

## MNbenefits state-wide launch

[MNbenefits](#) (pronounced M-N-benefits) is an accessible, easy-to-use online application interface for nine safety-net benefit programs that Minnesotans can complete in less than 12 minutes.

The application is a step forward toward DHS's [Integrated Service Delivery](#), our vision to make human services simpler and to create a better experience for the communities we serve. It embodies human-centered design, an approach that is embedded in the [agencywide strategic plan](#) and the enterprise [modernization work](#) we share with MNIT and our county and tribal nation partners.

MNbenefits will replace ApplyMN, the current online application interface. A soft launch for state-wide use started in November 2021, with complete state-wide adoption scheduled for February 1, 2022.

### Suggested actions:

The Code for America team conducted targeted outreach in specific communities, including attending community events, working with cultural and community leaders, and conducting outreach in multiple languages. Code for America has reviewed [research](#) on Hispanic/Latino people being very mobile friendly and using smartphones to access the internet. Consider including digital communications in a mobile-friendly format in addition to the following suggested outreach actions:

- 1. Publicize MNbenefits well.** Using plain language, communicate the purpose of the tool, how users can benefit from it, and how to access it.
- 2. Advertise where people are.** Place flyers, brochures, etc. in physical locations frequented by potential users, including transit centers, faith-based organizations and houses of worship, and stores like Aldi Walmart and dollar stores. Consider a mailing for older adults.
- 3. Use Social Media.** Advertise on Facebook, Twitter and other social sites as relevant (see suggested list of statewide groups to include, below)
- 4. Advertise in local media.** Consider advertising with local TV, print publications and newspapers, AM radio stations and other local media sources.
- 5. Leverage word of mouth.** Word of mouth can spread quickly through communities. Building a strong reputation and community trust can help increase use of the tool.
- 6. Overcome language, literacy and cultural barriers.** Use translated assets as needed. Acknowledge that some concepts (e.g. child support) don't exist in some languages. Consider using video or voice recording to aid understanding among users with lower levels of literacy.

DHS Communications is providing a media kit for servicing agencies to use at their discretion. The kit will include ready-for-print files and digital assets, and customizable design files for each of the assets listed below in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali languages.

Customizable assets:

1. **One-page flyer** (PDF and InDesign files)
2. **Two-page flyer** (PDF and InDesign files)
3. **Office poster** (PDF and InDesign files)
4. **Business card** (PDF and InDesign files)
5. **Images for print ads** (sized for 1/2 page and 1/4 page ads; PDF and InDesign files)

State of Minnesota branded assets:

1. **One-page flyer** (PDF and InDesign files)
2. **Two-page flyer** (PDF and InDesign files)
3. **Office poster** (PDF and InDesign files)
4. **Business card** (PDF and InDesign files)
5. **Images for print ads** (sized for 1/2 page, 1/4 page and 1/6 page ads; PDF and InDesign files)
6. **Images for digital ads** (sized 300x200 pixels, 728x90 pixels (banner), and 160x600 pixels (tower); jpg and InDesign files)

## DHS statewide messaging

DHS Communications will begin to place ads in Jan/Feb 2022 with diverse statewide and metro-area publications such as Latino American Today, the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, the Somali American, and The Circle. Additional messaging will be shared via DHS social accounts (Twitter, Facebook), and participation in the social media outreach by sister state agencies including the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will be encouraged.

## Suggested messaging

### Sample Social Media messaging:

There's a faster, easier way to get public assistance benefits. With [MNbenefits](#) you can apply for food, housing, childcare, emergency and cash assistance programs all at once, from your smartphone, in less than 20 minutes! Visit [mnbenefits.mn.gov](http://mnbenefits.mn.gov) to get started.

### Sample call script/voicemail message:

If you would like to apply for cash programs, SNAP, Emergency Assistance, or Medical Assistance, you can speak to a representative to have an application mailed to you; you can apply online at [www.mnbenefits.mn.gov](http://www.mnbenefits.mn.gov); or, you can pick an application up at [address].

**Sample email message to community partners:**

We are writing to announce a change to how we receive public assistance applications electronically. The MN Department of Human Services has launched a new application interface called [MNbenefits](#). This online application is available in all Minnesota counties and Tribal Nation servicing agencies, and will replace the old ApplyMN application effective 1/31/2022.

The MNbenefits application allows users to simultaneously apply for benefits from the following nine programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Emergency Assistance
- Housing Support
- Child Care Assistance Program
- Diversionary Work Program
- General Assistance
- Minnesota Family Investment Program
- Minnesota Supplemental Aid
- Refugee Cash Assistance

Applying for benefits through MNbenefits takes an average of 12 minutes and can be completed from a smartphone or desktop. The application is currently offered in English and Spanish, with more language translations to come.

We are providing a flyer (attached) with general information that you may share with your community members. Any questions can be directed to [contact details].

Thank you!

[signature block]

## **Suggested timeline for outreach**

1. See table below

## Tasks and Timeline

Task	Timeline	Method	Frequency
Identify all ApplyMN links and references on websites/documents	Now thru early Jan, 2022	Internal query	One time
Print media kit items as needed	Now thru early Jan, 2022	In-house or print vendor	As needed
Announce to partners: MNbenefits.mn.gov is live; communicate ApplyMN shutoff date is 1/31/22	Now thru 2/1/2022	Email to partners	Send initial announcement; reminder email sent by 1/31
Announce to public: MNbenefits.mn.gov is live and will replace ApplyMN	Now thru 2/1/2022	Add website callout or page with MNbenefits info/link	As needed
Announce to public: MNbenefits.mn.gov	Now thru 2/1/2022	Servicing agency Social media sites	Weekly reminders
Place printed items in offices, distribute at local physical locations	Jan-Feb 2022	In-person distribution or mail to partners	As needed
Replace ApplyMN links and references with MNbenefits info on websites/documents	When ready; deadline is 1/31/22	Internal web updates	One time
Advertise in local media	Jan-Feb 2022	Digital/print ad placement, community postings	As needed
Advertise in relevant social groups	Jan-Feb 2022	Social posts; tag partners/groups	As needed