

Strategic plan goals



Agency strategic plan goals: 2024-2028



**Reduce direct exposures
and cumulative impacts**



**Reduce levels of high
priority pollutants**



**Environmental justice and
disproportionate impacts**



**Advance the Climate
Action Framework**



Modernize data



**Diverse, equitable and
inclusive workplace**

Goal 1 – Reduce exposures and cumulative impacts

Reduce direct exposures to known pollutants, including their cumulative impacts.

Strategies

1. Advance a framework that will integrate cumulative impacts into the MPCA's work.
"Cumulative impacts" are the combined effects of long-term pollution exposure and other stressors on an individual. Understanding these helps create a more holistic picture for regulators.
2. Prevent, reduce, and replace toxic chemicals in products with safer alternatives.
3. Identify and address impacts of human exposure to pollutants at contaminated sites.
4. Improve air quality by addressing air pollutants and air toxics to improve the health of residents living in environmental justice areas.

Goal 1.1 – Progress

Advance a framework that will integrate cumulative impacts into the MPCA's work.

"Cumulative impacts" are the combined effects of long-term pollution exposure and other stressors on an individual. Understanding these helps create a more holistic picture for regulators.

Accomplishments

- Completed a cumulative impacts framework to guide future work in December 2023.
- Began approved pilot projects for cumulative impacts in June 2024.

What we're working on now

- Completing pilot projects and made recommendations for future cumulative impact programs in June 2026.
- Meeting legislative requirements and timelines to implement cumulative impacts activities:
 - Final notice of intent to adopt rulemaking by April 1, 2026
- Engagement with community members through public meetings, community events, and easy-to-understand communications materials.
- Implementation of plan before end of rulemaking process.

Goal 1.2 – Progress

Prevent, reduce, and replace toxic chemicals in products with safer alternatives.

Accomplishments

- Tested hundreds of products so far for compliance with prohibitions (PFAS in food packaging; Lead, cadmium and mercury in certain products). The agency uses this information to engage, inform, ensure compliance, and initiate enforcement.
- The Get the Lead Out program also has collected lead tackle and distributes non-lead fishing tackle through various partners.

What we're working on now

- Developing rules to govern reporting and related fees for Amara's law and staffing up to test the 11 categories of products where intentionally added PFAS is prohibited.
- Continuing to test products and related follow-up.
- Distributing lead-free tackle kits to youth, ages 6 to 15, at summer camps.

Goal 1.3 – Progress

Identify and address impacts of human exposure to pollutants at contaminated sites.

Accomplishments

- Trichloroethylene (TCE) and volatile organic compound (VOC) historical analysis project on target for completion by 2030. These are chemicals that vaporize easily and contribute to air pollution and health problems.

What we're working on now

- The GAP lookback project, which addresses gaps in air monitoring, is on target to reach the goal of assessing 250 sites per year.

Goal 1.4 – Progress

Improve air quality by addressing air pollutants and air toxics to improve the health of residents living in environmental justice areas

Accomplishments

- Air toxics reporting rules, which require facilities to report on air toxics, met the statutory deadline to publish the notice of intent to adopt in November 2024. The rule is on track to be finalized in fall 2025.
- Air toxics emissions regulation rules, which expand the list of chemicals the state has the authority to regulate, are on track for completion.
- Engagement with community members is being carried out through public meetings, community events, and easy-to-understand communications materials.

Goal 1.4 – Progress

Improve air quality by addressing air pollutants and air toxics to improve the health of residents living in environmental justice areas

What we're working on now

- At least 50% of identified facilities are not meeting health benchmarks, so the agency is prioritizing these facilities to bring them up to standard.
- The agency is also prioritizing the 75% of identified facilities that need to reduce emissions.

Goal 2 — Reduce pollutants

Reduce levels of high-priority pollutants

Strategies

1. Address nitrate in water. High levels of nitrate in water can be harmful to humans and the environment.
2. Address sulfate in water. High levels of sulfate can also be harmful to humans and the environment, particularly in wild rice.
3. Advance the Minnesota PFAS blueprint. PFAS, also known as “forever chemicals,” do not break down and can accumulate in both humans and other living organisms.

Goal 2.1 - Progress

Address nitrate in water

Accomplishments

- Implementing nitrogen reduction strategies in wastewater permits.
- Updated feedlot permit requirements to further minimize the risk of surface and groundwater contamination.

What we're working on now

- Increasing the number of feedlot permits with nitrate actions.
- Developing and tracking recommendations for improved best management practices for nitrate.
- Updating the Nutrient Reduction Strategy

Nitrate actions are meant to reduce nitrate in water and include cover crops and delaying manure application.

Goal 2.2 - Progress

Address sulfate in water

What we're working on now

- Implementing the sulfate standard to protect wild rice in wastewater permits.

Goal 2.3 - Progress

Advance the Minnesota PFAS blueprint

Accomplishments

- Developed PFAS ambient monitoring networks.

What we're working on now

- Developing PFAS water quality standards for surface waters that provide drinking water
- Implementing PFAS monitoring requirements in permitting programs
- Supporting PFAS pollution prevention and reduction initiatives through grant programs

Goal 3 – Advance environmental justice

Advance environmental justice and protect Minnesotan's who are disproportionately impacted.

Strategies

1. Ensure environmental justice principles are incorporated into the agency's core work and decision-making.
2. Partner with Tribal Nations in Minnesota to protect human health and improve our shared environment.

Goal 3.1 Progress

Ensure environmental justice principles are incorporated into the agency's core work and decision-making.

Accomplishments

- Hosted a series of community meetings around enforcement or permitting actions in collaboration with agency programs and Community Affairs.
- At least 40% of agency grant recipients were in environmental justice areas of concern.
- Re-envisioned MPCA's environmental justice advisory management team.

What we're working on now

- Generating further buy-in from communities with a sense of justice.
- Developing and implementing an environmental justice methodology for the agency by 2027.

Goal 3.2 Progress

Partner with Tribal Nations in Minnesota to protect human health and improve our shared environment.

Accomplishments

- Strengthened Tribal consultations.
- Identified priority work areas: land programs, environmental justice, emergency response, air/water guidance, consultation documentation, and Tribal-State Relations Training (TSRT) tracking.
- Finalized best practices for Tribal engagement in coordination with Tribal Nations.

What we're working on now

- Developing best practices and policies for identified work areas above.
- Identify additional funding opportunities to support Tribal partnerships and knowledge integration.
- Draft of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)/Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is developed in close coordination with Tribal Nations.

Goal 4 — Advance the Climate Action Framework

The Climate Action Framework is built on six goals to make a better home for future generations of Minnesotans: clean transportation, climate-smart natural and working lands, resilient communities, clean energy and efficient buildings, healthy lives and communities, and a clean economy

Strategies to advance the Climate Action Framework

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from sources where the MPCA has oversight and influence.
2. Increase resiliency in communities, businesses, waterways, contaminated sites, and infrastructure.

Goal 4.1 — Progress

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from sources where the MPCA has oversight and influence

Accomplishments

- Awarded grants for climate pollution reduction planning and implementation.
- Embedded greenhouse gas reduction initiatives in prevention, incentive, and regulatory programs and the closed landfill program.
- Completed assessment plan for closed landfill program.

What we're working on now

- Implementation plan for closed landfill program to be completed by January 2027.

The Closed Landfill Program exists to maintain certain mixed municipal waste landfills in the state over the long term. Closed landfills must be monitored and managed to protect the environment and human health. Once landfills are enrolled in the Closed Landfill Program, the MPCA is responsible for their long-term care.

Goal 4.2 — Progress

Increase resiliency in communities, businesses, waterways, contaminated sites, and infrastructure.

Accomplishments

- The use of best management practices (BMPs) that are beneficial for addressing climate threats is on the rise.
- Healthier Watershed website is tracking BMPs.
- Discussion and emphasis on climate resiliency incorporated into each WRAPS update.

What we're working on now

- Tracking BMP implementation data related to green infrastructure or climate resiliency.

Goal 5 - Modernize capabilities to collect, manage and share data.

Modernize capabilities to collect, manage, and share data.

Strategies

1. Ensure data assets are managed, trustworthy, and widely available to guide decision making.
2. Convert all external services used to collect data to online applications and improve customer experience.
3. Improve internal customer experience and services to support agency staff.

Goal 5.1 Progress

Ensure data assets are managed, trustworthy, and widely available to guide decision making.

What we're working on now

- Ensuring all data assets have a data management plan.
- Ensuring monitoring projects have quality assurance project plans that are well defined and documented.
- Ensuring high-value data assets are readily available to the public using self-service online sharing platforms.

Goal 5.2 Progress

Convert all external services used to collect data to online applications and improve customer experience.

What we're working on now

- Establishing a process to measure customer experience across functions.
- Functional areas have customer service metrics by 2025.

Goal 5.3 Progress

Improve internal customer experience and services to support agency staff.

What we're working on now

- Establishing a process to measure customer experience across functions.
- Functional areas have customer service metrics by 2025.

Goal 6 — Diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace

Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and throughout agency operations

Strategies

1. Hire and retain a workforce that represents Minnesota's people.
2. Increase spending with targeted vendors.
3. Build a culturally competent workplace.

Goal 6.1 — Progress

Hire and retain a workforce that represents Minnesota's workforce

What we're working on now

- By 2028, all categories of protected groups will be fully represented.
- By 2028, the MPCA will retain at least 75 percent of newly hired employees over their first two years and will achieve this retention rate for American Indians, people of color, people who have a disability, and veterans at a consistent rate every year.

Goal 6.2 — Progress

Increase spending with targeted vendors

Accomplishments

- Increased spending with targeted vendors by 362% and targeted vendor select purchase orders by 200% in the 2025 fiscal year.

What we're working on now

- Continue increasing spending with targeted vendors by 10% each year compared to the 2018-2022 historical average spending.
- Track reported data related to targeted vendor spending and purchase/contract orders.

A **targeted vendor** is a small business that is owned by a woman, racial minority, person with a substantial physical disability, or veteran, or located in an economically disadvantaged area.

Goal 6.3 — Progress

Build a culturally competent workplace

What we're working on

- Our goal is for 40% of agency employees to have an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) score in the Acceptance or Adaptation orientation.
- Hired an IDI coordinator in May 2025
- At least two IDEA credits offered monthly, sometimes more

The IDI assesses intercultural competence
– the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonalities.