



2026 State Legislative Priority and Platform

hennepin.us



Here together. For the better.

Hennepin County is Minnesota's most populated county with 1.3 million residents. That only tells part of the story.

Hennepin County includes: 45 municipalities that span from urban cities to rural communities; global destinations like the Mall of America; major transit hubs like the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport; the state's largest safety-net Level I trauma hospital, nationally recognized for care quality, advanced technology, clinical research, and academic programs; and important innovation and research centers like the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

The county is also a center of commerce. Approximately one-third of the state's jobs come from businesses in Hennepin County, including 9 Fortune 500 Companies, such

as Target, U.S. Bancorp, and Best Buy, and agriculture giants such as Cargill. In addition, Minnesota's economy is driven by small business and entrepreneurs. Hennepin County recognizes that small businesses are the foundation of our economy and often the heart of our communities. The US Census Bureau reports Minnesota is home to more than 409,000 non-employer businesses — or the self-employed.

This wealth of small businesses has helped to uniquely enrich the Twin Cities metro area. Minneapolis–St. Paul ranks as the 17th most diverse economy among all 384 metropolitan areas in the United States.

Minnesota's robust and diverse economy is aligned with that of Hennepin County. Together, we all do better.

Hennepin County's 2026 State Legislative Priorities and Platform has multiple priorities, many of which will benefit residents throughout the state. This includes requests that change systems to help build equity for all. Others are environmental asks that will affect the air and water quality for all Minnesotans. And there are others for improved transportation systems, which are critical for employment and moving goods and delivering services.

This platform asks for the state to invest in vital infrastructure, such as affordable housing. It asks for investments in children and families, as well as in health and health care. It asks for continued investments in employment pathways, especially as we see such low unemployment rates and know that businesses are hungry for people who can do the work.

The requests included here are about investing in Hennepin County priorities for the benefit of our residents and all Minnesotans.



Established in
1852



607
square miles



1.3
million
residents

45
cities



100+ lakes
& Mississippi River



9 fortune 500
companies

11 watershed
districts with a
diverse range of
creeks and wetlands



Platform priority

Service Delivery

Protect the county's ability to continue providing critical services to residents.



Platform

Bonding

Hennepin Recycling Recovery Facility — \$26 million (repurposing previous authorization)

The county is seeking to redirect previously allocated \$26 million of state bonding monies to construct a county recycling recovery facility in Brooklyn Park.

When paired with existing recycling programs, recycling recovery facilities divert the most tons from the trash, on the shortest timeline and at the lowest cost per ton compared to other priority zero-waste actions.

State support is needed to advance recycling infrastructure that will allow counties to meet state-mandated recycling goals and reduce reliance on landfilling.



West Broadway Safety and Mobility Improvements — \$10.1 million

Hennepin County is seeking state funding to reconstruct West Broadway Avenue (County Road 81) from Lyndale Avenue to West River Parkway. We are requesting \$5.3 million of state bond funds with a 50% match commitment from Hennepin County to fund the entire \$10.6 million reconstruction project. The project will address disparities among our residents and build healthier communities.



Washington Avenue Multimodal Improvements with METRO H Line ABRT — \$6.5 million

The county is seeking state funding to reconstruct County Road 152, known as Washington and Cedar avenues in the Seven Corners area. We are requesting \$6.5 million of state bond funds with a 50% match commitment from Hennepin County to fund the entire \$15 million reconstruction project.

Climate and environment

Protect the environment and conserve resources



Support legislation and policies that protect the environment, conserve resources, build equity and resiliency, and promote adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Promote and support state laws and programs that will help achieve the county's greenhouse gas emissions, climate action, zero-waste, and resiliency goals.

Climate and environment

Energy efficiency and renewables

- Promote weatherization and energy efficiency for homeowners and renters, including education and assistance, and advocating for affordable homeowners' insurance.

Natural resources

- Permanently authorize the mortgage and deed tax capture for the Environmental Response Fund used to clean up contaminated properties in the county.
- Respond to the loss of trees due to invasive pests, disease, and climate change by increasing state funding for local governments to improve community forests and manage tree waste.
- Support increased state funding for local administration of soil and water conservation districts.
- Support policies that prevent and treat aquatic invasive species and pollution and protect the state's water and natural resources.

Waste management

- Accelerate a zero-waste future to help the county meet its climate action goals and accelerate the timeline for closure of HERC between 2028 and 2040.
- Fund a pre-processing facility in Hennepin County to recover reusable and recyclable materials from the trash before disposal.
- Support increased state funding for SCORE, expanding organics composting and anaerobic digestion initiatives, and promoting market development for recycled materials.
- Update e-waste and battery statutes to ensure cost coverage for collectors and to educate consumers on safe management.
- Adopt truth-in-labeling laws for recyclable products.
- Repeal the state preemption prohibiting local units of government from banning the use of single use plastic bags.
- Adopt a mandatory diversion requirement for construction and demolition (C&D) waste.
- Adjust pricing structures such as pay-as-you-throw to incentivize waste reduction, reuse, and recycling with no direct cost to residents.
- Support the Partnership on Waste and Energy 2026 legislative platform.
- Change organized collection process and hauler licensing.
- Adopt and enforce material bans at landfills for all materials that emit methane: food/organics, paper/cardboard, wood, and textiles.

General government

Improve government operations



Partner with the State of Minnesota to improve government services delivery, reduce mandates on local government, re-prioritize government spending, and promote effective management of county programs by allowing local control.

General government

Elections

- Provide clarity and better access for absentee voting.
- Support state-level standards and equipment for ranked choice voting.
- Strengthen election security and integrity as well as safeguard election workers, candidates and voters.

Operations and administration

- Support reallocating or increasing certain marriage license, motor vehicle, watercraft, off road vehicle, and driver's license filing fees to make deputy registrars' offices more self-sufficient and reduce administrative burdens for local registrars.
- Support revenue sharing with the state's Driver and Vehicle Services for online transactions.
- Update Hennepin County statutes regarding the Medical Examiner's office.

Data practices

- Oppose changes to the Minnesota Data Practices Act that require audit logs or audit trails that impose an undue financial or resource management burden on local units of government.
- Protect residents' personal information by making a person's address, phone number and email address private data.
- Support legislation that bases email retention policies on the information contained within the record and not on the file type to which it is stored; oppose legislation that requires government entities to retain emails that are not part of the official record and do not serve a business purpose.
- Update the Official Records Act to permit the digitization of all official records without prescribing the medium or technology.
- Protect data on minor children library users.

Broadband

- Increase broadband access and digital equity by enhancing infrastructure; by expanding broadband services with the redefining of the duties, title and goals of the state's Office of Broadband Development; by expanding the Border-to-Border program to provide continued state and federal funding to Hennepin County; and by updating state broadband goals.

Hennepin Healthcare System

Ensure access to healthcare services for all



Ensure access to the full continuum of health care services for all by addressing racism as a public health crisis through policies that eliminate health disparities, increase equity, support the capacity of the health-care workforce, and create financial stability for Hennepin Healthcare System as the state's safety-net provider.

Hennepin Healthcare System

Increase the financial stability of Hennepin Healthcare System

- Support efforts to minimize harm from federal changes to Medicaid and increase supplemental funding sources that will impact how the largest Medicaid provider system and statewide safety-net trauma hospital manages the challenges of caring for a disproportionate share of medically and socially complex patients with unmet social needs.
- Protect Medicaid directed payments to maximize the benefit of this program, and protect the 340B drug discount program to improve outcomes and manage higher care costs associated with serving a disproportionate number of Medicaid patients.
- Preserve hospital capacity for patients who need inpatient care by ensuring patients can swiftly and safely discharge to an appropriate setting through streamlining processes and investing in the capacity of long-term care, children and youth mental health services in the community, and other higher acuity mental health settings.

Increase health equity and improve population health through innovation and reform

- Support state investments to eliminate health disparities in mental health and maternal health care, including supporting birthing people experiencing substance use disorder during pregnancy, and expanding trauma-responsive health care. Support innovative public health and health-care delivery models that address social drivers of health; and adding Collaborative Care Model through state plan amendments through Medicaid.

- Promote efforts to address the state's opioid crisis, including increased access to medication-assisted therapy, alternative pain management therapies, peer recovery supports, and Medicaid coverage while detained pre-trial, and ensuring Hennepin Emergency Medical Services are available to all residents.
- Support the safety of our communities, employees, and patients through preventative workplace violence efforts; policies that support healing after violence; address gun-violence as a public health crisis and support prevention efforts; and investing in sustainable funding for hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs.

Support the capacity of the health care workforce to ensure the delivery of exceptional care

- Promote policies that support increasing staff capacity in the health care workforce, including maintaining telehealth, improving licensing flexibilities and access to interpreters, and increasing loan forgiveness programs.
- Partner to ensure the evolution of academic medicine in Minnesota supports a strong health care ecosystem, creates a workforce reflective of patients and increases medical professionals of color, and addresses existing workforce and provider shortages in Minnesota, especially in the addiction and mental health-care system. Remove barriers to employment for justice-involved individuals and enact programs that create a pathway for youth of color to enter and stay in health-care professions.
- Support efforts to increase equitable access to medical education, including investment in graduate medical education and health-care workforce development, including tax incentives for educators.

Health and human services

Improve outcomes for all residents



Ensure that mental health, substance use disorder, and disability services, and safety net and public health systems work to improve experiences and outcomes for all residents, especially the most vulnerable. Eliminate disparities by supporting preventative models of care and early intervention services to avoid over-reliance on crisis response. Advance new policies and funding mechanisms that recognize racism as a public health crisis.

Health and human services

Systems reforms

- Mitigate harmful impacts of federal cuts to health and human services programs. Minimize administrative burdens and preserve access to public health services, health care, health care navigation, nutrition support, and other essential programs, particularly for the most vulnerable residents. Support systems improvements, administrative efficiencies, and funding alternatives to prevent county cost shifts.
- Address the crisis of gun violence through common-sense gun safety, state investment in preventative and responsive behavioral health supports for adults and children, and support for capacity-building in community-based prevention and response.
- Improve technological systems to streamline and provide efficiencies and simplification to Health and Human Services program requirements.
- Support changes designed in partnership with counties to align and simplify program access, rules and administration.
- Increase state support for local public health capacity for infectious disease response, expanded vaccine access, and to address other public health crises.
- Support seamless and timely access to Community First Services and Supports (CFSS) services for eligible individuals while minimizing administrative burdens.
- Increase state financial, technological, and administrative support to address caseload demands across the human services continuum.
- Support legislation that bolsters supportive services for all veterans and their families.

Invest in children and families

- Address the significant cost burden of child care for working families, a key factor in preventing communities from building wealth.
- Support state investment in community-driven solutions to improve maternal health, birth outcomes, and public health programming (e.g., Children and Teen Checkups, targeted home visiting, doula care), especially for communities of color.
- Strengthen the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act and Indian Family Preservation Act and invest resources to reduce the disproportionate number of African American and American Indian children in the child protection system and increase frequency and timeliness of reunification.
- Support legislation to remove barriers created by current foster care licensing requirements that result in fewer kinship and culturally appropriate foster families.
- Ensure educational stability for youth in foster care or who may be unstably housed. Support the efforts of others to resolve structural deficits for school systems serving children with complex needs.

Health and human services continued

Invest in health through mental health and substance use disorder services access and improvements

- Increase state support to meet the needs of county residents with mental health and substance use challenges, including culturally responsive services, early crisis interventions, and services required for stabilizing residents in the community and primary care settings.
- Invest in preventive upstream services to reduce the harmful impact of substance use disorder and the opioid epidemic, including readily available opiate antagonists as an alternative to emergency crisis requests.
- Support efforts to integrate mental health, housing, substance use disorder, and criminal justice interventions, to improve residents' outcomes and reduce recidivism.
- Support integrated state-county funding and services model to comprehensively address the needs of children and families with complex behavioral health issues.

Housing

Support safe and stable housing



Increase state resources to support safe and stable housing for all individuals and families.

Housing

- Increase accessible, affordable long-term housing for residents with up to 50% area median income (AMI), prioritizing affordability up to 30% AMI.
- Increase housing and related services options for residents with disabilities, including those exiting or diverting from institutional care who need on-site support to integrate their communities successfully.
- Provide sustainable operational funding to make safe, dignified, and housing-focused emergency shelters available to residents experiencing homelessness.
- Continue to reform the Housing Support Program to remove the financial disincentives that cause residents to choose unsheltered settings and ensure the program reflects real costs in the housing market.
- Support dedicated revenue to and reduce administrative burden on counties to meet affordable housing needs.

Law, safety and justice

Protect public safety



Preserve and protect public safety through state-county partnerships that address funding challenges and support reform.

Law, safety and justice

Increase funding

- Protect the current community corrections formula allocation and promote fully funding the formula to ensure adequate and ongoing state funding for supervision of individuals under court jurisdiction in the community.

Remove barriers

- Expand notification requirements for the automatic expungement of certain cannabis related offenses to include corrections agencies that are in possession of any related records.
- Support state leadership to integrate human-centered design principles and to coordinate the efficient administration of public safety answering points (PSAP's) across jurisdictional lines.
- Support efforts to ensure that non-citizen residents are guaranteed due process in the legal system and increase their safety and security.

Improve outcomes

- Support regional, cost-effective, solutions to advance reforms that strengthen the continuum of care, deliver better outcomes, address licensing and certification challenges, and support healthy outcomes for county-connected youth and their families.
- Support ongoing state investments to expand capacity and appropriate placement in state-funded facilities to ensure greater access to behavioral health services and eliminate racial disparities in the public safety and health systems.
- Support domestic and intimate partner violence prevention efforts and transformative services to achieve a community where all people are healthy, valued, and thrive. Leverage state and local partnerships that create opportunities for collaboration.
- Support the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board 2026 legislative platform.

Taxes

Assure flexibility to serve our residents



Protect state funding for mandated services and assure flexibility to serve our residents without undue reliance on property taxes.

Taxes

- Support County Program Aid (CPA) that funds county-mandated services and reduces reliance on property tax.
- Ensure veterans and their spouses/partners remain eligible for the veterans' property tax exclusion.
- Modernize property tax regulations to improve equity for vulnerable populations, eliminate disparities, and close loopholes.
- Update state assessor duties to reflect modern guidance and standards provided by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and allow assessors to access data to ensure accurate and transparent assessments.
- Support efforts to make the property tax system more equitable by expanding homestead market value exclusion, property tax refunds, modifying classifications, modifying how special assessments are billed, and changing confession of judgment payment plan terms.
- Seek non-property tax revenue source to fund Hennepin County health care related operations and facilities, which provide care to patients from across Minnesota, from surrounding states and to Hennepin County residents, youth activities, library hours, and long-term capital needs of the public infrastructure of Target Field.
- Modernize the Tax Court petition and appeals process to ensure counties can defend property valuations in court while still protecting private taxpayer data.
- Protect existing revenues for counties to meet the needs of their communities. Oppose efforts to reallocate local government resources or interfere with established project prioritization.

Transportation

Strengthen the long-term value of neighborhoods and communities



Provide a safe transportation network that offers strong connections through multiple modes, respects the environment and improves the health and quality of life for all who live, work, or visit here.

Transportation

- Support state funding and regulatory changes to implement recommendations from the Blue Line Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board.
- Support legislation that promotes the advancement of the Blue Line Light Rail Transit Project. This includes, but is not limited to, right-of-way acquisition, insurance, liability, interjurisdictional coordination, federal regulatory requirements, and funding.
- Support the Metropolitan Council's implementation of Arterial Bus Rapid Transit along various routes in Hennepin County to provide shorter transit times, increased ridership, and expanded mobility for communities along the proposed lines.
- Support state investments to construct and maintain multi-modal infrastructure initiatives that enable safe access for all users, including Active Transportation, Complete Streets, and Green Streets.
- Support state investments for Toward Zero Deaths initiatives and policies which require crash reports for all crashes.
- Modify the special distribution of leased vehicle sales tax in the metro area to fairly include Hennepin and Ramsey counties.
- Oppose any increase in weight or size limits for commercial trucks and other motor vehicles.
- Support increased funding for the Local Bridge Replacement Program and the Local Road Improvement Program.
- Support MnDOT's Corridor of Commerce program and funding to achieve the full corridor vision for projects in Hennepin County.
- Support state investments to reduce transportation carbon emissions, including, but not limited to, vehicle and transit electrification, electric vehicle charging stations, and infrastructure that connects people by all modes of travel.
- Promote the adoption of policies that support a pathway toward reducing vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in alignment with Hennepin County's goal to reduce VMT per capita by 20% by 2040.
- Support legislation that explores eliminating transit fares to boost ridership, remove cost burdens for lower-income riders, and speed up transit efficiency by improving boarding times.

Workforce development

Meet the future workforce needs



Meet the future workforce needs of Hennepin County and other employers and address persistent disparities, with stronger state support, by connecting well-trained and qualified individuals to high-demand jobs in our region.

Workforce development

- Support efforts to raise and protect wages for residents at the lowest income levels to reflect regional costs of living.
- Expand eligibility and increase flexibility for the Dislocated Worker Program.
- Protect SNAP Employment and Training funding, provide flexibility for eligibility, and prioritize funding to critical populations.
- Ensure presumption for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the Workers Compensation program does not result in unmanageable cost increases for local governments.

Nonprofit requests

Support the following nonprofit organizations by serving as the fiscal agent for state bonding proceeds.

- Avivo — \$26.7 million
- St. David's YWCA Renovation — \$7 million
- People Serving People — \$11.5 million

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners



Jeffrey Lunde
 District 1
hennepin.us/Lunde
 612-348-7881
jeffrey.lunde@hennepin.us



Angela Conley
 District 4
hennepin.us/Conley
 612-348-7884
angela.conley@hennepin.us



Heather Edelson
 District 6
hennepin.us/Edelson
 612-348-7886
heather.edelson@hennepin.us



Irene Fernando
 District 2, Chair
hennepin.us/Fernando
 612-348-7882
irene.fernando@hennepin.us



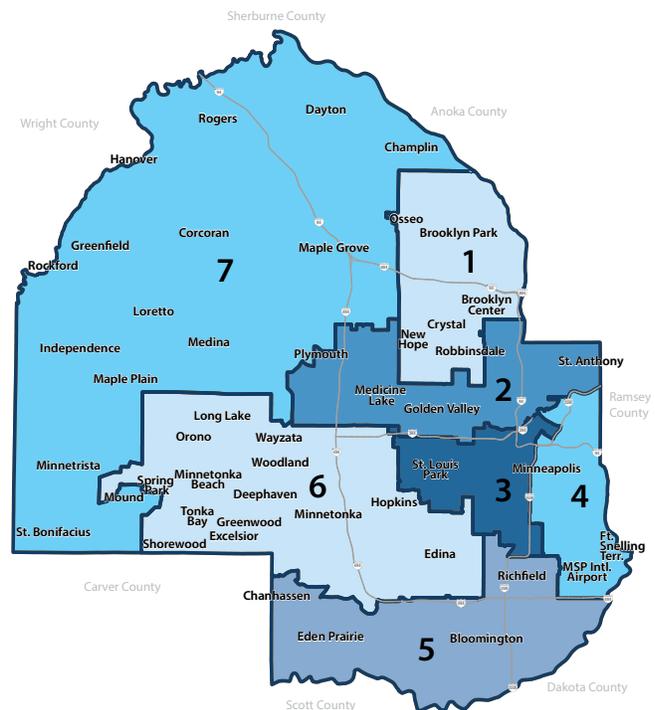
Debbie Goettel
 District 5, Vice Chair
hennepin.us/Goettel
 612-348-7885
debbie.goettel@hennepin.us



Kevin Anderson
 District 7
hennepin.us/Anderson
 612-348-7887
kevin.anderson@hennepin.us



Marion Greene
 District 3
hennepin.us/Greene
 612-348-7883
marion.greene@hennepin.us



A-2400 Government Center
 Minneapolis, MN 55487-0240
 612-348-3081

County Administration

A-2303 Government Center, Minneapolis, MN
55487-0233

Jodi Wentland

County Administrator

612-543-4344

county.admin@hennepin.us

Intergovernmental Relations

A-2305 Government Center, Minneapolis, MN 55487-0235

Wanda Cannon

Public Policy Manager

Cell: 612-559-6510

wanda.cannon@hennepin.us

Akolade Gbadamosi

Public Policy Manager

Cell: 612-471-8783

akolade.gbadamosi@hennepin.us

Kirk Pederson

Public Policy Manager

Cell: 612-432-0447

kirk.pederson@hennepin.us

Liz Doyle

Deputy Director

612-801-6075

elizabeth.doyle@hennepin.us

Meg Montgomery

Public Policy Manager

612-348-7789

megan.montgomery@hennepin.us

Liz Young

Director

Cell: 612-559-0447

liz.young@hennepin.us

Brennan Furness

Public Policy Manager

Cell: 612-235-0938

brennan.furness@hennepin.us

Hennepin Healthcare System

701 Park Avenue, S6.107, Minneapolis, MN 55415

Susie Emmert

Senior Director, Advocacy and Public Policy

Cell: 651-278-5422

susie.emmert@hcmcd.org

Jessica Oaxaca

Advocacy Engagement Manager

Cell 507-828-8604

jessica.oaxaca@hcmcd.org

Hennepin County
Board of Commissioners

A-2400 Government Center
300 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55487-0240
612-348-3081

hennepin.us

