



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

**Fast Facts:**  
2015 Legislative Session

## Providing children with a safe place to learn and grow

Over the past decade the number of children living in poverty has increased by more than 50 percent. Today more than 325,000 Minnesota children are living below the federal poverty level, including over 70,000 who are in deep poverty. Too often, these living conditions lead to poor academic performance, mental and physical health problems, involvement in the criminal justice system and premature death. We know that without support many of these children will never get the chance to lead healthy and successful lives, and may continue the cycle of intergenerational poverty that keeps families and communities in perpetual crisis. Minnesota simply cannot afford to leave these children behind.

In the 2015 legislative session the governor and Legislature made important investments to help make these children's lives better, including crucial reforms and investments in our child protection system, increased access to affordable child care, and additional funding for homeless and sexually exploited youth.

### 2015 legislation:

**Child protection:** Many of the recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children were passed into law in 2015, including more financial support to counties and tribes to hire additional staff, and funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance oversight and training, and funding to reduce disparities in the child protection system. Additionally, background studies on child protection workers will be required when requested by counties and tribes, and a legislative task force was established to oversee implementation of recommendations from the original task force. These changes will significantly improve child safety and well-being by increasing resources and accountability for county and tribal child welfare agencies, strengthening the role of the state in oversight and supporting best practices in child protection across county, tribal and state government. **FY16/17: \$52.2 million**

**Child care waiting list:** Increased funding to reduce the waiting list for the Child Care Assistance Basic Sliding Fee program will enable more than 300 families (more than 600 children) a year to access affordable child care. **FY16/17: \$10 million**

**Child support disregard:** Investment in changes to Minnesota Family Investment Program statute will allow a portion of child support payments to be disregarded from income — up to \$100 for a family with one child and up to \$200 for a family with two or more children. This will help struggling families qualify for the financial assistance program to make ends meet. **FY16/17: \$7.9 million**

**Safe Harbor:** Increased funding for Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth will help more vulnerable youth secure safe and stable housing and services. **FY16/17: \$1.6 million**

**Homeless youth:** Increased funding for the Homeless Youth Act will provide more ongoing grants to nonprofit organizations that offer services for homeless youth. This additional funding will provide stability for more young people under 21, who are the group most likely to become homeless. **FY16/17: \$2 million**

**Mobile food shelf:** Additional dollars to fund a Hunger Solutions Minnesota mobile food shelf will ensure food is reaching hungry Minnesotans who need it. **FY 16/17: \$2 million**

**Safe Place for Newborns:** Additional funding for a public awareness campaign will help keep newborns safe and provide safe, anonymous alternatives for mothers to leave their newborn children. **FY16: \$350,000**

**Child support fee:** This investment eliminates the \$25 application fee for federal child support services to help families who are struggling financially access child support services. **FY16/17: \$34,000**

**Emergency Support Services Grants:** This investment will help shelters and other essential services for homeless families and individuals keep operating at effective levels. **FY16/17: \$500,000**

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