

Legislative Platform



FAIR BUDGETING

1. Any state or federal funding reductions to counties should also reduce mandates to avoid shifting costs to property taxes. Funding reductions should be shared equitably across the state systems and regions.
2. Counties are key partners in implementing state programs and services. Any changes to county programs or funding should involve counties in the decision-making process to ensure effective outcomes.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Dakota County supports:

1. State and federal funding for priority Dakota County projects:
 - a. Interstate 35 Bridge and County Road 50 Improvements
 - b. Recycling Zone Plus
 - c. Thompson County Park Improvements
 - d. County Energy Efficiency and Generation
2. State funding for projects within Dakota County:
 - a. TH 13/Nicollet Intersection
 - b. TH 50 Safety Improvements east of TH 52
 - c. TH 77 Northbound Lane Addition
3. A study related to an Amateur Sports Complex in the southern Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
4. Direct allocation of funding to support capital costs for emergency shelter development.
5. The Metropolitan Council's request for capital improvements to the Metropolitan Regional Park system.
6. Water infrastructure improvement projects within the cities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Coates, Hastings and South St. Paul.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Dakota County supports:

1. A comprehensive plan by the legislature, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Board of Animal Health to slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease.
2. Adequate state resources for the long-term care of existing landfills, including the return of diverted CLIF funds.
3. Appropriations to cover the cost of required electric vehicle charging stations at County buildings or other locations.
4. Coordinated efforts among state agencies to develop updated state rules and guidelines for the standardized implementation and oversight of wastewater, graywater and combined rainwater/stormwater reuse systems.
5. Coordinated efforts among state agencies to prevent tree waste and ensure regional capacity to dispose of large quantities of wood waste as a result of Emerald Ash Borer infestation and other tree diseases.

6. Development of local priorities and the provision of cost-effective, efficient and environmentally sound statewide waste management practices.
7. Effective state and federal product stewardship and extended producer responsibility laws with an emphasis on products that support producer-led toxicity reduction, source reduction, reuse and recycling.
8. Efforts to actively address groundwater contamination due to nitrates, PFAS and other emerging contaminants of concern.
9. Efforts to protect and improve the quality of ground and surface water in Minnesota.
10. Efforts to update Minn. Statute 103I (Wells, Borings and Underground Uses) to allow the commissioner of health the ability to delegate the inspection, reporting and enforcement duties for all borings.
11. Full state funding, including SCORE funds to metropolitan counties, for waste diversion mandates by the state.
12. Increased State Aid for Aquatic Invasive Species and Establish Base Funding for Terrestrial Invasive Species Management.
13. Legislation and policies that support providing efficient, cost effective, affordable, clean, renewable and sustainable energy.
14. Legislation and/or MPCA actions that provide funding to properly close the Freeway Landfill in accordance with existing State Rules to protect public health and the environment and benefit the local community.
15. Maintaining Minnesota's existing waste management hierarchy that prioritizes waste management in the preferred order: waste and toxicity reduction, reuse, recycling and organics recovery/diversion, resource recovery and land disposal.
16. Maintaining support for the statewide Extended Producer Responsibility and product stewardship approach that reduces the amount and toxicity of product packaging and increases the recyclability of packaging waste and focusing on effective implementation of this approach to reduce the quantity of packaging entering landfills.
17. State and federal funding for local water infrastructure improvement projects.
18. State and federal funding opportunities that will assist the county in investing in energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction, clean energy production and fleet electrification, and set the county on a path to achieving net-zero status.
19. State support of ongoing efforts to financially assist landowners with replacement of non-compliant septic systems for protection of essential groundwater resources, such as increased funding for the AgBMP programs or direct grant funds used for septic system replacement.
20. State-led coordinated market development efforts to recover materials from waste that prioritizes high-value uses of recovered materials including for hard-to-recycle materials.
21. Strengthening legislation to identify and eliminate PFAS contamination sources, including investigating PFAS in biosolids, and increased funding to local communities and private well owners for PFAS mitigation.
22. The establishment of a long-term state program to assist public and private drinking water well owners with the treatment of contaminated well water that exceeds safe drinking water levels.
23. The use of state funding to support solid waste management projects as a match to the funds counties invest in infrastructure for solid waste management activities mandated by the state.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dakota County supports:

1. A child welfare system designed to keep children safe and with their families through adequate funding with the impact of providing manageable caseloads and keeping children in safe permanent housing arrangements.
2. Addressing an eligibility gap in the waiver system related to older adults with significant mental health needs.
3. An Interstate Funding Formula (IFF) for distribution of federal Older Americans Act (OAA) resources that adequately funds the growing needs of older adults in the 7-County Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
4. Flexibility for Elder Waiver renewals for individuals in long term care.
5. Interventions that address workforce challenges and resulting impacts in disability services including:
 - a. Stabilizing home and community-based services staffing through targeted wage increases and other strategies (i.e. educational incentives, etc.)
 - b. Maximizing flexibility in self-directed programs to increase informal support options for people.
 - c. Simplifying paperwork and administrative requirements where they don't add value so direct support staff can focus on direct support.
 - d. Increasing availability of assistive technology to supplement paid caregivers.
6. Investments in modernizing the IT infrastructure at all levels for counties administering DHS and DCYF programs that will reduce the administrative burden for both clients and workers.
7. Moving educational neglect from child protection to child welfare response.
8. Policies and legislation that address cannabis and THC impacts including:
 - a. Enhancing local control
 - b. Reducing public health impacts
 - c. Dedicating cannabis-related tax and fee revenues for public health prevention activities
 - d. Strengthening efforts to monitor product safety, conduct inspections, prevent access to minors, and enforce rules and regulations.
9. Policies and legislation that promotes better communication for MNChoices generally, and in the MNChoices Assessment process.
10. Setting the assessment adjustment for Medical Assistance to three years.
11. Simplification of state program rules and reporting requirements is paramount to successful modernization.
12. Stable, flexible state funding and public policy to improve and maintain healthy communities by supporting:
 - a. Addressing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
 - b. State funding for home and community-based care.
13. State policy and financing to assure a full range of community-based mental health services that promote mental health, prevent mental health problems, promote mental wellbeing, treat mental health conditions, and allow people with mental health conditions to thrive in the community.
14. Sustainable funding for community-based Family Resource Centers.
15. The elimination of health and human services-related cost shifts to counties.
16. The full funding of mental health crisis services, including:
 - a. 24/7 phone and mobile crisis response
 - b. Crisis follow up and stabilization services, including embedded social workers with local law enforcement.
 - c. Direct appropriations to Dakota County until there is an increase in state funding.

17. The work of the 2024 Working Group on Youth Interventions in promoting best practices and improving the system of care.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

Dakota County supports:

1. Ensuring the county receives its fair share of state housing funding to:
 - a. Fully fund emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness
 - b. Enhance and expand state rental assistance programs and other homelessness prevention resources.
 - c. Enhance and expand dependable streams of funding to support services that help people find and maintain housing.
 - d. Increase the number of affordable, accessible, and available rental units throughout Dakota County.
 - e. Expand rapid re-housing resources to support households who lose their housing through an eviction.
2. Funding to expand the Housing Demonstration program.
3. State funding and policy to strengthen the public safety net for those unable to work and to remove disincentives that discourage able-bodied people from achieving self-sufficiency.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dakota County supports:

1. Investments to maintain and expand the Dakota County Workforce Mobility Program, creating better job opportunities in critical occupations.
2. State assistance to communities in reaching their workforce and economic development potential in order to enhance the quality of life for all Minnesotans.
3. Updates to policies within the Office of Broadband to expand eligible program costs to take advantage of advances in broadband technology.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Dakota County supports:

1. Authority to create a service district, by adoption of a resolution, for the purpose of levying upon a portion of Dakota County to finance governmental services benefiting a service area within that county.
2. Efforts to adjust the Homestead Market Value Exclusion formula to support homeowner property tax relief by increasing the market value threshold and including an index to adjust annually with changing residential market values.
3. Maintained or increased appropriations for programs to enhance library services.
4. Policies that promote effective and efficient county government that provides quality services to meet the needs of Dakota County residents without infringing on the decision-making ability of local elected officials.
5. Revising eminent domain statutes to ensure equitable processes for determining landowner compensation and attorney fees.

6. The amendment of Minn. Stat. § 216G.05 to require that the permitting state agency, rather than county boards, be required to hold a public meeting regarding the construction or operation of a pipeline.
7. The authority delegated to democratically elected officials to make budget decisions for the unit of government for which they were duly elected.

Dakota County opposes:

1. Measures that would interfere with the ability of local governments to manage their budgets.

NATURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP AND PARKS

Dakota County supports:

2. Authorization to issue administrative fines for park ordinance violations.
3. Increasing or maintaining the current allocations and funding distribution of Lottery in Lieu funding.
4. Increasing State funding for Metropolitan Parks O&M.
5. Increasing the Park and Trail Legacy funding share to the Metropolitan Regional Park System.
6. Reauthorization of the lottery dedication to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.
7. Sustainable and balanced management of the state's environmental and natural resources through effective enhancement of local, state and federal governance.
8. The Metropolitan Council's request from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund to acquire private inholdings within regional parks and greenways.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Dakota County supports:

1. Expanded, indexed and sustainable funding levels for community supervision of people in the corrections system.
2. Full funding of the research-driven community supervision funding formula in state statute to ensure effective implementation of these critical policy reforms continue after the sunset of supervision fees in 2027.
3. Programs and policies that promote safe communities through effective prevention, education, supervision and treatment.
4. State funding for the recruitment, retention and training of law enforcement officers.
5. The state fully funding the costs for continued health insurance costs for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty under Minn. Stat. § 299A.465.

STATE GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS

Dakota County supports:

1. Full funding of local costs for or relaxation of state mandates.
2. Reformation of the Metropolitan Council governance structure to increase accountability to their regional constituency.

TRANSPORTATION

Dakota County supports:

1. A statewide, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that keeps Minnesota competitive in a global marketplace with long-term sustainable funding to ensure safe systems that efficiently move people and goods.

Highways and Bridges

2. Issuance of general obligation bonds for the Local Road Improvement, Local Bridge Replacement Bonding, and Local Road Wetland Replacement programs.
3. Issuance of trunk highway bonds contingent upon increased long-term funding.
4. Maintaining the current distribution of the Motor Vehicle Lease Sales Tax.

Rail

1. Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
2. State and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.
3. The use of the Dan Patch Corridor as a greenway for non-motorized transportation.

FEDERAL

Dakota County supports:

1. Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
2. Efforts to support state and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.
3. Ensuring federal approval as necessary of human services administrative waivers passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2021.
4. Federal funding to support improvement of the Interstate 35 Bridge/County Road 50 interchange.
5. The amendment of the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy in the Social Security Act, allowing pre-trial detainees to access Medicaid services while awaiting trial and in the month prior to release from incarceration. Doing so will support appropriate supports for mental health and substance use disorder treatment that will increase health and decrease recidivism.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the positions contained in this platform, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners generally supports the legislative recommendations of the local units of government within the county and organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- National Association of Counties (NACo) and its associated professional organizations.
- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and its associated professional organizations.
- Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) and its associated professional organizations.

The county board may choose to take a different position on individual items within the platforms of these and other organizations whose platforms they generally support. The county board may also consider additional positions in response to issues that emerge during the legislative session.