DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
ENTERPRISE SUSTAINABILITY

Frequently Asked Questions about the State of Minnesota's Enterprise Sustainability Program:
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Welcome to the FAQ page. Feel free to click below on any question that interests you.
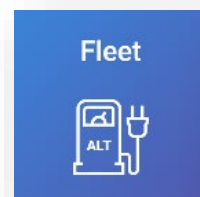
Questions

Q) What is sustainability.mn.gov?

Welcome to the State of Minnesota's Enterprise Sustainability dashboard, sustainability.mn.gov. This website officially tracks and reports the performance of the Executive Branch agencies' progress towards meeting the six sustainability goals.

The site also hosts various supporting documents and publications in the resources page located on the top right.

There are six "Enterprise-wide" focus area pages, one for each goal and focus area. You can click on the focus area page icons to be brought to that focus area page. Here's an example of the Fleet focus area icon:

FLEET FOCUS AREA ICON

Progress for all focus areas is currently reported on a "percent progress towards goal" basis. For example, if the goal is a 30% reduction, a 15% reduction would place an agency at 50% progress.

F.A.Q.

The "Agency Scorecards" page lists all the agencies' performance on a percent progress towards goal basis for all the focus areas and agencies.

Feel free to share the website on social media using our [Share ◁] function!

Finally, here are the six focus area goals. Each focus area page lists each goal. For your reference, all the focus area goals are listed below.
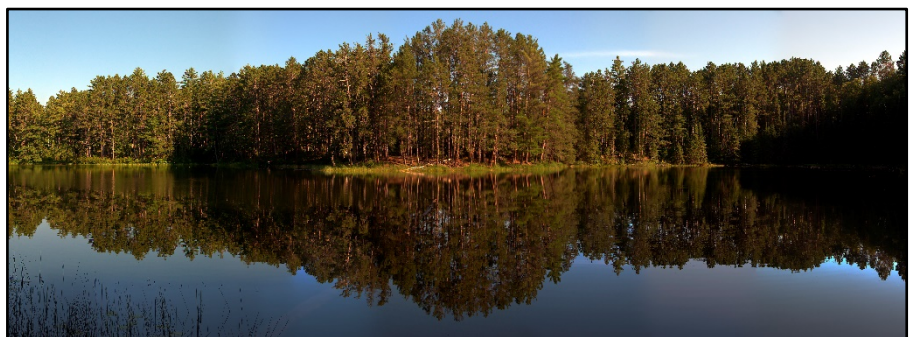
1) Reduced Fleet Fossil Fuel Consumption: 30% reduction of state fleet consumption of fossil fuels by 2027 relative to a 2017 adjusted baseline.
2) Energy Consumption: 30% reduction in consumption of energy per square foot by 2027 relative to a 2017 adjusted baseline.
3) Reduced Water Consumption: 15% reduction of water use by 2025 relative to a 2017 adjusted baseline.
4) Reduce Solid Waste: 75% combined recycling and composting rate of solid waste by 2030.
5) Sustainable Procurement: 25% of total spend on priority contracts are sustainable purchases by 2025.
6) Greenhouse Gas Emissions: 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 relative to a 2005 calculated baseline.

Q) How often are results and data updated on this website?

This is site will be updated annually with new results for all agencies. Reports for the preceding calendar year will published in the summer months. We expect the 2019 annual report to be published around mid-July 2020.

Q) Why does the Minnesota state government have six sustainability goals?

As with any large organization, operating Minnesota's government generates pollution, consumes energy and natural resources, and contributes to climate change. Minnesota has made progress to make its government operations more sustainable. Yet there is much more work to do.

Continuing the effort to run our government in more sustainable ways helps Minnesotans by improving the environment, controlling unnecessary waste of natural resources and public funds, and spurring innovation. These measures save taxpayer dollars through avoided costs, increased efficiencies, more resilient facilities, and a stronger economy.

F.A.Q.

Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan have reaffirmed state government's commitment to sustainability by issuing Executive Order 19-27 called, "Directing State Government to Conserve Energy and Water, and Reduce Waste to Save Money." The executive order applies to twenty-four cabinet level agencies called throughout this website as the "enterprise." You can read the entire executive order HERE.

Q) How does the Enterprise define "sustainability?"

The State of Minnesota, as an enterprise, defines sustainability as meeting the economic, social and environmental needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same needs.

Q) What happens if an agency does not meet a goal?

MINNESOTA SENATE BUILDING SOLAR PV INSTALLATION

While we want all agencies to meet these goals, we realize that some agencies may only meet some goals and not others. To ensure all agencies are successful, the Office of Enterprise Sustainability is charged with removing barriers, developing tools, and providing technical planning assistance. Yet, agencies won't be penalized for falling short of a goal.

In some circumstances, agencies making strong progress may be required to take actions due to their mission, or due to outside factors, that affect their ability to meet the goals.

For example, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has necessarily expanded its footprint to better serve and improve the quality of life for our state's veterans—while the agency's energy use intensity score is likely to improve, the agency's greenhouse gas emissions may increase because an expanded footprint can result in greater emissions.
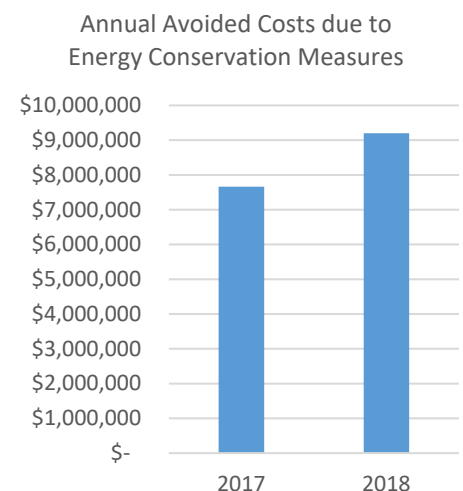
Q) How has the state avoided costs due to conservation measures – what does "cost avoided" mean?

While the Enterprise Sustainability initiative is new to state government operations, many agencies have been independently making progress since 2005. Energy efficiency measures allow an agency to operate at a similar level while consuming less energy resources.

The avoided energy costs are calculated by both the agency's reported data and a weather-adjusted analysis of building-level energy consumption values. The avoided cost is the difference between the expected energy cost and the actual energy cost.

Annual Avoided Costs due to Energy Conservation Measures

At the same time, the cost of energy is almost always rising over time and is expected to keep rising. By implementing smart energy efficiency measures, we can avoid the increased energy costs we would otherwise face.
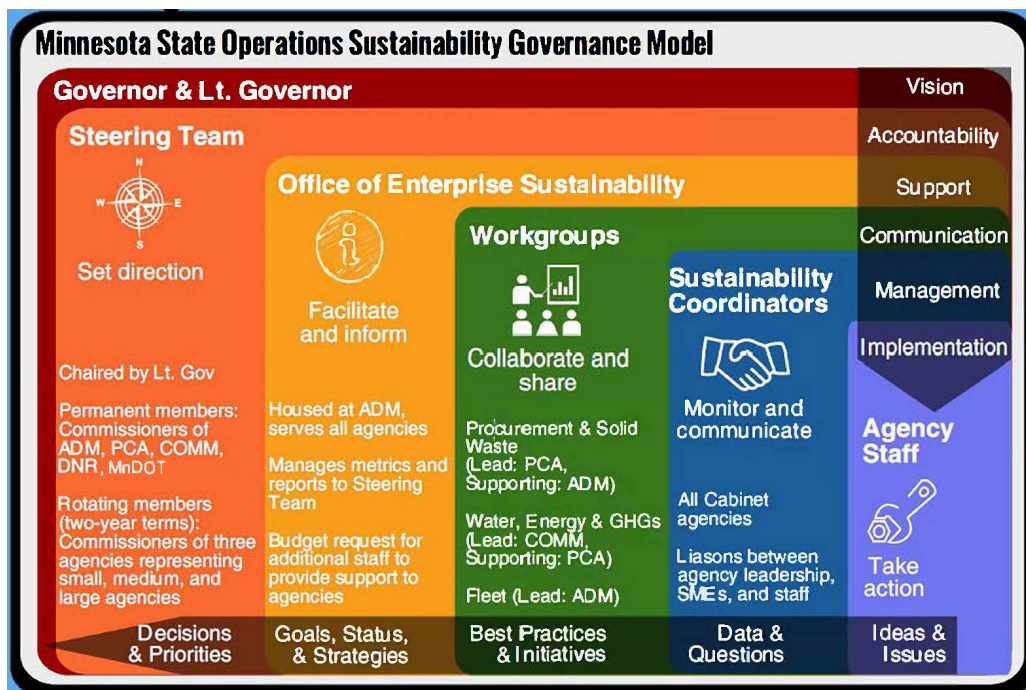
Q) How do agencies participate?

The Executive Order 19-27 outlines a sustainability governance structure and the roles and responsibilities for individual state agencies. Each agency is a valuable partner in this work.

Agencies participate through the workgroups, reporting of data and information, and the sharing of best practices. Agencies are responsible for:

- Establishing an internal sustainability process and designating a Sustainability Coordinator;
- Working with the Office of Enterprise Sustainability to create agency-specific sustainability plans;
- Tracking and reporting data to the Office of Enterprise Sustainability;
- Sending subject matter experts to the three workgroups: 1) Fleet, 2) Procurement and Solid Waste, 3) Energy, Water, and Greenhouse Gasses;
- Participating in informational and educational campaigns; and
- Encouraging the advancement of sustainability.

The following graphic details the "Minnesota State Operations Sustainability Governance Model:"

For more information on specific agency actions and responsibilities, check out the Executive Order 19-27.

F.A.Q.

Q) What is the role of the Office of Enterprise Sustainability?

Housed at the Department of Administration, the Office of Enterprise Sustainability's (OES) duties are to:

1) Manage sustainability metrics and reporting systems, including a public dashboard for Minnesotans to track progress;
2) Help Cabinet Agencies overcome challenges they may have in reaching the Sustainability Goals;
3) Educate Cabinet Agencies and other state agencies, boards, and commissions on sustainability best practices, tools and resources through a network of Cabinet Agency sustainability coordinators and Workgroups;
4) Assist Cabinet Agencies with development of their sustainability plans;
5) Administer the Productivity Loan Fund for the Productivity Loan Committee; and
6) Publish an annual report approved by the Sustainability Steering Team, shared with the public on the OES website, and presented to the Environmental Quality Board.

Q) How can an agency have negative progress towards goal?

Negative progress means that the agency experienced an *increase* for a focus area goal that seeks to *decrease.* The water, energy, fleet, and greenhouse gas goals are "reduction goals." For those focus areas, agencies are working to reduce consumption (and greenhouse gas emissions) relative to a baseline year value. If an agency is showing negative progress it is because they have gone in the wrong direction. For example, if the goal is a 30% reduction and an agency has increased by 30%, the agency would show -100% progress towards goal. The calculation is: +30% change/-30% goal = -100% progress towards goal.

Q) Why report all focus areas as percent progress towards goal?

All the goals are reported on a standard scale to quickly communicate where agencies are towards meeting those goals. The focus areas have differing percent reduction targets and timeframes, a common scale gives all the focus areas equal importance.

Q) How can I learn more?

There is much more information on the State's sustainability methods and assumptions on the methodology, hosted in the "Resources" page. If you have more questions, feel free to send an email to mnsustainability@state "dot" mn "dot" us.