

2026 SENATE EXPEDITION BOOK DRAFT ONE

March 13th

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Introduction Letter from Tom

Student Names Alphabetical with District and Group Number

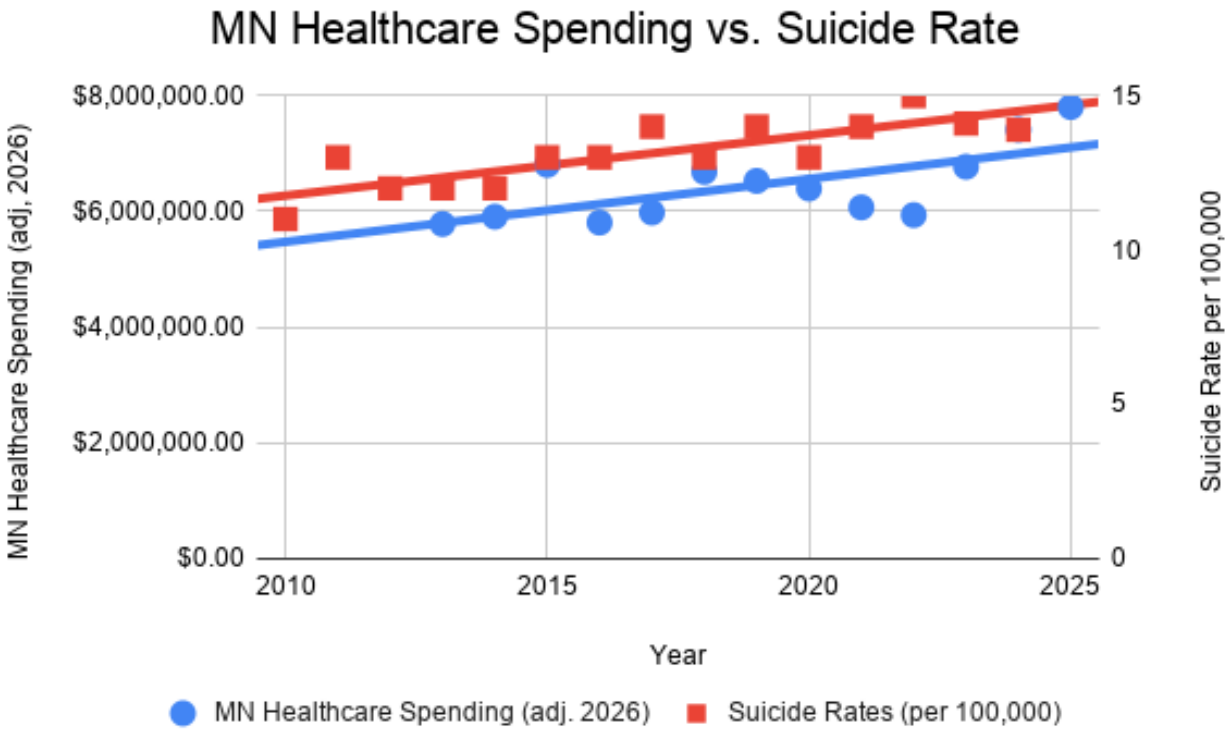
Students by District Numerically with Names and Group Numbers

Group 1

MN Healthcare Spending vs. Suicide Rates

Max N. (67A), Pawsana L. (65A), Qianna T. (65B), Millie J. (66A)

Do you know how many people commit suicide in MN? 813 people have committed in MN. Such as Brian Short, a Minnesotan mentally disturbed man shot himself, his wife and his three children. Brian Short went to the emergency room, urgent care and his family doctor several times to get help for depression and anxiety in the summer of 2015. Allegedly the Park Nicollet health system did not take Short’s “severe, overwhelming and rapidly worsening” illness seriously enough. Relatives of Brian Short had sued Park Nicollet health system, alleging that doctors did not do enough to treat Short’s mental illness before he fatally shot his family. This shows that we need to get better healthcare and more reliable systems because a mistake like this could cost everything. Health care providers need to take things seriously and we should spend money on people who actually want to help.



In this expedition we will be studying MN Suicide rates vs MN Healthcare spending. We got our data from the MN dept. of health website. The blue line, MN healthcare spending was slowly going down but spiked up a lot in 2023-2024. The red line is MN suicide rates per 100k people which is steady but getting higher slowly . It spiked in 2022 but had a positive drop and the suicide rate has lowered. As you see when the healthcare spending went down the suicide rate went really high, only when healthcare spending went up the suicide rate went down again.

We all as people shouldn’t have to feel like dying is the only way to have peace. Most people have friends. But what about those people who don’t ?. We should have more resources for people that feel that way. We need more people to care about them If we cut cost for health care spending the suicide rates would go up.

Year	MN Healthcare Spending (act.)	MN Healthcare Spending (adj. 2026)	Suicide Rates (per 100,000)
2013	\$4,093,265	\$5,781,408	12
2014	\$4,248,812	\$5,907,824	12
2015	\$4,889,416	\$6,804,641	13
2016	\$4,229,041	\$5,805,872	13
2017	\$4,464,982	\$5,980,276	14
2018	\$5,093,997	\$6,684,362	13
2019	\$5,051,639	\$6,527,522	14
2020	\$5,072,579	\$6,395,550	13
2021	\$4,880,869	\$6,068,890	14
2022	\$5,130,443	\$5,935,261	15
2023	\$6,228,973	\$6,772,022	14
2024	\$7,031,410	\$7,415,221	14
2025	\$7,624,141	\$7,806,086	
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Category	bls.gov	CDC

MN PreK-12 Education Spending vs. MN Juvenile Felony Rates

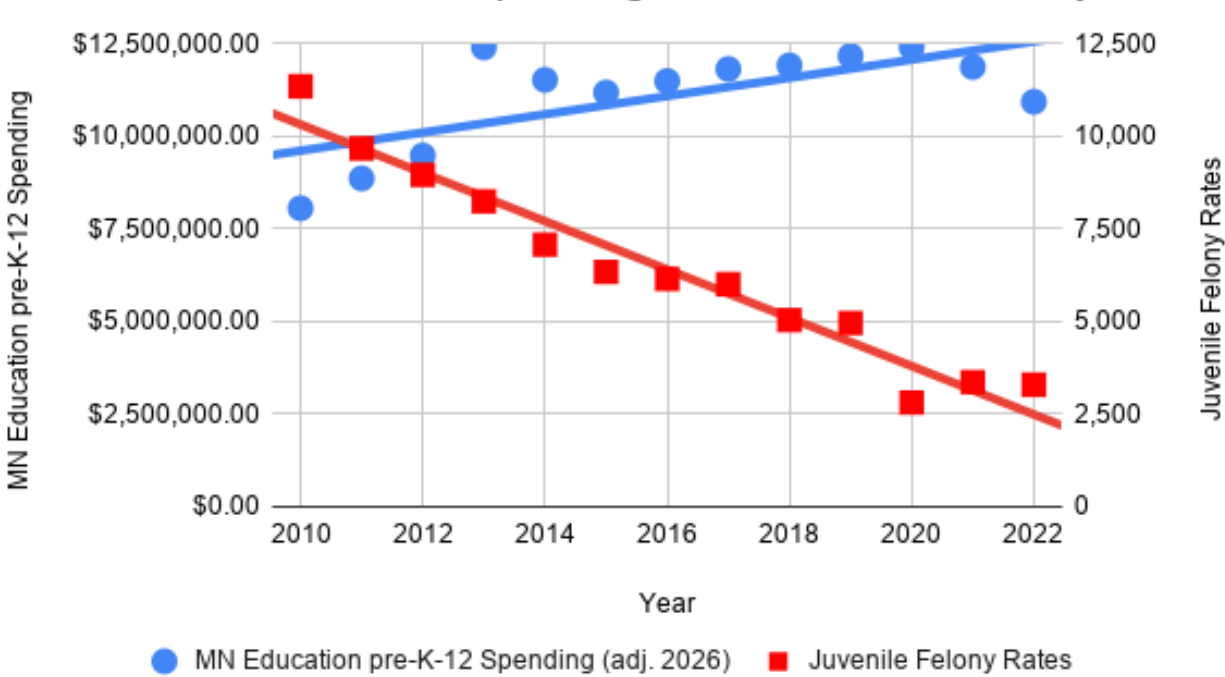
Elsa H. (67A), Sadie W. (66B), Ceci C. (66B), Audrina W. (67A)

Frank (pseudonym) was born into a family that was known for doing crimes. He committed his first offense before he was even a teenager. The first time he was on probation was for drug violations, theft, arson, and grand theft auto. Frank was a bad student because of his home life. At school, Frank was known to disrupt the class and be defiant towards teachers during school. Frank couldn't find a way out of his bad habits and started struggling in school, but also in his personal life even more. This all changed when one day Frank met a teacher. Frank slowly started behaving better in class because of the help of this teacher. While he would still act out it was less often and less intense. Frank's teacher believed in him and believed he could get out of his life of crime. When Frank got in trouble for his antics around the school, this teacher advocated for Frank to go to detention instead of a suspension from school. Because usually when Frank was suspended he would only watch TV and hang out with bad influences.

Frank's teacher also talked to his mom about his attendance problems. If Frank was absent, his mom would be notified immediately and if the absence was unexcused, then Frank's mom and his teacher would develop a plan to get Frank back to school. This teacher also advocated for Frank to get into social programs after school, like drug and alcohol treatment, and community service work. Because this teacher cared so much about Frank and his future, Frank didn't drop out of middle school, attends high school regularly, and is off probation now free of his crime ridden past.

We are studying the amount of juvenile crimes compared to the Minnesota Pre-K-12 Education Spending. We got our information from the Minnesota Government general spending page, and also aecf.org. In our data set, our first line is MN Pre-K-12 Education Spending. It shows that from 2010-2022 education spending tends to go up and continue to increase. Our second line of our data set is Juvenile Felony Crime Rates. This line shows that crimes committed by kids in Pre-K-12 is continuing to go down over the years. These lines work together to show that when we increase Mn Education Pre-K-12 Funding, Juvenile Felony Rates tend to go down.

MN PreK-12 Education Spending vs MN Juvenile Felony Rates



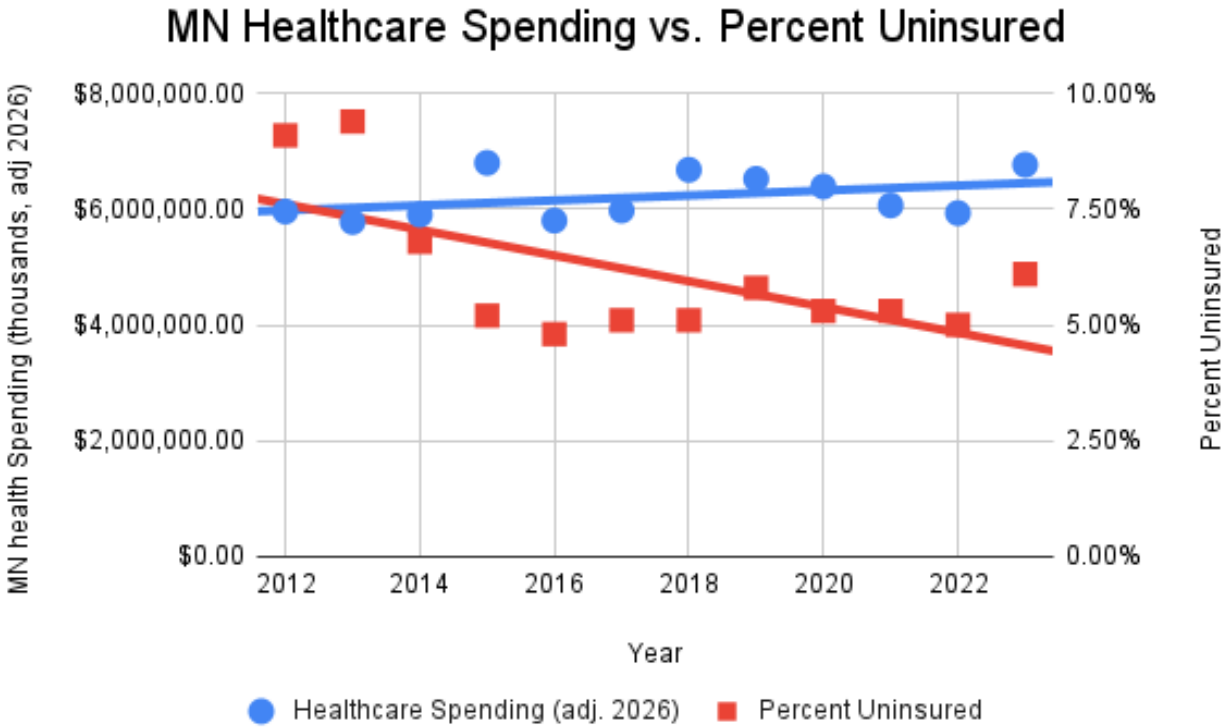
Year	MN PreK-12 (act.)	MN PreK-12 (adj. 2026)	Juvenile Felony Rates
2010	5,395,913	\$8,051,895	11351
2011	6,148,293	\$8,859,325	9669
2012	6,687,479	\$9,478,537	8957
2013	8,905,875	\$12,405,156	8238
2014	8,446,137	\$11,525,922	7067
2015	8,204,234	\$11,181,972	6331
2016	8,516,938	\$11,493,544	6141
2017	8,901,333	\$11,819,217	5997
2018	9,233,048	\$11,917,454	5029
2019	9,587,811	\$12,174,662	4947
2020	9,835,739	\$12,409,352	2796
2021	9,919,135	\$11,874,368	3350
2022	9,960,012	\$10,932,816	3277
2023	10,204,038	\$10,854,380	
2024	11,969,194	\$12,374,123	
Source:	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	AECF Data Center

Group 3

MN Healthcare Spending vs. Percent Uninsured

Isabelle T. (67A), Vivien Y. (67A), and Sarisella X. (44B)

A little boy named Drew Kalal, who is six years old, had severe speech delay. He had issues with motor skills. Drew’s parents had insurance, but the co-pays were using up money. “ Well, when you’re being seen two to three times per week, we were averaging \$400 to \$500 a month just in medical bills.” Breanna Kalal had said. Breanna then heard from a mother about The United Healthcare Children’s Foundation medical grants aimed for middle class people. She applied and got accepted. Breanna received a 5,000 medical grant. We need more permanent programs like The United Healthcare Children's Foundation to help the people in need. It is vital that we establish this because no family should have to go through this, nor hope for a miracle grant. In that way more people can have health insurance and so children can thrive without prolonging health issues.



We are studying MN health spending vs. percent uninsured. We got our data and information from health.state.mn.us, and from our teacher Tom Totushek. Our graph is saying that the percent uninsured is going down which means more people are getting insured, the trend line is decreasing but the scatterplot stays the same so there’s still a lot of people that are uninsured. The trend line for MN health spending is going up slightly but the plots take a dip at some point but goes back up.

Our ask to the Minnesota policy makers is to spend more money on healthcare. As we ask that we expect the percentage of uninsured people to go down, this is important because it will provide healthcare for others in need.

This is absolutely necessary for the policymakers to increase financial investment in healthcare. By committing more funding and doing this the goal is to further reduce the percentage of uninsured individuals. This increase in spending is very essential to ensure that vulnerable populations and those currently in need gain access to necessary and general medical services.

Year	Healthcare Spending (act.)	Healthcare Spending (adj. 2026)	Percent Uninsured
2012	\$4,288,490	\$5,962,995	9.10%
2013	\$4,093,265	5,781,408	9.40%
2014	\$4,248,812	5,907,824.18	6.80%
2015	\$4,889,416	6,804,641.42	5.20%
2016	\$4,229,041	5,805,872.31	4.80%
2017	\$4,464,982	5,980,276.34	5.10%
2018	\$5,093,997	6,684,361.82	5.10%
2019	\$5,051,639	6,527,522.28	5.80%
2020	\$5,072,579	6,395,550.14	5.30%
2021	\$4,880,869	6,068,890.08	5.30%
2022	\$5,130,443	5,935,261.31	5.00%
2023	\$6,228,973	6,772,022.35	6.10%
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	MN Compass

Minnesota must increase healthcare spending now. By investing more resources, we will lower uninsured rates and ensure every citizen receives essential care.

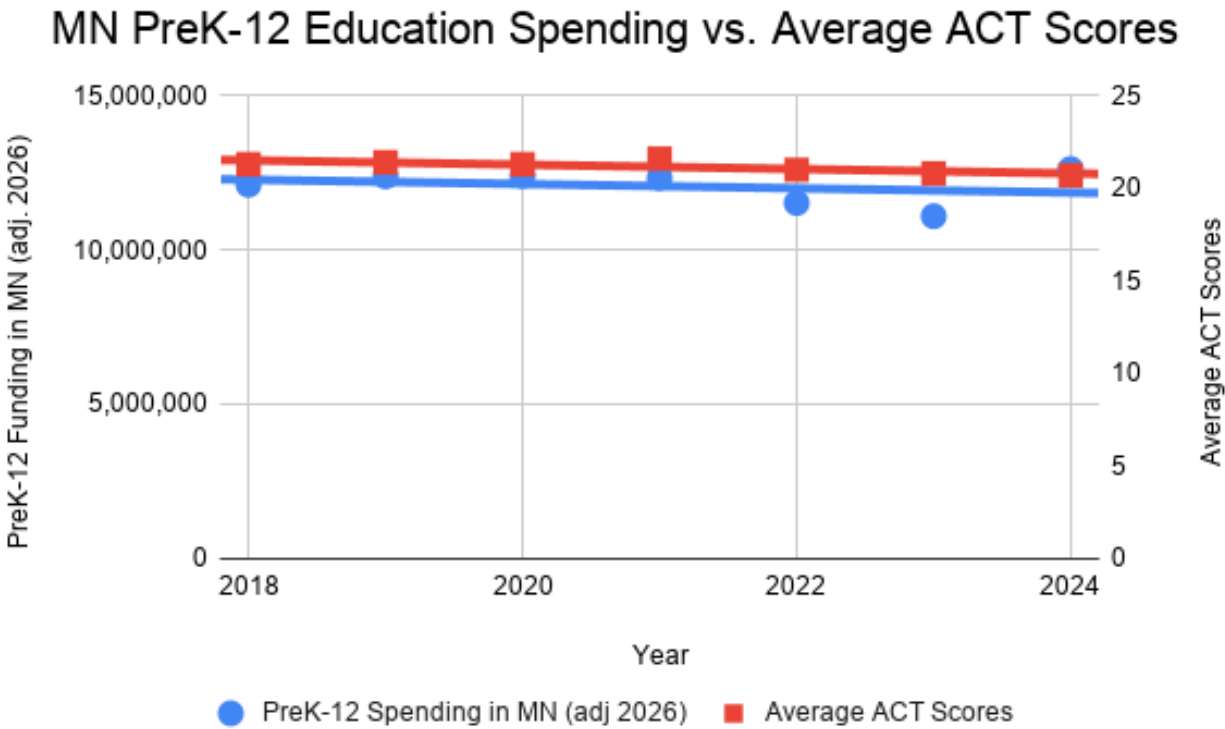
Group 4

PreK-12 Education Spending vs. ACT score in MN

Oliver L. (64B), Ben C. (67A), Ethan M. (65A), and Hughes M. (64A)

Over the past few years, Minnesota has invested significantly more in PreK-12 schools, with larger budgets and higher expectations for student learning. But even with all that funding, many students aren’t meeting the grade-level expectations and important measures. 10-year-old Leo struggles in his 4th-grade classroom as special support staff and funding are cut. His school lost a special education paraprofessional, similar to other schools that cannot afford individualized attention. Leo struggles with reading and writing, falling further behind every day without specialized help. It's challenging for him to ask for help because his teacher is overwhelmed by the large number of students and the limited resources. This makes lots of parents and teachers feel frustrated because they “want the extra money to really support the students to succeed, not just pay for programs that don’t help them.”

We are studying the relationship between MN State Education Funding and ACT scores. We got our data from various websites. The blue line represents the K-12 spending over the years and the red line represents the average ACT score in Minnesota. As PreK-12 funding stays the same the average ACT score goes down.



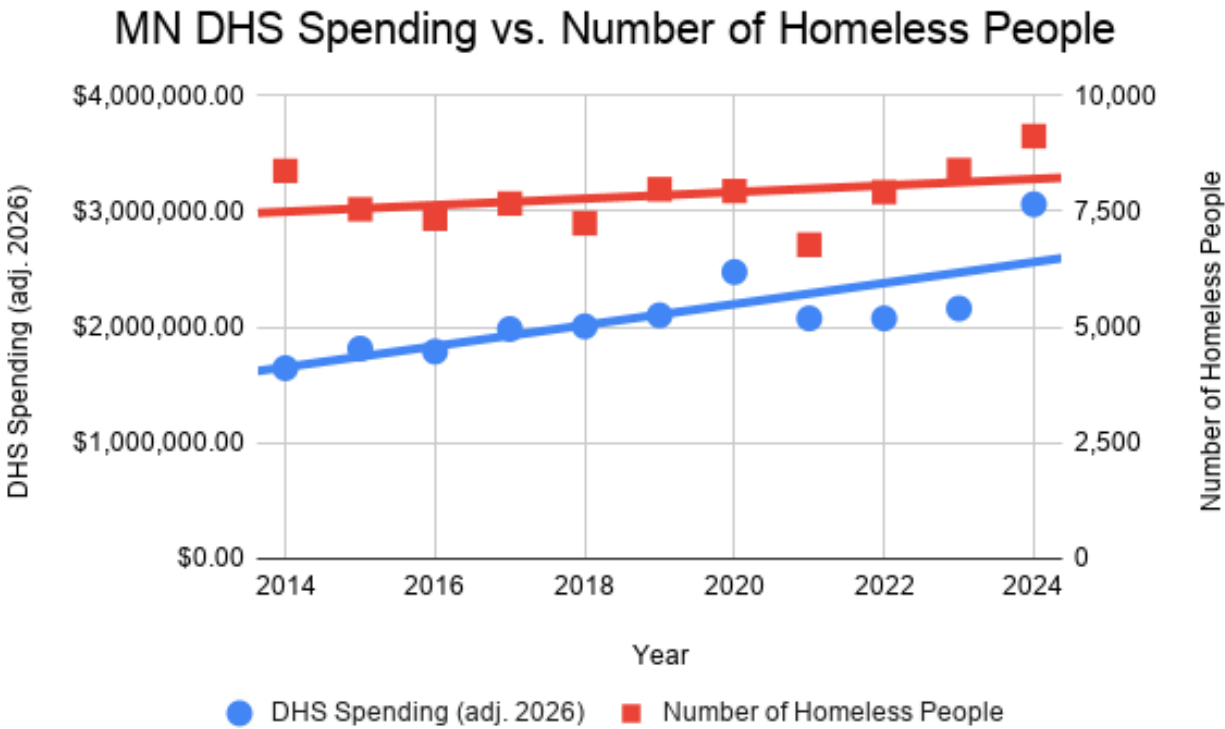
Year	PreK-12 Spending (act.)	PreK-12 Spending (adj. 2026)	Average ACT Scores in MN
2018	\$9,233,048	\$12,115,639	21.3
2019	\$9,587,881	\$12,389,069	21.4
2020	\$9,835,739	\$12,400,982	21.3
2021	\$9,919,135	\$12,333,488	21.6
2022	\$9,960,012	\$11,522,450	21.0
2023	\$11,093,620	\$11,093,620	20.8
2024	\$11,969,194	\$12,622,530	20.7
Source:	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	AECF Data Center

MN DHS Spending vs. Number of Homeless People

Clara B. (64A), Fuji T. (65A), Rocio H. (65B), and Jack S. (67B)

Have you ever imagined living on the cold streets, struggling? Well, Jane became homeless because her mother lost their housing. She was raised in a town that had alcohol, drugs, abuse, and neglect. Jane spent two decades on and off the streets while struggling with substance use disorder. In 2017, she was very sick. She had been diagnosed with a heart condition called endocarditis, which inflamed her heart from bacteria and substances. People usually get endocarditis at the age of 60 and older, but she had gotten it at about 30 years old. She had to spend months in the hospital. After Jane left the hospital, she had to do a 30-day treatment with other women who used drugs. Besides all of the challenges, Jane was able to recover from her opioid use disorder. Even though Jane got help, people are still struggling on the streets with substance addiction and are unable to get help. People don't always have the resources or support to get better.

We are studying the correlation between spending from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and its impact on the number of homeless individuals. We gathered our data from the General Fund Spending in Major Areas, an inflation-adjusted calculator, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and various university and government websites. Upon reviewing the graph, we observed that as the number of homeless people increases, spending by the Minnesota Department of Human Services also rises.



Year	DHS Spending (act.)	DHS Spending (adj. 2026)	Homeless Count
2014	\$1,181,078	\$1,642,248	8,377
2015	\$1,301,626	\$1,811,484	7,546
2016	\$1,372,120	\$1,883,726	7,341
2017	\$1,479,023	\$1,980,963	7,668
2018	\$1,527,624	\$2,004,554	7,243
2019	\$1,624,958	\$2,099,705	7,977
2020	\$1,962,788	\$2,474,700	7,940
2021	\$1,730,166	\$2,151,295	6,775
2022	\$1,792,129	\$2,073,262	7,917
2023	\$1,985,770	\$2,158,892	8,393
2024	\$2,902,907	\$3,061,363	9,182
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	PIT Study

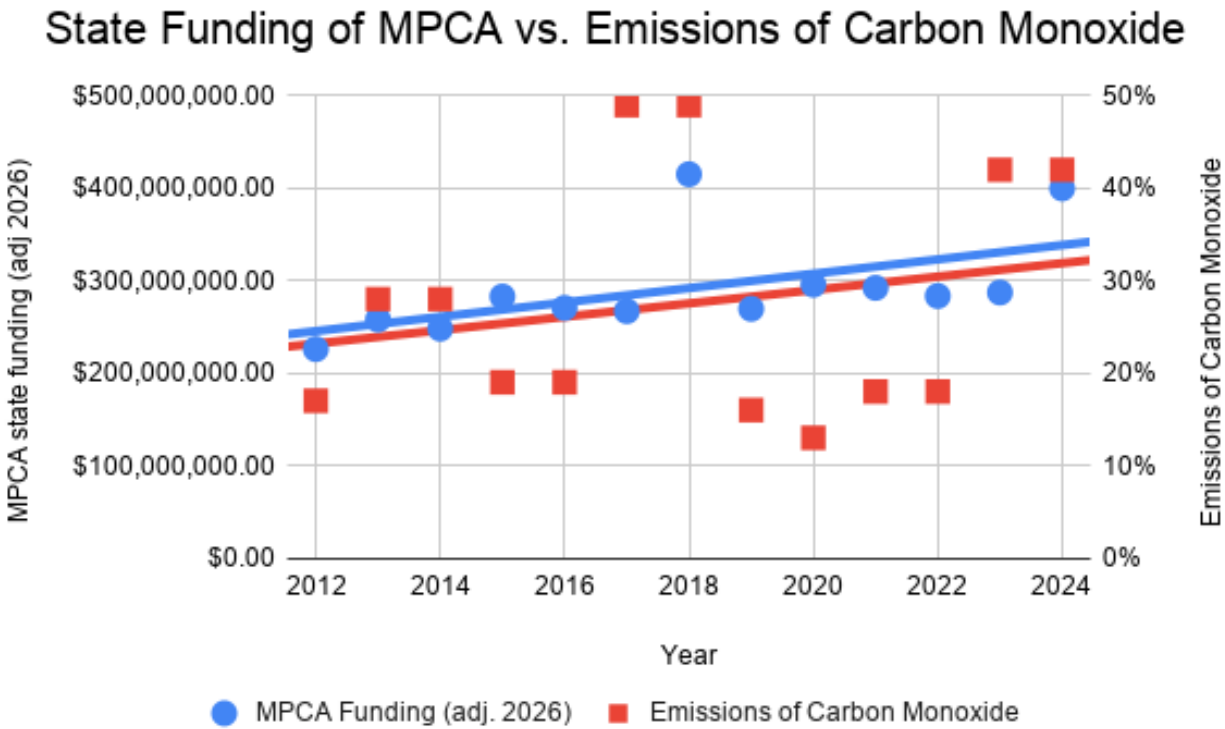
Group 6

State Funding of MPCA vs. Emissions of Carbon Monoxide

Xio S. (64B), Charlotte S. (66B), Anna F. (64B), and Ollie G. (66B)

Air pollution has affected thousands of people worldwide, and Minnesota is no exception. Air pollution can affect anyone, but seniors, young children, and people with asthma, are especially vulnerable to health problems caused by air pollution. Zhara Darnell Dooley, who grew up in the Rondo community of St.Paul, has been severely affected by air pollution. Zhara has asthma, so she has to be very cautious about the air she is breathing. If she gets exposed to harmful air, she could have an asthma attack. “The only way I can describe it is if you're in a pool, and the water is up to your neck and you’re trying to breathe, but there’s pressure on your neck,” she said. Sometimes, her asthma attacks are so bad, she ends up in the hospital. It’s been terrifying for Zhara, and it needs to change. We are responsible for polluting the air, so we should be responsible for cleaning it up.

We are studying state funding of MPCA and the emissions of carbon monoxide. We found this information through government websites. Our blue line shows how much MPCA is being funded more and more each year. Our red line shows that pollution is going up every year. These lines show that funding for MPCA is working but we need to fund it more so that pollution goes down.



Year	MPCA Funding (act.)	MPCA Funding (adj. 2026)	Carbon Monoxide 8 hour percent of lowest standard
2012	\$159,501,000	\$225,955,466	17%
2013	\$184,736,000	\$257,926,370	28%
2014	\$180,566,000	\$248,079,940	28%
2015	\$206,140,000	\$282,880,330	19%
2016	\$199,598,000	\$270,490,647	19%
2017	\$201,238,000	\$267,024,567	49%
2018	\$320,528,000	\$415,171,115	49%
2019	\$211,865,000	\$269,538,933	16%
2020	\$234,510,000	\$295,672,200	13%
2021	\$235,033,000	\$292,220,880	18%
2022	\$245,003,000	\$283,436,890	18%
2023	\$269,066,000	\$287,212,603	42%
2024	\$385,644,000	\$399,859,358	42%
Source	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	Pollution Control Agency

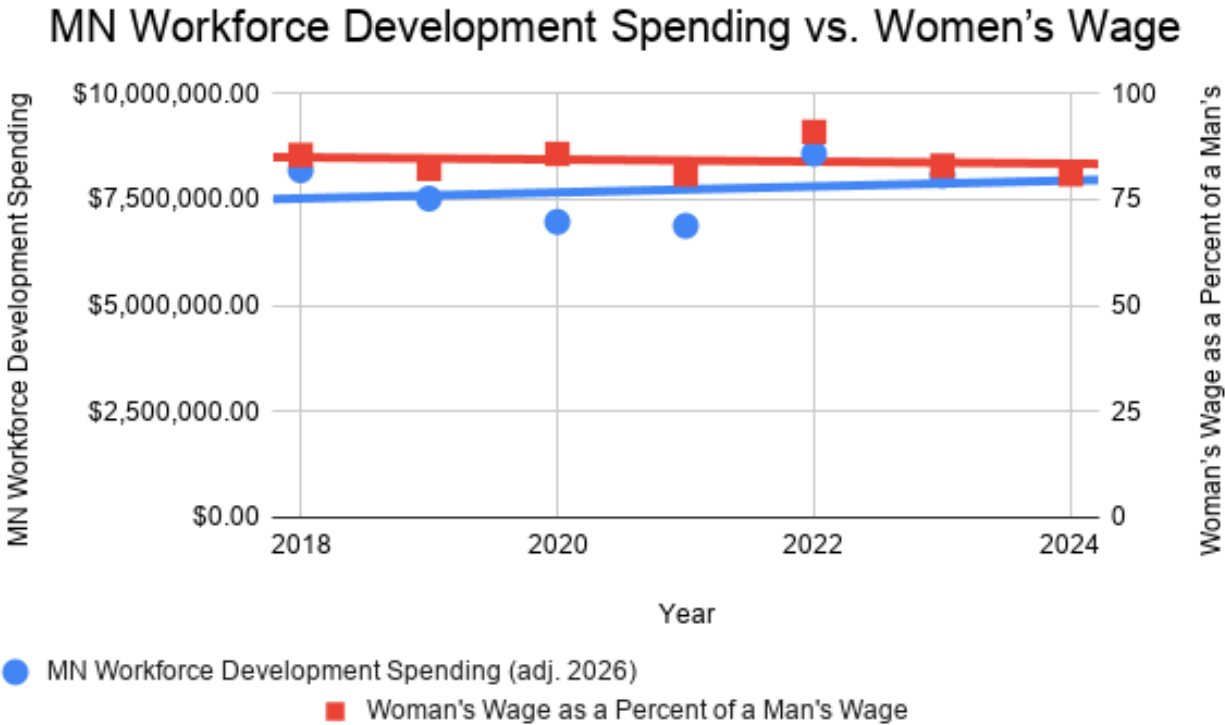
Air pollution is a very serious problem and we need to stop it by stopping carbon emissions and finding eco-friendly solutions.

Group 7

MN Workforce Development Spending vs. Women's Wage

Sally K. (66B), Finnley F. (64A), and Lydia M. (67B)

We are studying the correlation between workforce development spending in Minnesota and how it compares to a woman's wage. We collected this information through the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. Our blue line shows the amount of spending going into Workforce Development while our red line shows the average woman's wage in Minnesota as the percentage of the average man's wage. This graph shows that the wage gap in Minnesota is increasing as the workforce development spending is increasing. This means that we need to prioritize mending this gap and differently distribute the workforce development spending. In Minnesota,

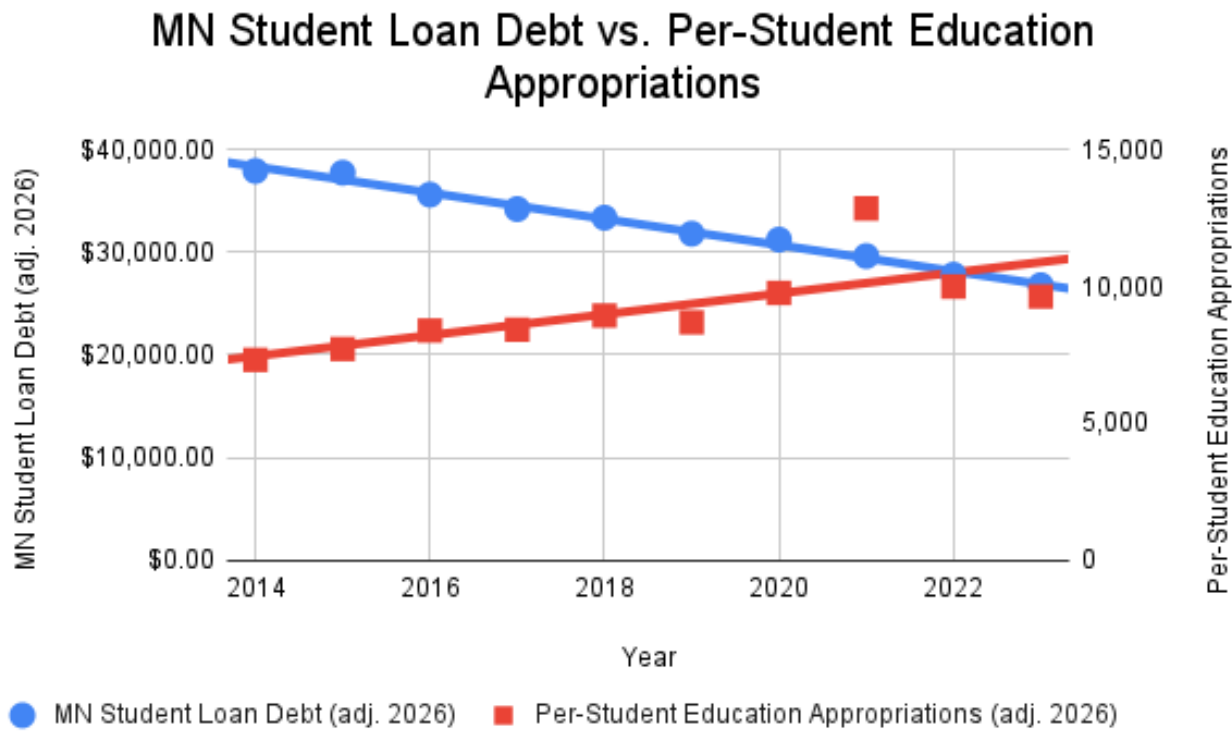


Year	MN Workforce Development Spending (act.)	MN Workforce Development Spending (adj. 2026)	Women's Wage as a percent of Man's Wage
2018	\$6,243,000	\$8,192,087.84	85.5
2019	\$5,821,000	\$7,521,659.25	82.3
2020	\$5,529,000	\$6,971,009.59	85.8
2021	\$5,532,000	\$6,878,508.70	81.0
2022	\$7,420,000	\$8,583,983.67	91.0
2023	\$7,421,000	\$8,067,971.70	83.0
2024	\$149,378,000	\$154,884,274.73	81.0
Source	Governor's Authorized Budget	bls.gov	U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

MN Student Loan Debt vs Per-Student Education Appropriations

Melita A. (64A), Isabel B. (64A), Junia G. (64B), and Rain T. (64B)

At Open World Learning, many of our teachers have experienced debt from college. Kenny Nguyen is but one of many whose life has been dragged down by increasingly high tuition rates. After getting a masters from St. Thomas, he graduated with a total of \$12,000 in debt, even after various scholarships. It took him 3 years of paying back his student loans to become debt free. Kenny was lucky enough to only have to take out subsidized loans, but others haven't been so fortunate, leaving them with crippling interest from their loans. He would've been in much more debt if it weren't for his Pell Grant that paid for the total of his masters program. His story is one with a happy ending but there are countless others whose ambitions have been crushed by a greedy system. He has benefited from the efforts of many legislators. We must keep the student loan debt numbers down to preserve our country's youth.



We are researching the correlation between the amount of average Minnesotan student loan debt vs the money the government gives students for debt. This shows how the government is helping with student debt and if it's working. We obtained our data from the MN office of higher education, which gave us the data on student debt through the years of 2014-2023. We also used SHEF (State Higher Education Finance), which gave us the data points for Per-Student Education Appropriation, within the same timeframe. Our blue line shows the student loan debt is steadily going down, while the red line shows the per-student education appropriations are going up. This data shows us that the Education Appropriations are helping students pay back their debt.

We think that the government should keep giving money for forgiving student loan debt because we can see that it's helping. This is important because of the negative impacts student loan debt has on students, and how it can take years to pay off their debt, even continuing into adulthood.

Year	MN Student Dept Loan (act.)	MN Student Dept Loan (adj. 2026)	Per-Student Education Appropriations (act.)	Per-Student Education Appropriations (adj. 2026)
2014	\$27,304	\$37,965	\$5,265	\$7,321
2015	\$27,156	\$37,793	\$5,546	\$7,718
2016	\$25,969	\$35,652	\$6,116	\$8,396
2017	\$25,568	\$34,245	\$6,290	\$8,425
2018	\$25,453	\$33,400	\$6,818	\$8,425
2019	\$24,453	\$31,840	\$6,731	\$8,697
2020	\$24,793	\$31,259	\$7,751	\$9,772
2021	\$23,852	\$29,658	\$10,349	\$12,868
2022	\$24,064	\$27,837	\$8,650	\$10,006
2023	\$24,663	\$26,813	\$8,868	\$9,641
Source	MN Office Of Higher Education	bls.gov	SHEF (State Higher Education Finance)	bls.gov

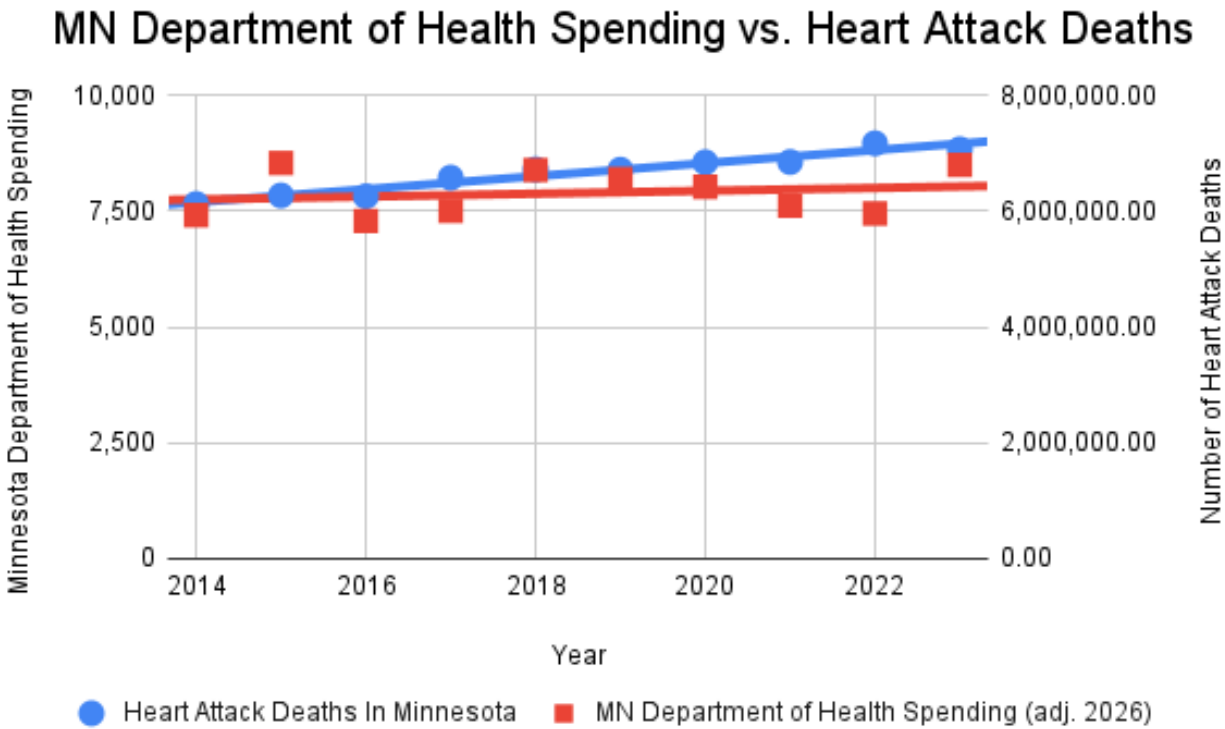
Student loan debt is a big problem in Minnesota, but according to SHEF the government is helping pay off and prevent debt.

MN Department of Health Spending vs. Heart Attack Deaths

Ciaran S. (66A), Theo M. (66B), Otis O. (64A), and Xavier L. (65A)

In 2022 a young Minnesota boy named Zachary Leight had started feeling sick with vomiting and disorientation. After two days his mother Terra was driving him to an urgent care center in New Brighton, when his eyes rolled back and his fingers curled. Terra called 911 and performed CPR in an attempt to save him, when the paramedics arrived they took him to Children’s Minnesota where a medical team there worked to try to save him. One hour later he was announced dead of cardiac arrest.

We are studying the relationship between Healthcare spending in Minnesota and heart attack deaths. We got our data for the number of heart attack deaths from cdc.gov and for the Minnesota Healthcare spending we used the General Fund Spending by Major Area. Our graph shows that the number of heart attack deaths are going up as the Minnesota Department Of Health spending increases.



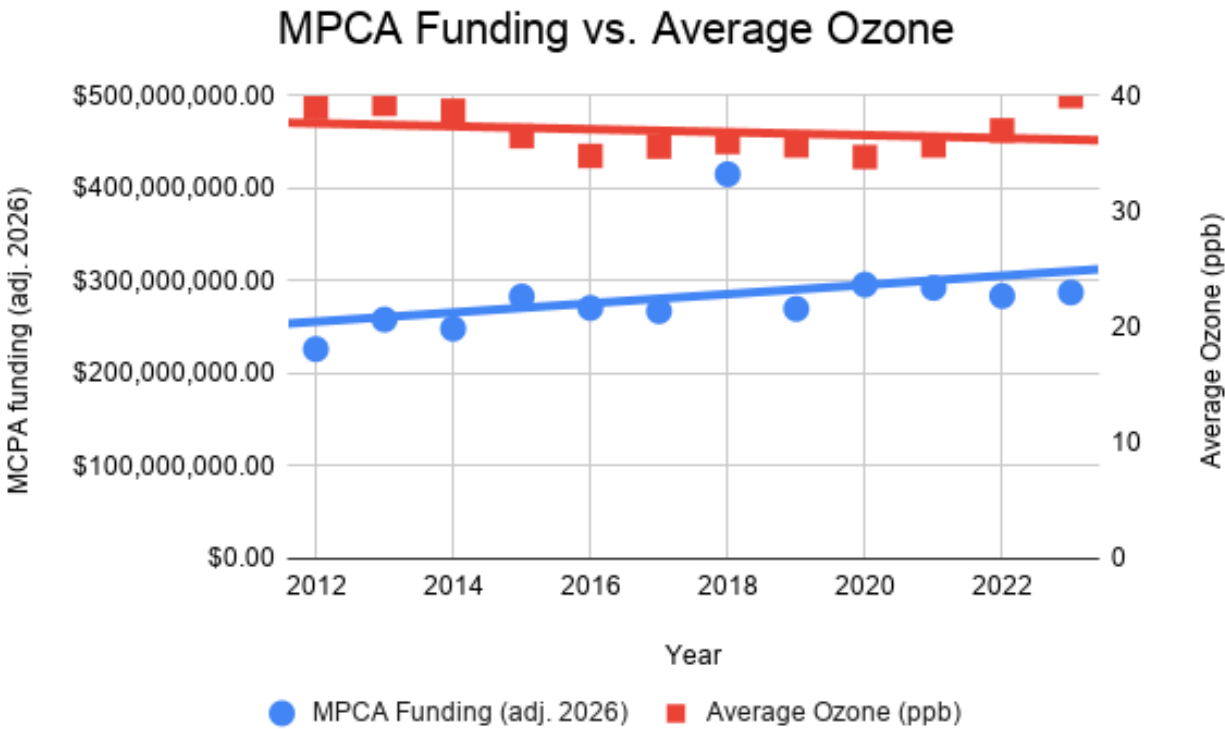
Year	MN Health Spending (act.)	MN Health Spending (adj. 2026)	Heart Attack Deaths In Minnesota
2014	\$4,248,812	\$5,935,669	7,659
2015	\$4,889,416	\$6,836,714	7,844
2016	\$4,229,041	\$5,833,237	7,825
2017	\$4,464,982	\$6,008,463	8,230
2018	\$5,093,997	\$6,715,867	8,408
2019	\$5,051,639	\$6,558,288	8,401
2020	\$5,072,579	\$6,425,694	8,562
2021	\$4,880,869	\$6,097,494	8,568
2022	\$5,130,443	\$5,963,236	8,972
2023	\$6,228,973	\$6,803,941	8,843
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	CDC.gov

Group 10

MPCA Funding vs. Annual Average Ozone

Gideon P. (67B), Liam T. (66B), and Quinten T. (65B)

at the age of 16, the son of Cassandra Holmes died due to unexpected heart and lung problems. A heart transplant was required, and he didn't survive. With many unexpected deaths in south Minneapolis, asthma attacks have become too much of a problem. Those who live in more industrial areas end up suffering severe damage to the lungs, and in some cases can require a visit to the emergency room.



In our group, we are studying the effects of air pollution and MPCA funding. We've noticed that the average ozone has gone down with every \$100,000 that goes to air pollution monitoring and cleaning. But our funding is going down in recent years and the average ozone is going up every year so we need to keep up with MCPA funding or else Minnesota will be in ruins.

Our ask is that you acknowledge the air pollution that is happening in the world more. Many have died from asthma attacks or heart disease caused by air pollution. Our expectations are that if this situation is focused on even a little more, that it could have huge results. This is necessary because air is well... important and we need it to be less polluted so that people can breathe better.

Year	MPCA Funding (Actual)	MPCA Funding (adj. 2026)	Average Ozone (ppb)
2012	\$159,501,000	\$225,955,466	39.0
2013	\$184,736,000	\$257,926,370	39.3
2014	\$180,566,000	\$248,079,940	38.7
2015	\$206,140,000	\$282,880,330	36.5
2016	\$199,598,000	\$270,490,647	34.8
2017	\$201,238,000	\$267,024,567	35.6
2018	\$320,528,000	\$415,171,115	36.0
2019	\$211,865,000	\$269,538,933	35.7
2020	\$234,510,000	\$295,672,200	34.7
2021	\$235,033,000	\$292,220,880	35.7
2022	\$245,003,000	\$283,436,890	37.0
2023	\$269,066,000	\$287,212,603	40.0
Source	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	MN Department of Health Ozone Measurements

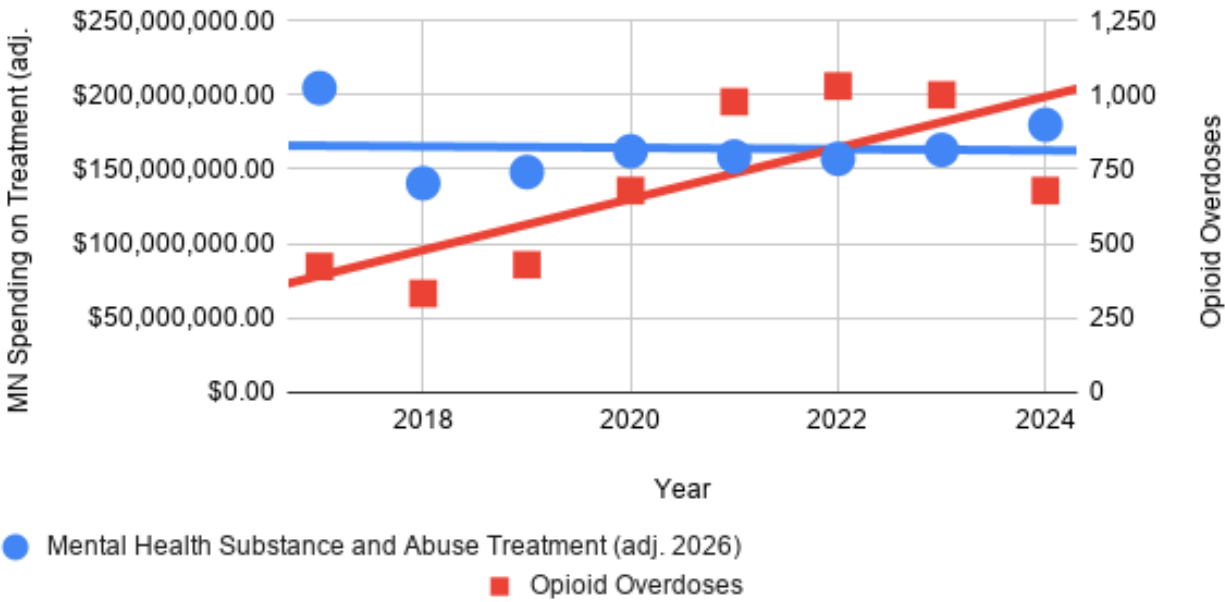
air pollution has caused too many problems for our state. If we don't do something now, it'll only get worse, let's fix it.

MN Spending on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment vs. Opioid Overdoses

Sylas G. (65A), Jacoby O. (64B), Momodu F. (65A), and Thomas S. (67B)

In Rochester Minnesota a boy named Caleb Malek arrived at the door of Zumbro Valley Health Center detox centers he had been brought there by staff at his sober home after testing positive for the opioid fentanyl. Seven hours later he was pronounced dead due to workers failing to start cpr and not knowing how to use narcan to fight the overdose. Caleb attended Northfield high school and graduated with the class of 2016 he was a very talented baseball player. Baseball was his passion, his talents were noticed and he even earned himself a scholarship to Iowa western community college but due to the incompetence of the workers at Zumbro Valley Health somebody’s little boy has passed away.

MN Spending on Mental Health Substance Abuse Treatment vs. Opioid Overdoses



We are studying the correlation between Minnesota spending on Mental Health substance abuse treatment and opioid overdoses. We got our data from the MN management and budget and we got our opioid overdose data from the Minnesota department of health. Our red lines show the number of overdoses and our blue line shows the amount of money being spent on Mental Health and substance abuse treatment in Minnesota. The combination of our lines show that if the state of Minnesota spends more money on Mental Health substance abuse treatment the amount of opioid overdoses go down.

We are asking policy makers to increase spending on training and facilities to help better the people in Minnesota. In hope that we can drop the number of opioid overdoses.

Year	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment (act.)	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment (adj. 2026)	Opioid Overdoses
2017	152,907,000	204,799,500	422
2018	107,141,000	140,590,800	331
2019	114,659,000	148,157,680	428
2020	128,646,000	162,197,940	678
2021	127,591,000	158,647,100	978
2022	135,781,000	157,081,100	1031
2023	150,029,000	163,108,700	1001
2024	170,729,000	180,048,260	678
Sources	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	CDC.gov

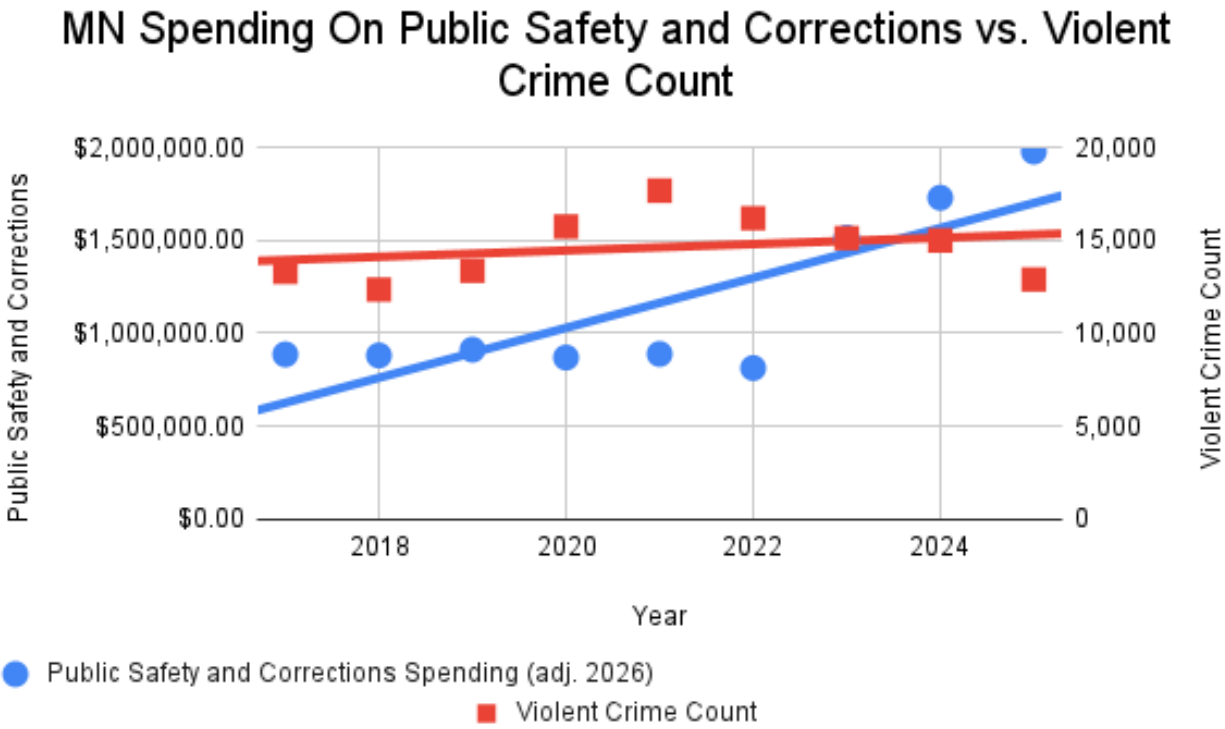
If the amount of overdoses go down in Minnesota the state will have a better economy and Minnesota will be safer all around.

MN Spending On Public Safety and Corrections vs. Violent Crime Count

Bennett M. (66B), Elliot C. (67B), Gavin T. (67B), Gordon H. (64A)

We are studying the correlation between the Spending On Public Safety And Corrections and the Violent Crime Count in Minnesota. We got our data from the crime statistics database. The circle line represents spending on public safety, and the square line represents the violent crime count compared to spending. As the violent crime rate slowly goes up spending on Public Safety And Corrections Spending goes up quickly.

In December 2022, two young men became victims of a shooting in downtown St. Paul. 18 year old David Burton Johnson, and 21 year old Elijah Marquise Payne, were rushed to the hospital after first responders found them suffering from fatal gunshot wounds. Both of them later died at the Hospital.



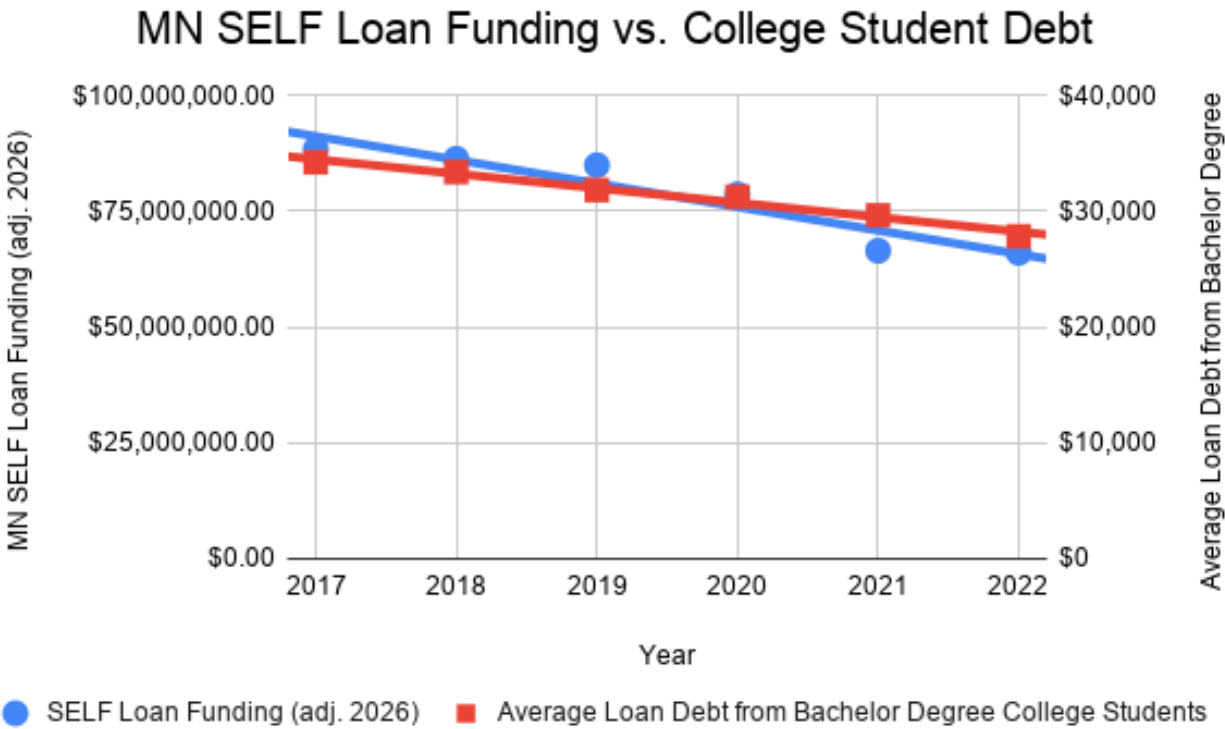
Year	Public Safety and Corrections Spending (act.)	Public Safety and Corrections Spending (adj. 2026)	Violent Crime Count
2017	\$672,085	\$886,717	13,321
2018	\$680,538	\$881,040	12,366
2019	\$720,728	\$912,225	13,381
2020	\$696,470	\$869,677	15,766
2021	\$762,068	\$889,033	17,704
2022	\$741,856	\$812,980	16,217
2023	\$1,430,248	\$1,516,535	15,142
2024	\$1,680,712	\$1,732,086	15,015
2025	\$1,974,029	\$1,981,327	12,911
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	FBI Crime Data Explorer

MN SELF Loan Funding vs. College Student Debt

Mango N. (64A), Chester T. (44B), Arlo M. (65B), and Niko S. (65B)

In 2023, under Joe Biden’s administration a plan to help student debt and forgive loans was overturned by the Supreme Court. During the plan, many students received fake hope that their debt would be forgiven, only to be met with debt that could follow them their whole life. A student in Mankato called Ms. Lenarz was expecting to receive huge cuts to her debt, but was met with rejection and now has to pay a staggering debt of 70,000 US dollars. She will never be able to pay this off. Her life is ruined, she will never be able to solve this without government intervention.

We are studying SELF Loan Funding, (a MN loan program,) and how student debt, (specifically bachelor degrees,) relate to it. We got our data from the MN Office of Higher Education website, which has everything we needed. Our blue line data shows SELF loan funding, and the downward trend in the last few years. Our red line data shows the average bachelor degree student debt, and its downward trend in the last few years. The relationship shows how when SELF funding is lowered, student debt also drops.

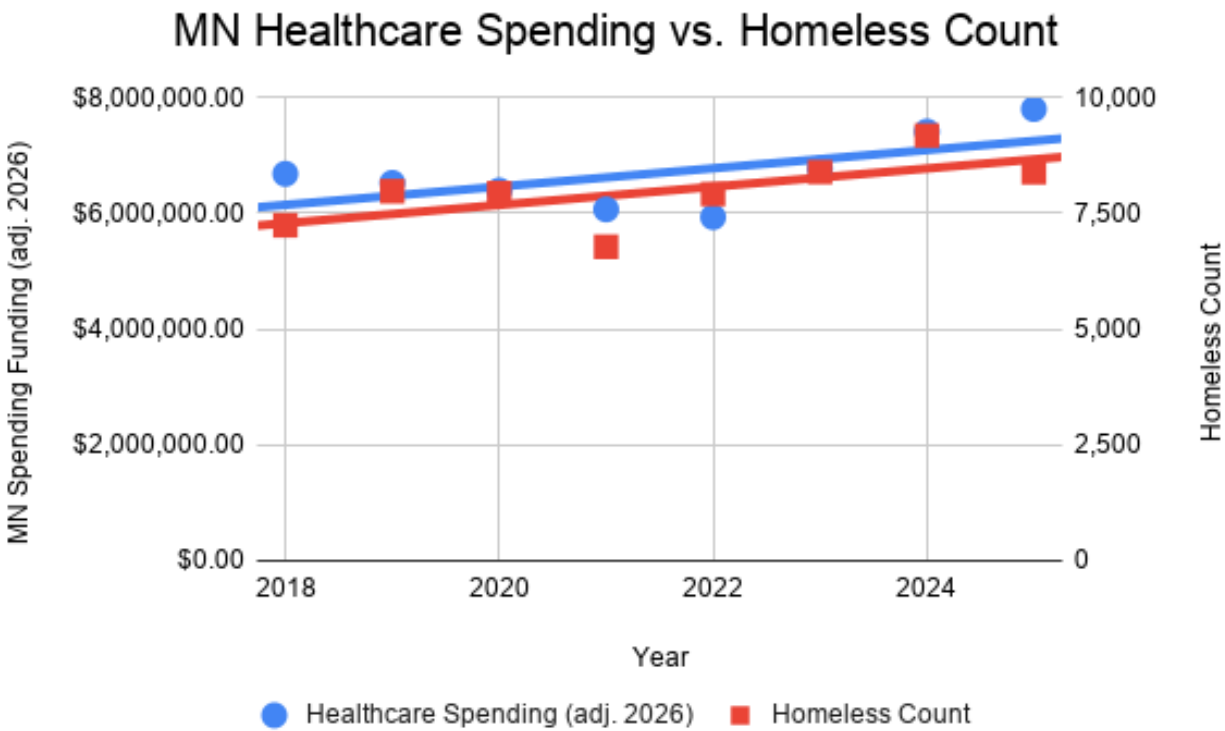


Year	SELF Loans Funding (act.)	SELF Loans Funding (adj. 2026)	Average Loan Debt from Bachelor Degree College Students (act.)	Average Loan Debt from Bachelor Degree College Students (adj. 2026)
2017	\$66,050,746	\$88,466,585	\$25,568	\$34,245
2018	\$65,818,464	\$86,367,233	\$25,453	\$33,400
2019	\$65,770,495	\$84,985,956	\$24,641	\$31,840
2020	\$62,399,605	\$78,673,945	\$24,793	\$31,259
2021	\$53,459,574	\$66,471,826	\$23,858	\$29,665
2022	\$57,071,529	\$66,024,403	\$24,062	\$27,836
Source	MN Office of Higher Ed	MN Office of Higher Ed	bls.gov	bls.gov

MN Healthcare Spending vs. Homeless Count

Nikolai L. (66B), Thaddeus H. (38A), Loudon B. (67B), and Halvor J. (66A)

Many people in Minnesota are suffering from Homelessness, especially people who are in debt for one reason or another. People like Sandra Johnson who struggle every day. Sandra is an older woman who lost her home in 2006 due to funeral expenses, medical debt and a mortgage. She had funeral expenses due to her mother dying in early 2006. Sandra lived with her church family, then with her actual family, then in her car until it was towed away. For the next six years Sandra was homeless. All of this because she lost her husband at a young age and had to pay medical debts from cancer and other chronic illnesses. If you choose to fund health care then we will see less cases like this and less unnecessary suffering in our city.



Our project is on health care funding and how it is affecting homelessness in Minnesota. For us we got our first data set from the General Fund Spending Major Area, and our second set of data we got from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These two data set were used for getting the necessary data for health care funding. The third data set was from the PIT Count which was where we got our homeless count. Our data sets show that the more money spent on health care, the more homelessness the count goes up. But in the long run the homelessness would go down. Health care funding isn't too good of a source for all of homelessness but if it was they would have lines going in opposite directions.

Year	Healthcare Spending (act.)	Healthcare Spending (adj. 2026)	Homeless Count
2018	\$5,093,997	\$6,684,362	7,243
2019	\$5,051,639	\$6,527,522	7,977
2020	\$5,072,570	\$6,395,539	7,940
2021	\$4,880,869	\$6,068,890	6,775
2022	\$5,130,443	\$5,935,261	7,917
2023	\$6,228,973	\$6,772,022	8,393
2024	\$7,031,410	\$7,415,221	9,182
2025	\$7,624,141	\$7,806,086	8,392
Source	General Fund Spending Major Area	bls.gov	PIT Count

We are asking you to spend more money on healthcare. Because If we spend more money on healthcare homelessness will go down.

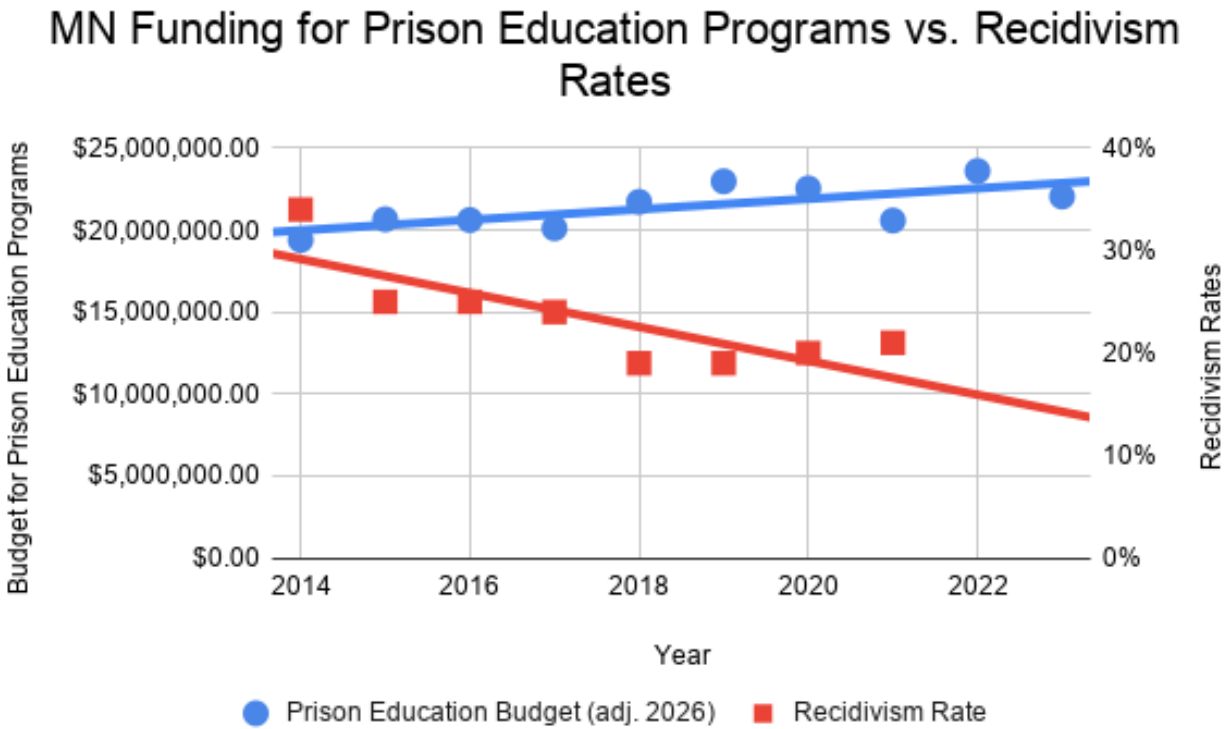
MN Funding for Prison Education Programs vs. Recidivism Rates

Sebrena C. (65A), Zelda J. (64A), William S (64B), Greta C (64A)

Jason Sole was a man whose childhood was filled with the war on drugs and didn't have words for what he was experiencing and no one would tell him, he was confused, angry, and had no way to express that, everything felt that it was against him, but he was convicted of firearm possession and in 2005 convicted of his second drug possession charge. He was sent to prison but he was given an education while he was there. Jason chose to change himself for the better, he is now helping others get a better life, he is a justice educator, is married with kids, and is an author. His life was changed in prison, and it is not wrong to say that he is in a good place because of the education he got.

We are studying the correlation between funding for prison education and recidivism rates. We gathered our recidivism rate data from Department of Corrections performance reports. We got the budget data from the Governor's Budget. The blue line shows the lowering recidivism rates in Minnesota from 2014-2021. The red line shows the rising budget for prison education programs. Our data suggests that more spending for prison education leads to decreased recidivism rates. like in 2014, when the budget was the lowest the recidivism was the highest it has been and then when the money increased the recidivism decreased drastically.

We want to spend more money educating prisoners. We expect that if we give prisoners a better education, they will be able to get jobs they couldn't before, go to college, and not return to a life of crime. According to a report from the Education Commission, for every dollar spent educating prisoners, there's a \$4-\$5 economic return. It's been proven that education programs increase rates of hope for prisoners. And many prisoners want to participate in these programs. According to the same study, 70% of the adult prisoners surveyed said they would like to enroll in a prison education program, but have been unable to due to low availability.



Year	Prison Education Allocation (act.)	Prison Education Allocation (adj. 2026)	Recidivism Rate
2014	\$13,950,000	\$19,396,990	34%
2015	\$14,842,000	\$20,655,740	25%
2016	\$15,014,000	\$20,612,090	25%
2017	\$15,015,000	\$20,109,000	24%
2018	\$16,552,000	\$21,719,600	19%
2019	\$17,779,000	\$22,973,300	19%
2020	\$17,878,000	\$22,540,730	20%
2021	\$16,553,000	\$20,582,060	21%
2022	\$20,402,000	\$23,602,480	
2023	\$20,279,000	\$22,046,950	
Source	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	MN DOC

It shouldn't be the burden of the individual to rise above their oppression, it should be the responsibility of the establishment to do better.

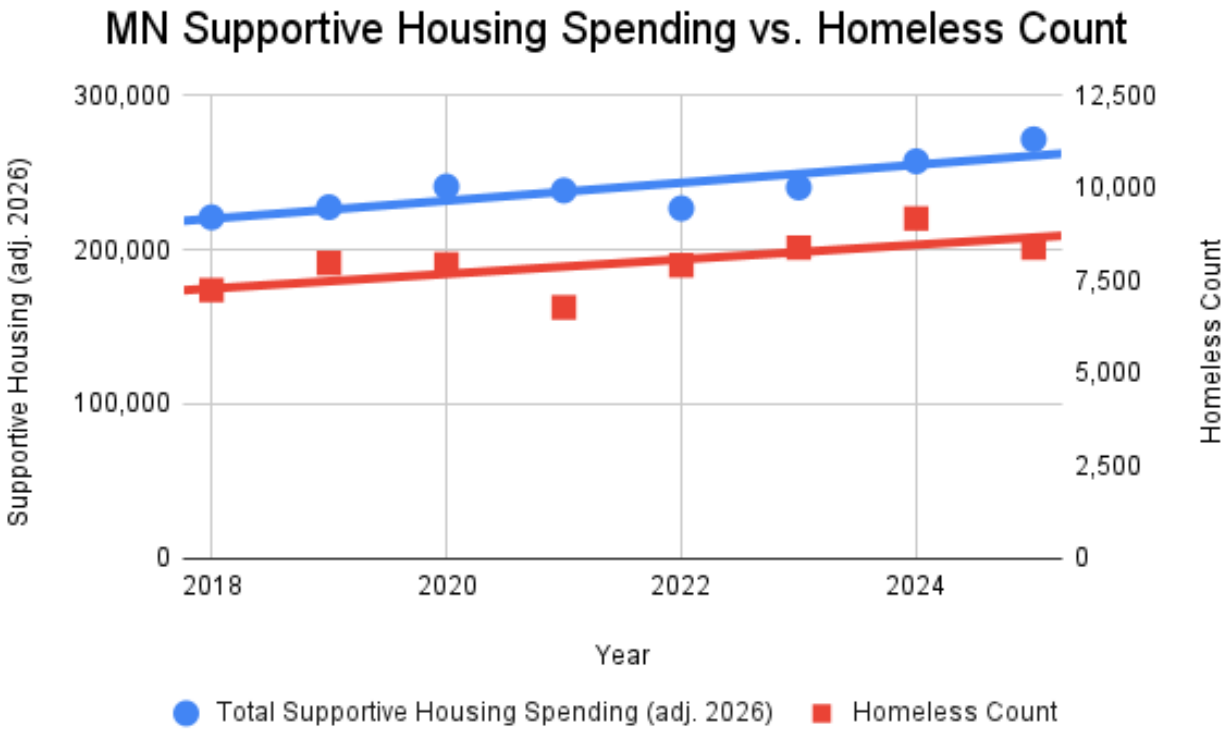
MN Supportive Housing Spending vs. Homeless Count

Htoo M. (66B), Elizabeth B. (64B), Rosie W. (64A), and Patrick W. (64A)

Many people face homelessness in Minnesota, Betty Allen being one of them. But unlike most other homeless people, Betty’s life was turned around by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Betty was living in her car for four years, with her dog, before heading to El Paso, Texas. She went to Texas during covid to care for her sick and dying elderly parents. Her parents were struggling to battle covid, but lost. They both died within days of each other. After this sudden tragedy, Betty caught covid herself. She slowly climbed back to health as she headed back out to Minnesota. When Betty got to Minnesota she struggled to find housing again. Betty finally got an apartment with the help from social workers. Then the HUD paid 980 dollars of her 1400 monthly rent.

We are studying on Homelessness vs Money Spent Towards Supportive Housing Programs in Minnesota and how we want it to get better. We got our data from MN management and the budget of Minnesota. The blue line shows Total Supportive Housing Spending (adj 2026) and the red line shows Homeless count. This shows that we need to work on both Total Supportive Housing Spending and Homeless count.

We wanted this graph to raise awareness of the large amount of homeless people in Minnesota. Even as the government spends thousands of dollars towards supportive housing, homeless numbers continue to increase. When we spend more money the homelessness count increases indicating that we need to find another way to make the numbers decrease. All though we shouldn’t stop the Supportive housing program funding all together we should spend some of that money on people who need food, clothes and housing.

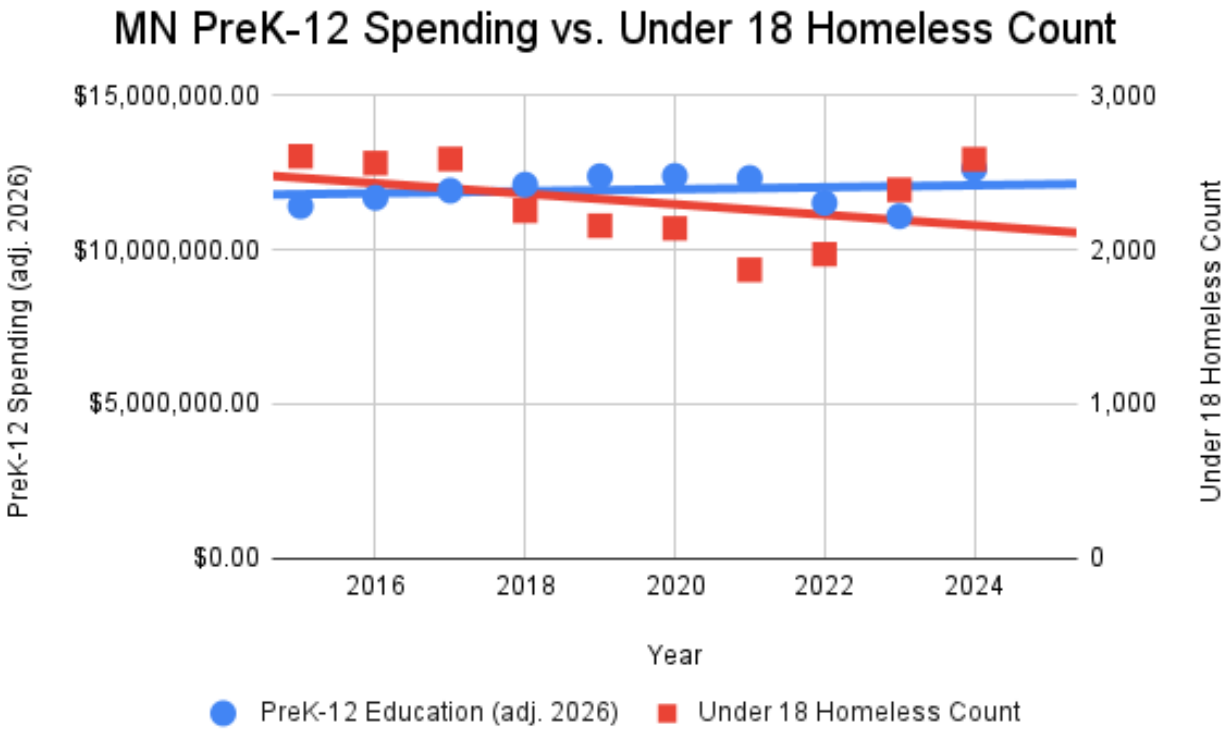


Year	Supportive Housing (act.)	Supportive Housing Grants (act.)	Total (act.)	Total (adj. 2026)	Homeless Count
2018	159,027	9,489	168,516	221,127	7,243
2019	166,696	9,531	176,227	227,713	7,977
2020	181,977	9,264	191,241	241,118	7,940
2021	181,213	10,634	191,847	238,543	6,775
2022	177,530	18,622	196,152	226,922	7,917
2023	201,877	19,364	221,241	240,529	8,393
2024	225,054	19,106	244,160	257,487	9,182
2025	253,418	12,014	265,432	271,766	8,392
Source	Governor's Authorized Budgets	Governor's Authorized Budgets	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	PIT Study

MN PreK-12 Spending vs. Under 18 Homeless Count

Jack G. (66A) and Felix R. (64A)

There is over 9,000 homeless people in MN that have to sleep through dark, cold nights, hot blazing sun and the worst of all rude people. I've seen homeless people all over Minnesota. I see at least one every time I go somewhere. It's a problem that needs fixing. one example is



We are studying the amount of money Minnesota spends on PreK-12 education vs. the population of homeless youth in Minnesota. We got most of our data from General Fund Spending By Major Area, bls.gov, and PIT count. The red line in the average under 18 homeless count from 2014 to 2024. The blue line is the average MN spending on PreK-12 education from 2015 to 2024. Both of the lines together show that when the blue line goes up, the red line goes down.

policy enforcers should make more efforts to get people off the street so the homelessness is less of a problem in the future.

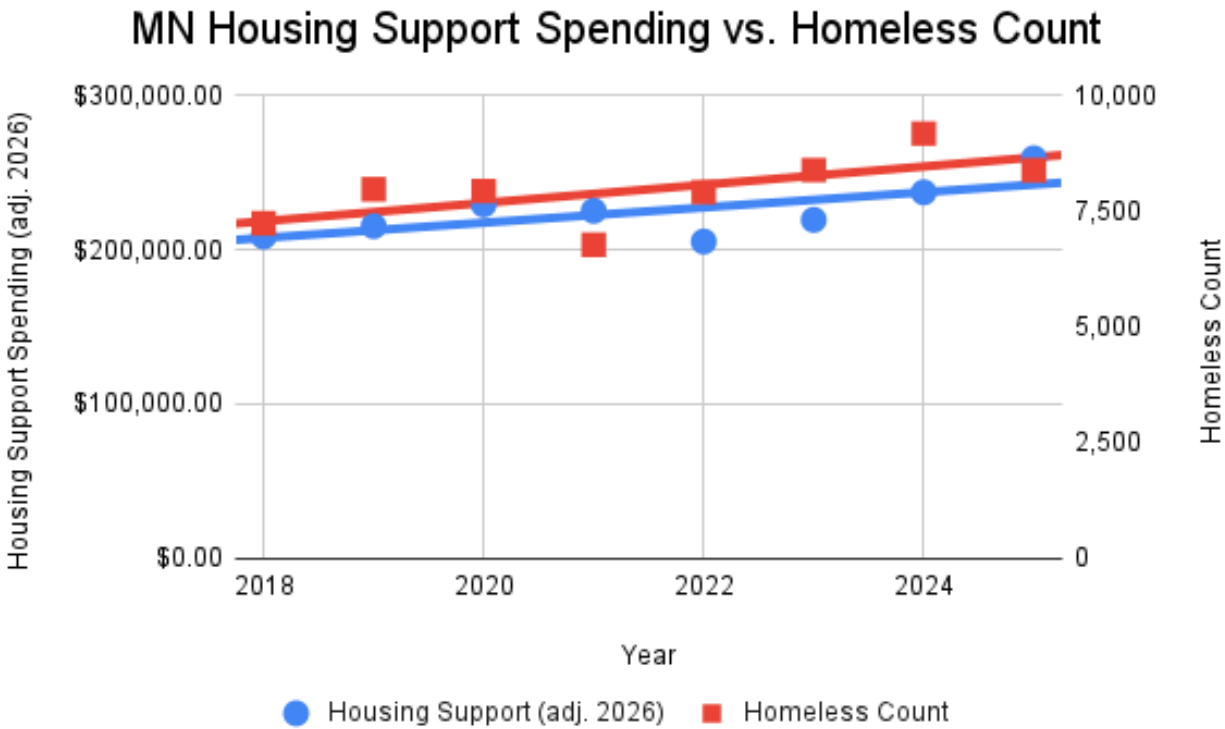
Year	Prek-12 Education Spending (actual)	Prek-12 Education Spending (adj. 2026)	Under 18 Homeless Count
2015	\$8,204,234	\$11,417,902	2607
2016	\$8,516,938	\$11,692,546	2563
2017	\$8,901,333	\$11,922,205	2590
2018	\$9,233,048	\$12,115,340	2254
2019	\$9,587,811	\$12,388,979	2157
2020	\$9,835,379	\$12,400,528	2140
2021	\$9,919,135	\$12,333,488	1870
2022	\$9,960,012	\$11,522,450	1972
2023	\$10,204,038	\$11,093,638	2390
2024	\$11,969,194	\$12,622,534	2588
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	PIT Count

We want homelessness to go down after all people take down Forrests for an IKEA or a Walmart parking lot. Why do this when you can build a house or better yet a home. Since these big companies won't listen to us we need your help.

MN Housing Support Spending vs. Homeless Count

Mavis C. (64A) Eleanor F. (64B), Bahati S. (67B), and Willa B. (64A)

After losing his home to financial difficulties, teenager Roy Lee Spearman Jones was offered a place to stay with his friend and friend’s grandmother, and he gratefully accepted. His mom wanted to move to Omaha, Nebraska but after moving 17 times he liked living in Minnesota, and wanted to stay here. When his mom told him she was cutting off his health insurance he moved in with her out of fear of his medical bills falling to his friend's grandmother. From there things only got worse for him. He was fighting so much with his mom he had no choice but to move back to Minnesota with his friend. After a few months he felt like too much of a burden and moved out. With nowhere to go, he ended up sleeping behind the garbage cans near his school before moving into a homeless shelter. He now has a job and is attending community college but doesn’t doubt he will end up homeless yet again.



Our project is about the state spending on housing support and homelessness rates in Minnesota. We got our data for the state spending from MN.gov general fund balance analysis from November 2025, and the homelessness rates from the PIT count. The blue line on our graph represents the money (2026 adj) the state is spending on housing support, which is going up. The red line represents the amount of homeless individuals per year in Minnesota, which is now going down since 2024. This graph currently has a positive correlation because we need to be spending a lot more money on housing support for it to make a bigger difference. Although it seems to not be helping, the homelessness rates have been going down since 2024, and dipped in 2021 as well. This benefits the state as well as its cheaper for the state to help people stay in their own homes, than to have more homeless shelters, and find somewhere else for them to live.

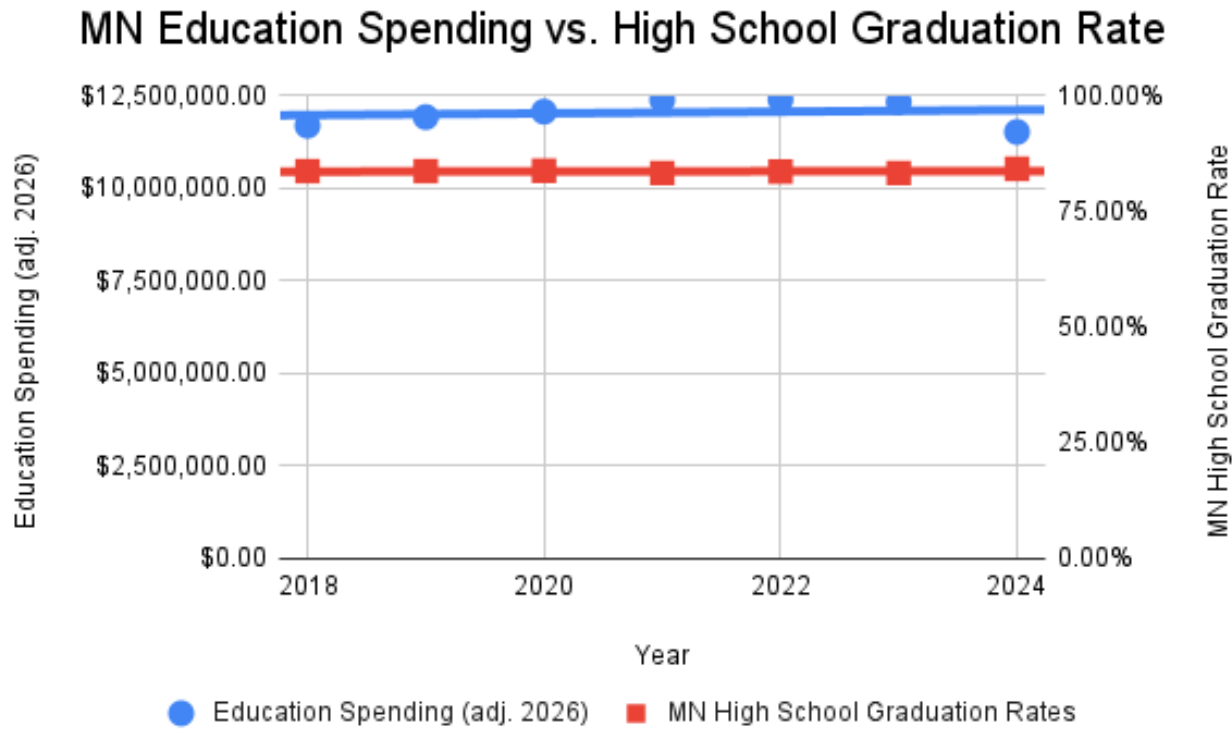
Year	Housing Support (actual)	Housing Support (adj. Jan 2026)	Homeless Count
2018	\$159,027	\$208,676	7,243
2019	\$166,696	\$215,398	7,977
2020	\$181,977	\$229,438	7,940
2021	\$181,213	\$225,321	6,775
2022	\$177,530	\$205,379	7,917
2023	\$201,877	\$219,477	8,393
2024	\$225,054	\$237,339	9,182
2025	\$253,418	\$259,466	8,392
Source	Governor's Authorized Budgets	bls.gov	PIT Study

We want homeless rate to go down, and the way to do that is for YOU to up your spending on housing support

MN Education Spending vs. High School Graduation Rate

Rajan A. (66A), James D. (44A), and Julio Y. (67A)

Now, think about a boy who’s trying to graduate. He came from Mexico and is looking for an education. This is a story about 17 year old Adolfo Saldana-Lara, a Mexican immigrant trying to graduate high school. With his brother living with her girlfriend, and none of his relatives graduated yet, he feels pressured to graduate. But several failed classes did not stop Adolfo, as he continued on to graduate high school and became the first member in his family to do so, all with the help of U.S Education spending.



We are studying the correlation between High School Graduation and Education Spending. We found our information through the Minnesota Department of Education and the General Fund Spending by Major Area (Minnesota Management and Budget). Our first line (blue) shows the consistent rate of Education Spending in recent years. Our second line (red) shows that the High School Graduation rate in percentages has been fairly stationary in recent years. When compared they show that when the one line goes up the other does the same.

We know about Adolfo and his heavy struggles towards graduation, but the main reason due to this is underfunding. Bloomington Kennedy High School was severely underfunded, and thus, the school did not have enough resources to teach their students sufficient material to graduate and get a high school diploma. If only you, a part of the government, equalized funding towards every high school, Thousands of kids like Adolfo wouldn’t face the same struggle towards graduation. Instead, giving every kid a fair chance at school would clearly be the right choice for the success of the students.

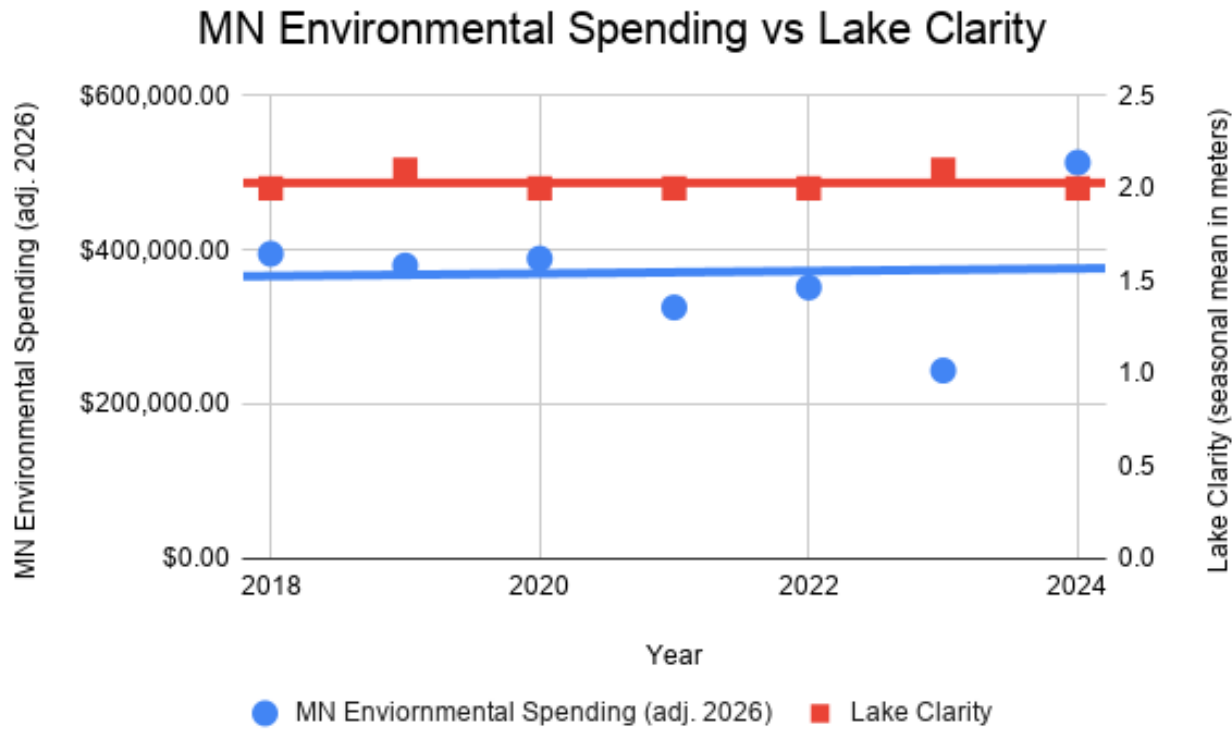
Year	PreK-12 Education Spending (actual)	PreK-12 Education Spending (adj. 2026)	High School Graduation Rate
2018	\$9,233,048	\$12,071,014	83.70%
2019	\$9,587,811	\$12,388,979	83.70%
2020	\$9,835,739	\$12,400,982	83.80%
2021	\$9,919,135	\$12,333,488	83.30%
2022	\$9,960,012	\$11,522,450	83.60%
2023	\$10,204,038	\$11,093,638	83.30%
2024	\$11,969,194	\$12,622,535	84.20%
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	MDE

Equalizing school funding would benefit others like Adolfo, helping them graduate and giving sufficient resources to schools like Bloomington Kennedy High School.

MN Environmental Spending vs. Lake Clarity

Edmund K. (64A), Declan P. (64B), Soren S. (66B), and Rafael H. (65A)

Jack Ariola Erenberg was an 9 year old aspiring hockey player who told his beloved mother he would build a house for her someday when he was strong enough. Sadly, he never got the chance as he died due to a brain-eating amoeba, leaving behind his 4 siblings and his 2 mourning parents. Jack would have been 23 today. Jack is not alone, there have been other cases of this happening in Minnesota. All of this could have been avoided if there had been consistent testing for such deadly threats. We could have saved Jack if there had been better testing and consistent funds allocated towards monitoring Minnesota's lakes.



We are studying water clarity, and how environmental spending can help keep a better eye and/or control over it. We got our data from a website made by the University of Minnesota designed for you to look at certain environmental metrics about lakes, but the metric we used was seasonal mean of lake clarity for the whole state. Our first line (blue) shows that the environmental spending in Minnesota has spiked in recent years. Our second line (red) shows that the seasonal mean of lake clarity has been fairly stable throughout our data set. Our two lines together show that environmental spending can affect the lake's clarity. For example, in 2023 there was a big drop in environmental spending but lakes like Itasca and also across the whole state lake clarity spiked. But when environmental spending returned to normal, the lake clarity returned to normal. And Lake clarity is a metric that can give us an idea of what is going on with vegetation nutrients and other things in lakes, we need to make sure that our lake clarity doesn't fluctuate too much so the health of our lakes stay stable.

We ask that the MN state policy makers increase environmental spending so we can better monitor and control the clarity and health of our lakes. We believe that this will stop fluctuations and allow us to catch anything that could be of harm to the wildlife or humans within a lake. A single lake clarity sample costs under 50 dollars. This pales in comparison to the medical costs and heartbreak that can be caused by illnesses and infections from contaminated lakes, not to mention that better lake quality can raise property values. We need to keep a close eye and control upon the health of our lakes for the health of our wildlife and our citizens

Year	Environmental Spending (act.)	Environmental Spending (adj. 2026)	Lake Clarity (seasonal mean in meters)
2018	\$300,895	\$394,836	2.0
2019	\$289,305	\$379,627	2.1
2020	\$296,151	\$388,610	2.0
2021	\$247,829	\$325,202	2.0
2022	\$267,609	\$351,158	2.0
2023	\$185,399	\$243,281	2.1
2024	\$391,201	\$513,335	2.0
Source	General Fund Spending by Major Area	bls.gov	UofM Lake Browser

"Minnesota's natural bodies of water should be more closely and consistently monitored for the betterment of our state's health and wellness."

