

Minnesota Tax Tracker (TT)

A Citizen-Powered Transparency & Fraud Prevention System

Minnesota Tax Tracker Transparency and Accountability Act

Introduction

Minnesotans are told fraud happened. We are told investigations are underway. We are told people will be arrested. But by the time that happens, the money is often already gone.

Most citizens still cannot easily answer basic questions:

- Where are our tax dollars collected from (in totals)?
- Where is the money going?
- Who approved it?
- Was it actually spent the way it was supposed to be spent?

Fraud prevention today is too reactive - too few people reviewing records after damage is done. We need prevention, not just prosecution.

This is not a Republican idea. This is not a Democrat idea. Transparency should unite both parties, because taxpayer dollars belong to the people.

Section 1. Establishment of the Minnesota Tax Tracker

The State shall establish a secure public platform known as the Minnesota Tax Tracker (TT), accessible by website and mobile app.

TT is:

- A transparency and verification platform
- Not a banking system
- Not a funds-transfer system
- Not replacing audits or law enforcement

Its purpose is simple: Every public dollar collected and spent by the State should be traceable, verifiable, and accountable - within the limits of privacy and security law.

Section 2. Revenue Transparency (Aggregate Only)

TT shall display aggregate revenue totals by category, including:

- Individual income tax
- Sales and use tax
- Corporate taxes
- Transportation-related taxes
- Excise taxes
- Federal funding and transfers

TT shall not display or expose individual taxpayer records. This allows Minnesotans to understand the big picture of where revenue comes from without violating privacy.

Section 3. Public Spending Dashboard, Search, Follow, and Notifications

A. Public Spending Dashboard

TT shall display appropriations and spending in a clear drill-down:

State -> Department -> Program -> Region/City -> Entity (school/vendor/project) -> Category -> Receipt/Documentation

If funds are allocated, the system must reconcile totals to the appropriation and flag discrepancies.

B. Fast Search (No Scrolling)

TT shall include a typed search bar allowing both specific searches and topic searches.

1) Specific search (exact) examples:

- JFK High School
- Robbinsdale School District
- MnDOT
- U.S. Foods
- Travel expenses

2) Topic search (broad) examples:

- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Drug treatment
- Infrastructure
- Public safety

Topic searches return related programs, departments, vendors, and transactions tagged to that topic.

C. Filters

Results may be filtered by:

- Date range
- Dollar range
- Category (meals, equipment, travel, etc.)
- Location (district/city/county)
- Verification status (verified/disputed/pending)

D. Follow List (One-click dashboard)

Verified Minnesota users may follow schools, programs, departments, infrastructure projects, spending categories, and public-official expense categories. Followed items appear in a quick-access dashboard.

E. Real-Time Notifications

Users who follow an entity or topic may receive notifications when:

- Funds are allocated
- Spending posts
- Documentation is uploaded
- Vendors confirm or dispute
- Red flags are filed or resolved

Section 4. Comprehensive Spending Visibility (No Hide-by-Threshold)

All expenditures of state-appropriated funds shall be logged in the existing state accounting system and reflected in TT to the extent legally permitted.

There shall be no minimum dollar threshold for public visibility of spending categories that are legally public.

To reduce burden, TT shall prioritize integration with existing accounting and procurement systems, minimizing manual entry.

Section 5. Documentation and Receipt Requirements

For expenditures that are public under Minnesota law, TT shall display documentation appropriate to the spending type, which may include:

- Transaction date
- Vendor identification

- Category
- Amount
- Receipt/invoice (where applicable and public)

Excluded or redacted data includes:

- Individual payroll details (summary totals only)
- Student-protected information (FERPA)
- Protected health information (HIPAA)
- Active investigation exemptions
- Classified or security-sensitive operations

Section 6. Vendor Verification System

All vendors receiving state funds shall register for a Vendor Verification ID.

When an agency posts a transaction in TT:

- The vendor receives notice
- The vendor confirms or disputes within 10 business days

Status:

- Verified (Green)
- Disputed (Red)
- Pending (Yellow)

Vendor non-response does not automatically prove fraud, but may trigger administrative follow-up. Small business accommodations must be offered (simple confirmation tools, batch confirmations, support).

Section 7. Examples: How TT Prevents Fraud

A. Schools

If a school posts an expense such as '\$50,000 for uniforms,' parents can see the receipt and vendor confirmation. If the team never receives uniforms, a parent can red-flag it with a note. The school responds publicly (for example: shipping delay, correction, or replacement order).

B. Infrastructure

If \$10 million is allocated to a project, the contractor and subcontractors are visible with verified invoices. If the total exceeds \$10 million without authorization, the system flags it.

Section 8. Public Official Travel and Expense Transparency

All reimbursable expenditures funded by public dollars for travel, lodging, meals, office expenses, and security expenses (where releasable) shall be published in TT in categorized form with associated documentation as permitted by law.

For safety, publication may be delayed up to 72 hours. There is no exemption by party or position. Public office means public accountability.

Section 9. Citizen Accounts, Verification, and Privacy

A. Verified Minnesota Users

Minnesota residents may voluntarily create verified accounts to use engagement features. Verification may require name, date of birth, address, and Minnesota-issued ID verification. Students may register using verified school ID for school-tracking functions.

B. Identity Data Protection

Verification records shall be encrypted, stored separately from public-facing activity, not publicly displayed, and accessible only to authorized personnel under lawful standards. Annual independent cybersecurity review is required.

C. Out-of-State Observers

Anyone may view TT publicly. Out-of-state users may create observer accounts for notifications and following but may not vote in polls, submit red flags, or comment. This keeps Minnesota governance in Minnesota hands while allowing national transparency.

Section 10. Citizen Red Flag and Note System

Verified Minnesota users may submit one red flag per transaction and include a short written note. Red flags must select a reason category, such as:

- Missing documentation
- Vendor not confirmed
- Delivered item not received
- Amount appears inconsistent
- Duplicate or duplicate-like charge
- Other (with explanation)

Anonymous flags are not permitted. Harassment, threats, or political messaging are prohibited.

Response Rules (Balanced)

- Agencies are encouraged to respond after the first red flag to show the issue is being addressed.

- Mandatory public response is required when five (5) or more verified red flags are filed on the same transaction or transaction set.

Status labels may include: Under Review, Clarified, Corrected, Closed. If a required response is not provided within administrative timelines, the matter escalates to designated oversight authority. False or malicious misuse may lead to suspension of red-flag privileges.

Section 11. Advisory Polling (Guardrails to Protect Elections)

TT may include advisory polling limited to bills and policies currently on the docket, budget and program questions, and government service changes.

Polling must not include candidate preference, election outcome predictions, or campaign messaging.

To prevent campaign misuse:

- Polls may not run within 90 days of a primary or general election.
- Poll results are non-binding, aggregated, anonymized, and not exportable for campaign use.

Polling exists to improve representation, not to advantage candidates.

Section 12. Civic Engagement Analytics (Aggregated Only)

TT may display aggregated, anonymized insights such as:

- Most-followed programs and categories
- Where red flags cluster
- Participation rates by district
- Poll turnout (no individual identity)
- Age bands in polls (optional, aggregated only)

This helps lawmakers see what citizens care about without exposing personal data.

Section 13. Implementation Plan

Phase 1: Planning, Legal Structuring, and Technical Design (3-6 months)

- Rulemaking, privacy and security standards
- Integration plan with existing systems
- Vendor ID framework
- Redaction standards and compliance mapping

Phase 2: Pilot Program (3-6 months)

Pilot with: 1-2 school districts, 1 infrastructure project, 1 public program, and 1 state department.

Test: documentation workflows, vendor confirmation, red flags, search/follow/notifications, and security/performance.

Phase 3: Statewide Activation (within 12 months total)

After pilot evaluation and legislative review, expand statewide.

Section 14. Fiscal Responsibility and Staffing

The State shall prioritize existing IT, cybersecurity, compliance, and legal staff; integration with existing systems; and automation of reporting where feasible.

Costs must be disciplined and transparent. Appropriations remain subject to legislative approval and fiscal notes.

Section 15. Annual Transparency Report

An annual public report shall include:

- Vendor verification compliance rates
- Red flag resolution metrics
- Reconciliation discrepancy metrics
- Program participation and engagement (aggregated)
- Implementation costs and savings estimates

Conclusion

Minnesotans deserve to know where their money goes. We should not learn about fraud after the money is gone. We should prevent it before it happens.

The Minnesota Tax Tracker puts transparency in the hands of the people: proactive, visible, and focused on preventing damage before it occurs.

This is not partisan. Republicans and Democrats should both support transparency, because public money should be accountable no matter who is in power.

When citizens and leaders can see the same roadmap, trust begins to grow - and Minnesota moves forward stronger, together.