

EQUITY PROVISIONS PASSED IN 2021

Agriculture

Items included in Ag Finance Omnibus [1st Special Session Laws 2021, Ch. 3; HF 8 (Sundin)]

- **Urban and Youth Ag Program funding doubled** – Up to \$600k/yr from AGRI account at MDA. These grants catalyze urban youth agricultural education and/or urban agriculture community development. For-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, local government entities, and Native American tribal communities are eligible to apply for the program – provided that their project is in an urban area or within the boundaries of a federally recognized Tribal land.
- **Emerging Farmer Working Group funded** - \$10k/yr from the Urban Ag appropriation. The Emerging Farmers Working group was created in 2019 and directed to advise the commissioner and legislature regarding the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that support emerging farmers in MN, Emerging farmers are members who are, and organizations that represent, farmers or aspiring farmers who are women, veterans, persons with disabilities, American Indian or Alaskan Natives, members of a community of color, young, and urban, and any other emerging farmers as determined by the commissioner.
- **Farm-to-School Program funding doubled** – Up to \$800k/yr from AGRI account at MDA. Farmers that participate are often smaller, emerging farmers, plus the benefit of healthy food in schools helps people of all backgrounds.
- **Good Food Access Program funding increase** – Up to \$450k/yr from AGRI account at MDA (\$150k/yr more than the 2019 budget). This program increases availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, including produce, for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas. The GFAP provides financial support and technical assistance to open, renovate, or expand the operations of grocery stores and small food retailers, and expands access to credit and reduces barriers to investment.
- **Emerging Farmer Outreach Position and Translation Services at MDA funded** - \$150k/yr ongoing for staff at MDA to assist emerging farmers and help navigate resources and program opportunities at MDA, including \$25k/yr for translation services. These were recommendations from Emerging Farmers Working Group.
- **Industrial Hemp development** - \$50k onetime in the first year for industrial hemp program development for IT needs. Supported by BIPOC hemp growers.
- **International Trade and New Markets funding** - \$50k onetime for international marketing, including in Taiwan. Supported by testimony from BIPOC farmers/businesses in committee.
- **Livestock Processing Grants** - \$1.5 million onetime for grants to start, modernize or expand meat and poultry processing facilities (\$750k/yr). Grants cannot exceed \$200,000.
- **Second Harvest Heartland funding increase** - \$100k increase for food purchases from Minnesota producers, especially for dairy and protein products, to be distributed at Minnesota food banks.
- **Farm Advocates and Farmland Access Teams funding increase** - \$150k increase must be used for a farmland access teams pilot program to assist beginning and existing farmers find land to farm.

Items included in Ag Policy Omnibus [Regular Session Laws 2021, Ch. 28; SF 958 (Sundin)]

- **Cottage Food Laws expanded** – Annual income cap increased to \$78k and pet treats allowed for sale from home producers. Producers can also register as a business. Cottage Foods are used by many BIPOC farmers/gardeners as a tool to add a source of food and income.

- **Board of Animal Health membership changes** – Increased membership of the Board from five members to six, adding a member of a federally recognized tribe located in Minnesota who is involved in livestock production.
- **Farmer Lender Mediation Act** – Extended for another five years, this program helps all farmers, including BIPOC farmers, navigate financial proceedings with lending institutions for a good result.

Items included in other bills

- **Market Bucks/Healthy Eating Here at Home Grants (in State Gov Finance budget)** - \$325k/yr for the Market Bucks program included in the House bill. This program is used by EBT/SNAP recipients at farmers markets to add \$10 to their purchasing power to buy healthy local food from Minnesota farmers.

Commerce, Climate & Energy

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention (HF 1589 – Richardson)** – Responding to the massive increasing in catalytic converter thefts the bill increases reporting requirements for scrap metal dealers when purchasing a catalytic converter. The Dept. of Commerce is also directed to create a pilot project to identify the vehicles most likely to be targeted by a theft and establish a process to label those catalytic converter unique identification numbers using labels, engravings, paint or other methods.
- **Clean Energy Careers Pilot Project (HF 1270 – Lee)** – The bill appropriates \$2.5 million in FY22 from the RDA to Northgate Development to create a pilot project providing skills and training relevant to the design, construction, operation, or maintenance of various clean energy infrastructure in north Minneapolis.
- **Solar for Schools (HF 1427 – Acomb)** – This bill creates a grant program to help install solar energy systems on schools to reduce energy costs. 60% of the funding will go to schools with over 50% of the students receiving free and reduced lunch. Energy costs are the second highest expense for most schools.
- **Self-Storage Reform (HF 1205 – Agbaje)** – Minnesota’s self-storage laws were reformed in 2014 but missed some important updates. These provisions allow someone to access critical items (under \$125 in value) if they received public assistance, are eligible for legal aid services, or are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. This update will also eliminate the use of evictions for storage tenets with an unpaid balance.
- **Cold Weather Rule (HF 912 – Acomb)** – This bill expands the cold weather rule protections by extending the window two weeks in the fall from the current October 15 to October 1. The bill also extends the protections two weeks in the spring from April 15 to April 30.

Items included in other bills

- **Energy Conversation and Optimization (ECO) Act (HF 168 – Stephenson)** – ECO updated and reformed Minnesota’s energy conservation programs that are run by the Minnesota’s energy utilities. One of the major reforms requires utilities to increase the amount of spending directed at low-income ratepayers. These improvements will help more Minnesotans, who typically cannot afford to spend money on energy efficiency improvements, to conserve more energy and spend less on their utility bills.

E-12 Education

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Extending 4,000 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Slots:** Maintains early learning opportunities at school sites across the state with high concentrations of students in poverty.
- **Historic Investments to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers:** Funding for Grow Your Own teacher training, American Indian teacher preparation grants, teacher mentorship programs, teacher recruitment efforts, Black Men Teach, and the Sanneh Foundation.
- **Girls in Action:** Funding to sustain and expand program sites focused on reducing negative behavior among female students by partnering students with mentors, developing leadership skills, and providing community engagement through service learning.
- **Non-Exclusionary Discipline Training:** Funding for teacher training to reduce disparities in student discipline and decrease the number of students of color who are removed from the classroom for behavior that white students are not.
- **School Meal Shaming Prevention:** Policy language to ensure students with outstanding meal debt are not denied meals and require reminders for payment to not demean or stigmatize any student.

Environment

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Air monitoring:** \$184,000 to purchase portable air monitoring equipment so that the MN Pollution Control Agency can quickly assess pollution levels and impacts in Environmental Justice communities.
- **Youth Engagement:** \$800,000 for grants for No Child Left Inside, a nationally-recognized program aimed at engaging lower income children in natural resources based activities.
- **Local Water Infrastructure Grants: \$1.998 million** for a local government water infrastructure grant program for local governmental units and Tribal governments. (40% of this appropriation will be for grants in the metro area.)

Health and Human Services

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **MFIP Cost of Living Adjustment and one-time \$435 payment for recipients**
- **PCA Funding:**
 - SEIU Contract: \$67.56 million in 22-23; \$103.887 million in 24-25
 - Rate Framework: \$30.36 million in 22-23; \$39.559 million in 24-25
- **CCAP Rates:** At the 40th percentile of the 2021 survey for infants and toddlers and the 30th percentile for pre-school and school children. Rates will be updated again with 2024 survey data.
- **Homelessness:** Over \$25 million in 22-23 and over \$20 million in the tails, including \$12 million per biennium for emergency service grants and \$2 million per biennium for emergency shelter.
- **Homeless Youth Access to Birth Records:** Allows homeless youth to access their birth records and obtain a copy of their official birth certificate and lays out a process for obtaining a photo ID. Also waives fees for homeless youth for these purposes.
- **Housing Support Rate Increase:** \$50 per month
- **Extended Postpartum Coverage Under MA:** Extended from 60 days to 12 months.
- **ICHRP Investment:** Expands the Integrated Care for High-Risk Pregnant Women program.
- **Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act:** Requires hospitals with obstetric care and birth centers to make available to direct care employees and contractors who routinely care for patients who are pregnant or postpartum a continuing education course on anti-racism training and implicit bias. Also contains provisions to promote diversity in the midwife/doula workforce.

- **Supporting Healthy Babies Grants:** \$558K in 22-23 for a grant to the Wilder Foundation for the African American Babies Coalition (AABC) initiative for community-driven training and education on best practices for supporting healthy development of babies during pregnancy and postpartum.
- **Additional Funding for Home Visiting Grants:** \$3 million in 22-23 and \$1.5 million in 24-25
- **Major Dental Reform:** Increased rates to help improve access for public program patients and a trigger system that could lead to a dental carveout if health plans do not meet performance benchmarks.
- **Periodontal Coverage:** Adds nonsurgical treatment for periodontal (gum) disease to dental services covered under MA for adults.
- **Enhanced Asthma Benefit:** Adds MA coverage for enhanced asthma services and related products for children with poorly controlled asthma.
- **MA Coverage for Weight Loss:** Removes an existing prohibition on MA covering drugs and pharmaceutical ingredients used for weight loss.
- **Lead Risk Assessment:** Strengthens protection from lead exposure by expanding where an assessing agency must conduct lead risk assessments, decreasing the blood lead level threshold that triggers certain assessments, and enhancing an agency's authority to order lead hazard reduction.
- **Tobacco and Vaping Prevention Funding:** \$8 million per biennium
- **Court-Appointed Counsel:** Requires that in all juvenile protection proceedings where a child risks removal from the care of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, the court shall appoint counsel if the parent, guardian, or custodian desires counsel.
- **Family First Implementation:** Funding to implement this federal law, which focuses on preventative behavioral health services and trying to keep families together.
- **ICWA Training:** Invests in Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and MN Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) training and development for county child welfare and child protection staff.
- **Ombudsperson for American Indian Families:** Makes this a standalone office while providing new funding to keep the current budget for other Family Ombudspersons intact.
- **Parent Support Grants:** \$300K per biennium for Minnesota One-Stop for Communities, a nonprofit that assists parents in going through the child welfare system.
- **Foster Care Background Studies:** Brings family foster care licensing standards more in-line with adoption standards in order to reduce existing barriers that can make family preservation difficult.
- **Mental Health Workforce Bill:** Numerous provisions designed to address lack of cultural and ethnic diversity among MN's mental health workforce. They include allowing children's mental health grants to be used to provide supervision to clinical trainees from BIPOC communities; strengthening continuing education requirements; establishing a Culturally Informed and Responsive Mental Health Task Force; increasing diversity on licensing boards; and establishing a mental health cultural community continuing education grant program.
- **SUD Providers that Provide Culturally Specific Services:** 5% rate increase
- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Implementation Grants:** \$2 million per year
- **School-Linked Mental Health and SUD Grants:** \$17 million in extra federal funds over the next 4 years
- **Tribal Overpayments:** Funding to keep the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the White Earth Nation from having to pay back money for medication-assisted treatment (MAT) overpayments.
- **Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council (CECLC):** Extends the sunset for the CECLC until 2025 and allows council members to be compensated for their work.

Items included in other bills

- **Prenatal Substance Use Reporting Requirements:** Modifies prenatal substance use reporting requirements to help reduce a barrier to pregnant women receiving important care (HF 1026-Morrison; carried in regular session HF 2128 CCR).

Higher Education

Items included in Higher Ed Omnibus Bill [1st Special Session Laws 2021, Ch. 2; HF 7 (Bernardy)]

- **Underrepresented Teacher Candidate Grants (student teaching grants)** - \$1 million/yr funding increase (and \$1.125 million/yr in the tails) for BIPOC student support grants during their student teaching practicum.
- **Teachers of Color and American Indian Teacher Scholarship Pilot funded** - \$3 million for scholarships for aspiring Teachers of Color and American Indian Teacher (TOCAIT) students.
- **Student Transfer Report** – OHE must collect and report summary data on students who withdraw from enrollment before completing a degree, including information on transfer to other institutions.
- **Direct Admissions Minnesota Pilot Program funded** - \$1 million in FY22-23 to start-up, and \$75k/yr ongoing to reach Minnesota students to tell them they've been accepted to college. As a universal policy, direct admissions holds great potential to reduce equity gaps, provide important college-going information and signals to high school students, alleviate potential access gaps for rural and urban populations, and eliminate the need for extensive financial and cultural capital to navigate the college application process. Direct admissions is also a low-cost policy compared to other interventions seeking to increase college access and equity (such as traditional grant-aid programs, mentoring, or wrap-around services).
- **ICAP (Intervention For College Attendance Program) funding increase** - \$715k/yr increase for this program that helps students stay on track for high school graduation and college.
- **Student Transcript Access updates** – Colleges must not withhold a student's transcript over a financial debt if any of the following conditions are true: the debt is under \$250, the student is on a payment plan, the debt has been sent to collections, or the transcript is requested by an employer. A report is required on the use and impact of this requirement and the provision sunsets in 2024.
- **Developmental Courses exempted from state grant term limits** – Developmental courses taken during undergrad no longer count against a student's state grant eligibility credit limit.
- **State Grant funding increase and extended eligibility** - \$2.6 million/yr ongoing which will provide access to over 2,700 new students, 46% of whom are from families with incomes below \$40k. Average state grant awards also increase across the spectrum of income categories.
- **State Grant Parameter Changes** – House DFLers fought for a permanent increase to the LME (Living and Miscellaneous Expenses) allowance from 106% to 109% of federal poverty guidelines. Senators wanted a decrease in the AFR (Assigned Family Responsibility (AFR) was decreased by 3% in every student category.
- **American Indian Scholarships** –Blood quantum criteria removed from the eligibility requirements. Anyone who is a member of a federally recognized tribe OR is ¼ or more American Indian ancestry is eligible. This also brings the American Indian Scholarship into alignment with other programs so students can get an additional award in the summer, in addition to the traditional two semesters. This could help some students get up to \$6,000 in a year.
- **College Possible increase and report** - \$100k for FY22-23. The report that College Possible is currently required to complete must be modified to include more robust and focused reporting on the use and outcomes of the state investment.
- **Supporting Students' Basic Needs** - \$1 million onetime. This new item was a Governor's request to help provide more student supports like mental health hubs, and to help students access community services available to them like SNAP and other social service programs.
- **Z-degree Textbook Program** - \$250,000 per year onetime to help develop zero text-book courses.
- **Basic Needs Hub Requirements** – Minnesota State is required to explore the implementation of a centralized resource hub which helps students access local, state, and national resources to fulfill their basic needs. Each college must also have a localized webpage with a clear point of contact for

assistance. The Board must also create a streamlined financial trigger to inform students of basic needs resources.

- **Mental Health Awareness** – \$1.5 million onetime at MinnState. The system is required to implement a mental health awareness program that includes improved web resources including self-assessment, mental health first aid training for faculty and staff, grants for campuses to establish peer support groups, mandatory mental health information at orientation, and outreach during times of high academic stress times to ensure students are aware of mental health resources available to them.
- **Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students funding increase** - \$188k increase in FY22-23 and going forward. OHE had over \$800k in requests last year and could only award \$175,000.
- **Childcare grant award increase and extended eligibility** – Sets award maximums at \$6,500/child per year.
- **Hunger Free Campus Grants funded** – \$307,000 in FY22-23 to provide financial awards to reduce food insecurity on campuses. The awards accompany the Hunger Free Campus Designations determined by statewide student organizations and OHE.
- **SELF-Refi cap increases** - The SELF Loan Refi program is modified to increase the maximum loan that can be refinanced from a \$70,000 to \$200,000 loan maximum for an individual. The program liability ceiling is also increased from \$100 million to \$300 million of total debt.
- **Fostering Independence Grants** – This new last-dollar program will ensure that Minnesota foster children without means do not have to pay for college. It will appropriate \$3.997 million in FY22-23 as it starts up, and \$7.522 million in the tails as it starts serving foster students.

Housing

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Eviction moratorium off ramp** – Evictions disproportionately impact BIPOC households; [PolicyLink's rent debt dashboard](#) estimates that 58% of Minnesotan households currently behind on their rent are BIPOC and 73% are low income.
- **\$100 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds to build affordable housing**
- **Shelter task force**
- Increased onetime funding for
 - **Homeownership Assistance Fund**
 - **Challenge Program** (BIPOC households served in 2019: 71% of rental projects, 60% of owner projects)
 - **Workforce and Affordable Homeownership Program**
 - **Manufactured Home Park Infrastructure**
- Maintains base funding for:
 - **Homework Starts with Home**
 - **Bridges** (Provides rental assistance for households with a member with a serious mental illness while they await federal housing assistance)
 - **Homeownership Education, Counseling, and Training (HECAT)** (2019: 54% of households served were BIPOC)
 - **Capacity Building Grants** (Aimed at addressing housing disparities & building power in communities impacted by disparities)
 - **Build Wealth MN**

Jobs & Labor

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Rebuilding Minneapolis & St. Paul:** \$80 million for economic development with much of that expected to rebuild corridors harmed by civil unrest.
- **Carveouts for business relief:** Of the \$70 million appropriated for COVID business relief, over half is carved out for BIPOC-owned businesses, ethnic malls, women-owned businesses and businesses with 6 employees or fewer.
- **\$86 million from Workforce Development Fund:** Includes funding for competitive grant programs (e.g. Pathways to Prosperity) and individual organizations (e.g. Twin Cities R!SE) that are dedicated to training low-income and disadvantaged individuals for the workforce.
- **\$15 million for workforce training from the General Fund:** Additional funding for competitive grant programs.
- **\$10 million for technical assistance to small businesses:** Much of this funding expected to go to organizations like Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) and African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS) that focus on helping minority entrepreneurs get their businesses up-and-running
- **\$2 million for Emerging Entrepreneur Fund:** Revolving loan fund to grow businesses owned by BIPOC individuals, women, and veterans.
- **Full funding for disabled workers:** \$58 million from the General Fund and \$16 million from the Workforce Development Fund to help disabled Minnesotans participate in the workforce.

Legacy

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Cultural Heritage:** \$5 million for a competitive grants program to create, celebrate, and teach the art, culture, and heritage of diverse Minnesota communities, including Asian and Pacific Island communities, the Somali diaspora and other African immigrant communities, Indigenous communities with a focus on the 11 Tribes in Minnesota, the African American community, the Latinx community, and other underrepresented cultural groups, including communities of Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Public Safety & Judiciary

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- Establish the Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (HF 2124 – Keeler)
- The decriminalization of poverty - Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform (HF 75 – Moller) and Reducing or Waiving Traffic and Criminal Surcharges (HF 306 – Frazier)
- Timely Processing of U-Visa Certification Documents (HF 321 – Feist)
- The Hardel Sherrell Act (HF 1267 – Long)
- Exempting Filing Fees by Tribal Representatives (HF 1007 – Becker-Finn)
- Modifications to MN Human Rights Act; Reasonable Accommodations (HF 2010 – Reyer)
- Establish Waivers for Indigenous Building Practices (HF 1042 – Keeler)
- Sexual Assault Reform (HF 707 – Moller)
- Grants for community violence prevention (Innovation in Community Safety Grants)
 - House DFLers also worked with Governor Walz to use \$15 million of the American Rescue Plan flexible funds for additional investments in community violence prevention grants.
- Increase funding for civil legal services and public defenders.

State Government, Elections, and Veterans

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Taxpayer Assistance Grants:** Funds Volunteer Taxpayer Assistance Services (“VITA” grants) to help low income tax filers
- **Veterans Stable Housing Initiative:** establishes a new initiative aimed at finding and securing stable housing for veterans.
- **Veterans’ Restorative Justice:** establishes a diversion program focused on ensuring that veterans are not punished for potentially treatable side effects stemming from their time in service.
- **Wage theft:** Funds a program at the Attorney General’s office aimed at preventing employers from failing to pay employees for their time.

Taxes

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Investing in Working Families:** - One of the DFL’s top priorities in this budget was to expand the Working Family Credit. HF 9 extends the WFC to Minnesotans without children down to age 19 (from 21). Income from refundable tax credits for low-income workers and their households are effective tools for moving individuals and families out of poverty. These credits result in a host of associated benefits that help Minnesota’s most vulnerable workers. They are only available for those who are working already – reflecting Minnesota commitment to hard workers, families, and children. They also provide benefits statewide – just 51% of the returns claiming credits in 2015 were in the Twin Cities metro area and about 12% of returns statewide claimed the credit.
- **Protecting Minnesota’s Most Vulnerable** – County Homelessness Aid and the Unemployment Insurance Exclusion direct dollars to Minnesota’s most vulnerable, helping keep them in their homes and off the streets.
- **Rondo Land Bridge** – This historic investment will start repairing the wrong done to the Rondo neighborhood and its community by reconnecting the parts that were severed by the installation of Interstate 94.

Transportation

Items included in Omnibus Bill

- **Driver’s license suspension reform**
- **\$57.5 million for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lines**
- **Body worn cameras for State Patrol and Capitol Security**
- **Metro Mobility forecasted funding**
- **Metro Transit zero-emission transit vehicle transition planning**
- **ID photo variance for homebound individuals**
- **Diabetes driver’s license general reporting requirement repealed**