

2026 Proposed Hennepin County Budget

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County Administrator



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A community where
All people are healthy
All people are valued
All people thrive

Introduction

Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to present the Administrator's proposed 2026 operating and capital budgets. This proposed budget addresses the uncertainties we face as an organization and reflects the careful, deliberate, and compassionate work of our staff across all lines of business.

Our 2026 budget proposal process began in earnest in January 2025. Departments across all lines of business have collaborated, innovated, and made tough choices to reduce expenses without jeopardizing our commitment to serving residents.

At its core, this budget balances foundational mission-driven services that continue to make investments in our communities, our infrastructure and our employees.

This budget also continues our commitment to eliminating disparities to address the board's declaration of racism as a public health crisis.

The shift from disparity reduction to disparity elimination reflects both the urgency and the clarity of our mission and the board's declaration of racism as a public health crisis. We are deliberately investing in upstream services to prevent the need for more complex and costly interventions later, because the health and success of our residents depend on our ability to intervene early and create opportunities for all.

This work stretches across all seven of our disparity elimination domains, as we provide a spectrum of services to address persistent racial disparities in Connectivity, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Income, and Justice.

Our Climate Action Plan is fully integrated into this approach. The impacts of climate change fall heaviest on those already experiencing inequities. By reducing emissions, improving community resilience, expanding green infrastructure, and lowering vulnerabilities, we strengthen both our environment and our residents' ability to thrive.

We are in the midst of a multi-year strategy to manage financial pressures, and while the path has not been easy, our approach has been disciplined and our commitment to delivering excellent service, unwavering.

**We are in this together,
and we are better together.**

Budget details

I am proposing a 2026 Hennepin County budget of \$3.09 billion, with a net property tax levy of \$1.13 billion, an increase of 7.79 percent.

The operating portion of this budget totals \$2.73 billion, an increase of 7.2 percent or \$182.3 million from the 2025 adjusted budget. This budget invests over \$1.38 billion in our employees, a 3.1 percent increase over the 2025 adjusted budget. This includes health insurance, general salary adjustments, and other cost increases.

Throughout 2025, we have been proactively and carefully managing our vacant FTEs and have slowed planned growth this year to ensure the sustainability of our staffing models. The proposed 2026 budget includes a total of 9,762.0 full-time equivalent employees, a decrease of 249.7 vacant funded positions from the 2025 adjusted budget.

As we consider the financial realities before us, there are several key budget drivers continuing to shape our work:

- State and federal funding reductions and cost shifts are expected, including changes to Medicaid and SNAP. In 2026, we are estimating an initial \$8 million shift to Hennepin County, with greater impacts forecasted in 2027 and 2028. We know that other areas previously funded by State and Federal revenues may also be at risk.
- Staffing costs, including health insurance expenses, are increasing. Overall, the organization is reducing 249.7 vacant FTEs within the budget and redirecting staff resources to areas where they are most needed, including the stabilization of staffing levels within the Sheriff's Office.
- The increased debt service for our capital budget reflects substantial increases in adopted capital budgets since 2020, as well as higher construction costs.

The 2026 capital budget totals \$365.9 million. This is \$202.5 million less than the 2025 board adjusted capital budget of \$568.4 million. Recall that the 2025 capital budget included the county's final contribution to the Green Line Extension light rail project. This represents a \$21M property tax increase that will help fund the debt services.

Investments include:

- \$227 million invested toward our roads, bridges, trails, bus rapid transit, light rail transit, solid waste and energy infrastructure,
- \$13 million in investments in our critical 24/7 corrections, public safety, and courts facilities,
- \$30 million toward facilities supporting the Health and Human Services lines of business including the medical center,
- \$47 million in libraries and
- \$49 million toward our Operations line of business, including Information Technology and Facility Services.

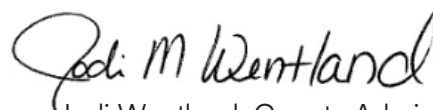
These capital investments support and preserve critical infrastructure while recognizing the increased costs of debt and construction.

Commissioners, this budget was not easy to build. It represents tough decisions, carefully managed growth, and diligent management in the face of uncertain funding conditions.

But it also represents stability, sustainability, and a forward-looking strategy to keep Hennepin County strong to help us prepare for future funding risks at the federal and state levels.

It is a budget that protects foundational public services, invests in our employees, stabilizes public safety infrastructure, and maintains our role as a safety-net provider. Above all, it is a budget that reflects our values of equity, stewardship, and integrity and our enduring commitment to the residents we serve.

I want to express my gratitude to our employees, who serve with compassion and professionalism, and to you, the Board of Commissioners, for your leadership. Together, we will continue to navigate the challenges ahead while building a community where all people are healthy, valued, and thriving.



Jodi Wentland, County Administrator



Our commitment to eliminating disparities

Reducing and eliminating disparities isn't just an aspirational goal at Hennepin County, it's our shared organizational commitment driving the work we do each day. In 2020, the county board declared racism as a public health crisis and in doing so, created a renewed focus on policies, services, and programs to advance equitable outcomes in the areas of Connectivity, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Income, and Justice.

Innovation across the seven domains

Continued ingenuity and collaboration is critical to our success in service to our residents. This memo showcases just some of the ways we're advancing equity in each of the seven domains through cross-departmental collaboration, intentional partnerships and innovative programs and services.

Connectivity

Hennepin County ensures our technology, transit and transportation systems are accessible, affordable and climate ready.

We are advancing transit, multi-modal options, safety and accessibility on our transportation network, which is a core service to connect people to health care, employment, housing and education. Engagement with our communities and project stakeholders is critical in the design and delivery of transportation projects to ensure outcomes that meet people's needs.

County roads as a backbone

Our county transportation system is not just miles of roadway; it's a backbone of connectivity. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people are using our system. We are committed to ensuring our existing system operates well so people get to where they are going, while also incorporating new multi-modal and connection options and reducing the impact on our environment. Through efforts like implementing a refined Complete and Green Streets approach to our projects, we are rethinking how we use the entire right of way of our county system. With fresh thinking, we are enhancing access, providing better options, making travel safer, and creating a network that better serves everyone.

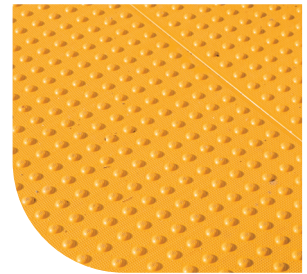
While we're always engaged in this work, two recent focus areas include:

Improving accessibility: We have revised our ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plan and have been investing in accessibility improvements across our transportation system to ensure everyone can safely and comfortably walk and roll along and across our roadways.

Advancing safety: The county is committed to reducing fatal and serious injury crashes along our roads for all people. We are finalizing our Toward Zero Deaths Plan, which demonstrates our commitment to safety and our roadmap for implementing safety strategies along our High Injury Network.

Transit centered around our residents

We continue our community oriented anti-displacement initiative for the Blue Line Extension, collaborating with Met Council to advance efforts to move closer to final designs and construction. As people travel our county roads, they are likely to encounter improved experiences like new bus rapid transit and better and more accessible transit stops.



Digital connectivity to meet our residents' needs

Hennepin County is working to improve digital connections for all our residents. We provide digital navigation services, broadband infrastructure development, expanded access to free residential Wi-Fi, online safety training and policy advocacy that help ensure residents can easily and safely access modern technology.

Our residents experience this in multiple ways:

- Technology training in specific communities and languages
- High-quality broadband connectivity from new fiber optic infrastructure
- Online safety training and other supports
- Connectivity via the Hennepin County Library so residents can have reliable access regardless of their living situation or quality of personal internet service

The county also has led regional coordination with government partners, internet providers and community organizations to implement a digital equity plan for Hennepin County.

In addition to increasing technology and broadband connections for residents, the county's digital accessibility policy increases digital connection by ensuring websites and services in digital spaces meet the needs of all users, regardless of ability. Regular digital engagement creates opportunities to listen to and understand the voice of community, and to take meaningful action that increases service access and improves the digital customer service experience.

Education

Hennepin County supports greater achievement and whole-being outcomes for youth and families through educational success.

Hennepin County is home to more than 185,000 school-aged children. While the county's 600+ schools serve as the primary providers of educational programming, we play a vital supporting role in ensuring student success.

Our work in this domain is guided by the **Grow, Learn, Thrive framework**, which reflects the spectrum of services that residents need at every stage of their educational journey.

Hennepin County supports our residents to:

- **Grow** by providing holistic education services for youth and families that are focused on healthy childhood development and early learning, holistic supports, mental health, family stability and well-being.
- **Learn** by championing literacy and academic skill development and accelerating school success for students in the PreK-12 educational system.
- **Thrive** through programs and services that support high school graduation, GED attainment, internships, and skill development that open opportunities for pathways to college and careers.

Providing holistic educational services for youth and families

- Hennepin County Library provides early literacy support through culturally relevant programming at library sites and in the community, including baby and family story time opportunities. In addition, over 40 locations provide spaces designed for families and young children to “play and learn.”
- Early Learning Scholarships expand access to high-quality early education and care for county connected families.



- Public Health programs such as Family Home Visiting, WIC (supplemental nutritional assistance program for Women, Infant, and Children), Child and Teen Check-ups, Follow Along, Caring Connections for Kids, and other clinical services provide trusted connections with families early in a child's life and encourage access to preventative health care.
- ¡Aprendamos juntos! addresses the needs of new arrival families staying in Hennepin County family shelters, providing outreach, educational support, and English language classes for adults and children's activities.
- School-based mental health services provide culturally responsive and trauma-informed mental health services to students in Hennepin County schools.

- Connect for School Success, a voluntary, parent-driven program, supports families whose children have significant barriers to school attendance, focusing on increasing student and family engagement, reducing barriers, increasing connections to community supports, and improving school attendance.
- School to Housing works to prevent homelessness by partnering with participating school districts to identify and serve families that need support finding stable housing. School to Housing supports families with their housing search, financial assistance with rent, and case management for nine months once housed.

Championing literacy and academic skill development

- Education Support Services provides strength-based academic support for county-connected youth and families, with services ranging from tutoring and advocacy to school navigation. The program works closely with students and families to address barriers, improve learning outcomes, and create stability in educational pathways.
- Hennepin County Library offers several different programs to support literacy and academic skill development, including in-person tutoring for K-12 students at 18 library locations across the county, online, on-demand tutoring in English and Spanish, and structured literacy support aligned with the science of reading at 11 libraries.

Supporting high school/GED completion and career development

- Teen HOPE integrates TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) monitoring with public health home visiting and case management for all Hennepin County young parents who are under age 20 and without a high school diploma or GED at the time of MFIP enrollment.
- Pathways School Reengagement program supports young parents with academic assessment, onsite GED/online HS instruction, career exploration, paid internship, credential training, postsecondary preparation, and college support by providing holistic services that improve academic and employment outcomes for young parents and youth on probation.
- Education Support Services provides GED support and navigation for youth and adults, as well as academic credit recovery services for youth age 14 and older.
- Be at School addresses absenteeism through supportive, family-centered interventions. By working with culturally specific community agencies, the program helps students stay engaged in school and prevents deeper involvement in child protection or juvenile justice.

Employment

Employment is a cornerstone of economic stability, opening doors to income, resources, and long-term security.

Hennepin County plays a vital role in preparing residents for the workforce, connecting them to meaningful careers, supporting local employers, and investing in the growth of our more than 9,000 employees. Our holistic approach centers on opportunity, development and advancement.

Hennepin County champions employment strategies that expand access to quality jobs with living wages, benefits and advancement pathways, which strengthens lives, the workforce, and our regional economy, fueled by 1.3 million residents.

Through these strategic efforts, we're helping residents and county employees achieve lasting employment success across every stage of their career.

- Investing in county employees to foster a resilient, future-ready workforce by supporting growth, well-being, and organizational impact
- Developing the current and future workforce through tailored programs, internships, and partnerships that enhance skills and career readiness
- Supporting employers by connecting them with talent, tools, and partnerships to recruit, retain, and advance their workforce
- Addressing employment barriers through employment, training, and career pathway services tailored to residents' unique needs
- Collaborating with local businesses to connect job seekers with meaningful employment opportunities in high-demand industries
- Expanding career pathways through internships, externships, and career readiness skills-based learning programs prepare residents for career success



Investing in county employees

Hennepin County invests in its workforce through a comprehensive Total Rewards program that includes mentorship, tuition reimbursement, and defined career pathways. These programs support employee growth and well-being, helping to build a resilient, forward-thinking workforce that delivers equitable, responsive services across the county.

Building the current and future workforce

Creating opportunities for work experience plays a crucial role in reducing and eliminating disparities in employment, education and income. Hennepin GO is the county's overarching, comprehensive programmatic strategy for providing residents employment pathways, internships, externships, and various programs focused on career readiness, skills-based learning, and targeted services for youth. We work closely with partners like BrookLynk, StepUp, and Urban Scholars to help young people achieve educational goals, increase earning potential, and attain a better quality of life. By coordinating with state and community partners, we maximize our impact and create meaningful opportunities for all.

Supporting employers

We partner with community organizations, education partners, and regional employers to create training programs designed to lead to well-paid, full-time employment with advancement opportunities. This model integrates recruitment efforts, hiring initiatives, and specialized strategies and programs to meet employee and workforce needs.

Employment, training, and career pathways services

Our services are grounded in a deep understanding of community-specific strengths and barriers, informed by data and insights that guide decision-making and program design. We offer holistic, participant-centered support through skill-building programs and strategic partnerships aimed at promoting long-term career success. Through intentional design and community alignment, we're building pathways that lead to meaningful, sustainable careers.

Targeted programming

We intentionally focus on meeting residents where they are. We provide low-barrier employment and training services for adults without dependents who are currently or have recently experienced homelessness, helping them re-enter the workforce with stability and support. We also provide targeted services for residents who have received employment and need additional support to retain employment. This intentional strategy is focused on residents finding and keeping employment.

Assisting job seekers

Our job training, employment, and career assistance programs help unemployed and underemployed people find jobs in our changing workforce. Programming includes federal-and state-mandated programs like Diversionary Work Program, Minnesota Youth Program and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and county-specific initiatives. Support also includes access to pathway partnerships, labor market insights, career fairs, and guidance on refining job qualifications to better match workforce needs.

Leveraging data and community input

To better understand the unique needs, strengths and challenges of county residents we serve, the county is intentional in using data to inform and adjust the design and delivery of our wraparound support services. This ensures our programming is responsive to evolving community needs, targeted, and effective in promoting long-term career and life success.

Health

Hennepin County supports improved health outcomes and well-being for its 1.3 million residents.

While Minnesota and Hennepin County are known for good health status, some of the greatest disparities in the nation exist for our racially and ethnically diverse communities.

From creating and maintaining access to care, to our efforts to prevent chronic illness, our work is guided by the countywide strategic framework to ensure we treat, intervene and prevent illness and address social determinants of health to improve well-being for all residents, especially people of color who experience stark disparities in health. Disparities in health outcomes are unfortunately consistent and interdependent with our other domains. Our work has to comprehensively leverage all our assets, which is why the health domain includes:

- Public Health
- Human Services
- Hennepin Health
- Hennepin Healthcare
- NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center



Our priorities include:

- Chronic disease, with emphases on heart disease among Black/African American and Indigenous women
- Maternal health and early childhood health
- Addressing food insecurity
- Healthy aging
- Mental health

Heart disease

In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death, killing 1 out of 3 women. In Hennepin County, it disproportionately affects Black/African American and Indigenous women, causing premature loss of life and reduced quality of life. The Women's Heart Health Initiative works with community and clinical partners to:

- Prevent heart disease
- Strengthen care coordination before, during and after serious heart problems
- Build awareness through a community-created campaign

Food security

Access to sufficient food is a persistent struggle for many Hennepin County residents: 6.8 percent of households report experiencing times where they haven't had enough food and ran out of money to buy more, according to the 2022 Survey of the Health of All the Population and the Environment (SHAPE). Hennepin County is developing a food security plan to address root causes and provide funding to community partners working to end hunger in Hennepin County.

Maternal health and early childhood health

Black/African American and Indigenous birthing people face higher rates of pre-term birth than people of other races and ethnicities. Hennepin County is investing in community-initiated solutions and is implementing a birth justice plan. The county has expanded existing programs focused on improving maternal health outcomes and experiences, supported pilot programs and projects in the birth justice plan, and expanded reproductive health services and navigation at the Public Health Clinic. The county has invested more than \$3.8 million in direct services, community education, and cross-agency collaboration to support birth justice.

Healthy aging

In 2019, an interdisciplinary planning team helped develop the county's Age-Friendly Hennepin action plan. It outlines policies, services and infrastructure (physical and social environment) needed to help older adults — especially those experiencing the greatest disparities in outcomes — live healthy, engaged lives. Age-Friendly Hennepin County developed a policy review tool to identify county policies that support or conflict with age-friendly principles. Additionally, 22 community partners received grants to help older adults connect socially through technology, activities and outdoor spaces.

Mental health

Fourteen percent of Hennepin County adults reported experiencing frequent mental distress, according to the 2022 SHAPE survey. This percentage has more than doubled since 2002. Our efforts include expanding access, providing upstream help and offering person-centered services. We envision a future where every resident has equitable, timely access to high quality care for mental health and substance use disorders that supports their long-term safety, stability and health.

Housing

The availability of affordable housing is the key to ending homelessness in Hennepin County. To that end, the county's housing strategy works to open doors to safe, stable affordable housing.

Hennepin County is working to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. We play a unique role as both a funder of affordable housing and a provider of human services, helping to create housing opportunities and guide people into those opportunities. Our collaborative efforts work to mobilize the resources needed to help people keep their homes or help them find, sustain, and thrive in new homes.

Our nation-leading strategic approach focuses on:

- Making one-to-one connections with residents with housing barriers.
- Increasing the quantity, quality and variety of housing opportunities.
- Ensuring a robust continuum of affordable housing and direct client support, from exiting homelessness through homeownership.
- Prioritizing housing resources for populations that have the greatest barriers to housing stability.

One example of our nation-leading strategic approach is our work to effectively end veterans homelessness. Hennepin County and our partners are housing and helping veterans overcome homelessness at a higher rate than veterans are coming into the homelessness system.

As a result, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have certified that we are meeting their benchmarks for effectively ending homelessness among veterans in Minnesota's largest county.

Emergency shelter

Hennepin County supports a network of contracted emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness. Operating as an emergency response to the lack of affordable housing, we provide shelter and other stopgaps to maximize health and safety while ensuring that people have access to the basic services they need as they work on their housing plans.



Housing services

Our housing services help people find and maintain affordable housing. Hennepin County case managers, community partners, and staff work one-to-one with people to prevent homelessness and while they are experiencing homelessness. Services focus on supporting people who are in shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness as they work to break down barriers and move into permanent housing.

Eviction prevention

We provide emergency rental financial assistance, legal advice and representation, mediation for renters and landlords, and we support navigating housing options so that residents can find a housing solution and preserve their long-term housing stability.

Deeply affordable housing

Hennepin County funds the development and preservation of affordable rental housing meant to maximize the amount of rental housing available to very low-income households. Through programs such as the Affordable Housing Incentive Fund, Home Investment Partnerships Program, Supportive Housing Strategy, and Single Room Occupancy Housing, the county finances long-term options tailored to the specific barriers people face when seeking housing.

Homeownership

We make homeownership possible for more families by increasing affordable options, supporting first-time homebuyers and funding critical home repairs to preserve homeownership. By investing in capital funding to make homes affordable, down payment assistance, and financing and support to make homes healthier and more livable, we work to reduce disparities in homeownership and help families build wealth, impacting their ability to excel in all domains.

Income

Income is foundational to self-sufficiency, security, and long-term well-being for every county resident and employee.

Hennepin County programs, services and strategies aim to provide stability, create opportunities and advance prosperity for residents and business.

Hennepin County is working across all domains to not only provide direct support to people who need it, but also create opportunities, address gaps in wealth creation and lead by example as an employer.

We continue to strengthen how we support families and communities to create a more equitable future by leveraging robust strategies:

- Offering a network of safety net systems that support veterans, people experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and families and individuals with income constraints
- Expanding access to sustainable wages through county jobs, workforce programs and partnerships with local employers
- Promoting equitable hiring practices and fair pay standards across county-supported programs and through contracted services and prevailing wages
- Advancing economic vitality in our region by fostering stable employment, and supporting local businesses that create jobs and vibrant, resilient communities
- Bolstering small businesses and entrepreneurship through inclusive access to resources like specialized consulting, training, and equitable access to capital

Financial assistance

We take a holistic approach toward providing basic income supports to families and individuals as they work toward self-sufficiency. Staff help residents access state and federal programs to connect to health care coverage, food, child care assistance, ongoing cash assistance and financial help to those in need.

Support for veterans

The Veteran's Service Office connects county veterans to state and federal benefits, financial assistance and housing support. Services include help accessing pension, disability compensation, emergency aid, health care, and employment resources.



Leading as an employer

Hennepin County invests in fair wages and comprehensive benefits that reflect the cost of living, support employee stability, and promote equity. In addition to providing entry level, living wage jobs, the county offers tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness programs to support employees' career growth and financial well-being. By modeling best practices in pay and benefits, the county sets a standard as an employer of choice.

Connecting jobs and income

We recognize that employment is one of the most effective income strategies, creating pathways for residents to gain skills, earn credentials and access financially secure careers. Through internships, career pathways and high school diploma programs, residents earn immediate income while building their long-term earning potential. By linking work experience with education and advancement opportunities, the county strengthens household income today and builds the foundation for high earning potential in the future.

Equity in work with contractors

Hennepin County's purchasing area is working to increase diversity in contracts by implementing equity-focused procurement strategies and setting subcontractor goals in county contracts, which has helped eliminate bias and barriers to women-owned businesses and for businesses owned by people of color. We recognize the challenges small, minority-owned enterprises face in our procurement processes, so we are assessing ways to eliminate barriers and provide supports through rapid prototyping.

Bolstering small businesses

To eliminate long-standing disparities in business ownership, Hennepin County's Elevate Hennepin program offers inclusive pathways and entrepreneurship training for residents to successfully launch and grow their own business. The program also supports small businesses with specialized consulting, expert guidance, and equitable access to capital to help them thrive and grow.

Maximizing tax benefits

Eligible homeowners can reduce their property tax burden through homestead classification and the Minnesota Property Tax Refund. These programs lower taxable value and offer refunds based on income or tax increases.

Justice

Hennepin County supports a legal system that is equitable and prioritizes individual well-being and community safety by advancing early intervention and prevention strategies.

We prioritize policies and programming that aim to improve life outcomes, increase access to justice, and are responsive to the needs of individuals engaged with the legal system, including victims of crime.

Hennepin County is uniquely positioned to convene, collaborate and connect with other government entities, non-profits and community providers to address justice issues and disparities at all levels. Our work in the justice domain often intersects with other domains. We know that disparities in income, housing, health, and education can negatively impact an individual's trajectory into or out of the legal system. And, vice versa, an individual's involvement in the legal system can impact their access to a living wage, stable housing, and educational success.

Hennepin County remains committed to eliminating inequities and implementing system changes that advance safety, stability and well-being for all.



Early intervention and prevention strategies

- The Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) partners with community-based organizations to offer voluntary pre-trial services to youth in delinquency cases who are not already receiving case management services. The aim is to provide support to youth and families during a time when re-offense is most likely.
- The Health Equity Legal Project at Adult Representation Services (ARS) provides free legal counsel and supportive services to new or expecting parents experiencing hardships that put them at risk for child protection involvement. Available support includes parent mentors, attorneys, and resource specialists.
- A collaboration between DOCCR and Human Services Behavioral Health has resulted in social workers embedded in the Adult Corrections Facility and Juvenile Detention Center (JDC). The social workers at the JDC identify the needs of youth and their families and provide responsive support and resource coordination. These efforts increase access to services and decrease continued and cyclical engagement with the legal system.

Improve life outcomes, increase access to justice

ARS offers supported decision making and prepetition services for people at risk of guardianship actions. These preventative efforts preserve an individual's decision-making ability, protect their civil rights and reduce court caseloads.

Access to a living wage, stable housing, and educational success

- In housing court, most landlords can afford to hire their own lawyer—unlike the tenants they are taking to court. ARS provides legal representation to income-eligible residents and has helped the vast majority of tenant clients avoid eviction.
- The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Helping Others by Providing Education (HOPE) Program provides education and other programming to people in the jail. Opportunities include GED courses, recreational activities, professional services (e.g., Veteran Affairs, social workers), substance abuse support groups, personal development, faith-based activities, and post-release job resources.

Advance safety, stability and well-being

- The Hennepin County Attorney's Office educates non-citizens and witnesses on the U and T visa certification process to encourage the reporting of crime, assist in the prosecution of cases, and promote public safety.
- DOCCR's Child-Friendly Family Visiting program at the Adult Corrections Facility aims to improve resident well-being through family connection, mitigate the secondary effects of incarceration on children, clients, and families, reduce recidivism among currently incarcerated parents, and reduce intergenerational criminal justice system involvement. Incarcerated parents participate in parenting education groups, one-on-one peer support, and in-person visits with their children. ARS holds regular legal clinics for residents, providing access to counsel on family court and other civil legal matters.

Address disparities, eliminate inequities

Staff within the Hennepin County Attorney's Office Victim & Witness Services Division speak at least 10 additional languages beyond English: Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Hindi, Newari, Nepali, Telugu, Tamil, Sanskrit, and Arabic. The aim is to provide culturally responsive supports focused on the rights and needs of crime victims and witnesses.

Climate Action

Hennepin County's Climate Action Plan guides the county's response to climate change. This plan serves as a roadmap in mitigating the impacts of climate change while strengthening resilience for our residents. We know that the impacts of climate change will be felt most acutely by residents with low-income, and our action steps are to support resiliency in these communities. Our climate response is centered around equity; this means that we interconnect disparity elimination within our climate action strategies with the aim of creating a better future for ourselves and future generations.

With the adoption of the Climate Action Plan in 2021, we have integrated seven foundational strategies across the county to build community resiliency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Some examples of collaboration and success in our seven foundational strategies are listed below.

Strengthen individual and community resilience

Strong communities are resilient in the face of climate change. These communities have access to affordable housing, healthcare, food, transportation, and community support.

To empower vulnerable communities, Hennepin County is supporting food sovereignty through community-based solutions. We are also advancing emergency preparedness and cooling options for extreme heat. We do so while fostering relationships to engage, listen and respond with people-centered solutions to build resilience. Our theory of change is that community members are our partners in this work, not solely the recipients of our programming.

Cut greenhouse gas emissions from transportation

Transportation is responsible for 34 percent of Hennepin County's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and promoting alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and public transit are essential to meeting our emission reduction goals.

We also need to increase the use of electric vehicles (EVs) and the development of electric vehicle infrastructure. Hennepin County is greening its county fleet, installing EV charging ports at its facilities, supporting green streets that encourage multiple modes of travel, and supporting flexible, hybrid, and telework conditions to reduce employee VMT.



Prevent food waste and divert organic material

Wasting food contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the excess use of energy to grow, transport, and store unused food products. In the landfill, decomposing food generates methane, a greenhouse gas even more potent than carbon dioxide. Hennepin County supports food rescue efforts to divert more food to people in need, support cities in offering organic recycling collection, and require large food-based businesses to recycle food waste. We manage and develop waste infrastructure with government partners and the solid waste industry.



The tree canopy is an important and integral part of Hennepin County's green infrastructure. To maximize the benefits that trees provide, the county's forestry program focuses on growing healthy trees, partnering in large-scale planting events, managing threats to the tree canopy, raising awareness about tree pests and disease, educating the public on the benefits of trees, and supporting partners through the Healthy Tree Canopy Grant program. Since 2020, 576,000 trees have been planted — more than halfway to our goal of 1 million by 2030.

Design and maintain infrastructure, buildings, and properties to future climate conditions

Hennepin County is implementing strategies to help human and natural systems cope with and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. We are designing infrastructure based on predictions for future climate conditions such as heavier precipitation events by increasing stormwater holding capacity and supporting regional partners to reassess stormwater design standards. When possible, our new buildings and renovations follow the state's sustainable building guidelines (known as Buildings, Benchmarks & Beyond or B3) with a goal of net-zero emissions. Further, we use lifecycle analysis for selecting climate-friendly building materials and furnishings. Additionally, we are supporting the implementation of community-led resilience hubs to serve as shelters during extreme weather events.

Build and maintain green infrastructure and sequester carbon

Building and maintaining green infrastructure is a strategy the county is using to sequester carbon, increasing climate resilience and improving environmental health. Green infrastructure includes a range of practices that mimic natural patterns that can make a site more resilient, reduce flooding, and improve water quality. We incorporate green infrastructure such as permeable surfaces, rain gardens, conservation easements, and cool roofs early in project planning and support training with partners on best practices and the expansion of green job opportunities.

Transition to renewable energy and reduce energy use

In Hennepin County, two-thirds of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from buildings. In county owned buildings, we are committed to reducing emissions by deploying sustainable design and management practices. We generate clean energy with onsite solar and geothermal energy, and we access off-site utility-generated renewable energy and community solar gardens. We are on track to achieving an ambitious goal of 10% of energy use met by onsite solar by 2027.

Through partnerships such as Partners in Energy, we are developing localized strategies to drive down energy emissions countywide. We also educate residents through our Electrify Everything project and support cities with funding and technical support for energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy.

Decrease the heat island effect

Urban heat islands are areas that get hotter than surrounding areas due to use of heat-retaining materials like concrete and asphalt. They usually have more roads, buildings, and surfaces that absorb heat and fewer trees that keep the area cooler. Knowing what parts of the county are the hottest helps us plan where to increase tree canopy and convert hardscape into pervious pavement. To help locate those hot areas, in 2024 more than 120 volunteer community scientists collected data in Hennepin and Ramsey counties as part of NOAA's 2024 Urban Heat Island Mapping Campaign. This mapping enables us to better understand geographic heat susceptibility and population vulnerability as we plan for extreme heat emergency response and longer-term climate mitigation. We also can better support residents by offering cooling centers where they are needed and delivering targeted notifications.



Our shared values

People First

People are our purpose. Residents are at the center of everything we do, and our employees are our greatest asset.

Stewardship

We act boldly in the stewardship of our resources and environment.

Integrity

We act with the highest ethical principles and demonstrate professionalism and personal responsibility in our service to community.

Equity

We are committed to the shared responsibility of advancing policies and practices that promote equitable access, outcomes and opportunities for all.

Innovation

We drive innovation in policies, services and programs to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

2026 Proposed Hennepin County Budget

Jodi Wentland, County Administrator

Prepared for the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners
Tuesday, September 16, 2025

