



MNCITLA 2024 Legislative Platform

The Minnesota County Information Technology Leadership Association (MNCITLA) is a voluntary membership association consisting of over 60 counties from around the state.

MNCITLA's purpose is to support Minnesota county information technology leaders through collaborative communication between counties, state agencies, the Legislature, and public sector organizations.

MNCITLA prides itself on successfully integrating counties of all sizes into an active organization. Our goals include providing education and advocacy that reinforce how foundational information technology is to every county function. We believe that IT must be valued as an integral part of public service and governance, as opposed to merely technical support.

In 2019, MNCITLA formally affiliated with the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) to establish an advocacy presence at the State Capitol and to collaborate more effectively across county professional associations.

Cybersecurity

Minnesota's citizens rely on their counties to provide election services, vital records management, public health and humans services, public safety, road and bridge maintenance, property records, environmental resources, waste disposal, and other essential services. County governments rely completely on secure, interoperable technology systems to deliver these services. These systems link federal, tribal, state, county, and other local governments together, presenting challenges and opportunities. The need for interconnected technology systems between units of government means that a security risk at one city, county, state agency, or contracted vendor becomes a threat vector for all.

- MNCITLA supports the Legislature working with agencies, local governments, and other stakeholders to develop an ongoing, state-funded cybersecurity grant program. This program would build on the work of the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program and other federal programs.
- MNCITLA supports and prioritizes greater collaboration between counties and state agencies on cybersecurity efforts including security event monitoring, shared trainings, outreach programs, vulnerability assessments, and incident response.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning has evolved to allow state and county government to adopt this tool into their day-to-day operations. MNCITLA view County Governments ability to use generative AI as an opportunistic tool that may be adopted by an entity to fill the gap of meeting citizen expectations and to fill gaps as the workforce resources decline. MNCITLA supports the use of AI in government but believes strong guardrails are necessary to protect sensitive data and mitigate inaccuracies from the outputs of generative AI tools.

- MNCITLA supports creating a state-driven AI data warehouse for data sharing to local governments as well as analytics to help with forecasting.
- MNCITLA supports policies preventing county data being collected into AI tools.
- MNCITLA supports convening a state and local government working group with the intention of creating comprehensive AI data use policies.

Next Generation 9-1-1

Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) technology is necessary for the safety of our communities so that individuals can be located with a high degree of accuracy when calling from a mobile device, or texting 911. This technology will be implemented by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety in response to the NG911 Advancement Act of 2012. MNCITLA recognizes the enhanced partnership between County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and 911 services, due to counties being tasked with building the emergency management maps that are foundational to NG911 technology. Long-term maintenance and protection of NG911 infrastructure will also be the responsibility of county governments.

- MNCITLA supports dedicated funding for current County Geographic Information System mapping efforts related to NG911 rollout.
- MNCITLA also supports ongoing, dedicated funding to meet future cybersecurity and infrastructure needs of NG911.

IT Workforce and Training

Minnesota will need to fill 45,000 tech jobs and 6,500 IT jobs by 2032, according to a recent study by the Minnesota Technology Association. The same study estimates Minnesota will only produce 6,600 new tech workers by 2032. Competition between private entities and Counties for IT workers is already fierce. Educating and training thousands more technology and IT workers ensures fewer vacancies on County IT staffs.

- MNCITLA supports efforts to increase the availability of computer science courses at secondary and post-secondary institutions.
- MNCITLA supports efforts to develop training or apprenticeship programs that upskill non-IT workers pursuing careers in IT.

Broadband

Broadband is an integral part of everyday life, yet nearly 10% of all Minnesotans—and a 25% of rural Minnesotans—don't have access to quality high-speed broadband service. Every aspect of today's world—workforce, telehealth, education, business, and agriculture—depends on a reliable broadband connection. Expanding broadband accessibility and affordability will allow local governments to provide more effective and efficient services to our communities in the future.

- MNCITLA supports equity and access to affordable broadband service and infrastructure in Minnesota.
- MNCITLA supports legislation that would provide adequate and continuous funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program.
- MNCITLA supports the goal of statewide deployment of modern, scalable broadband networks that meet or exceed state statutory speed goals.

Data Management

Counties create and are entrusted with a significant amount of sensitive data. As the data generated, collected, and maintained by counties grows, so does the challenge of securing, storing, and sharing data.

- MNCITLA supports clarification and simplification of existing data practices statutes.
- MNCITLA supports funding allocations for county governments to offset the growing costs associated with securing, storing, and sharing government data.

County-State IT Collaboration

County IT departments face challenges when administering state and federal services to Minnesota's residents. County IT departments and their leaders must have public sector-specific knowledge to navigate the challenges of technical implementation these services require, which can present a barrier in understanding for those outside of public-sector IT. Greater collaboration, visibility, and understanding between counties and state officials is necessary for efficient operation of county-managed systems.

- MNCITLA's goal is to provide information to elected officials and state agencies in an approachable and understandable way.
- MNCITLA supports reducing overall costs through greater collaboration between government entities including agency-sponsored, county-managed systems.

Technology Procurement Process

The procurement process in Minnesota provides competition and essential transparency when using taxpayer dollars. As county governments utilize more complex technology, the limitations of Minnesota's procurement process in technology acquisition have become evident, particularly when county business needs change.

- MNCITLA supports modifications to the procurement process that allow for more innovation, collaboration, and adaptability in technology acquisition.

Resources for Digital Accessibility

Digital resources have become integral in how citizens understand and interface with their county governments. As these technologies continue to expand, MNCITLA understands this increase in interaction and transparency requires a simultaneous focus on digital accessibility and inclusion. The Rule to Improve Online Accessibility announced by the Department of Justice further underscores that Counties will need to implement specific technical standards to remain in compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- MNCITLA supports funding for implementing digital accessibility standards.

For additional information, please contact MNCITLA Executive Director, Nathan Zacharias at nzacharias@mncounties.org or 715-222-2824.