

State of Minnesota
Legislative Audit Commission

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CORRECTIONS, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND JUDICIARY

1. Department of Public Safety's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) <i>Requested by Representatives Robbins and Johnson and legislative staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does OJP have a reasonable process for awarding grants?• What has been the impact of the office's programs?
2. Juvenile Sentencing Laws <i>Requested by Representative Feist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent have Minnesota's juvenile sentencing laws changed in response to new understanding about youth cognitive development?• How do Minnesota's juvenile sentencing laws compare with those in other states?
3. Division of Vehicle Services (DVS) Oversight of Vehicle Dealers <i>Requested by a citizen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent has DVS provided required oversight of vehicle dealers across the state?• How well has DVS managed its workload and inspections with respect to overseeing vehicle dealers?
4. Recidivism Rates of Adult Felons <i>Requested by a citizen; related OLA evaluation released in 1997</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent are convicted Minnesota felons subsequently arrested, convicted, and imprisoned?• How do these recidivism rates compare with those in other states?
5. Guardian ad Litem Board's Data-Practice Requests <i>Requested by a citizen; related OLA evaluation released in 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does this board respond appropriately to requests from the public and provide adequate information on its website?
6. Strategies for Preventing Repeat Offenses by Impaired Drivers <i>Required by Laws of Minnesota 2021, chapter 11, art. 5, sec. 21</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent have ignition interlock and vehicle forfeiture effectively reduced repeat offenses by impaired drivers?• What has been the financial impact of these strategies?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENERGY, AND COMMERCE

7. Energy Conservation Improvement Program <i>Requested by Representative Scott and Senator Mathews; related OLA evaluation released in 2005</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent has this program met the objectives set in statute?• Are conservation programs, such as energy audits and equipment rebates, cost effective?
8. Department of Labor and Industry Grant Oversight <i>Requested by Representatives O'Driscoll and Robbins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the Department of Labor and Industry have an appropriate process for making grants?• To what extent has the department adequately overseen the grants it makes?
9. Impact of COVID-19 on Small Businesses <i>Requested by Representatives O'Driscoll and Robbins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent have small businesses been affected by state actions related to COVID-19?

<p>10. Unemployment Insurance (UI) Fraudulent Payments</p> <p><i>Requested by several legislators; related OLA evaluation will be released in 2022</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have UI payments been made to individuals who did not qualify for assistance?
<p>11. Payments for Both Worker's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance</p> <p><i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How frequently have individuals simultaneously received both worker's compensation and unemployment insurance benefits? • To what extent has the Department of Employment and Economic Development investigated—and remedied—such cases of double payment?
<p>12. State Oversight of Long-Term Care Insurance</p> <p><i>Requested by Representative Sandell and a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does Minnesota have adequate laws in place—and has the Department of Commerce provided sufficient oversight—to protect against unreasonable increases in rates for long-term care insurance?

EDUCATION

<p>13. Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Grant Oversight (Feeding Our Future Grants and Others)</p> <p><i>Requested by Senators Chamberlain, Benson, Howe, Koran, Mathews, Newman, Rarick, Westrom, and Draheim; Representative Erickson; and legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does MDE have an appropriate process for making grants? • To what extent has the department adequately monitored the grants it makes?
<p>14. School Nursing Services</p> <p><i>Requested by Representatives Bahner, Boldon, Feist, Hausman, and Youakim, and the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the accessibility and quality of health services compare between school districts that employ licensed school nurses and districts with other arrangements? • Are there adequate health services in smaller school districts, which are not required to employ a licensed school nurse or contract with a public or private health organization? • To what extent has the Minnesota Department of Education overseen school districts' health services for students?
<p>15. Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board Grant Oversight</p> <p><i>Requested by Representatives Erickson and Robbins and legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board have an appropriate process for making grants? • To what extent has the board adequately overseen the grants it makes?
<p>16. Special Education Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <p><i>Requested by Representatives Erickson and Robbins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been sufficient accountability for federal and state special education expenditures during the pandemic? • Have these expenditures been sufficiently transparent to the public?
<p>17. Student Teacher Grants</p> <p><i>Requested by Representatives O'Neill and Robbins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the outcome of grants provided to students enrolled in teacher education programs, including grants for student teaching?
<p>18. Office of Higher Education (OHE) Fund Transfers</p> <p><i>Requested by Representative Erickson</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What authority does the Commissioner of OHE have to transfer money appropriated to the agency? • To what extent has the commissioner transferred funds, and for what purposes?

<p>19. Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) <i>Requested by legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have school districts administered the PSEO program consistently across the state? • Are grade-level eligibility criteria appropriate and applied consistently across school districts? • How do PSEO and “PSEO by Contract” affect the funding school districts receive?
<p>20. Office of Higher Education Oversight of Private Higher Education Programs <i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has OHE exercised proper oversight of programs offered by private higher education institutions? • To what extent has OHE closed or sanctioned private programs, and has it done so for justifiable reasons?

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND AGRICULTURE

<p>21. “Green Acres” and Agricultural Land Preservation Programs <i>Requested by Representative Hansen; related OLA evaluation issued in 2008</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes to these programs have been made since OLA’s 2008 evaluation? • Do these programs effectively equalize taxes for agricultural landowners and preserve farmland?
<p>22. DNR Land Purchases <i>Requested by Senator Weber</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent, if at all, has DNR purchased land at costs exceeding the land’s market value?
<p>23. MPCA Air Monitoring and Regulation <i>Requested by Representative Lee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) ensured that facilities comply with regulations to limit air pollution? • Was there adequate public oversight of the Northern Metals Recycling facility prior to its fire in April 2021?
<p>24. “Cottage Foods” Regulation <i>Requested by Senator Mathews</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Department of Agriculture properly regulate homemade foods that are exempt from state food licensing laws?
<p>25. Dams and Dam Safety <i>Requested by Representative Hansen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the condition of Minnesota’s dams, and to what extent do they pose safety risks? • Should Minnesota consider reducing the number of dams on state waterways?
<p>26. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Oversight of Wildlife Management Areas <i>Requested by numerous environmental advocacy groups, including Izaak Walton League of America, MN Division; Fish and Wildlife Legislative Alliance in Minnesota; Backcountry Hunters and Anglers; National Trout Center; Northcountry Guide Service; Audubon; Sierra Club, North Star Chapter; and Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has DNR protected and managed the state’s Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)? • To what extent has DNR prioritized timber production in these areas, and have efforts to promote timber production violated DNR’s responsibilities to manage and protect these areas?
<p>27. MPCA Regulation and Oversight of the Lyndale Avenue Corridor Site <i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) properly assessed the causes of groundwater and soil vapor contamination in Bloomington’s Lyndale Avenue Corridor? • Has MPCA taken appropriate actions to address this contamination?

<p>28. MPCA Landfill Permitting and Oversight <i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) have adequate standards for permitting and expanding landfills? • Does MPCA adequately monitor permitted landfills? • Besides MPCA, what other public entities are involved in landfill oversight?
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GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

<p>29. Distribution of COVID-Related Federal Funding <i>Requested by Senator Draheim; Representatives Gruenhagen, Robbins, Lueck; and other legislators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mechanisms have state agencies used to ensure that federal COVID-19 funds were appropriately and transparently distributed to eligible recipients?
<p>30. IT Consolidation <i>Requested by Representatives Bahner and Elkins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the scope of MNIT's purview be expanded to include state constitutional offices, the Legislature, and smaller boards and commissions? • To what extent would such additional consolidation result in improved data security, cost savings, or improved customer service?
<p>31. Grants to Nonprofit Organizations <i>Requested by Representatives Johnson and Robbins; related OLA evaluation issued in 2007</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have state agencies employed proper and transparent processes for awarding grants to nonprofit organizations?
<p>32. Election Integrity <i>Requested by Senators Anderson and Westrom; related OLA evaluation released in 2018</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have existing controls ensured the integrity of Minnesota's elections? • To what extent are there adequate controls regarding the entire voting process, from voter authentication through final vote tabulation?
<p>33. Metropolitan Council: Land Use Planning <i>Requested by Representative Becker-Finn</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has the Metropolitan Council established appropriate regional priorities? • To what extent has the Council effectively managed land use planning among local governments and across the region?
<p>34. Executive Branch Decisions Related to COVID-19 Pandemic <i>Requested by Representative Lueck</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What health-related studies and statistical information did the departments of Health and Education rely upon to advise the Governor on businesses and school shutdowns? • On what basis did the Governor decide to have virtually all state workers work from home?
<p>35. State Work-From-Home Policy <i>Requested by Representative Lueck</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact on the Executive Branch's work-from-home policy on services to the general public?
<p>36. Metropolitan Council <i>Requested by several legislators and legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Metropolitan Council sufficiently accountable for its decisions and expenditures?
<p>37. State Agency Grant Administrative Expenses <i>Requested by several legislators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of grant funds do agencies keep to administer grants?

38. Office of Administrative Hearings <i>Requested by a citizen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the Office of Administrative Hearings managed the cases that come before it efficiently and consistently?
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HEALTH

39. Insulin Safety Net Program <i>Requested in Minnesota Statutes 151.74, subd. 14</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have insulin manufacturers reimbursed pharmacies for urgent-need insulin, determined eligibility in a timely manner and notified individuals, and provided pharmacies with insulin product as required by law? • To what extent is the training program developed for navigators adequate and easily accessible?
40. Minnesota Health Records Act <i>Requested by Senator Howe</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the impact of the Minnesota Health Records Act, which protects the medical records of patients? • Has this act inhibited the ability of providers to offer appropriate care?
41. Vault Health Contract and Billing <i>Requested by Senator Benson; related OLA special review released in 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has Vault Health—through its contract with MDH—overbilled the State of Minnesota for COVID-19 testing? • Has the State of Minnesota made excessive payments to Vault for this testing?
42. COVID-19 Death Counts <i>Requested by Senator Benson</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have Minnesota deaths attributed to COVID-19 been accurately counted? • How many Minnesotans died due to another cause when the death was listed as COVID-19 on the death certificate? • To what extent did a state entity instruct physicians, coroners, or other medical professionals to list COVID-19 as the cause of death?
43. State Funding of Medical Research <i>Requested by a legislator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the state funded medical research? • What have been the outcomes of the state's medical research expenditures?
44. Board of Nursing Complaint Unit <i>Requested by two citizens; related OLA evaluation released in 2015</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the board processed cases effectively, efficiently, and consistently, and has the board been well managed? • To what extent has the board replied in a timely manner to questions and complaints?
45. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Health Regulation Division <i>Requested by several citizens</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has this division inspected or otherwise examined state-regulated or federally regulated health care facilities on a regular basis? • Has this division provided appropriate training and guidance to its employees? • Is the division properly staffed?
46. MDH Oversight of Medical Cannabis Program <i>Requested by a citizen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has MDH adequately overseen this program? • Has MDH shown favoritism toward any producers or manufacturers of cannabis products?

<p>47. Board of Nursing <i>Requested by citizens; related OLA evaluation released in 2015</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the board implemented necessary changes in response to OLA's 2015 evaluation? • Has the board processed cases effectively and efficiently, and has the board been well managed? • To what extent has the board met its responsibilities regarding the open meeting law, the data practices act, and licensing?
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HUMAN SERVICES

<p>48. Department of Human Services (DHS) Organization <i>Requested by Representatives Albright and Robbins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What functions housed within DHS are related to functions performed by other state agencies? • How do other states structure their administration of human services programs? • Are there alternative ways to structure the services and functions currently housed within DHS that would achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness?
<p>49. Childcare Revitalization Grants <i>Requested by Representatives Demuth and Robbins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the Department of Human Services (DHS) awarded these grants? • Have there been unnecessary delays in awarding these grants—and, if so, why?
<p>50. Health Care Fraud <i>Requested by Representatives Quam and Robbins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is there fraud in health care spending?
<p>51. County Mental Health Crisis Responders <i>Requested by Senator Klein</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the geographic availability of county mental health crisis responders across the state? • How often have these responders received calls, and to what extent did they meet requirements to respond when called? • To what extent does state funding support county mental health responders?
<p>52. DHS Oversight of Managed Care Organizations <i>Requested by a legislator</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Department of Human Services (DHS) properly oversee managed care organizations? • How much does this oversight cost? • Has DHS implemented audits of managed care organizations that the Legislature funded several years ago? • How does DHS ensure that its staff have no conflicts of interest with the managed care organizations it oversees?
<p>53. Developmental Disabilities Waiver <i>Requested by citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have revenues and expenditures changed over the past five years? • To what extent have facilities changed staffing ratios and services provided over this same time period? • For what reasons have changes in services and benefits occurred?
<p>54. Problem Gambling Program <i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective and coordinated are the state's efforts to control problem gambling? • Has DHS's Problem Gambling Program been well managed?

<p>55. DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) Sanctions</p> <p><i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the Department of Human Services' (DHS) OIG administered sanctions in a consistent manner? • Does the OIG have adequate policies to ensure consistency?
<p>56. Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)</p> <p><i>Requested by Senator Westrom; related OLA special review released in 2019</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is there evidence of fraud in CCAP? • Does CCAP have adequate internal controls to prevent fraud?
<p>57. Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP)</p> <p><i>Requested by Representative Sandell; related OLA evaluation released in 2011</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the treatment program successfully prepared its residents for reintegration into the community?

TRANSPORTATION

<p>58. Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)</p> <p><i>Requested by Senators Dibble, Benson, Draheim, Howe, Koran, Mathews, Newman, Rarick, Weber, and Westrom, and Representative Hornstein; contained in HF3035 and SF2676</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the primary reasons for delays and cost increases in the SWLRT project? • Has the Metropolitan Council properly managed the project's schedule and costs? • Was there sufficient Metropolitan Council scrutiny of the route decisions and design choices that have subsequently required substantive changes to project costs or plans?
<p>59. Trunk Highway Fund</p> <p><i>Requested by Senators Howe, Koran, Mathews, Newman, and Weber</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has MnDOT used the money from this fund? • Has MnDOT used these funds appropriately? • Have these funds been used for purposes other than road and bridge projects?

OTHER

<p>60. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA): RentHelpMN and COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)</p> <p><i>Requested by Senators Anderson, Benson, Dornink, Draheim, Howe, Koran, Mathews, Rarick, Weber, and Westrom; Representatives Theis and Robbins; and several legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did MHFA consistently apply eligibility criteria for these programs? • Does the agency have proper controls in place to avoid fraudulent payments? • Did the agency process applications in an efficient manner and within a reasonable timeframe? • Did MHFA fully utilize its funding to maximize the total amount of direct-assistance payments?
<p>61. Board of Animal Health Oversight of Companion Animals</p> <p><i>Requested by Representative Hansen and legislative staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well has the Board of Animal Health fulfilled its responsibility to "protect the health of the state's domestic animals" with respect to companion animals? • How well has it fulfilled its responsibility to enforce the provisions of the commercial breeders licensing and enforcement law?
<p>62. Broadband Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Requested by Representative Hansen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the funding to develop broadband infrastructure been awarded competitively and through a transparent process? • What has been the overall process for developing broadband across the state, and has it utilized the most current technology?

<p>63. Destination Medical Center <i>Requested by Senator Senjem</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the Destination Medical Center (DMC) initiative been executed in accordance with the statute that created it? • Have local decisions regarding the receipt and use of DMC monies been made in accordance with the provisions of statute? • Have the DMC administrative and operational processes involving the state, county, city, and DMC Board conformed with statute? • What is the return on investment of the DMC?
<p>64. Sustainable Building Guidelines <i>Requested by Representative Lee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have new state buildings and major renovations that received funds from the bond proceeds fund been compliant with sustainable building guidelines, as required in Minnesota Statutes 2021, 16B.325? • What is needed to ensure that such state buildings and major renovations comply with this statute before money is encumbered on a project? • Who is in charge of enforcing this statute, and does this need to be clarified in law?
<p>65. Property Tax Refund Timeliness <i>Requested by a citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the Minnesota Department of Revenue distributed property tax refunds by the deadlines established in law?
<p>66. Minnesota’s COVID-19 Response <i>Requested by Laws of Minnesota 2021, chapter 12, art. 2, sec. 21</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective has the state’s response to COVID-19 been—including programs to provide testing, vaccination, and public outreach; contracting and other state purchasing necessary to facilitate the response or to provide public services; and the methodology used in modeling and forecasting the course of the outbreak?
<p>67. Programs Supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Minnesotans <i>Requested by Representatives Agbaje and Hollins, and the House POCI Caucus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within DEED, DHS, MPCA, and MHFA, what programs are focused on supporting BIPOC Minnesotans? • How much funding has been allocated and spent on these programs, and were the resources utilized as intended? • Which organizations received funding from programs meant to support BIPOC communities?