

2002

Minnesota Milestones

—▶ Measures that matter

Summary

Background and history

Minnesota Milestones began in 1991 in the belief that a shared vision, clear goals and measurement of results would lead to a better future for Minnesota. As a first step, Minnesota Planning asked people from every region to describe what they wanted their state to be like in 30 years. The resulting vision, found below, describes the hoped-for qualities of Minnesota's people, communities, governments, economy and environment. Nineteen goals distill the vision. Progress toward each goal is measured by a package of 70 indicators.

The purpose of *Minnesota Milestones* is to help citizens, communities and public officials track progress toward these 19 goals. Achieving the goals requires the collective efforts of government, private businesses, nonprofit organizations and the citizens of Minnesota.

New in *Minnesota Milestones 2002*

Minnesota Milestones 2002 now provides data and interpretation online at www.mnplan.state.mn.us/mm/2002.html. The site includes many direct links to local data, such as for school districts and counties. The goals and indicators in *Minnesota Milestones 2002* are the same as those in *Minnesota Milestones 1998*.

The online *Minnesota Milestones 2002* also allows for easier and more frequent data updates than printed copies permit. For example, some data from the 2000 Census used for several *Minnesota Milestones* indicators will not be available until summer 2002. Once this data is available those indicators will be updated.

Relationship of *Minnesota Milestones* to other accountability measures

Minnesota Milestones was one of the earliest state efforts to promote accountability for results. It has been a catalyst in the growing movement toward performance measurement and quality management in government.

However, *Minnesota Milestones* measures progress towards broad societal goals that go far beyond specific government programs and policies. Many factors beyond the control of government influence progress on the 19 goals in *Minnesota Milestones*.

Other state, regional and local government accountability projects strive to measure the effectiveness of specific programs and policies. These projects complement each other and provide an opportunity to examine Minnesota's progress from different angles.

Overall major trends

The 1990s were a time of unprecedented economic prosperity throughout the country and in Minnesota. This prosperity provided the opportunity not only for economic gains, but social and environmental progress as well.

C O N T E N T S

Overall major trends	1
Data gaps	2
<hr/>	
A vision for Minnesota's future	2
<hr/>	
Table	2
Goals showing progress	
Goals with inadequate data	
Goals with stable or mixed results	
<hr/>	
Goals and indicators at a glance	3
<hr/>	
Progress toward each goal	4
People	4
Community and democracy	5
Economy	6
Environment	7

MINNESOTA PLANNING



APRIL 2002

A vision for Minnesota's future

The vision developed from the priorities of thousands of Minnesotans in 1991 and 1992 remains a guiding force for *Minnesota Milestones 2002*.

"We Minnesotans like our state. We believe Minnesota is a good place to raise a family, go to school and enjoy life. We appreciate the natural beauty, the friendliness and sense of opportunity, the good government and the diverse economic opportunities. We believe strong values are important – spiritual values, individual responsibility, volunteering, a strong work ethic and sharing with others. We appreciate our cultural diversity. These are the personal values we cherish and want to carry forward into the next century.

We do not want growth and change to overpower our quality of life. We want to plan for the future. Yet we recognize that we will have to make tough choices, as we have in the past. We want to deepen the values that have guided earlier generations and made Minnesota a leader in the nation. We want to begin now to build an even better place to live, a Minnesota to pass on proudly to our children and grandchildren.

When we talk about our hopes for the future, we share a vision with these common themes:

- Minnesota will be a community of people who respect and care for one another.
- Our economic activity will create wealth and provide a good standard of living for all our people.
- Our citizens will be good thinkers, creative, always learning, with the skills to compete internationally.
- We will protect and enjoy the natural world.
- Our government will be responsive, effective and close to the people."

– From the original *Minnesota Milestones*, 1992

Minnesota moved forward in the areas of public safety, health, government performance, economy, educational achievement and attainment as well as some aspects of the environment.

Despite progress on many of the *Minnesota Milestones* goals, significant challenges remain. For a number of education, health, and economic indicators significant disparities exist between races and ethnic groups. Disparities also exist between urban and rural areas. Challenges exist for many of the environmental goals.

Minnesota Planning offers its judgment on how Minnesota has done on each goal since 1990, keeping in mind that not all regions or populations within the state have experienced the same trends. Readers are encouraged to examine the indicators and draw their own conclusions.

For most of the 70 indicators in *Minnesota Milestones*, data exists only through 1999 or 2000. The recent economic downturn and effects of the events of September 11, 2001, are not yet reflected. How these events affect Minnesota's progress towards achieving the 19 goals for a healthy and secure future is a story still being written.

Data gaps

Progress on several goals is uncertain due to lack of or inconsistency of data. Additional data from the 2000 Census, expected in summer 2002, will help to fill in the picture for some goals. For example, until new data is available on child poverty, it is difficult to determine how well Minnesota has done to ensure that its children will not live in poverty. Another type of data problem is the change in how race is reported in the 2000 Census compared to the 1990 Census. This prohibits an accurate comparison of trends by race and ethnicity on any indicator that relies on census data.

Goals showing progress

Academic achievement
Inclusive communities
Safe, caring communities
Health
Responsive, efficient government
Sustainable economic growth
Skilled workforce

Goals with inadequate data

Decent, affordable housing
Child poverty

Goals with stable or mixed results

Stable, supportive families
School readiness
Support for independent living
Participation in democracy
Standard of living
Viable rural and urban economies
Conservation of natural resources
Quality of the environment
Healthy ecosystems
Outdoor recreation

Goals and indicators at a glance

PEOPLE

Our children will not live in poverty.

1. Child poverty
2. Low-income schoolchildren

Families will provide a stable, supportive environment for their children.

3. Satisfaction with child care
4. School transfers
5. Child abuse and neglect
6. Teen pregnancy
7. Runaways

All children will be healthy and start school ready to learn.

8. Low birth weight
9. On-time immunization
10. Preschool child development

Minnesotans will excel in basic and challenging academic skills and knowledge.

11. Elementary school skills
12. Eighth-grade basic skills
13. College entrance scores
14. High school graduation

Minnesotans will be healthy.

15. Health insurance
16. Infant mortality
17. Life expectancy
18. Premature death
19. Smoking and tobacco use
20. Suicide

COMMUNITY AND DEMOCRACY

Our communities will be safe, friendly and caring.

21. Sense of safety
22. Violent and property crime
23. Juvenile apprehensions
24. Volunteer work

People in need will receive support that helps them live as independently as they can.

25. Nearby support
26. In-home help for older people
27. Welfare to work
28. Food shelf use
29. Homelessness

All people will be welcomed, respected and able to participate fully in Minnesota's communities and economy.

30. Bias crimes
31. Minority teachers
32. Employment of people with disabilities
33. Transportation for people with disabilities

People will participate in government and politics.

34. Voter turnout
35. Checkoff campaign contributions

Government in Minnesota will be cost-efficient, and services will be designed to meet the needs of the people who use them.

36. Satisfaction with government services
37. Price of government

ECONOMY

Minnesota will have sustainable, strong economic growth.

38. Growth of gross state product
39. Employment of working-age population
40. Energy efficiency of the economy

Minnesota's workforce will have the education and training to make the state a leader in the global economy.

41. Post-high school education and training
42. Job placement after two-year college
43. Adults with college education

All Minnesotans will have the economic means to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

44. Median family income compared to U.S. median
45. Poverty rate
46. Availability of full-time work

All Minnesotans will have decent, safe and affordable housing.

47. Housing costs
48. Home ownership

Rural areas, small cities and urban neighborhoods throughout the state will be economically viable places for people to live and work.

49. Counties losing population
50. Net gain in businesses
51. Regional disparity in unemployment
52. Unrestricted highways
53. Urban home values
54. Freeway congestion

ENVIRONMENT

Minnesotans will conserve natural resources to give future generations a healthy environment and a strong economy.

55. Energy use per person
56. Renewable energy sources
57. Vehicle miles
58. Air pollutants
59. Water use
60. Timber harvest
61. Solid waste and recycling
62. Toxic chemicals

Minnesotans will improve the quality of the air, water and earth.

63. Urban air pollution
64. Water quality in lakes and rivers
65. Nitrate in groundwater
66. Erosion of cropland

Minnesota will restore and maintain healthy ecosystems that support diverse plants and wildlife.

67. Wildlife habitat
68. Changes in land use

Minnesotans will have opportunities to enjoy the state's natural resources.

69. Parkland and open space
70. Recreational trails

Progress toward each goal

PEOPLE

Goal trends

Our children will not live in poverty. Until Census 2000 data is received, it is difficult to track progress on reducing child poverty.

Families will provide a stable, supportive environment for their children. There has been little progress on this goal except for the decrease in the number of births to teens.

All children will start school ready to learn. Indicators are mixed, but there has been significant improvement in timely immunization of young children.

Minnesotans will excel in basic and challenging academic skills and knowledge. This goal's indicators continue to show steady improvement for the state as a whole.

Minnesotans will be healthy. There has been progress toward achieving this goal, except for fluctuations in teenage tobacco use.

Educated and healthy children and adults are a foundation for progress in all aspects of Minnesota's future. Minnesota has focused attention on the status of children, adults and families through creation of goals and progress measures. Graduation standards and tests are now firmly established in public schools and the Minnesota Department of Health has put forth wide-ranging public health goals for 2004 and provided data to communities to help them measure progress. Although Minnesota is considered a leader in health, learning and the well-being of children many challenges remain, including health and education disparities among racial and ethnic minorities.

Progress

Most health-related indicators show stability or improvement for Minnesota as a whole since 1990. These *Minnesota Milestones 2002* findings are supported by the annual United Health Foundation State Health Rankings, a composite index of general health that consistently ranks Minnesota at or near the top. Premature death, infant mortality and suicide rates have all dropped and more children are being immunized on time. The teen pregnancy rate has declined steadily, although it has increased among Hispanic and Asian girls. The percentage of adults covered by health insurance has remained stable, while the percentage of insured children has increased. Premature death (years of potential life lost before age 65) has declined.

Several key indicators demonstrate progress toward Minnesota's education goals. Since basic standards tests began in 1995-96, the trend has been positive. The percentage passing the math test rose from 69 percent in 1995-96 to 75 percent in 2001-02. The percentage passing the reading test also rose, from 53 percent in 1995-96 to 80 percent in 2001-02. National comparisons look good. In the most recent mathematics exams, Minnesota elementary and middle school students ranked first among the states; in reading they ranked eighth and fourth, respectively.

Minnesota's average scores on the ACT college entrance test, taken by 66 percent of students, have held steady since 1996. Minnesota ranks second highest among the 26 states where more than half of graduating seniors took the test. Graduation, dropout and continuation rates have not changed significantly since 1996. Students who graduated in 2000 were the first required to pass Minnesota's Basic Standards tests.

Challenges

Generally positive trends can mask wide gulfs within the state. In education and health care, significant disparities persist between White people and people of all other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Although infant mortality in the Black/African American population has declined significantly, rates for Black/African American, American Indian and Hispanic infants remain much worse than rates for Whites. In Minnesota's public schools, only 37 percent of Black/African American students, 43 percent of American Indians and 47 percent of Hispanic students graduate on time. Although the rate of teenage pregnancy is declining, it remains very high among Black/African American girls and is increasing among Asians and Hispanics.

There are also disparities associated with socioeconomic position. While the state enjoyed a thriving economy until 2001, lack of statistics leaves uncertain the state's progress toward eliminating child poverty, although the percentage of schoolchildren approved for free or reduced-price school meals leveled off in the latter part of the decade.

Many Minnesota families are thriving, but a growing number seem to be living under increased stress. Public school transfers have fluctuated throughout the decade and the number of runaways is increasing. While the number of determined cases of child abuse and neglect has changed only slightly, the number of children reported as having died from maltreatment increased significantly, from three in 1998 to 28 in 1999.

Despite Minnesota's progress on academic achievement in the 1990s and the high rankings compared with other states, there is evidence that school results need to be improved nationwide. Only about one-third of

Minnesota elementary and secondary students demonstrate “proficient” mastery in national mathematics and reading tests. About one-fourth fall short of basic mastery. In a recent study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, U.S. students age 15 were ranked 15th in reading, 19th in mathematics and 14th in science out of 31 developed countries.

Troubling health trends include the continued rise in the percentage of newborns with low birth weight. Although life expectancy and premature death statistics have improved, cancer and unintentional injury continue to be the leading causes of premature death. Smoking use among adults and tobacco use among teens continue to be a concern with daily use rates of 20 and 25 percent respectively.

Minnesota has taken a lead among the states in establishing a comprehensive system of early childhood screening. This gives clear indication of commitment to the goal of healthy preschool children who enter school ready to learn. Since early childhood screening was begun, the data has indicated mixed results. However, referring children for further assessment or placing them in special education gives them a better chance to get the help they need.

COMMUNITY AND DEMOCRACY

Goal trends

Our communities will be safe, friendly and caring. Declining crime rates have led to significant progress toward this goal.

People in need will receive support that helps them live as independently as they can. While those in need appear to have access to support, there is also a stronger demand for support services.

All people will be welcomed, respected and able to participate fully in Minnesota’s community and economy. The indicators for this goal suggest that progress is being made toward achieving a more inclusive Minnesota.

People will participate in government and politics. The two indicators for this goal are sending a mixed message. While voter turnout was higher in recent elections, fewer people wanted public funds to be used for campaigns.

Government in Minnesota will be cost-efficient and services will be designed to meet the needs of the people who use them. The price of government has dropped since the mid 1990s, but remains close to levels seen in the early 1990s. Minnesotans’ satisfaction with the amount and quality of services has remained high.

The goals in this section speak to the importance of healthy, inclusive communities that offer safety and support, as well as the importance of people participating in community life. Some aspects of community life, such as crime rates and voting, are easy to measure. Others, such as need for food or shelter assistance or efficiency of government, are more difficult to measure. On balance, Minnesota communities appear to be safer than most, support systems for people in need are strong, and voter turnout ranks near the top nationally. At the same time, dependence on food shelves and homeless shelters remains high.

Progress

Progress has been made in parts of each goal. Minnesotans are safer compared to 1990, strong support systems exist to help those most in need, more citizens are helping each other, and most Minnesotans are satisfied with their government.

People’s sense of safety has remained fairly constant, with more than nine out of 10 Minnesotans reporting that they feel safe. Violent and serious property crimes have dropped since the mid-1990s and are lower than 1990 levels. Juvenile crime, measured by the apprehension rate of youth age 10 to 17, has declined as well.

More people are helping others in their communities. Volunteerism is up slightly since the early 1990s. Of people who feel they need help, a high percentage report that they get the help they need. Fewer people over age 60 say they need help in their homes, but when they do, over 85 percent say they get the help they need.

There has been movement toward more inclusive, welcoming and respectful communities. Although the racial and ethnic diversity of school teachers is increasing, it is nowhere near the diversity of the student population. Bias crime appears to be falling but still does occur, mainly related to race or national origin.

Public transportation for people with disabilities, an important factor in their participation in work and community life, has improved since the early 1990s. However, availability varies widely by location. Transportation needs are likely to increase as the population ages.

Civic participation has increased as measured by voter turnout. Citizen satisfaction with government has risen to nearly 85 percent while the price of government has declined in recent years.

With the enactment of welfare reform in 1996, more families have one or more adults working than in the early 1990s. This trend can be viewed as being both negative and positive. It is negative in the sense that working families still must rely on welfare for additional income, but it is positive in that the welfare

system is focused on moving people off of welfare and into self-sufficiency.

Challenges

Despite significant progress on many of the goals, challenges remain. Even though food shelf use was relatively stable, the families that used them did so more frequently. Mixed information exists in the use of homeless shelters. While there has been an increase in space to accommodate the homeless, an increasing number of Minnesota homeless, both adults and youth, are being turned away.

Although Minnesota ranks high in voter turnout compared to the nation, only about 50 to 70 percent of eligible voters choose to participate in elections. The percentage of Minnesota tax filers who are willing to designate \$5 – at no cost to themselves – to publicly finance campaigns through the checkoff on the state income tax form has dwindled from nearly 20 percent in 1991 to less than 9 percent in 2000.

An analysis on the employment rate of people with disabilities will be conducted when data from the 2000 Census is available in summer 2002.

ECONOMY

Goal trends

Minnesota will have sustainable, strong economic growth.

Consistent economic growth during most of the 1990s helped Minnesota reach this goal.

Minnesota's workforce will have the education and training to make the state a leader in the global economy.

Minnesota's workforce continues to be one of the best educated in the country. Job placement of two-year public college graduates improved throughout the 1990s.

All Minnesotans will have the economic means to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Overall progress was made on this goal, but some Minnesotans continue to lack a reasonable standard of living.

All Minnesotans will have decent, safe and affordable housing.

Data that is currently available hints at progress over the last decade, but upcoming 2000 Census data will help complete the picture.

Rural areas, small cities and urban neighborhoods throughout the state will be economically viable places for people to live and work.

There was uneven success in reaching this goal in all communities, neighborhoods and rural areas. While the number of counties losing population during the 1990s was worrisome, positive strides were made in reducing the regional unemployment differences in the state.

A strong economy not only supports the self-sufficiency goals of individuals and families, but creates the means for dealing with diverse challenges ranging from education to environmental protection. Throughout most of the 1990s, Minnesota kept pace with or outperformed a strong national economy. The indicators for these goals include basic economic measures such as gross state product, family income and poverty, as well as measures of things such as educational attainment that create the foundation for economic growth. In addition, several indicators – including regional unemployment rates and urban home values – highlight the importance of the economic well-being of individual neighborhoods, communities and regions across the state.

Progress

Robust economic growth during the 1990s created the opportunity to make progress on most of the *Minnesota*

Milestones goals. Between 1990 and 1999, Minnesota's gross state product, the value of all goods and services produced in a year, grew more than 43 percent, adjusted for inflation.

Minnesota's strong economy was also reflected by higher participation in the workforce by Minnesota's working age population, annual net gains in the number of businesses in most Minnesota counties, increased access to full-time work for those Minnesotans who wanted it and lower unemployment rates throughout the state.

Progress was made toward a more sustainable economy in which economic growth and environmental protection are complementary objectives. The energy efficiency of the economy improved – that is, less energy was required to produce a dollar's worth of goods and services in 1999 than in 1990.

Minnesota's growth in income has helped many Minnesotans improve their standard of living. Minnesota's median income outperformed the nation's median income throughout the decade and in fact, the difference widened over the years. This increase in income is one factor in the growth of the already high rate of home ownership for Minnesotans. Nationally, Minnesota ranked fourth in home ownership in 2000.

A highly educated workforce has been a strength of Minnesota's economy for many years. Rising educational levels among adults and improved job placement for two-year college graduates indicate that Minnesota continues to make progress on workforce skills and knowledge.

Challenges

Despite a period of unprecedented economic growth, prosperity did not reach all Minnesotans. While unemployment levels reached historic lows for many parts of the state, other

areas, particularly in the northern half of the state, still faced unemployment levels higher than the national average. Fewer counties had a net loss in population than in the 1980s, but 25 counties (primarily in the southern and western regions) lost population despite a statewide population growth of more than 12 percent.

The population growth that accompanied economic prosperity has increased pressures on the quality of life in some parts of Minnesota. In the Twin Cities, urban home values in Minneapolis and St. Paul significantly lagged behind homes in the suburban areas. Congestion on the Twin Cities freeway system has steadily worsened.

In 2000, Minnesota ranked second-highest in the nation in the percentage of employment by Minnesota's working-age population. This trend bears watching. A high rate may indicate that more people are working multiple jobs and an increasing share of households need two incomes to make ends meet.

A lack of comparable data prevented a thorough analysis of progress toward some goals. Changes in how the U.S. Census Bureau reports race for the 2000 Census prevent an accurate examination of progress for home ownership and income by race. In addition, a change in survey methodology prevents a historical trend analysis on post-high school education and training.

In summer 2002, census data is expected on a number of important indicators. For example, the percentage of Minnesotans age 25 and over with a graduate or professional degree will show whether Minnesota has improved on an indicator where Minnesota previously ranked 28th in the country. In addition, census data on the percentage of households paying more than 35 percent of their income on housing will be important for assessing the state trend in housing affordability.

ENVIRONMENT

Goal trends

Minnesotans will conserve natural resources to give future generations a healthy environment and a strong economy. Movement toward this goal remains mixed. Minnesota has increased its reliance on local renewable energy sources and is recycling more, yet producing more solid waste and using more water and fossil fuel energy.

Minnesotans will improve the quality of the air, water and earth. Progress on this goal, too, is mixed. Pollution prevention efforts have significantly reduced some types of air pollution and more rivers are swimmable, but some lakes have become less swimmable and estimated soil erosion from wind has increased.

Minnesotans will restore and maintain healthy ecosystems that support diverse plants and wildlife. Indicator species for five habitat types also show mixed results. Loons (lakes) and prairie chickens (prairie) appear to be more plentiful while sharp-tailed grouse (brush land) and pheasant (farmland) have fallen off, with the black-throated green warbler (forest) remaining stable.

Minnesotans will have opportunities to enjoy the state's natural resources. Access to the state's natural resources and recreational areas has steadily increased.

Minnesota Milestones views a healthy economy and a vibrant, sustainable environment as going hand-in-hand. The goals in this section deal with conservation of natural resources and improvements in environmental quality, as well as access to water and natural areas for recreation. Indicators focus attention both on the condition of natural systems and pressures placed on

the environment in the form of pollution or land use. The indicators in this section show improvements in pollution emissions and recycling, and generally healthy ecosystems, but also show increased pressures on the environment from population growth, energy consumption and land development.

Progress

Minnesota has become the third-largest wind power producer in the United States, behind California and Iowa. Renewable energy of all types makes up a slowly rising portion of the state's energy production, up to 6 percent today from 4 percent in 1990.

There have also been dramatic improvements in air quality for several major types of pollution and increases in Minnesota's recycling rate, which has gone from 36 percent in 1991 to 48 percent in 2000. The amount of toxic chemicals released directly into the environment has gone down. More of Minnesota's rivers are safe for swimming. The decade has also seen less soil erosion from water, greater abundance of some key species like the loon, more forest land and clear progress toward giving Minnesotans greater access to the state's natural resources through trails and parks.

Challenges

Significant challenges to Minnesota's environment remain. Minnesotans are using more fossil fuel energy than ever before, and as this energy consumption grows so do toxic air pollutants and emissions of carbon monoxide and other gases that contribute to global climate change. Emissions of sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide that lead to smog continue to edge upward as well.

Vehicle miles driven per person rose during the past decade, up 33 percent between 1990 and 2000. Minnesotans are using more water and producing solid waste faster than the population is growing. Minnesota's population grew

by 11 percent between 1991 and 2000, while total generation of solid waste grew by 44 percent.

Fewer of the state's rivers support aquatic life and soil erosion from wind appears to have worsened.

Significant increases in urban land pose growing challenges for wildlife since the increase may fragment the habitat they depend on. Improved indicators are still needed to track changes in the quality, not just quantity, of different ecosystems.

The indicators presented here tell an important story about how Minnesota's environment is doing. But just as important is what they do not say. For example, while toxic chemicals reported under the federal Toxic Release Inventory have declined significantly, they represent a small percentage of the total amount manufactured, handled and used.

Similarly, the six criteria pollutants used to judge air quality for the Twin Cities area have dropped dramatically during the past decade, but there are hundreds of chemicals, including most toxic chemicals and greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, that remain unregulated and pose threats to human health, long-term economic progress and environmental quality.

Minnesota Planning is charged with developing a long-range plan for the state, stimulating public participation in Minnesota's future and coordinating activities with state agencies, the Legislature and other units of government.

Minnesota Milestones 2002 Summary is available on the Minnesota Planning Internet site at www.mnplan.state.mn.us

Research was conducted by Jay Stroebel, Susan Browender, Susan Eichhorst, Rolf Nordstrom, Lee Schutz, Steven Scrogham and Sandra Stalker. Web design and technical support was provided by Andrew Koebrick and Renee Anderson. Assistance was provided by David Arbeit, Heidi Habeck, Mary Jo Leier and Linda Oelker. Review was provided by Susan Roth, Marcia Farinacci, Jay Fonkert, Debra Hagel, Ginger Hope, Jim Ramstrom and Barbara Ronningen.

Upon request, this document will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.



658 Cedar St., Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-3985
www.mnplan.state.mn.us