

## Human Services investments and policy focus on behavioral health care, opioids, foster care, homelessness

Targeted investments approved in the 2022 session will address gaps in Minnesota’s continuum of behavioral health care, particularly for children experiencing crises. A new subcabinet and funding from legal settlements will focus on repairing the harm caused by opioids across the state. A new state board will supervise competency restoration programs for defendants found not competent to understand the proceedings against them or to assist in their own defense. Governor Tim Walz and the Legislature also created an ombudsperson for foster care youth, extended housing services for people experiencing homelessness, and made remote adult day services available permanently.

### 2022 legislation

**Strengthening the mental health system.** Grants for supervision will help mental health providers address workforce challenges by improving access to mental health professionals in communities with the most disparate access and health outcomes. A one-time grant for an African American community mental health center will support culturally specific, trauma-informed and family-centered behavioral health services. Funding for the First Episode Psychosis program will support programs serving people age 40 and under with early signs of psychosis. A more equitable, research-based funding formula taking effect in 2025 will increase funding for 11 of 18 Adult Mental Health Initiatives.

**Expanding behavioral health resources for children.** Broader eligibility for Intensive Treatment in Foster Care will include children living with their families in the community, promoting family preservation and better access to early intensive services. A new licensing and policy framework for Children’s Residential Crisis Stabilization services will improve services for youth experiencing mental health crises. A pilot project will create mental health urgency rooms for youth under age 26 experiencing mental health crises.

**Increasing support for mobile crisis and mobile transition services.** Ongoing funding for mobile crisis grants will permanently strengthen Minnesota’s mobile crisis infrastructure and improve access to crisis services. New mobile transition teams will focus on people in emergency departments and inpatient hospital settings who no longer need hospital-level care, strengthening person-centered discharge planning.

**Addressing the opioid crisis.** Settlement payments from pharmaceutical companies and distributors will help address the impact of opioid use disorder across Minnesota. Three-quarters of the funding will flow directly to counties and cities, with the rest going into a state settlement account to pay for activities including tribal child protection and grants. A new Governor’s Subcabinet will identify challenges related to treatment, prevention and recovery. The Governor’s director of addiction and recovery will chair the subcabinet, which will also have an 18-member advisory council. DHS will provide staffing and administrative support.

**Establishing a state system for competency restoration.** Based on the recommendations of the Community Competency Restoration Task Force, Minnesota courts will gain the authority to order defendants into competency restoration programs based on treatment and public safety needs. A new State Board of Competency Restoration will certify programs and provide competency education to defendants statewide. Resources will support forensic navigators to coordinate placements for defendants; clearer directives on treatment timelines and supervision; and competency-related examinations for defendants.

**Adding oversight and preserving family relationships in foster care.** The new Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson, to be named by the Governor, will investigate issues related to the health, safety and welfare of youth in foster care. Legal requirements for removing a child from their home will become more robust, with the intent of reducing unnecessary removals and increasing placement with family and kin if out-of-home placement is necessary.

**Bolstering the state's response to homelessness.** For people and families experiencing homelessness, transitional housing will be available for 36 months, instead of 24 months. State law now recognizes that federally recognized Tribal Nations are eligible for grant funding to provide emergency services for people experiencing homelessness. Grants of up to \$200,000 will support providers serving homeless youth to improve or repair facilities.

**Extending emergency background studies and streamlining health care background studies.** People may continue working under a valid emergency study until January 2023, giving providers more time to complete full background studies. The emergency studies were put in place temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic. All new hires will need fingerprint-based background studies. Meanwhile, DHS will no longer conduct background studies for individuals who already completed criminal background checks as part of health care licensing or facility requirements. The department will report substantiated maltreatment findings to state health care licensing boards so they can determine whether to pursue further action.

**Making remote adult day services permanently available.** The option to participate remotely in adult day services will become permanent in January 2023. The pandemic demonstrated that remote services successfully offered older adults and people with disabilities an option when they couldn't attend center-based services.

**Redesigning the Vulnerable Adult Act.** A multi-year project to modernize the state's vulnerable adult protection statute got underway. Adult Protective Services is a county-administered social service program responsible for outcomes of safety and dignity for older adults and people with disabilities living in their own homes who are vulnerable to maltreatment. This year's changes will support more person-centered and culturally responsive approaches, increase process transparency and modify state law to provide a foundation for future reforms.

**Improving access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.** Gross income limits for SNAP will increase, without affecting the net income limit of 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. About 800 households will be able to keep SNAP, while another 620 households will become eligible.

## Related information

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- [DHS 2022 session fact sheets](#)

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