

# FACT SHEET | Expanding Opportunity for All Minnesotans

## *An Opportunity Agenda for a Better Minnesota*

---

Under Governor Dayton's leadership, Minnesota is doing much better than before – with 255,000 new jobs and a \$1.6 billion budget surplus. However, too many Minnesotans are still being left behind, especially in Greater Minnesota and communities of color that face health disparities, experience opportunity gaps in education, and have less access to jobs with family-sustaining wages. Governor Dayton's Opportunity Agenda for a Better Minnesota includes strategic investments to prepare workers for good jobs, alleviate disparities in health and housing, and expand economic opportunities for Minnesotans who have historically been left behind. Summaries of these proposed investments are included below.

### Expanding Statewide Economic Opportunity

- **Training for High Wage, High Demand Jobs** – The Minnesota PIPELINE project connects Minnesotans with training for jobs in high demand industries including advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, and information technology. More than 300 Minnesotans already have completed a PIPELINE training program, allowing them to access good jobs without incurring the significant student debt associated with other forms of higher education. Governor Dayton has proposed a \$600,000 investment to expand the PIPELINE project and allow more Minnesotans to participate.
- **Expanding Access to Apprenticeships for Great Jobs** – Apprenticeship programs combine job-related technical instruction with structured on-the-job learning experience to prepare Minnesotans for high-demand jobs and careers. Minnesota's LEAP initiative delivers grants to workforce training organizations that work with women, people of color, and members of other communities not traditionally involved in skilled trades. The Opportunity Agenda includes a \$100,000 investment to expand the grant initiative and help connect more Minnesotans of color with good-paying jobs in the skilled trades.
- **Pathways to Prosperity** – Governor Dayton's supplemental budget includes \$10 million for Pathways to Prosperity, a strategic effort to connect Minnesotans with the education and training they need to access opportunities in high-growth, high-demand careers with family-sustaining incomes. This program provides opportunities to historically disenfranchised communities, and other individuals facing barriers to employment, to expand economic opportunity for more Minnesotans across our state.
- **Ensuring Minnesotans Receive Wages Earned** – Wage theft occurs when employers do not pay employees what is owed for work already performed. Wage theft costs hardworking Minnesotans and their families millions of dollars they already have earned. The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) estimates 39,000 Minnesota workers suffer from wage theft each year – costing workers \$11.9 million in wages. The Opportunity Agenda invests \$1 million to expand DLI's investigations and prevent wage theft.
- **Supporting Opportunity for Minnesotans with Disabilities** – The unemployment rate for Minnesotans with disabilities is more than double that of the general population. Minnesotans with disabilities who do find employment are far more likely to receive poverty-level wages. Governor Dayton has proposed a \$7 million investment in Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation program to ensure that Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities receive employment training and counseling, to ensure they are able to find and keep a job and live as independently as desired. The Opportunity Agenda also would make changes to help people with disabilities to live in their communities.
- **Cutting Taxes for Working Families** – Governor Dayton has proposed tax cuts that would benefit working and middle class Minnesota families, by cutting state taxes to match federal changes, and putting \$93 million back in the pockets of hardworking taxpayers through the Working Family Credit. More than 260,000 families would see more money on their bottom line under the plan from Governor Dayton.
- **Ending Unfair Lending Practices** – Many Minnesotans with low-incomes struggle to pay their living expenses and live paycheck to paycheck. When unexpected costs arise, these families are forced to rely on high interest "payday" loans, which often carry interest rates of more than 200 percent. These loans can plunge Minnesota's most vulnerable families into cycles of debt. Governor Dayton's budget would close

loopholes allowing payday lenders to make interest rates much higher than intended under state law. It also would limit borrowers to no more than four short-term loans in a 12-month period.

- **Protecting Equal Opportunity Across Minnesota** – To improve enforcement of state human rights law and make it easier for Minnesotans to file human rights complaints, Governor Dayton has proposed a \$2.3 million investment to open regional Department of Human Rights’ offices in Duluth, Rochester, and Worthington. These offices ensure that individuals across Minnesota are afforded the protections and opportunities they deserve under state law.
- **Workforce Goals for Bonding Projects** – Governor Dayton’s Jobs Bill requires construction contractors, who receive state funding to complete local infrastructure projects, comply with Minnesota’s existing workforce hiring goals. The Governor’s proposed reform will help ensure state bonding construction projects benefit all Minnesotans and reflect the rich diversity of our state.
- **Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program** – While people of color comprise a rapidly growing share of Minnesota’s overall population, less than 10 percent of all Minnesota businesses are minority-owned. As our state’s demographics change, it is imperative that we improve economic opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs to create good new jobs. Governor Dayton’s budget would reform the Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program (EELP) to better support businesses owned by people of color and women. The Governor’s proposal would allow EELP lenders to forgive remaining payments once 90 percent of the principal has been repaid.
- **Working Capital for Small Businesses** – Minnesota’s Working Capital Loan Fund helps small businesses get the funding needed to cover operating costs like wages and supplies until they receive payments for work on state transportation projects. It is intended to close the gap experienced by small-businesses on construction projects. Governor Dayton’s budget would make a one-time investment of \$1.5 million to improve equity and reduce disparities in contracting, by providing an infusion of working capital for socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

## Building Healthy Families and Communities

- **Addressing Health Disparities** – Minnesota, on average, ranks among the healthiest states in the nation. However, Minnesota has some of the worst health care disparities between groups in the nation. The Governor’s budget would invest \$1 million to alleviate health disparities in communities of color in Minnesota. This funding would help analyze trends in communities, provide direct outreach to improve health outcomes, and provide grants to community health boards or nonprofits dedicated to reducing rates of violence, suicide, and drug overdose – causes of preventable death with tremendous disparities for veterans, communities of color, and American Indians.
- **MinnesotaCare Buy-In** – Governor Mark Dayton is seeking to build on the bipartisan successes of MinnesotaCare. To lower prices for another 100,000 Minnesotans, Governor Dayton wants to give everyone who buys their insurance on the individual health insurance market the choice to buy-into MinnesotaCare. Minnesotans who choose “MinnesotaCare Buy-In” would pay their own way –meaning the cost of their premiums would pay for their coverage, without any additional ongoing costs to Minnesota taxpayers.
- **Reducing Exposure to Asbestos** – For decades, asbestos were added to common building materials, such as insulation, pipes, and sheetrock, to improve strength and fire resistance. However, asbestos fibers can cause severe lung diseases and cancer decades after the initial exposure. To help low-income Minnesotans remediate their homes, Governor Dayton’s budget would invest \$260,000 a year in the state’s Healthy Asbestos Insulation Remediation (Healthy AIR) Program.
- **Fighting the Opioid Epidemic** – Opioid deaths have increased 430 percent in Minnesota since 2000. Eighty percent of Americans addicted to heroin started out taking prescription pain medications. Governor Dayton’s supplemental budget would hold pharmaceutical companies responsible for their role in the epidemic by increasing the fee on these prescriptions and then investing the \$42 million generated to prevent and treat opioid addiction and abuse. Governor Dayton’s budget also includes funding to improve statewide tracking of overdoses in Minnesota so law enforcement and health officials can respond more

quickly and effectively. Governor Dayton's also would invest \$4 million for Minnesota's Tribal Nations and urban American Indian communities to fund prevention programs to reduce opioid abuse.

## Safe, Stable Housing for All Minnesotans

- **Opening the Door to the American Dream** – Americans have historically accumulated wealth and saved money for the future through homeownership. Currently, 77 percent of white households own their homes, while only 39 percent of households of color own their homes in Minnesota. This disparity is often aggravated by the unique barriers to homeownership facing Minnesotans of color. Governor Dayton's Opportunity Agenda would invest \$2 million to level the playing field for eligible first-time homebuyers with financial counseling and assistance with down payments and closing costs.
- **A Second Chance for Quality, Affordable Housing** – Minnesotans with a past criminal conviction can struggle to find work and housing decades later. In 2014, Governor Dayton signed legislation prohibiting employers from asking job applicants about most criminal convictions. This year, the Governor is proposing a \$300,000 investment to extend the "Ban the Box" concept into rental housing. Under Governor Dayton's proposal, landlords would have to proactively inform prospective applicants that a criminal background check would be conducted, how that information would be used, and what offenses would be disqualifying.

## Closing Opportunity Gaps for Minnesota Students

- **Homework Starts with Home** – Approximately 167,000 Minnesota households with children face housing instability. Research shows that homeless and mobile children are more likely to be absent from school, perform worse on math and reading tests, and eventually drop out. Through the Homework Starts with Home program, the Dayton Opportunity Agenda includes \$8 million to provide rental assistance to Minnesota families with children to ensure that students have stable housing throughout the school year.
- **Investing in Student Success** – Minnesota college students of color are far less likely to graduate than their white peers. With Minnesota becoming increasingly diverse and a looming workforce shortage, we cannot afford to leave any of our students behind. Governor Dayton has proposed a \$2.6 million investment for the Investing in Student Success initiative at the University of Minnesota. The resources would provide support services and opportunities to low-income, first-generation, and students of color at the University.
- **Engaging Teachers, Engaging Minds** – Good teachers can make all the difference for kids accessing opportunity and achieving success in their lives. But each year, Minnesota schools lose about 5,800 teachers to retirement, relocation to other states, and career changes, with Greater Minnesota communities hit especially hard. Teaching is engaging and important work – good teachers help close the achievement gap, and serve as advocates and role models. To expand opportunities for teachers, students, and communities across our state, the Governor has proposed a \$5 million investment to help train and attract more than 800 potential teachers by 2021.
- **Better Classrooms for American Indian Students** – Minnesota has four federal Bureau of Indian schools, which serve over 750 students on tribal reservations. These schools operate in aging, often decrepit facilities, with limited financial resources. Governor Dayton's budget invests \$3.7 million to help ensure students at these schools, receive the same state aid that students at other public schools enjoy. Without the Governor's proposed investment, state funding for these schools would drop 45 percent next year.

## Building Stronger Community Partnerships

- **Improving Tribal-State Relations** – Continuing the Dayton Administration's commitment to strengthening relationships with tribal governments, the Governor has proposed several investments to improve communications. Governor Dayton's budget would invest \$410,000 to continue the Department of Transportation's innovative Tribal-State Relations Training for state employees. In addition, the Governor's budget would allocate \$194,000, allowing the Department of Revenue to hire a tribal liaison that would work with Minnesota's Tribal Nations on tax issues.

- **Making State Government Technology Accessible** – Minnesotans increasingly rely on state government website and technology to access important resources and services. However, these systems are not always designed to meet the needs of Minnesotans with disabilities. This year, the Governor has proposed a \$500,000 investment for an external assessment of state agency technology accessibility and develop remediation plans for major state technology systems.
- **Law Enforcement and Community Partnership Investment** – To foster better relationships with Law Enforcement and Community, Governor Dayton has invested \$2 million. This money will support the community and strengthen law enforcement and community partnerships.
- **World-Class Training for Law Enforcement** – Law enforcement officers are regularly asked to make life and death decisions in a matter of moments. Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda includes \$10 million to ensure that local law enforcement officers receive world-class training.