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## **What is Minnesota Milestones?**

*Minnesota Milestones* is a citizen-based, 30-year plan for the state characterized by concrete and measurable goals. It is a way for Minnesotans to hold their leaders accountable. A report card serves as the summary and the report contains 20 broad goals and 79 specific milestones to measure progress.

*Minnesota Milestones* is the result of a citizen-based planning process. More than 10,000 Minnesotans participated in the process by:

- attending one of 45 meetings across the state
- filling out mail-in surveys
- reviewing draft documents (more than 9,000 copies were distributed)
- writing letters

The report contains a vision for Minnesota, with goals and milestones to measure progress. It is based on the ideas from *Reinventing Government*:

- what gets measured tends to get done
- if you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure
- if you can't recognize success, you can't reward it
- if you can't recognize failure you can't learn from it

The plan's 20 goals include:

- Sustaining above average economic growth in Minnesota.
- Maintaining economically viable small cities, rural and urban areas.
- Emphasizing advanced education so Minnesota will become a global economic leader.

We will measure progress toward these goals by periodically measuring 79 milestones such as:

- Minnesota per capita gross state product
- County per capita income
- College graduation rates

## **How effective is Minnesota Milestones?**

The 30-year plan has had an immediate impact on state agency budgets. State agencies have used the goals and indicators set forth in *Minnesota Milestones* in preparing their budget recommendations. *Minnesota Milestones* established the people's priorities and effectively implanted those priorities in state agency budgets. Through its 79 indicators, *Minnesota Milestones* provides a concrete way for citizens to measure results and hold government accountable.

The legislature embraced the notion of performance budgeting and passed a law in 1993 requiring every state agency to prepare performance budgets with strategic plans and measurable results.

Since the publication of *Minnesota Milestones* in December 1992, Minnesota Planning, state agencies, the Legislature, the private sector and others have been developing strategic plans to achieve the state's long-range goals. *Minnesota Milestones* does not include strategies because strategies change depending on what works, what doesn't and who is in charge. But the people's vision and long-range goals should remain unchanged into the future.

Some examples of strategies developed to achieve the goals in *Minnesota Milestones* are:

- **State of Diversity:** An action plan to combat racism in Minnesota.
- **Action for Children:** Long-range strategies to improve the lives of Minnesota children and their families.
- **Economic Blueprint:** Goals to ensure a good standard of living for all citizens.
- **Sustainable Development:** Developing new ways to protect the environment and develop the economy.
- **Affordable Housing:** Linking housing, transportation and jobs so that all Minnesotans have access to safe, clean and affordable housing.
- **Minnesota Children's Initiative:** A major effort conducted in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts to improve outcomes for the state's children.
- **Family Services Collaboratives:** An \$8 million family services collaborative grant program to help communities make major service delivery reforms for families and children.
- **Community Report Cards:** Developing an on-line children's report card for every community in the state. Within seconds, a customized report card for cities, counties or school districts will appear on the computer screen. Any Minnesotan will be able to view data from a variety of databases such as health, education demographics and crime, and compare performance with other localities, regions and the state.

## National acclaim

Minnesota has received numerous inquiries regarding replication of the process from, among others:

White House  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
National Governor's Association  
National Association of State Budget Officers  
State Council of Governments  
Arkansas  
Louisiana  
Texas  
Maine  
Vermont  
Florida  
Idaho

## **Chronology of Minnesota Milestones**

National and local media have given *Minnesota Milestones* favorable ratings:

*Very good long-range planning... ambitious Minnesota Milestones project targets goals and measures progress.*

– Financial World, May 11, 1993

*Allowing citizens to set the agenda and following through with solid goals is an admirable way of doing business.*

– City and State newspaper, Sept. 1, 1992

*Minnesota Milestones can help define goals and thereby help shape how Minnesotans conceive their future. And that can improve the state.*

– Minneapolis Star Tribune Aug. 18, 1992

*[Minnesota Milestones] will enable Minnesotans to identify the state's problems and their solutions to devise a system to ensure that politicians make progress toward meeting those goals.*

– St. Paul Pioneer Press Aug. 8, 1992

### Winter 1991

Shortly after taking office, Governor Arne H. Carlson received a copy of *Oregon Benchmarks* and decided to begin a similar effort in Minnesota. *Oregon Benchmarks* identified 162 specific indicators that the people of Oregon could use to hold their leaders accountable for results. Minnesota Planning was asked to take the lead and named the effort *Minnesota Milestones*. A chronology of the milestones process is presented below.

## **Phase I: Finding the Vision**

### Summer/Fall 1991

Public participation in determining the future of Minnesota was an important part of the *Minnesota Milestones* project. Over the summer and fall of 1991 Minnesota Planning conducted an intensive outreach campaign to involve Minnesotans in the milestones process. Community meetings were held across the state, thousands of invitations were mailed, and an aggressive medial effort was waged to bring citizens to the meetings. More than 1,600 Minnesotans attended one of 30 community meetings held in 15 locations around the state. In small groups, citizens discussed their dreams and hopes for the future of Minnesota.

### December 1991/January 1992

Minnesota Planning staff members sifted through over 40,000 ideas expressed at the public meetings. From those ideas came a vision statement outlining what Minnesotans want their state to be like 20 or 30 years from now. A preliminary vision statement was drafted.

Winter/Spring 1992

*Choosing Our Future*, a draft vision document was distributed to thousands of citizens for review and comment. Next, the vision was revised based on citizen input.

## **Phase II: Measuring Progress**

Spring 1992

During this time, goals and measurements were developed to achieve the vision. Minnesota Planning staff developed 27 broad goals and 103 indicators of progress. *Minnesota Milestones: Public Review Draft* was published.

Summer 1992

Minnesota Planning took *Minnesota Milestones: Public Review Draft* back to the public for comment. Almost 500 people attended one of 15 meetings across the state to comment on the public review draft. Presentations were made to numerous civic and community groups around the state. Experts were asked to review and comment on specific indicators. Surveys were included in the draft report to encourage public response and more than 8,000 report copies were distributed for comment.

## **Phase III: Moving Forward**

Fall/Winter 1992

Final revisions were made and *Minnesota Milestones: A Report Card for the Future* was published in December 1992. State agencies began incorporating *Minnesota Milestones* in their budget requests.

1993

Efforts began to develop strategies to achieve the state's goals in *Minnesota Milestones*.