such as solar farms.

Improving Soil Health and Water Storage

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor’s long-term strategy to build soil health will foster more productive crops, improve water quality, and create better resilience during extreme weather events. Funding landowners’ initiatives on soil health improves the soil’s ability to sustain agricultural crop productivity while providing essential functions such as regulating water, filtering and buffering pollutants, and cycling nutrients without resulting in soil degradation or otherwise harming the environment.

Water storage projects are designed and located to slow down or temporarily hold back water from reentering a stream or river. These projects reduce peak rates in key tributaries and remove sediment from runoff before it discharges into our lakes and rivers. The One Minnesota Budget will fund water storage projects that improve conditions in areas that have flooding, water quality issues, or climate change vulnerabilities.

Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands

Key climate strategies identified in the Climate Action Framework include enhancing grasslands and restoring wetlands. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan’s budget will enhance and restore more than 6,000 acres of grasslands and wetlands on public lands to increase carbon storage, improve wildlife habitat, enhance water quality, reduce flooding, and increase groundwater recharge.

Supporting Reforestation

Planting native trees is a powerful and commonsense climate mitigation action. Seed collection is the critical first step in producing the tree seedlings used by many public and private landowners for reforestation. Because the current approach to seed collection is under-resourced and unsustainable, the One Minnesota Budget helps ensure native tree seed is available to support reforestation efforts across the state.



AGRICULTURE

Minnesota farms, farm families, and agricultural producers have kept our state’s economy strong and helped feed the world. The One Minnesota budget ensures that we can continue growing and innovating in the agricultural sector.

Building Soil Health

Building soil health is important to water quality and natural resources in Minnesota. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor’s budget builds upon a pilot program to fully fund a grant to help farmers, producer groups, and local governments purchase or retrofit soil health equipment that is often specialized and expensive. These grants will expand the number of Minnesota farmers and acres engaged in soil health activities.

Investing in Biofuels Infrastructure

Motor fuel blends with ethanol burn cleaner than traditional fossil fuels and help give drivers more affordable options at the gas pump by increasing access to homegrown fuel that comes from Minnesota farmers. To promote the continued sale and use of higher ethanol blend biofuels, Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor

Flanagan propose additional funds to the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Biofuels Infrastructure Investment Grant program. This program helps smaller service stations offset the cost of investing in upgraded equipment that is compatible with motor fuel containing at least 15% or more of ethanol.

Improving Water Resources

Clean water – especially clean drinking water – is important to ensure healthy and successful children and families. The Agricultural Best Management Loan Program (AgBMP) is a water quality program that provides low-interest loans to Minnesota farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses to encourage agricultural projects or practices that help reduce, eliminate, or prevent water pollution. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose an increase in funding for this program, providing more Minnesotans access to improved water resources.

Funding the AGRI Account

The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) program provides grants, loans, and other types of financial assistance to advance Minnesota’s agricultural and renewable energy industries. The program helps farmers, agricultural businesses, and schools access a variety of funding opportunities, and is currently set to sunset in 2025. This proposal extends the sunset to 2035 to maintain AGRI’s significant economic impacts.

Increasing Access to Beginning Farmer Grants

Minnesota agriculture is made stronger by our diversity. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan’s budget includes a grant program specifically for new and emerging farmers to help them increase market access and sales. Smaller grant awards with lower matching costs would make this program more accessible to a wider group of people, and would help new farmers increase production, take on new customers, and grow their businesses.

Expanding Minnesota Grown

The Minnesota Grown program was started over 30 years ago to promote products that were grown or raised on Minnesota farms. Though membership has grown significantly, now including 450 meat and poultry producers, the last increase to state funding for the program was more than a decade ago in 2008. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor will increase annual funding and allow Minnesota Grown to expand its ability to promote locally raised and processed meat and poultry and support its producers.

Supporting Farm Safety, Health, and Wellness

Farmers often face high levels of stress and uncertainty, as well as increased occupational hazards. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan propose investing in the health and safety of farmers through farm safety outreach, equipment upgrades, mental health outreach, and other support services. This proposal also includes supporting farm-connected children and youth through a grant to the Minnesota FFA Foundation for innovative education, training, and outreach activities for youth mental health.

Replenishing the Ag Emergency Account

Since its start in 2016, the Ag Emergency Account has been a reliable source of funding for agricultural responses such as the 2020 swine supply disruption and the 2022 outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan will replenish the Ag Emergency Account for rapid response to agricultural emergencies, including drought, flooding, HPAI, and other animal disease outbreaks.

Expanding the Emerging Farmers Office

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are committed to helping everyone involved in Minnesota agriculture, including those from underrepresented communities. The One Minnesota Budget expands the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Emerging Farmers Office and allows additional staff to focus on the needs of emerging farmers, and immigrant and BIPOC producers and business owners. These staff will help the department remove barriers that prevent new or potential farmers from entering the field or succeeding.

Reducing Disparities for Farmers and Producers

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor will help reduce disparities for new and emerging farmers and BIPOC producers by assisting those navigating farm and food systems. Services may include training on rules, requirements, best practices, and assistance with land rental and lease agreements. This proposal will also fund organizations that already have established relationships with historically underserved populations and can provide technical assistance, clear information, and education.

Expanding the Good Acre LEAFF Program

The Good Acre’s Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund (LEAFF) program provides BIPOC farmers with new market opportunities by paying market-rate prices for their produce. The produce is then donated to hunger-relief organizations across Minnesota. This proposal expands the work the LEAFF program is already doing to support more Minnesota farmers and families and children in need of food.