



**FamilyWise**

THE HOME OF PREVENT  
CHILD ABUSE MINNESOTA

**MINNESOTA  
FAMILY  
WELLBEING  
INDEX**

**2026**  
EDITION



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# Introduction: Supporting Families at Every Level

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Families are the building blocks of our communities. When families have the support they need to thrive, our communities are healthy and resilient. Family support happens at every level, from local, state, and federal policies that ensure families' basic needs are met, to community-rooted organizations that partner with families to help them thrive, to neighborhoods where all families have safety and belonging. These are all levers that contribute to family wellbeing.

Today, many Minnesota families are facing hardships caused by increased immigration enforcement in our communities, high costs for everyday goods that families need, and a loss or anticipated loss of funding highlights the need for social safety net programs like affordable healthcare and food and childcare assistance.

In the face of these hardships, Minnesotans have made international news by rapidly organizing to support their neighbors. As volunteers and voters, Minnesotans have consistently shown up in high numbers to advance the wellbeing of all families. We are motivated and inspired, and many of us are looking for ways to take community care to the next level.

This report is meant to help inform and mobilize Minnesotans that want to take action to strengthen families. Whether you want to get involved in policy change and advocacy, connect with a local community-based organization, or build relationships with your neighbors, this report has practical information and resources you need to make a difference in your community.



# Policies that Support Strong Families

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Over the past year, the policy landscape at both the federal and state levels has seen dramatic shifts. The United States saw the largest cuts to healthcare and food assistance ever through the H.R. 1 budget bill. Executive orders have caused confusion, delays, and funding difficulties for social service programs.

**There is uncertainty about future funding for many important programs that support the wellbeing of Minnesota families.** In this section, you can find high-level information and resources about the current policy landscape across several levers of family wellbeing, as well as guidance for taking action as an advocate for policies that keep families safe and strong.

## Childcare

Minnesota ranks as the third most expensive state for childcare in the country.<sup>1</sup> In January 2026, the Trump administration froze billions of dollars in federal funding for childcare in Minnesota; the freeze is blocked by a federal judge, but the lawsuit remains uncertain.<sup>2</sup> Over 360,000 Minnesotans receive assistance from federal childcare funding, and the reinstatement of this policy would leave many families, small businesses, and nonprofits unable to afford their childcare.



Source: Minnesota Budget Project, 2026

Minnesota is taking steps to support families with young children; the **Paid Family and Medical Leave Act went into effect on January 1, 2026**, providing all working Minnesotans with paid leave for the birth of their child or to care for a sick family member.

## Food Security

**H.R. 1 cut over \$186 billion in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding over the next ten years, shifting responsibility to states for filling that gap.**<sup>3</sup> In Minnesota, over 440,000 people rely on SNAP funding to afford groceries and stay nourished. The bill expanded work reporting requirements, removing reporting exemptions for older recipients of SNAP (ages 55 to 65) and parents of teenagers (ages 13 to 18). It also created stricter requirements for veterans, those experiencing homelessness, and youth aging out of foster care. Already stretched thin, the onerous and confusing reporting requirements prevent many working families from getting the support they need to put food

on the table. Those who don't meet the reporting requirements could lose benefits after three months. This bill also cuts funding for legal non-citizens, making 9,000 refugees and asylees ineligible for federal SNAP benefits.

## Healthcare

The biggest cuts seen in H.R. 1 were to Medicaid, cutting \$1 trillion from federal funding over 10 years.<sup>4</sup> **As a result, more than 140,000 Minnesotans could lose access to healthcare they receive through Medical Assistance, creating barriers to accessing care and life-saving treatments.** Similarly to the SNAP cuts, H.R. 1 also enacts new work reporting requirements for working-aged people participating in Medicaid, and cuts care for legal non-citizens.

**90,000 Minnesotans**

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**\$177 more per month**

Source: MNsure.org, 2025

As part of these cuts to Medicaid, the nearly 90,000 Minnesotans currently getting care through Minnesota's ACA marketplace, MNsure, will pay around \$177 more per month because Congress failed to extend the enhanced tax credits.<sup>5</sup> These cuts are already being felt by Minnesota families. 2026 enrollment statistics shows an 8% decline in enrollment and that 87% of MNsure enrollees switched plans, many opting for cheaper plans potentially leading to being underinsured.<sup>6</sup>

## Housing

In late 2025, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a funding notice for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, which supports funding for homelessness prevention and assistance, including permanent housing solutions and related services. This notice caps the percentage of funding that can be used for permanent housing investments at 30%, compared to the previous 87%. While the funding notice was blocked by a federal judge, **if passed this provision could cause over 3,900 Minnesotans to lose access to housing, as 48% of Minnesota's permanent beds (long-term leasing or rental assistance) are funded by the CoC.**<sup>7,8</sup> There remains a lot of uncertainty, as risks of permanent housing solutions being cut and capped remain depending on the results of pending federal litigation.

## Partner Spotlight: Minnesota Budget Project

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To protect policies that support the wellbeing of Minnesotans, state lawmakers need to act in response to federal cuts. On the frontlines of this work is **The Minnesota Budget Project**, an initiative of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits that conducts research, advocacy, and engagement at the Capitol so that all Minnesotans can prosper.

**“One of the things that we are working on is a campaign to raise revenues, especially from those with the most resources, in order to replace lost federal funding, protect crucial services, and meet Minnesotan's needs,”** shares Deputy Director, Carly Eckstrom. “Because ideally we would ensure that Minnesotans have access to healthcare, food support, and other public services, regardless of their immigration status or other identities or circumstances beyond their control.”

**Eckstrom highlighted that it is important that legislators understand how these changes are going to affect Minnesotans as they continue to make these decisions at state and federal levels.** “We believe strongly in centering the voices of impacted people,” she said as she spoke on how Minnesota Budget Project approaches their advocacy. “We find that the best way that we can help is by working in coalition with organizations that work directly with impacted people and center that at the core of all of these policy changes.”

The Minnesota Budget Project is calling on legislators to take bold action to support Minnesotans. Individual citizens can make a difference as advocates, speaking to their legislators to how they and their community are directly impacted. At center is the reality that **“All of these harmful impacts are on Minnesotans, are on our neighbors,”** said Eckstrom, **“and our neighbors deserve a chance to thrive and to get what they need.”**



## Be an Advocate for Change

There are many resources for identifying your elected representatives and speaking with them about issues that are important to you. While you can advocate independently, there are many organizations that you can get involved with to join in collective advocacy efforts.

### Contact your representatives:

- [Find Your Representative](#) for both state and federal government.
- [Make Calls](#) - 5Calls provides phone numbers and scripts to call your legislators.
- [In-person Meetings](#) - Minnesota Council of Nonprofits toolkit for meeting with your representatives.

**Track current bills through state and federal Congress** to advocate for specific policies:

- State: [MyBills](#)
- Federal: [GovTrack.us](#)

**Find organizations doing advocacy** already and get involved with their work: [Nonprofit Member List - Minnesota Council of Nonprofits](#)

**Volunteer in your community** to support those impacted by federal cuts: [HandsOn Twin Cities](#)



# Support from Community-Based Organizations

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Trusted community-based organizations are a vital part of our collective wellbeing in Minnesota. There are over 40,000 registered nonprofits located across the state. With stories of fraud dominating the headlines, it's important to recognize the unique role and value of community organizations in supporting families.



“Nonprofits are often called on to step in when government response falls short,” says Laurel Hansen, Program &

Member Engagement Director at Metropolitan Alliance of Connected Communities (MACC). MACC is a member organization that supports and fosters collective action across approximately 60 human service nonprofits. **“Minnesota families know that in the toughest times - whether through a pandemic or ICE occupation - they can rely on nonprofits to have their backs and connect them to the critical services they need.”**

Unlike legislative systems, community-based organizations can respond to community needs in nuanced and nimble ways. Intercongregation Communities Association (ICA), a food shelf and social service agency in Hennepin County, recently overhauled services to meet new needs caused by increased immigration enforcement.

“We added a parallel emergency system without stepping away from our core services—scaling food distribution by 10x and launching a streamlined Relief Fund for rent and utilities, designed for anonymity and ease of access,” shared Kristin Lundgren, Director of Operations and Client Services. “The lift was significant: hundreds of volunteer hours, expanded storage across multiple locations, and complex, real-time coordination to keep everything moving. **What made it work was true symbiosis—nonprofit structure, accountability, and purchasing power paired with the trust, flexibility, and reach of mutual aid groups, parent networks, churches, and volunteers.**”

FamilyWise staff are experts at navigating community-based resources alongside families. We asked members of our team to share what makes community-based organizations successful in helping families. What we heard is that effective nonprofits are culturally responsive and meet real needs identified by their participants. They don't operate from a “top down” perspective. They have strong roots in the community.

In the end, Minnesota nonprofits are dedicated to supporting their communities. As Laurel shared, **“Even when adapting to multiple crisis and navigating unstable funding, our sector holds itself to the highest standards of accountability and efficiently delivers proven, measurable, reportable outcomes with integrity and care.”**

### Nonprofit Accountability

If you're a donor, you might be curious about the standing of a nonprofit you support. The Charities Review Council's Accountability Standards helps organizations align to industry standards of nonprofit compliance and oversight. When a nonprofit demonstrates that they meet the standards, they are listed on the Charities Review Council's Smart Givers website. If you're a donor or a nonprofit interested in learning more, visit <https://smartgivers.org>.

### Walking Alongside Families

When organizations operate in active partnership with families, listening to their wisdom and responding to their guidance, powerful things happen. Trust grows when people have the space to advocate for themselves. Confidence is created when everyone is treated like an expert in their own lives.

**For families seeking support from community-based organizations or government programs, FamilyWise staff had affirmations to share:**

- It's important to **recognize your own strength** – you've already done so much to get to where you are today!
- Remember: **be specific, and don't self-limit**. Clarity about your goals and desires will guide you, and knocking on doors you don't expect to open will surprise you.
- You are not alone. Whether it's the person you work with at a community organization, a family member, a neighbor, or a friend, **finding others who have walked similar paths** can be a great source of strength, support, and insight.
- **Don't give up!** Some resources can have very strict eligibility requirements. That doesn't mean that there aren't any other options that fit your needs. It takes community and perseverance.

## Resources for Families

- [211](#) - Connector to statewide social services resources
- [CLUES](#) - Supports social and economic equity and wellbeing for Latinos in Minnesota
- [COPAL](#) - Support for Latine families throughout Minnesota
- [Help Me Connect](#) - Resource portal for families with young children and those working with them
- [Help Me Grow MN](#) - Resource for healthy early childhood development
- [HousingLink](#) - Housing support for families and individuals throughout Minnesota
- [LawHelpMN](#) - Legal aid for low-income families and individuals
- [Lutheran Social Services](#) - Support for families throughout Minnesota
- [MIRAC](#) - Support for immigrants in Minnesota
- [MinnCAP](#) - Network of anti-poverty community groups working with families and individuals throughout Minnesota
- [Minnesota Day One](#) - Support for people who've experienced violence or crime in Minnesota
- [MnCHOICES](#) - Assessments for long-term services and support
- [MN Legal Aid](#) - Legal aid for low-income families and individuals
- [Salvation Army](#) - List of all Salvation Army groups in Minnesota
- [The 30-Days Foundation](#) - One-time financial grants for MN and Western WI residents
- [T-Mobile's Project 10Million](#) - Internet access for families of K-12 students
- [United Way](#) - Contact list for all United Way groups in Minnesota
- Facebook groups can also be a great resource. There are often city-specific groups for different resource needs. Try typing in the Facebook search bar your geographic region and some key words about what you're seeking.
- Libraries, schools, and places of worship can all be great places to look. Sometimes it might take just having a conversation with someone who works at one of these places to find what you need.

# Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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All families need support from their community to thrive. Without help, parents struggle, children suffer, and families get stuck in intergenerational cycles of trauma and poverty. Unlike formal programs, resources like family, friends, and neighbors can provide sustained support to families through life's ups and downs.



Carolyn Washington, who has over 20 years of experience working with families in crisis through The NEST family mentorship program, has seen the power of informal connections. “It helps with overall wellbeing,” says Carolyn. “I think about my own neighborhood. We know each other. All of our backyards and front yards connect. Over the weekend we’re all out in the backyard. Kids have bonfires. If I leave town, I let my neighbors know because I trust them. The neighbor has a key in case anything is going on.”

**Neighborhood connections instill a sense of safety for families. Seeing familiar faces brings warmth and comfort to day-to-day life.**

Unfortunately, many parents today (65%) report feeling isolated and lonely, a factor that puts kids at risk of abuse and neglect.<sup>9</sup> There are several elements that have contributed to the decline in social connectedness in American society in recent decades, including declining family size and marriage rates, decreased membership in community-based groups, and the introduction of technology like smartphones, social media, and remote work.

It’s not always easy to know where to start when it comes to building community. Some parents don’t know what supportive resources are out there, and others may not reach out for help for deeper reasons. “Sometimes people are isolated and lonely because they’re estranged from their families, and with that can come a lot of shame, mistrust, and disappointment. That can make it difficult to trust other people with your business,” shares Carolyn.

**Rebuilding a sense of connection, trust, and belonging in our communities is vital to the wellbeing of Minnesota families.** When parents have someone to call on for support – a family member, a friend, a mentor, a neighbor, a community group – they can better cope

with challenges, maintain stability, and take better care of themselves and their children. The good news is that moving towards more connected, supportive communities can be done through simple, everyday actions by individuals.

We are seeing the power of connected communities right now across our state. At the time of this publication, Minnesotans are organizing at every level in response to increased immigration enforcement activity in our communities. Neighbors have organized safety patrols, food delivery and transportation support, vigils and supportive circles, and more. **“Minnesotans have really shown the world how to be a supportive safeguard for our communities,” says Carolyn.**

### If you're feeling isolated, here are tips for taking steps to grow your support network:

- **Map out the people in your life.** Who do you trust that you could connect with more often? Are there any relationships that would be healthy to let go of or to rebuild?
- Do you know your neighbors? If not, **try starting a conversation with a neighbor** the next time you see them.
- **Tap into resources in your local community.** Is there a local library, school, church, or community center that has events that you could participate in? Getting involved in community activities can build new friendships and a sense of belonging.
- If you're engaging a lot of screen time, consider **increasing the proportion of time you're spending with people** instead, which can lead to more high-quality connections.

### If you'd like to show your support for families in your community, here are everyday actions you can take:

- **Be present with people in your life**, engaging in active listening, offering encouragement, and nurturing relationships with the people that are important to you.
- Host a neighborhood barbecue or organize a simple meet-and-greet with your neighbors to **bring people together to get to know each other.**
- **Offer practical support to families you know.** You could offer a ride or a meal, help with an application for insurance or for a job, or let neighborhood kids play in your yard when their parents need a break.
- **Volunteer for a mentorship program** – helping children and adults develop strong, safe, and stable connections can make a big difference. [Learn more about FamilyWise's young parent mentorship program, Bright Beginnings.](#)

# Conclusion

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Minnesota families have always needed the support of their communities to live well.

As we've seen already in 2026, whether through policy change and advocacy, community-based organizations, or simply a deep sense of neighborliness, Minnesotans everywhere and at all levels of power and leadership can make a difference for the good of our communities.

We are grateful to all Minnesotans for their commitment to supporting children and families through hard times. Let's build on our current momentum and continue to stand up for the safety, stability, and wellbeing of children and families in our communities.

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# Acknowledgements

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**Thank you to all report contributors**, including Carly Eckstrom and Laura Mortenson from the Minnesota Budget Project, Laurel Hansen at Metropolitan Alliance of Connected Communities (MACC), Kristin Lundgren from Intercongregation Communities Association, Carolyn Washington, FamilyWise staff members Yesenia Noyola Brown, Sharlene Washington, and Kim Lohse, and all of the participants, staff, and partners for the information and resources they provided.

**This report would not be possible without the support of our sponsors:** Marsden Services, Royal Credit Union, Associated Bank, Strategic Consulting & Coaching, Walser Automotive Group, Delta Dental of Minnesota, Mutual of America, East Minneapolis Exchange Club, and Hubbard Broadcasting.



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