

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Katie J. Sieben
Hwikwon Ham
Audrey C. Partridge
Joseph K. Sullivan
John A. Tuma

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of Telecommunications Access
Minnesota (TAM) Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and
Surcharge Recommendations

SERVICE DATE: April 15, 2025

DOCKET NO. P-999/M-25-13

The above-entitled matter has been considered by the Commission and the following disposition made:

- 1. Approved Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) fund budgets.**
- 2. Approved the surcharge recommendation of \$0.04 per wired and post-paid wireless customer access line and prepaid wireless retail transaction with an effective date of the change starting the first billing cycle on or after July 1, 2025, provided that the effective date accommodates the required minimum notice of fee change.**

This decision is issued by the Commission's consent calendar subcommittee, under a delegation of authority granted under Minn. Stat. § 216A.03, subd. 8 (a). Unless a party, a participant, or a Commissioner files an objection to this decision within ten days of receiving it, it will become the Order of the full Commission under Minn. Stat. § 216A.03, subd. 8 (b).

The Commission agrees with and adopts the recommendations of the Department of Commerce, which are attached and hereby incorporated into the Order.



BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Seuffert".

Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary

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February 20, 2025

Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

RE: TAM FY 2026 Budget and Surcharge Recommendations
Docket No. P999/M-25-13

Dear Mr. Seuffert:

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 237.52, subdivision 2, the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Commerce) – Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) program respectfully submits its fiscal year 2026 Budget and Surcharge Recommendations to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for approval.

The following proposed line item budget and line item justification attachments are included for your reference:

- Attachment A: TAM Fund
- Attachment B: TAM Program Administration
- Attachment C: Telephone Equipment Distribution Program
- Attachment D: Rural Real-Time Captioning
- Attachment E: Accessible News for the Blind

TAM is submitting the FY 2026 proposed budgets on behalf of the other programs supported by the TAM fund but has not analyzed the costs proposed by these programs.

- The FY 2025 budget for TAM Program Administration was \$179,629. The FY 2026 budget recommendation is \$169,119.
- The FY 2025 budget for Minnesota Relay was \$321,799. The FY 2026 budget recommendation is \$325,208.
- The FY 2025 budget for the Department of Human Services – Minnesota Access to Communication Technology (formerly the Telephone Equipment Distribution Program) was \$1,189,710. The FY 2026 budget recommendation is \$1,257,510.

- The FY 2025 budget for the Department of Human Services – Rural Real-Time Captioning program was \$180,892. The FY 2026 budget recommendation is \$182,185.
- The FY 2025 budget for the Department of Employment and Economic Development – Accessible News for the Blind program was \$100,000. The FY 2026 budget recommendation is \$100,000.
- The FY 2026 appropriation for the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) is \$1,620,000.
- The FY 2026 appropriations for Minnesota IT Services total \$340,000.
- The FY 2026 appropriation for the Legislative Coordinating Commission is \$133,000.

TAM recommends increasing the surcharge from \$0.03 to \$0.04, which would sufficiently support TAM funded programs in FY 2026 and should enable TAM to distribute the estimated required funding payments at the start of FY 2027.

As the charts below indicate, with a surcharge of \$0.04 and the budgets proposed for the various programs the TAM fund supports, the projected fund balance is estimated to be \$1.55 million at the close of FY 2026. The TAM fund is estimated to need approximately \$1.29 million at the start of FY 2027 for operating expenses and to provide initial payments to TAM funded programs. FY 2027 budgets may be higher, which would necessitate a larger fund balance at the start of the fiscal year.

Surcharge Amount	Projected Number of Post-Paid Wireless and Wired Customer Access Lines Per month	Post-Paid Wireless and Wired Access Lines Surcharge Revenue	Projected Number of Pre-Paid Wireless Transactions Per Month	Pre-Paid Wireless Surcharge Revenue	Projected TAM Fund Interest	Projected Fund Balance on July 1, 2025	Projected TAM Fund Expenditures	Projected Fund Balance on June 30, 2026
\$ 0.01	6,393,772	\$ 767,252.62	689,241	\$ 78,623.14	\$ -	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ (1,090,896.53)
\$ 0.02	6,393,772	\$ 1,534,505.23	689,241	\$ 157,246.29	\$ -	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ (245,020.77)
\$ 0.03	6,393,772	\$ 2,301,757.85	689,241	\$ 235,869.43	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ 640,854.99
\$ 0.04	6,393,772	\$ 3,069,010.47	689,241	\$ 314,492.57	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ 1,546,730.75
\$ 0.05	6,393,772	\$ 3,836,263.08	689,241	\$ 393,115.72	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ 2,452,606.51
\$ 0.06	6,393,772	\$ 4,603,515.70	689,241	\$ 471,738.86	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ 3,358,482.27

The below chart indicates the estimated funding needed at the start of FY 2027 (July 1, 2026), based on FY 2026 proposed budgeted amounts.

2 Months Operating Expenses for TAM Administration	(\$28,186)
2 Months Operating Expenses for Minnesota Relay	(\$54,201)
2 Months Operating Expenses for MN ACT	(\$209,585)
1st Quarter Payment for DHS-Captioning	(\$45,546)
1st Quarter Payment for DEED-ANB	(\$25,000)
1st and 2nd Quarter Payment for MNCDHH*	(\$810,000)
1st Quarter Payment for Minnesota IT Services	(\$85,000)
1st Quarter Payment for Legislative Coordinating Commission	(\$33,250)
	(\$1,290,769)

*MNCDHH requests payment of 50% of their annual appropriation in the first quarter, 25% in the second quarter, and 25% in the third quarter.

TAM respectfully requests Commission approval of TAM fund budgets and of the surcharge recommendation of \$0.04 per wired and post-paid wireless customer access line and prepaid wireless retail transaction. If the Commission determines a change to the TAM Fund surcharge is reasonable, TAM recommends the effective date of the change be the first billing cycle on or after July 1, 2025, provided that the effective date accommodates the required minimum notice of fee change. (Prepaid wireless retail transaction fee changes are effective 60 days after the first day of the first calendar month after the Public Utilities Commission changes the fee. Telecommunications companies and carriers must be provided 45 days' notice of fee change.)

If any party has reply comments on the TAM FY 2026 Budget and Surcharge Recommendations, they should be filed within 30 days of these recommendations. If there are questions regarding the TAM FY 2026 Budget and Surcharge Recommendations, please contact me at 651-539-1878 or rochelle.garrow@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Rochelle Garrow, TAM Program Administrator

Attachments

CC: All parties of record

Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) Fund

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted	2026 Budgeted Versus 2025 Budgeted	% Change
REVENUE						
Per Post-Paid Wireless and Wired Customer Access Line (FY 2024=\$0.04; FY 2025=\$0.03; FY 2026=\$0.04)	\$ 3,048,292.03	\$ 2,324,716.27	\$ 2,307,205.95	\$ 3,069,010.47	\$ 744,294.20	32.0%
Per Prepaid Wireless Retail Transactions	\$ 307,267.87	\$ 223,528.76	\$ 296,655.03	\$ 314,492.57	\$ 90,963.81	40.7%
TAM Fund Interest	\$ 121,413.04	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	33.3%
Total TAM Fund Revenue	\$ 3,476,972.94	\$ 2,623,245.03	\$ 2,713,860.98	\$ 3,483,503.04	\$ 860,258.01	32.8%

EXPENDITURES						
TAM Program Administration Funding	\$ (138,636.18)	\$ (179,629.00)	\$ (161,093.20)	\$ (169,118.50)	\$ (10,510.50)	-5.9%
TRS (Minnesota Relay) Funding	\$ (352,270.17)	\$ (321,798.77)	\$ (324,011.40)	\$ (325,207.99)	\$ 3,409.22	1.1%
MN ACT Funding	\$ (1,116,771.43)	\$ (1,189,710.00)	\$ (1,142,363.73)	\$ (1,257,510.00)	\$ 67,800.00	5.7%
Rural Real-Time Captioning Funding	\$ (153,063.01)	\$ (180,892.00)	\$ (178,334.44)	\$ (182,185.00)	\$ 1,293.00	0.7%
Accessible News for the Blind Funding	\$ (84,142.00)	\$ (100,000.00)	\$ (100,000.00)	\$ (100,000.00)	\$ -	0.0%
MN Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing	\$ (1,620,000.00)	\$ (1,620,000.00)	\$ (1,620,000.00)	\$ (1,620,000.00)	\$ -	0.0%
Minnesota IT Services	\$ (340,000.00)	\$ (340,000.00)	\$ (340,000.00)	\$ (340,000.00)	\$ -	0.0%
Legislative Coordinating Commission	\$ (133,000.00)	\$ (133,000.00)	\$ (133,000.00)	\$ (133,000.00)	\$ -	0.0%
Governor's Office Transfer	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Total TAM Fund Expenditures	\$ (3,947,882.79)	\$ (4,065,029.77)	\$ (3,998,802.77)	\$ (4,127,021.49)	\$ 61,991.72	1.5%

TAM FUND REVENUE VS. EXPENDITURES	\$ (470,909.85)	\$ (1,441,784.74)	\$ (1,284,941.79)	\$ (643,518.45)
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STATEMENT OF TAM FUND BALANCE	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted
TAM Fund Balance at Beginning of Fiscal Year	\$ 3,946,100.83	\$ 3,412,602.77	\$ 3,475,190.98	\$ 2,190,249.19
TAM Fund Revenue & Interest	\$ 3,476,972.94	\$ 2,623,245.03	\$ 2,713,860.98	\$ 3,483,503.04
TAM Fund Expenditures	\$ (3,947,882.79)	\$ (4,065,029.77)	\$ (3,998,802.77)	\$ (4,127,021.49)
TAM Fund Balance at Close of Fiscal Year	\$ 3,475,190.98	\$ 1,970,818.03	\$ 2,190,249.19	\$ 1,546,730.75

Department of Commerce

Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) Fund

FY 2026 Budget Line Item Justifications

Revenue

Surcharge Recommendation

TAM recommends increasing the surcharge from \$0.03 to \$0.04, which would sufficiently support TAM funded programs in FY 2026 and should enable TAM to distribute the estimated required funding payments at the start of FY 2027.

As the charts below indicate, with a surcharge of \$0.04 and the budgets proposed for the various programs the TAM fund supports, the projected fund balance is estimated to be \$1.55 million at the close of FY 2026. The TAM fund is estimated to need approximately \$1.29 million at the start of FY 2027 for operating expenses and to provide initial payments to TAM funded programs. FY 2027 budgets may be higher, which would necessitate a larger fund balance at the start of the fiscal year.

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The below chart indicates the estimated funding needed at the start of FY 2027 (July 1, 2026), based on FY 2026 proposed budgeted amounts.

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1st Quarter Payment for Minnesota IT Services	(\$85,000)
1st Quarter Payment for Legislative Coordinating Commission	(\$33,250)
	(\$1,290,769)

*Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) requests payment of 50% of their annual appropriation in the first quarter, 25% in the second quarter, and 25% in the third quarter.

Surcharge Revenue on Post-Paid Wireless and Wired and Customer Access Lines

This line item shows surcharge revenue collected from post-paid wireless and wired customer access lines in Minnesota. Telecommunications service providers remit 911, 988, TAM, and TAP surcharge revenue to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). DPS processes the remittances and transfers the TAM surcharge collected to the TAM fund.

The budgeted surcharge revenue for FY 2025 was \$2,324,716, based on a surcharge amount of \$0.03 per customer access line each month of the fiscal year. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$2,307,206.

TAM estimates approximately 5,415,707 post-paid wireless and 978,064 wired telephone access lines will remit TAM surcharge revenue each month in FY 2026. This estimate is based on post-paid wireless lines increasing 3.3% overall for the year and wired lines decreasing 7.9% overall.

FY 2026 surcharge revenue for post-paid wireless and wired access lines, based on a \$0.04 surcharge, is anticipated to be approximately \$3,069,010.

Fee Revenue on Prepaid Wireless Retail Transactions

This line item shows the TAM fee revenue remitted on each retail transaction for prepaid wireless telecommunications service. Retailers remit the collected fees to the Department of Revenue (Revenue), and Revenue deposits the fees into the TAM fund. Retailers may deduct and retain 3% of fees collected, and Revenue may deduct and retain 2%.

The FY 2025 budgeted amount of \$223,529 was based on a fee amount of \$0.03 per prepaid wireless transaction each month of the fiscal year. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$296,655.

TAM does not receive reports from Revenue on remittances from retailers. Therefore, TAM has no trend information detailing which retailers are remitting, the fee amount remitted by each retailer, the number of retail transactions, and so forth. As such, it is difficult to predict future fee revenue collected on prepaid wireless retail transactions.

TAM estimates approximately 689,241 prepaid wireless retail transactions each month in FY 2026. FY 2026 prepaid wireless fee revenue, based on a \$0.04 surcharge, is anticipated to be approximately \$314,493, and is based on an overall annual decrease of 0.5% in pre-paid wireless retail transactions.

TAM Fund Interest

This line item is the interest earned on funds in the TAM, MN ACT, Rural Real-Time Captioning, and Accessible News for the Blind dedicated accounts.

The FY 2025 budget was \$75,000. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$110,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$100,000.

Expenditures

TAM Program Administration Funding

The FY 2025 budget was \$179,629. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$169,119. The TAM Administration budget and line item justifications are included as **Attachment B**.

Telecommunications Relay Services (Minnesota Relay) Funding

Minnesota Relay is a federally mandated Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) program that allows an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or speech disabled to communicate over the telephone in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of an individual who does not have hearing loss or a speech disability. TAM contracts with T-Mobile USA, Inc. and Hamilton Relay, Inc. for the provision of Minnesota Relay services.

Overall use of Captioned Telephone Service, TTY-based relay service, and Speech-to-Speech relay service are declining. Consumers are presumed to be migrating from older analog-based relay services under the state's jurisdiction to internet-based relay services under the Federal Communications Commission's jurisdiction, and to newer technology such as text-to-speech apps, built in captioning on Smartphones, over-the-counter hearing aids, and other technology that provides communication accessibility.

Minnesota's TRS contract with T-Mobile for the provision of TTY-based and Speech-to-Speech relay services is effective April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026. The contracted rate is \$2.60 per conversation minute, plus a monthly recurring charge of \$3,600.

Minnesota's TRS contract with Hamilton Relay for the provision of Captioned Telephone Service is effective July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025. The contracted per conversation minute rate is \$2.20 for FY 2025. Hamilton is the only analog-based Captioned Telephone Service provider available. As such, Commerce and the Department of Administration are currently communicating with Hamilton on a possible single-source contract beginning July 1, 2025.

The FY 2025 budget for this line item was \$321,799. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$324,011. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$325,208.

Minnesota Access to Communication Technology Funding

The Department of Human Services administers Minnesota Access to Communication Technology (MN ACT), which is responsible for distributing specialized telecommunications devices to income eligible Minnesotans, informing the public of services available through the program, and providing training for the use of distributed equipment. MN ACT also provides outreach services for Minnesota Relay.

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,189,710. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$1,142,364. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,257,510.

The MN ACT budget and line item justifications are included as [Attachment C](#).

Rural Real-Time Captioning Funding

The Department of Human Services administers the Rural Real-Time Captioning program, which provides real-time, closed captioning of certain local television news programs for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. The program has a maximum annual budget of \$300,000.

The FY 2025 budget was \$180,892. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$182,185.

The Rural Real-Time Captioning budget and line item justifications are included as [Attachment D](#).

Accessible News for the Blind Funding

The Department of Employment and Economic Development administers the Accessible News for the Blind program, which provides accessible electronic information (news and other timely information) for people who are blind or have a visual disability. The program has a maximum annual budget of \$100,000.

The FY 2025 budget was \$100,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$100,000.

The Accessible News for the Blind budget and line item justifications are included as [Attachment E](#).

Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing

The Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) receives an annual direct appropriation of \$1,620,000 from the TAM fund to supplement their ongoing operational expenses.

MNCDHH's appropriation is subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.281, which requires that “[a]n unexpended balance not carried forward and remaining unexpended and unencumbered at the end of a biennium lapses and shall be returned to the fund from which appropriated.”

Minnesota IT Services

Minnesota IT Services receives an annual direct appropriation of \$290,000 from the TAM fund to coordinate technology accessibility and usability.

Minnesota IT Services also receives an annual direct appropriation of \$50,000 for a consolidated access fund to provide grants to other state agencies related to accessibility of their web-based services.

Legislative Coordinating Commission

The Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) receives an annual direct appropriation of \$133,000 from the TAM fund to caption live streaming of legislative activity on their website.

LCC's appropriation is subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.281, which requires that “[a]n unexpended balance not carried forward and remaining unexpended and unencumbered at the end of a biennium lapses and shall be returned to the fund from which appropriated.”

TAM Fund Revenue vs. Expenditures

This line item compares TAM fund revenue to TAM fund expenditures.

Statement of TAM Fund Balance

This section represents the total TAM fund balance for each fiscal year, and is calculated based on the fund balance at the beginning of the fiscal year, TAM fund revenue and interest, and TAM fund expenditures.

Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) Program Administration

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted	2026 Budgeted Versus 2025 Budgeted	% Change
TOTAL COMPENSATION						
Full Time Salary & Fringe - 1.10 FTE (41000)	\$ 123,960.07	\$ 138,750	\$ 137,500	\$ 144,250	\$ 5,500	4.0%

STATE OPERATIONS						
Space Rental and Utilities (41100)	\$ 5.00	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ -	0.0%
Printing and Advertising (41110)	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -	0.0%
Prof-Tech Services - Outside Vendor (41130)	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -	0.0%
Communications (41155)	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ -	0.0%
Travel: In-State (41160)	\$ 334.38	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	\$ -	0.0%
Travel: Out-of-State (41170)	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ 1,937	\$ 3,500	\$ -	0.0%
Employee Development (41180)	\$ 399.00	\$ 1,200	\$ 875	\$ 1,200	\$ -	0.0%
Agency Specific MNIT Services (41197)	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ -	0.0%
Supplies (41300)	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 100	\$ 500	\$ -	0.0%
Agency Indirect Costs (42000)	\$ 12,739.64	\$ 26,829	\$ 18,781	\$ 10,819	\$ (16,011)	-59.7%
Statewide Indirect Costs (42010)	\$ 998.09	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,250	\$ -	0.0%
Attorney General Costs (42020)	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ -	\$ 250	\$ -	0.0%
Other Operating Costs (43000)	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,000	\$ 300	\$ 1,000	\$ -	0.0%
Total State Operations	\$ 14,676.11	\$ 40,879	\$ 23,593	\$ 24,869	\$ (16,011)	-39.2%

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 138,636.18	\$ 179,629	\$ 161,093.20	\$ 169,118.50	\$ (10,511)	-5.9%
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Department of Commerce

Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) Program

Administration

FY 2026 Budget Line Item Justifications

Total Compensation

The salary line item request adheres to collectively bargained guidelines.

Full-Time Salaries and Fringe

The TAM administrative staff consists of a 1.0 FTE program administrator. The TAM program is part of the Programs for Innovation and Equity unit and approximately 10% of the unit manager's salary and fringe are allocated to TAM.

The FY 2025 budget was \$138,750. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$144,250.

State Operations

Space Rental and Utilities

This line item includes, as applicable, rent, utilities, building maintenance, and fees for program booths at fairs, conferences, and conventions.

The FY 2025 budget was \$500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$500.

Printing and Advertising

This line item includes photocopy and printing charges for program brochures, public relations materials, reports, and so forth. It also includes program advertising. Consumers are able to review detailed Minnesota Relay information online and, as such, are not often requesting printed materials.

The FY 2025 budget was \$2,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$2,000.

Professional and Technical Services – Outside Vendor

This line item includes funding for captioning, transcript services, and American Sign Language interpreters, as well as for department-wide professional and technical services contracts. It also includes design for brochures, videos, advertising, and other outreach mediums.

TAM develops and designs program materials in-house whenever feasible, which allows for considerable savings over contracting for these services.

The FY 2025 budget was \$2,500. FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$2,500.

Communications

This line item includes postage, shipping, telecommunications services, and computer services.

The FY 2025 budget was \$250. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$250.

Travel: In-State

This line item includes travel costs incurred by the TAM administration to attend meetings, trainings, seminars, and conferences.

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,000.

Travel: Out-of-State

This line item enables the TAM administration to attend the National Association for State Relay Administration (NASRA) and State Telecommunications Administrators for Relay by T-Mobile (START) conferences, or other disability access related meetings or conferences.

The FY 2025 budget was \$3,500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$3,500.

Employee Development

This line item is used to pay conference fees and tuition for TAM related seminars and training.

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,200. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,200.

Agency Specific MNIT Services

This line item is for information technology, including cloud hosting services and costs associated with the Minnesota Relay domain name.

The FY 2025 budget was \$100. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$100.

Supplies

This line item includes miscellaneous office equipment, furnishings, and supplies. The line item also includes certain outreach and public relations materials.

The FY 2025 budget was \$500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$500.

Agency Indirect Costs

Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 allows agencies to allocate all general support costs within the agency that cannot be directly charged to any agency program. The Department of Commerce's methodology for allocating agency indirect costs is based on a percentage of certain program line item expenses. The exact percentage is not known when the TAM proposed budget is prepared.

The FY 2025 budget was \$26,829 and was based on 18% of included line item expenses. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount of \$10,819 is based on an anticipated 7% of included proposed line item expenses.

Statewide Indirect Costs

Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 requires the Department of Finance to allocate all statewide general support costs to the agencies that consume them. The intent is to recover a proportional share of the general fund appropriations used to provide administrative support to funds whose costs are wholly or partially paid from non-general funding sources (federal or fee-based programs).

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,250. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,250.

Attorney General Costs

This line item is for services provided by the Office of the Attorney General.

The FY 2025 budget was \$250. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$250.

Other Operating Costs

This line item is for miscellaneous services and charges.

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,000.

Minnesota Access to Communication Technology

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted	2026 Budgeted Versus 2025 Budgeted	% Change
TOTAL COMPENSATION						
Division Director (.25 FTE)	\$ 44,428.78	\$ 49,500.00	\$ 46,650.00	\$ 48,750.00	\$ (750.00)	-1.5%
Program Coordinator (1.0 FTE)	\$ 135,244.92	\$ 150,500.00	\$ 142,230.00	\$ 148,750.00	\$ (1,750.00)	-1.2%
Assistant Coordinator (1.0 FTE)	\$ 112,964.70	\$ 124,000.00	\$ 117,820.00	\$ 123,750.00	\$ (250.00)	-0.2%
Program Specialists (5.0 FTE)	\$ 452,955.07	\$ 464,000.00	\$ 439,549.00	\$ 462,000.00	\$ (2,000.00)	-0.4%
Clerical Support Central Office (.80 FTE)	\$ 31,168.59	\$ 44,750.00	\$ 52,430.00	\$ 59,500.00	\$ 14,750.00	33.0%
Metro Program Support (.10 FTE)	\$ 5,564.58	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 5,524.00	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	11.8%
Management Analyst Central Office (.20 FTE)	\$ 12,531.90	\$ 18,500.00	\$ 17,415.00	\$ 17,250.00	\$ (1,250.00)	-6.8%
Communication Coordinator Central Office (.34 FTE)	\$ 31,460.94	\$ 35,750.00	\$ 33,780.00	\$ 36,500.00	\$ 750.00	2.1%
Interpreters (.20 FTE)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	
Total Salaries and Fringe	\$ 826,319.48	\$ 895,500.00	\$ 855,398.00	\$ 923,000.00	\$ 27,500.00	3.1%

STATE OPERATIONS						
Space Rental and Utilities (41100)	\$ 24,412.80	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 30,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	27.1%
Outreach Booths (411006)	\$ 1,269.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ -	0.0%
Printing & Advertising (41110)	\$ 18,294.16	\$ 33,500.00	\$ 30,550.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ (15,500.00)	-46.3%
Outside Vendor (411325)	\$ 10,368.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Postal Mailing-Shipping Service (411551)	\$ 6,733.29	\$ 6,210.00	\$ 5,850.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ (210.00)	-3.4%
Wireless Communications (411554)	\$ 4,446.62	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 3,200.00	\$ (1,300.00)	-28.9%
Travel: In State (41160)	\$ 19,063.33	\$ 19,400.00	\$ 18,694.00	\$ 24,500.00	\$ 5,100.00	26.3%
Travel: Out-of-State (41170)	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,037.23	\$ -	\$ (2,000.00)	-100.0%
Employee Development (41180)	\$ 1,649.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 4,000.50	\$ 5,700.00	\$ 550.00	10.7%
Supplies for Staff (41300)	\$ 658.62	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 4,700.00	361.5%
Supplies - Equipment Distributed (41300)	\$ 96,562.09	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 75,260.00	\$ 87,250.00	\$ 15,250.00	21.2%
Computer Related Parts and Supplies (413002)	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -	0.0%
Equipment Rental (414004)	\$ 20.21	\$ 150.00	\$ 57.00	\$ 360.00	\$ 210.00	140.0%
Repair to Equipment & Furniture (41500)	\$ 544.49	\$ 800.00	\$ 520.00	\$ 800.00	\$ -	0.0%
Agency & Statewide Indirect Costs (42000 & 42010)	\$ 101,823.00	\$ 108,500.00	\$ 107,930.00	\$ 114,350.00	\$ 5,850.00	5.4%
Other Operating Costs (43000)	\$ 4,516.31	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 14,067.00	\$ 33,650.00	\$ 21,150.00	169.2%
Equipment Non-Capital (471606)	\$ 91.03	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ -	0.0%
Total State Operations	\$ 290,451.95	\$ 294,210.00	\$ 286,965.73	\$ 334,510.00	\$ 40,300.00	13.7%

TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 1,116,771.43	\$ 1,189,710.00	\$ 1,142,363.73	\$ 1,257,510.00	\$ 67,800.00	5.7%
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Department of Human Services

Minnesota Access to Communication Technology

FY 2026 Budget Line-Item Justifications

Minnesota Access to Communication Technology (MN ACT), formerly the Telephone Equipment Distribution Program, is responsible for distributing specialized telecommunications devices to eligible Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, speech disabled, and physically disabled. MN ACT is also responsible for providing training in the use of the telecommunications devices available through the program.

In addition, MN ACT provides information on other assistive technologies and services, including accessibility apps, to individuals with communication disabilities that may assist them in leading more independent and productive lives. Staff may also assist MN ACT clients with completing telephone and internet service discount applications (such as Lifeline and the Telephone Assistance Plan).

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) contracts with the Department of Human Services (DHS) MN ACT to provide outreach services for Minnesota Relay. Staff are responsible for providing a comprehensive statewide outreach program to educate people about, and promote, Minnesota Relay services. Staff combine information on both MN ACT and Minnesota Relay when conducting outreach, which provides significant cost savings versus having two independent outreach programs.

MN ACT staff is housed at four DHS, Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing State Services Division (State Services) regional offices: Duluth, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and St. Paul.

Based on current trends, MN ACT anticipates serving over 450 individuals in FY 2026, including individuals receiving equipment for the first time and individuals who have received equipment in the past, but require additional services.

MN ACT's FY 2025 budget was \$1,189,710. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$1,142,364. The FY 2026 proposed budget amount is \$1,257,510 which is a 5.7% increase from FY 2025.

Total Compensation (8.89 FTE)

Base salary and fringe benefit expenses are combined into one line item representing total compensation. Salary line-item requests adhere to collectively bargained guidelines. In FY 2025 staff received a 4.5% wage adjustment. In FY 2026 it is expected that staff will receive a 3% wage adjustment.

The Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employee (AFSCME) labor agreements for FYs 2024-2026 include a provision for a Bilingual Language Differential. At the appointing authority's discretion, positions that communicate with the public in a recognized and approved language other than English (including Braille or

American Sign Language) on a recurring basis may be eligible to receive an additional \$50.00 per bi-weekly pay period. The FY 2026 proposed salaries include the differential for 7.64 staff positions.

The FY 2025 Total Compensation budget was \$895,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$855,398. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$923,000.

Division Director (.25 FTE)

The division director supervises the MN ACT coordinator.

The FY 2025 budget was \$49,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$46,650. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$48,750.

Program Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

The program coordinator supervises the assistant coordinator, five program specialists, and the central office clerical support.

The FY 2025 budget was \$150,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$142,230. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$148,750.

Assistant Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

The assistant coordinator is responsible for statewide promotion of MN ACT, assisting the program coordinator with the creation of policies and procedures, conducting client file reviews, serving as the database coordinator, and researching new telecommunications equipment.

The FY 2025 budget was \$124,000. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$117,820. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$123,750.

Program Specialists (5.0 FTE)

Program specialists are responsible for determining eligibility on new applicants, assessing appropriate equipment, troubleshooting equipment issues, exchanging equipment, training and installation of equipment, and conducting MN ACT and Minnesota Relay outreach.

This line-item includes two Metro and three Greater Minnesota program specialists. In FY 2025, two Metro specialists retired, and it was decided to back fill only one position.

The FY 2025 budget was \$464,000. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$439,549.

The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$462,000.

Clerical Support - Central Office (.80 FTE)

This position is responsible for mailing MN ACT applications and other resources, processing the receipt of applications, processing invoice payments, producing reports, and providing other statewide clerical support for the State Services.

The FY 2025 budget was \$44,750. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$52,430. The increased projected amount is due to under budgeting fringe benefits and an unexpected addition of the Bilingual Language Differential payment to the AFSCME contract. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$59,500.

Metro Program Support (.10 FTE)

This position responds to statewide telephone, email, and website inquiries, provides referrals to MN ACT staff, scans MN ACT documents and sends them to the MN ACT clerical support.

The FY 2025 budget was \$8,500. During FY 2025, the incumbent worked out of class in the Management Analyst position. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$5,524. In FY 2026, the position will be permanently filled. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$9,500.

Management Analyst (.20 FTE)

The management analyst performs fiscal analysis as a central function for State Services. Other responsibilities that support MN ACT include tracking program expenditures, assessing expenditures against projections, developing annual and quarterly program budget forecasts, and providing financial recommendations and support to MN ACT.

During FY 2025, the incumbent resigned, and work was completed through a work-out-of-class assignment. The position is intended to be permanently filled in FY 2025.

The FY 2025 budget was \$18,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$17,415. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$17,250.

Communication Coordinator (.34 FTE)

The communication coordinator is responsible for management of MN ACT's website, developing social media content, advertisements and creating accessible brochures and documents. The position works closely with MN ACT's assistant coordinator in expanding promotional efforts.

The FY 2025 budget was \$35,750. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$33,780. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$36,500.

Interpreters (.20 FTE)

This is a new line-item that includes 10% of a Metro, and 10% of a Greater Minnesota, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter position. This position is responsible for providing ASL interpreting services to support MN ACT staff during home visits, meetings and outreach activities.

In FY 2024, MN ACT hired two additional employees who require ASL interpreting services. Industry trends show a trajectory of a shortage of ASL interpreters. Adding interpreter support will assist in providing communication access needed for staff.

The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$17,000.

State Operations

Space Rental and Utilities

This line item includes a partial cost of State Services office space rental for MN ACT staff located in Duluth, Moorhead, and St. Cloud. It also includes St. Paul and Duluth state vehicle parking costs.

The Moorhead office lease is expiring June 30, 2025, and staff will be moving to a new location. It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the cost for the new leased space. The FY 2025 budget was \$24,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$30,500.

Outreach Booths

This line item includes booth registration fees.

The FY 2025 budget was \$3,500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted remains at \$3,500.

Printing and Advertising

This line item includes professional printing charges for public relations materials such as applications, outreach materials, business cards, and so forth. It includes print and electronic advertising of MN ACT services.

The FY 2025 budget was \$33,500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$18,000.

Postal Mailing - Shipping Service

This line item includes postage for mailings. It also includes costs associated with shipping equipment to and from clients, consumers, State Services regional offices, and equipment vendors.

The FY 2025 budget was \$6,210. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$6,000.

Wireless Communications

This line item includes wireless telephone service for five staff.

The FY 2025 budget was \$4,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$3,150. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$3,200.

Travel: In State

This line item includes:

- State car fleet services and rental cars (\$12,510)
- State car fuel (\$3,000)
- Reimbursed travel expenses for MN ACT staff (\$9,000)

The St. Cloud fleet car will be replaced in FY 2026, which will result in an increase in fleet services costs. In addition, increased regional boundaries requires longer distance travel for program specialists, increasing travel reimbursement expenses.

The FY 2025 budget was \$19,400. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is 24,500.

Travel: Out-of-State

This line item tends to include travel for staff to attend the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) national conference (airfare, meals, ground transportation, and lodging). However, there is no TEDPA conference scheduled in FY 2026.

The FY 2025 budget was \$2,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$0.

Employee Development

This line item includes funding for the TEDPA membership, registration fees to attend the annual TEDPA conference, organizational memberships, and attendance of networking groups. In addition, eight MN ACT staff are allowed \$500 per year for professional development.

Since the TEDPA conference will not be held in FY 2026, two staff will attend the Assistive Technology Industry Association conference virtually in FY 2026.

The FY 2025 budget was \$5,150. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$5,700.

Supplies for Staff

This line item includes general office supplies, shipping materials/boxes, and office equipment for staff.

In FY 2026, MN ACT will purchase accommodation kits (consisting of assistive listening devices) for each program specialist to have available for use by outreach attendees. The assistive listening devices provide accessibility communication for people with hearing loss.

The FY 2025 budget was \$1,300. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$6,000.

Supplies-Equipment Distributed

MN ACT expects to distribute approximately 300 pieces of equipment and accessories to new and existing clients in FY 2026. This includes amplified telephones, captioned telephones, hands-free speakerphones, wireless phones, devices for clients with speech and physical disabilities, interconnectivity devices, smartphone and tablets, paid applications, and accessories.

MN ACT strives to keep pace with telecommunications advancements. Current industry trends show that landline phones continue to be disconnected and replaced with advanced wireless devices and wireless accessories. In addition, within the last three years several telecommunications devices have been discontinued by the manufacturer due to low sales. Many discontinued products are used by

vulnerable populations, and it is a challenge to find replacement equipment for these individuals. The price of equipment increased in FY 2025, which could be an ongoing trend in the future.

The FY 2025 budget for equipment purchases was \$72,000. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$75,260. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$87,250. The subtotals of each type of equipment listed below does not include taxes.

MN ACT uses various methods to distribute equipment to new and existing clients. Refurbished (on the shelf) equipment is available to use for returning clients. The remaining equipment distributed is purchased new.

The proposed budgeted amount for new equipment includes:

- 3 TTYs at a total cost of \$1,390. The cost of each TTY is \$463.00. The demand for TTYs has decreased significantly due to newer technology such as Video Relay Service, Internet Protocol Relay, email, texting, and video calling services; all of which have expanded the communication options available for persons who are deaf or speech disabled.
- 10 captioned telephones at a total cost of \$900. There are several models available for distribution. The estimated budgeted amount is based on an average cost of \$90.00 per device.
- 30 phones with Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) captioning tablets at a total cost of \$13,125. This newer technology utilizes ASR without using Telecommunications Relay Services. The devices average \$525 per unit.
- 50 corded amplified telephones with amplified ringers, at a total cost of \$5,350. This estimate is based the most common amplified telephone commonly distributed, priced at \$107 per unit.
- 75 cordless amplified telephones with amplified ringers at a total cost of \$13,275. This estimate is based on the most common distributed cordless phone, priced at \$177 per unit.
- 10 amplified ring signalers, visual flashers, or vibration notification devices at a total cost of \$2,050. This estimate is based on the average cost of \$205 per unit.
- 5 hands-free speakerphones at a total cost of \$800. This estimate is based on a cost of \$160 per unit.
- 10 unlocked, simple cell phones that are hearing aid compatible at a total cost of \$3,500. The average cost of each device is \$350.
- 20 iOS and Android smartphones at a total cost of \$31,600. The average cost for a middle range smartphone in the current contract is \$1,580.
- 7 iOS and Android tablets at a total cost of \$9,100. The average cost for a middle range tablet in the current contract is \$1,300.
- 2 paid accessibility applications for iOS and Android smartphones and tablets at a total cost of \$200. The average cost of each app is \$100.
- 10 auxiliary devices at a total cost of \$2,000. This includes cell phone amplifiers, Bluetooth neckloops, streamers, answering machines, smart speakers, and smart displays. The estimate is based on an average cost of \$200 per device.

- 5 smartphone and tablet accessories at a total cost of \$500. Returned smartphones and tablets may not include all accessories so MN ACT must replace them for the next distribution. This could include wall chargers, car chargers, and/or OtterBox cases. Other accessories may include heavy duty stands and special styluses.
- Specialized equipment for consumers who are deafblind, speech disabled, or physical disabled are selected and distributed on a case-by-case basis. This category includes special switches, wireless and wired headsets, electrolarynx connected to a telephone, wireless voice amplifiers, and gooseneck mounts. These types of devices are the highest cost equipment MN ACT purchases. Given current trends and inventories, the total expense for specialized equipment is estimated to be \$4,025.

Computer Related Parts and Supplies

The FY 2025 budget was \$500. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$500.

Equipment Rental

This line item includes water service at the Moorhead and St. Cloud office.

The FY 2025 budget was \$150. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$57.00. In FY 2025 water service was only provided in the Moorhead office. In FY 2026, water service will be added to the St. Cloud office. The FY 2026 proposed budget amount is \$360.

Repair to Equipment and Furniture

This line item includes refurbishing services from equipment vendors.

The FY 2025 budget was \$800. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$800.

Agency and Statewide Indirect Costs

Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 requires the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) to allocate all statewide general support costs to the agencies that consume them. Agencies pass these costs on to all non-state funding sources in proportion to their consumption and reimburse the general fund with the recoveries. Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 also allows agencies to allocate all general support costs within the agency that cannot be directly charged to any agency program.

DHS may annually file for a waiver from MMB that would cap the agency and statewide indirect costs allocated to MN ACT. The DHS financial office has indicated that they expect the waiver to be granted for agency indirect costs in FY 2026. However, the statewide indirect cost cap has not been determined yet.

The FY 2025 budget was \$108,500. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$107,930. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount of \$114,350 represents 10% of the total MN ACT proposed budgeted amount.

Other Operating Costs

This line item includes ASL interpreter costs, ASL actors for accessible video projects, spoken and written translation services, employee length of service awards, staff software and other minor, unexpected costs.

The FY 2025 budget was \$12,500. In FY 2025, there was an increase in ASL interpreter costs due to additional MN ACT staff who are deaf. The FY 2025 projected amount is \$14,067.

Additional costs included in this line item for FY 2026 are:

- Repairs at the St. Cloud office (\$2,000).
- Moving and reconfiguration costs for the Moorhead office (\$20,400).

The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$33,650.

Equipment Non-Capital

This line item includes upgraded employee work smartphones and accessories. The FY 2025 budget was \$200. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$200.

Department of Human Services — Rural Real-Time Captioning

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted	2026 Budgeted Versus 2025 Budgeted	% Change
COMPENSATION AND STATE OPERATIONS						
Return of Unused Funds From Past Fiscal Year			\$ (2,557.56)			
Contract Management (.20 FTE)	\$ 26,899.56	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000	\$ 31,423	\$ 2,423	8.4%
Statewide and Agency Indirect Costs	\$ 3,265.00	\$ 3,265	\$ 3,265	\$ 3,538	\$ 273	8.4%
Total State Operations	\$ 30,164.56	\$ 32,265	\$ 29,707.44	\$ 34,961	\$ 2,696	8.4%
GRANT CONTRACTS						
Commercial Stations	\$ 80,073.45	\$ 99,000	\$ 99,000	\$ 99,000	\$ -	0.0%
Non-Commercial Stations	\$ 42,825.00	\$ 49,627	\$ 49,627	\$ 48,224	\$ (1,403)	-2.8%
Total Grant Contracts	\$ 122,898.45	\$ 148,627	\$ 148,627	\$ 147,224	\$ (1,403)	-0.9%
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 153,063.01	\$ 180,892	\$ 178,334	\$ 182,185	\$ 1,293	0.7%

Department of Human Services

Rural Real-Time Captioning

FY 2026 Budget Line Item Justifications

The Rural Real-Time Captioning program is responsible for entering into grant agreements with television stations to make live local news programming accessible to persons who are deaf, persons who are hard of hearing, and persons who are deafblind as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 256C.23.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 256C.30, subdivision (b), the grant agreements are limited to the following:

1. real-time captioning services for broadcasting that is not emergency broadcasting subject to Code of Federal Regulations, title 47, section 79.2;
2. real-time captioning services for commercial broadcasters in areas of Minnesota where commercial broadcasters are not subject to the live programming closed-captioning requirements of Code of Federal Regulations, title 47, section 79.1(d); and
3. real-time captioning for large-market noncommercial broadcasters who produce live news programming.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) administers this program, which has a maximum annual budget of \$300,000.

The FY 2025 budget for the Rural Real-Time Captioning program was \$180,892. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$182,185.

Compensation and State Operations

Contract Management (.20 FTE)

This line item reimburses DHS for staff salary and fringe to administer contracts for this program.

The FY 2025 budget was \$29,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$31,423.

Statewide and Agency Indirect Costs

Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 requires the Department of Finance to allocate all statewide general support costs to the agencies that consume them. Agencies pass these costs on to all non-state funding sources in proportion to their consumption and reimburse the general fund with the recoveries.

Minnesota Statutes section 16A.127 also allows agencies to allocate all general support costs within the agency that cannot be directly charged to any agency program. Indirect costs are based on total salary compensation; 10% is for agency indirect costs and 1.26% is for statewide indirect costs.

The FY 2025 budget was \$3,265. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$3,538.

Grant Contracts

Based on the most recent Request for Proposal (RFP) responses received, DHS anticipates entering into contracts with the three news stations that responded (KAAL-TV, LLC, Twin Cities Public Television, Inc., and Lakeland Public Television).

Contracts with Commercial Stations

DHS contracts with KAAL-TV, LLC in Rochester to provide real-time captioning of live local news in the southeast and southwestern region of the state. The FY 2025 grant amount for this contract is \$84,000. KAAL proposes to add an 11:00 a.m. newscast, which will be an additional five hours of live captioning per week for the fiscal year. The FY 2026 estimated grant amount for this contract is \$99,000.

The FY 2025 budget was \$99,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$99,000.

Grant Contracts with Noncommercial Stations

DHS contracts with Twin Cities Public Television, Inc. (TPT) to provide real-time captioning for weekly news programming. The FY 2025 grant amount for this contract was \$21,588. The FY 2026 estimated grant amount for this contract is \$21,769.

DHS contracts with Lakeland Public Television in Bemidji to provide real-time captioning of live local news in the northwest region of the state. The FY 2025 grant amount for this contract was \$26,455. The FY 2026 estimated grant amount for this contract is \$26,455.

The FY 2025 budget was \$49,627. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$48,224.

Department of Employment and Economic Development — Accessible News for the Blind

	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2025 Projected	FY 2026 Budgeted	2026 Budgeted Versus 2025 Budgeted	% Change
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND (NFB) NEWSLINE SERVICE						
Contract	\$ 61,500.00	\$ 71,000	\$ 71,000	\$ 69,500	\$ (1,500)	-2.1%
Total NFB Newsline Service	\$ 61,500.00	\$ 71,000	\$ 71,000	\$ 69,500	\$ (1,500)	-2.1%
RADIO TALKING BOOK STREAMING SERVICE						
Digital Streaming	\$ 19,142.00	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -	0.0%
Newspaper and Magazine Subscriptions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Smart Speaker Device Program	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -	0.0%
Total Radio Talking Book Streaming Service	\$ 22,642.00	\$ 29,000.00	\$ 29,000.00	\$ 30,500.00	\$ 1,500	5.2%
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 84,142.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	0.0%

Department of Employment and Economic Development - Accessible News for the Blind

FY 2026 Budget Line-Item Justifications

The Accessible News for the Blind program is responsible for providing, or entering into agreements with qualified entities to provide, an accessible electronic information service (news and other timely information) for eligible individuals pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 248.061 to 248.062. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) administers this program, which has a maximum annual budget of \$100,000.

The FY2025 total budget for the Accessible News for the Blind program was \$100,000. The FY2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$100,000.

National Federation of the Blind (NFB) – Newsline®

NFB – Newsline® Contract

DEED contracts with NFB to provide on-demand access, 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to over 500 newspapers and magazines from all over the nation and the world. The NFB – Newsline® provides access to daily newspapers and magazines for anyone who cannot read print material due to vision loss, dyslexia, or a physical disability.

The FY2025 budget was \$71,000. The FY2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$69,500. This amount includes the NFB Newsline® usage fees, which are telephone access charges the NFB incurs.

Radio Talking Book Streaming Service

Digital Streaming

The Communication Center of Minnesota State Services for the Blind's mission is providing Minnesotans who are blind, deafblind, losing vision, or who have another disability that makes it difficult to read print, access to current information. This information is primarily newspapers, books, and magazines. This service covers many local papers throughout Greater Minnesota. Trained staff and volunteers do the reading, as many people prefer to listen to the human voice instead of synthesized speech, which NFB Newsline® uses.

Customers (over 2,000 users) can access the Radio Talking Book Streaming Service using a computer, mobile device, or a smart speaker via an Alexa skill, which allows for more on-the-go access.

The FY2025 budget was \$25,000. The FY2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$25,000.

Newspaper and Magazines Subscriptions

This new line item includes some newspaper and magazine subscriptions that are read by Radio Talking Book staff for customers.

The FY2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$1,500.

Smart Speaker Device Program

DEED has a device program where individuals who have access to the internet, but do not have a computer, tablet, or smartphone, are provided with a smart speaker to access the Radio Talking Book Streaming Service.

The FY2025 budget was \$4,000. The FY 2026 proposed budgeted amount is \$4,000.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Hannah Olson, hereby certify that I have this day, served a true and correct copy of the following document to all persons at the addresses indicated below or on the attached list by electronic filing, electronic mail, courier, interoffice mail or by depositing the same enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at St. Paul, Minnesota.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ORDER

Docket Number P-999/M-25-13

Dated this 15th day of April, 2025

/s/ Hannah Olson

This list is subject to change until submission completion.

Company contacts - Paper Service

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1	Thomas	Campbell	tcampbell@otcpas.com	Olsen Thielen		2675 Long Lake Road St. Paul MN, 55309 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
2	Brent	Christensen	brentc@mnta.org	Minnesota Telecom Alliance		1000 Westgate Drive, Ste 252 St. Paul MN, 55114 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
3	Generic	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.state.mn.us		Office of the Attorney General - Department of Commerce	445 Minnesota Street Suite 1400 St. Paul MN, 55101 United States	Electronic Service		Yes	PR-25-13
4	Rochelle	Garrow	rochelle.garrow@state.mn.us		Department of Commerce	85 7th Place East, Suite 280 Saint Paul MN, 55101 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
5	Sarah	Maheswaran	sarah.maheswaran@state.mn.us			Dept. of Human Services 444 Lafayette Road North St. Paul MN, 55155-3814 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
6	Amy	McQuaid Swanson	amy.mcquaid-swanson@state.mn.us		Department of Human Services	PO Box 64969 St. Paul MN, 55164-0969 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
7	Daniel	Millikin	daniel.millikin@state.mn.us		Department of Human Services	540 Cedar Street St. Paul MN, 55155 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13
8	Generic Notice	Residential Utilities Division	residential.utilities@ag.state.mn.us		Office of the Attorney General - Residential Utilities Division	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul MN, 55101-2131 United States	Electronic Service		Yes	PR-25-13
9	Will	Seuffert	will.seuffert@state.mn.us		Public Utilities Commission	121 7th Pl E Ste 350 Saint Paul MN, 55101 United States	Electronic Service		Yes	PR-25-13
10	Nicole	Westling	nicole.westling@state.mn.us		Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Suite 280 St Paul MN, 55001 United States	Electronic Service		No	PR-25-13

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