



Amtrak in Minnesota

Fiscal Year 2024



Amtrak is America's Railroad,[®] created by Congress to "provide efficient and effective intercity passenger rail mobility consisting of high quality service that is trip-time competitive with other intercity travel options." In FY 2024, the company's 22,000+ employees operated an average of almost 300 intercity trains per day along 47 permanent routes, serving a record 32.8 million passengers. Amtrak's network includes 524 regularly-scheduled stops across 46 states, 3 Canadian provinces, and Washington, DC. Partner-operated Thruway routes offer connecting service to additional communities, typically via bus.

Service & Ridership

In FY 2024, Amtrak operated an average of **4 intercity trains per day** on 2 permanent routes serving Minnesota, with **177,521 total passengers** boarding or alighting in the state.¹ Service was provided via the following routes:²

- **State-Supported Trains**

- ***Borealis***³ — St. Paul-Minneapolis - Red Wing - Winona - Milwaukee - Chicago (*1 round trip daily*)

- **Long-Distance Trains**

- ***Empire Builder*** — Chicago - Milwaukee - Winona - Red Wing - St. Paul-Minneapolis - St. Cloud - Fargo - Spokane - Portland / Seattle (*1 round trip daily*)

As a **State-Supported route**, the *Borealis* is operated in partnership with the **Minnesota Department of Transportation** (MnDOT), the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Outside the Boston-to-Washington Northeast Corridor (NEC), Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) requires that short- and middle-distance Amtrak routes (i.e., those less than 750 miles in length) be State-Supported; in other words, sponsoring partners fund the majority of those routes' costs and make decisions about schedule, frequency, and other aspects of service. In FY 2024, sponsoring partners funded a total of \$1.2 million in operating payments for the *Borealis*, helping support a total ridership on that route⁴ of 88,444 in less than five months of operations.

Stations

During FY 2024, Amtrak intercity trains made scheduled stops at 6 locations in Minnesota:

¹ Total equals sum of all boardings and alightings at in-state stations.

² Not all stops shown. Note that certain frequencies may not serve every station listed.

³ *Borealis* service was new in FY 2024, and began operating on May 21.

⁴ Unlike state- / station-specific ridership, total *route* ridership equals sum of all boardings and alightings divided by two.



Station (Code)	Ridership (Ons + Offs)	Amtrak ADA Responsibility	Amtrak ADA Compliance	Amtrak ADA Investment ⁵
Detroit Lakes (DLK)	5,580	Partial	FY 25	\$2,776,002
Red Wing (RDW)	11,031	Partial	FY 26	\$7,389,050
St. Cloud (SCD)	9,358	Sole	FY 26	\$2,311,246
St. Paul-Minneapolis (MSP)	126,421	None	N/A	—
Staples (SPL)	7,977	Sole	FY 28	\$2,422,269
Winona (WIN)	17,154	Sole	FY 27	\$2,821,004
Total:	177,521	5/6	In Progress	\$17,719,572

Importantly, Amtrak is working to ensure that its stations are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Most Amtrak-served stations are decades old; many were served by other railroads before the company ever existed. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted in 1990, requires that U.S. stations be made accessible; in response, Amtrak developed an ADA Stations Program (ADASP) to bring station components for which the company is responsible into full ADA compliance. ADASP aims to ensure Amtrak provides the best possible service in the shortest possible timeframe; the program will ultimately invest a total of \$1.8 billion in up to 385 communities nationwide, including a **\$17.7 million investment in Minnesota**. All Amtrak-responsible work is targeted for completion by the end of FY 2029.

Detailed profiles of every permanent Amtrak station stop, including current information on accessibility, can be found on the Great American Stations website: <https://www.greatamericanstations.com>.

Additional Footprint

Amtrak trains are supported by a **turnaround maintenance location** in St. Paul (contractor-staffed), which services locomotives and passenger cars.

Additionally, Amtrak maintains a **crew base** in St. Cloud.

Host Railroads & On Time Performance

Outside the NEC, most Amtrak trains must travel over other “host” railroads’ tracks—and hosts generally control dispatching decisions on the tracks that they own. By law, Amtrak trains are supposed to receive preference over freight trains (i.e., priority in dispatching), but many host-dispatched trains arrive late at their destinations, and many routes do not meet on-time performance (OTP) standards established by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)—affecting millions of passengers per year.

Listed below are the Amtrak routes that operate in Minnesota, along with each route’s major in-state host railroad(s) and full-route customer on-time performance (C-OTP)⁶ in FY 2024:

⁵ “Amtrak ADA Investment” describes Amtrak’s projected total investment in compliance work over the lifetime of ADASP.

⁶ C-OTP measures the proportion of customers traveling on a given route who arrive at their destinations on time. Suppose that passengers board a train scheduled to make two stops, and suppose that train is on time at the first stop, but arrives late at the second. If all passengers alight at the first stop, C-OTP for that train is 100%; if all passengers alight at the second stop, C-OTP is 0%.

Route	In-State Host(s)	C-OTP
State-Supported		
<i>Borealis</i>	CPKC	51.6%
Long-Distance		
<i>Empire Builder</i>	CPKC, BNSF	55.5%

Procurement

Amtrak’s procurements are subject to “Buy America”-style domestic preference requirements, which the company is proud to meet or exceed. Nationally, Amtrak paid nearly \$4.5 billion for goods and services in FY 2024; 99% of that amount was spent domestically, and **\$62.9 million** went to vendors in Minnesota:

Community	Amount
Hamel	\$43,579,138
Minneapolis	\$14,810,801
St. Paul	\$2,145,349
Plymouth	\$650,973
St. Cloud	\$342,962
Rochester	\$333,389
Shakopee	\$326,704
Eden Prairie	\$160,294
Winona	\$132,335
West St. Paul	\$108,163
Thief River Falls	\$67,876
Eagan	\$53,754
North Mankato	\$24,719
Glenwood	\$21,900
All Others < \$20k	\$105,753
Total MN Payments:	\$62,864,111

The single largest in-state payment category was **railway maintenance machinery and equipment**.

Employment & Compensation

At the end of FY 2024, **36 Amtrak employees** worked in Minnesota, and the company had paid out a total of **\$3,231,820 in base wages and salary** in-state. Nationwide, Amtrak employed more than 22,000 active workers; total base wages and salaries for the year exceeded \$2.1 billion.

Current Amtrak Routes in Minnesota

