



2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Greater Minnesota Partnership advocates for public policies and investments that stimulate prosperity throughout Greater Minnesota.

The Greater Minnesota Partnership encourages Governor Walz and the Minnesota Legislature to make the following top priorities for the 2024 legislative session.

Workforce Housing

Greater Minnesota's workforce housing market does not work under existing constraints. In order to increase the housing stock throughout Greater Minnesota available to our workforce, the GMNP supports investments and regulatory reforms that aim to reduce the private market cost of developing new affordable and market rate housing and revitalize existing housing. Additionally, GMNP supports investments that will increase opportunities for senior citizens to access housing that meets their care and life needs.

In most communities, a typical worker does not qualify for income-contingent housing support but cannot afford to build a new home on their own. They cannot access private capital because the cost to build a new home is more than the house will appraise for once it is built. The high construction costs of multi-family rental units often require rents that exceed the housing affordability benchmark of 30 percent or less of a household's income. These factors are further complicated by lower wages that produce prevailing rents that do not justify private development of new multi-family units due to concern that their investment will not find enough tenants who can afford the new units. Collectively construction costs, financing challenges and prevailing rents do not produce enough replacement units to our aging housing stock and thereby threatens our communities long-term tax base and ability to supply workers to our businesses for economic growth

Greater Minnesota Child Care

Every family in Greater Minnesota should have access to high-quality, affordable childcare. In order for this to happen, we need to retain and increase the number of childcare providers serving Greater Minnesota, increase the number of childcare slots available for our families and workforce, and enhance the quality of care provided to our children. To accomplish these goals, the GMNP supports both investments and regulatory reforms that allow providers to operate financially sustainable childcare businesses while maintaining a commitment to a safe and nurturing environment for our young learners. We also support efforts to build a stable, high quality, diverse, and equitably compensated childcare workforce that encourages workers to enter and remain in the industry.

Healthcare and Emergency Medical Services

Minnesotans living in Greater Minnesota should have access to health care, including care delivered by telehealth and through innovative care delivery models. When a community lacks access to primary, emergency, mental health, or long-term care, the community's ability to attract new employers, and its employers' ability to recruit and retain employees, is also negatively impacted. The GMNP supports the work of other organizations that advocate for investments and regulatory reforms that enhance regional care systems, telehealth system development and infrastructure, and healthcare workforce development.

Workforce

Our workforce is the most important driver of economic growth. Without access to a workforce whose skills are aligned with business needs, or where access to training for new and existing workers is not available, new businesses will not develop and existing businesses will not expand in a community. To build our workforce, Minnesota needs K-12 schools that are preparing all students to successfully continue their education or to be ready to appropriately enter our economy, and higher education systems and workforce training programs that are aligned with our economic needs and adaptable to our economy's ever-changing needs. As a result, the GMNP supports efforts that enhance partnerships between education providers, local employers, and communities. GMNP supports efforts that enhance and reimagine workforce training—both employer-based and credentialed training— and mitigates achievement gaps equitably in all corners of the state. In addition, the GMNP supports programs that encourage worker relocation to areas of need, or that reduce the barriers that workers face—such as lack of housing or child care—in relocating to a new community.

Universal Broadband

The internet is the backbone of the 21st century economy. Unfortunately, too many people and businesses in Greater Minnesota lack access to the level of broadband service needed to fully engage in the regional and global economies, as well as social and community life. The state has a goal for all Minnesotans to reach access to high-quality broadband—defined as 100MBPS download and 20MBPS upload by 2026. The seven metropolitan counties are each at 98 percent or more of properties having access to 100/20 service. In Greater Minnesota, counties range from 99 percent access to less than 30 percent. The GMNP supports a FY23-24 biennial investment that fully funds the 2026 broadband goal. The GMNP also supports policies that create a balance between the need to serve unserved and underserved properties.

The GMNP supports continued and increased investment in critical areas that promote economic development and prosperity throughout Greater Minnesota including:

Capital investment and Infrastructure in Greater Minnesota

Capital investment bills are important in stimulating the state's economy and addressing the public infrastructure need across the state. As such, capital investment bills should focus on the key infrastructures—local roads and bridges, wastewater, and other infrastructure—that grow local and regional economies in Greater Minnesota. At least 50 percent of all capital investment funding

should be directed to Greater Minnesota.

Transportation

A fully developed and maintained transportation system is critical for prosperity in Greater Minnesota. The GMNP supports a comprehensive approach for transportation, which includes sufficient funding and regulatory improvements that allow the state to effectively and efficiently maintain and expand our transportation system.

Economic Development and Workforce Development Grant Programs

Strategic and targeted investments in project-focused opportunities is an effective way to spur economic and workforce development in specific communities. The GMNP supports the state maintaining and growing investments in grant programs that have a proven record in 1) creating job growth, 2) maintaining existing employment, or 3) enhancing innovation and the adoption of new technologies. These programs include, but are not limited to: Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI), Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF), Job Creation Fund, Redevelopment Grant Program, Demolition Loan Program, and the Job Training Incentive Program. In addition to supporting the continued state investment in these programs, the GMNP supports changes to the programs that allow them to more effectively and efficiently address the needs of Greater Minnesota communities, businesses, and employees.

Property Tax and Tax Incentives

The GMNP supports protecting and maintaining Local Government Aid. LGA helps Greater Minnesota businesses receive needed city services while restraining local property taxes. The future investment in LGA should support including inflation and population growth in the formula to keep up with increases in population and inflation. Additionally, the GMNP supports the use of tax incentives as a method of investing in business growth or new business creation.

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