

# **Grantee Reference Guide**

**2024 LONG COVID NETWORK & CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS**

LAST UPDATED: JUNE 2024

## **Grantee Reference Guide**

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# Introduction

This guide is for grantees of the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Long COVID Network & Capacity Building Grant program (“the Long COVID Program”). It contains topics related to the state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-2027 grant period, including, program, financial, and procedural requirements that govern the grant process. It does not replace established state policies or regulations governing the administration of grants.

Information in this guide is based on established policies and regulations that are current as of the date of publication. Grantees are responsible for being aware of and abiding by all applicable statutes, regulations, principles, and policies; for abiding by their grant agreement with MDH; and for staying current on changes or issuances relating to the administration of grants. Updates to the guide are posted on the [Long COVID Program Grantee Hub \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/funding/LCgranteeportal.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/funding/LCgranteeportal.html).

***This guide is subject to change.***

## General Information

### About the Long COVID Grant Program

The Minnesota Legislature created the MDH Long COVID Program in 2023 ([Minnesota Statutes, §145.361 \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2023/cite/145.361\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2023/cite/145.361)). The law states that MDH will award grants to eligible organizations to plan, construct, and disseminate resources and information to raise awareness and support people with long COVID and related conditions.

Goals of the grants will include:

- Monitor trends in incidence, mortality, and health outcomes; changes in disability status, employment, and quality of life; and service needs of individuals with long COVID or related conditions and to detect potential public health problems, predict risks, and assist in investigating long COVID and related conditions health inequities.
- More accurately target information and resources for communities and patients and their families.
- Inform health professionals and citizens about risks and early detection.
- Promote evidence-based practices around long COVID and related conditions prevention and management and to address public concerns and questions about long COVID and related conditions.
- Research and track related conditions.

More information about the Long COVID Program can be found in the [2024 Long COVID Network & Capacity Building Grants: Request for Proposals \(www.health.mn.gov/diseases/longcovid/docs/longcovidrfp.pdf\)](https://www.health.mn.gov/diseases/longcovid/docs/longcovidrfp.pdf).

### Grant Management

Grantees will work with the Long COVID grant manager, who will serve as the primary point of contact at MDH. The grant manager will collaborate with you to foster your success in accomplishing work plan activities and assist with administrative and reporting requirements.

Please feel free to reach out to your grant manager with questions or concerns at any time throughout the grant period.

**Grant Manager: Emerson Wheeler (he/they)**

[emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us](mailto:emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us)

651-201-5645

## Grant Program Requirements and Expectations

The Long COVID Program is funded through Minnesota statute. This public program is subject to oversight by the State of Minnesota. To maintain the integrity of the program, Long COVID grantees must exercise caution in determining how your funds will be spent to support the implementation of the activities included in your work plans.

***Grantees are required to comply with the requirements outlined in this guide and in grant agreement.***

### General Requirements

- Participate in site visits and a financial reconciliation processes with MDH.
  - **Site visits** are meetings with your grant manager to discuss topics such as progress toward grant goals, spending updates and financial issues, and successes and challenges in your grant-related work. The meetings will be completed in person. Other MDH staff may sometimes accompany grant managers on visits to better get to know you and your program. Your grant manager will contact you to set up site visits at times that work for you and your staff. State policy requires that site visits take place at least once per year for grant awards of more than \$250,000.
  - **Financial reconciliation** is a process where a grantee's request for payment for a given period is reviewed alongside supporting documentation for that request. This includes requests such as purchase orders, invoices, receipts, canceled checks, general ledger reports, bank statements, check stubs, timesheets, and payroll records. If the reconciliation identifies any spending, invoicing, or documentation issues, you must work with MDH staff to resolve them. In some cases, you may be placed on a financial monitoring plan depending on the issues identified through the reconciliation. State policy requires at least one financial reconciliation take place before final grant payment is made for grant awards of \$50,001-\$250,000. MDH may choose to conduct additional financial reconciliations for grants of any amount. Your grant manager or another MDH staff will contact you with additional details and instructions via email and give you 30 days to submit supporting documentation. This could happen at any time and for any invoice period throughout the grant period.
- Participate in MDH-sponsored technical assistance and trainings such as conferences, summits, grantee gatherings, webinars, and trainings. MDH will communicate event dates and whether they will be offered in-person, virtually, or a hybrid option.
- Submit annual progress and evaluation reports on grant activities and outcomes.
- Contribute to the development of and participate in a shared measurement system to assess the impact of the grant program overall.

- Provide updates and/or grant summary information as requested to be included in MDH reporting.
- As appropriate, serve as a long COVID community expert and resource to communities and professionals.
- Provide technical assistance within the defined community.
- Stay up to date on information from MDH through resources and periodic emails from MDH staff with important news and updates.

## Program Requirements

- Participate in the **Long COVID Grantee Network**, which may take place at quarterly grantee gatherings and additional in-person meetings and/or through online networking and sharing.
- Participate in Grantee Orientation in Month 1.
- Work with MDH staff to finalize your Year 1 work plan, no later than six months after the start of the grant. This is incorporated into your grant agreement.
- Develop a logic model and evaluation plan for Year 1 (July 2024 - June 2025) within the first 3-6 months of the project that reflects the grant activities and desired outcomes. MDH can support these activities if organizations do not have capacity.
- Develop or update the work plan, budget, logic model, and evaluation plan for Years 2 and 3 of the grant period (July 2025 – June 2027) by April 30, 2025. MDH can support these activities if organizations do not have capacity.
- Work with MDH staff throughout the grant period to update your work plan and budget as activities and spending evolve and/or shift. Grantees may request a work plan or budget revision at any time throughout the grant period (apart from the last month of a biennium) to ensure that the work plan and budget on file reflects actual activities and spending. Refer to the Budget and Work Plan Revisions section within this document for more information.
- Contact your grant manager if encountering difficulties or major delays in implementing the activities in your work plan.

## Staffing Requirements

- Designate one staff person to serve as the primary liaison between the Long COVID Program and your organization.
  - This person should be a consistent, primary liaison between MDH and your organization, meaning they are readily available and always included in communications, responsive to emails from MDH (generally responding **within 2-3 business days**), and inform their MDH grant manager when they will be **out of the office** for prolonged periods of time. When the primary contact is out of the office, a back-up contact should be identified, and the grant manager should be notified of how to reach the back-up if needed.

- At least 0.5 full-time equivalent (20 hours per week) total staff time must be dedicated to the project activities, including for regular meetings with the grant manager and participation in the grantee network. If an organization chooses to divide that time among more than one staff member, staff roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and consistent across the grant period.
- Contact your grant manager as soon as possible when staffing for the grant changes, such as hiring new staff, a leadership change, or someone leaving the organization. If the staff person changing was/will be paid with grant funds, a budget modification and/or formal revision is required. We are also happy to meet with your new staff person to welcome them and provide them with an overview of the Long COVID grant program.
- Please be intentional about recruiting and/or hiring staff, leadership and board members who are reflective of the communities you serve.

## Communications Requirements

- Before translating a MDH or state resource related to long COVID, check with your grant manager to make sure MDH or the state has not already translated the information or materials.
  - Occasionally translations may already be in progress. Many translated materials can be found on the [MDH Materials and Resources page](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/translation/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/translation/index.html>).
- **Notify MDH Staff in writing before submitting an abstract or call for presentations** at a national or state conference and before submitting manuscripts for publication that are based on work funded by this Long COVID grant. You can do this by emailing your grant manager.
- **Submit all mass media developed under the Long COVID grant** (e.g., billboards, bus advertisements, and radio ads) to be preapproved by the State *before production*. The State reserves the right to approve, modify, and/or deny any communications or publications developed under the grant (e.g., advertisements, signage, printed materials, and webpages).
- **Acknowledge support from MDH *when appropriate* by using MDH's logo.** Refer to **Acknowledgement Guidelines** below for more detailed information.

## Acknowledgement Guidelines

Grantees are asked to acknowledge support from MDH *when appropriate* by using the MDH logo in printed materials, news releases, newsletters, advertisements, postcards, posters, programs, catalogs, invitations, films, videotapes, electronic transmissions, and websites. There may be instances in which using the logo might not be appropriate to include, such as when doing so could create mistrust or deter participation in the program/activity/action. Consult with your grant manager if you have questions about logo usage or would like to discuss the context of your situation to determine whether logo use is appropriate.

When acknowledging MDH support, please include the following credit line with the logo:

*This activity is made possible by a grant from the Long COVID Program of the Minnesota Department of Health.*

Grantees are asked to acknowledge MDH support even when *written* credit is not applicable by providing verbal credit before each event or performance.

## Institutional Review Board Requirements

The purpose of the MDH Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review data collection activities to ensure the rights of community members and other program participants from whom you may be collecting information. **If you wish to collect data from community members and other participants through work funded by the Long COVID Program, you are required to consult with MDH staff to determine if your work requires MDH IRB review and approval.** Examples of data collection that would require MDH IRB consultation include but are not limited to:

- Surveys, questionnaires, assessments, medical records, or other individual record review that are not directly related to program planning, improvement, or evaluation activities.
- Key informant interviews, focus groups, listening sessions that are not directly related to program planning, improvement, or evaluation activities.

To better understand what data collection and reporting activities may require MDH IRB review, please visit [Types of IRB Review - MN Dept. of Health \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/irb/forms.html). Then, e-mail Emerson Wheeler at [emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us](mailto:emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us) with any questions or to provide the completed [Application for Preliminary Review \(www.health.state.mn.us/data/irb/forms.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/irb/forms.html) form.

## Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to track progress toward completing all outcomes and activities in your work plan by submitting completed progress and annual reports according to the schedule in the table below. At the end of the grant period, your final annual report must be submitted and complete before your final (June 2027) invoice will be paid.

Progress reports will include brief updates on activities and spending, while annual reports will be more comprehensive and include evaluation outcomes and shared measures (refer to the **Shared Measurement System** section below). *Your grant manager will provide templates outlining the required content of the reports.*



## Progress and annual reporting schedule

Grant Year	Report Type	Reporting Period	Due Date
Year 1 (FY24)	Progress Report	July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024	January 31, 2025
Year 1 (FY24)	Annual	July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025	July 31, 2025
Year 2 (FY25)	Progress	July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025	January 31, 2026
Year 2 (FY25)	Annual	July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026	July 31, 2026
Year 3 (FY26)	Progress	July 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026	January 31, 2027
Year 3 (FY26)	Annual	July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027	July 31, 2027
Year 4 (FY27)	Progress	July 1, 2027 to December 31, 2027	January 31, 2028
Year 4 (FY27)	Annual	July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028	July 31, 2028

## Shared Measurement System

All grantees are required to participate in a process with MDH staff to identify any common outcomes between grantee programs. Grantees will be asked to track these outcomes and contribute to a shared measurement system. MDH staff acknowledge that, given the wide variety of activities among grantees, outcomes within a grantee program may not pertain to shared outcomes between grantees. In certain circumstances, grantee outcomes might not adhere to shared outcomes reported to the Shared Measurement System, and therefore will be exempt from this reporting.

## Financial Requirements and Restrictions

### Fiscal Responsibilities

Grantees must be good stewards of the funds you are awarded. You must be fiscally responsible and should follow state laws and procedures for expending and accounting for your grant funds. Grantees must also:

- Prepare required reports and trace funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that funds have not been used in violation of program restrictions.
- Determine the reasonableness and allowability of costs in accordance with program requirements and terms of the grant agreement and charge the grant for only the activities that were in the approved work plan and budget.
- Ensure that grant funds are used to develop new programs or expand current programs that address the impacts of long COVID and related conditions.
- Support accounting records with source documentation.
- Submit quarterly invoices (at minimum) according to the schedule in the grant agreement (by the 15th day of the following month). Financial transactions will be on a reimbursement basis.

- Meet audit requirements described in the grant agreement.
- Ensure that indirect costs are explained, justifiable, and do not duplicate itemized charges.
- Allocate at least 10% of annual funds for evaluation. Evaluation funds may be used for staff time, data collection tools, or for an outside evaluation contractor. You are responsible for tracking and maintaining financial records related to your evaluation spending. You will be asked whether the 10% requirement was met for the year on each annual report.

## Financial Documentation and Record Retention

Grantees are responsible for keeping documentation to support all grant expenditures, including, payroll records, receipts for all grant related expenses, contracts/invoices with subcontractors and consultants, travel logs, and cancelled checks.

Minnesota Statutes section 16B.98, subdivision 8, requires that **grantees maintain payroll books, payroll records, documents, accounting procedures and practices of the grant. They must be made available to the State for six years** from the end of the grant agreement, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later. Grantees may receive requests for this information, which must be submitted to MDH upon request.

## Travel Expenses

Grantee staff may be reimbursed for travel expenses while traveling for grant-related activities, trainings, meetings, or conferences – including mileage, parking fees, hotel accommodations, and meals – in the amounts that actually incurred and in accordance with the [Commissioner's Plan \(https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp).

## Mileage

**Tribal Grantees** will be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses as outlined in their Tribal Policy, not to exceed the current federal reimbursement rates (\$0.67 per mile as of January 1, 2024 for privately-owned vehicles). Federal reimbursement rates can be found on the official [U.S. General Services Administration \(https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources\)](https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources) website.

**Non-Tribal Grantees** may be reimbursed for the use of personal automobile mileage at the current Federal IRS rate (\$0.67 per mile as of January 1, 2024) for travel related to grant activities. This mileage rate is subject to change - please check the [Federal IRS \(https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates\)](https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates) webpage or contact your grant manager for the current rate. In addition to mileage, actual parking fees or toll charges may be reimbursed.

## Hotel

**Tribal Grantees** will be reimbursed for hotel and motel accommodations as outlined in their Tribal Policy, not to exceed the current [Federal GSA Per Diem Rates \(https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates\)](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates). Rates vary depending on the location and month of travel.

**Non-Tribal Grantees** may be reimbursed for hotel and motel accommodations provided that you exercise good judgment in incurring lodging costs and that charges are reasonable and consistent with the facilities available.

## Food and Beverage Costs

Generally, outside of meals for staff while in travel status, the cost of food is not an allowable item. However, if there will be group meetings or grant activities where there is justification for a grantee to provide food, please include those food costs in the “Other” line of the budget and follow the guidelines below.

- Food can only be provided if most of the attendees are non-grantee staff.
- Grant funds **may not** be used to provide food for award dinners, celebrations, or parties, etc.

For food expenses during travel status, **Tribal grantees** will be reimbursed for meal expenses as outlined in their Tribal Policy, not to exceed the [Federal GSA Per Diem Rates](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>). Rates vary by city and state.

For food expenses during travel status, **Non-Tribal grantees** may be reimbursed for meals including tax and a reasonable gratuity according to the [Commissioner’s Plan](https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/000/az/labor-relations/commissioners-plan/contract/commissioners-plan.pdf) (<https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/000/az/labor-relations/commissioners-plan/contract/commissioners-plan.pdf>) created by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget, or the actual expense, whichever is less. Alcohol purchases will not be reimbursed. Maximum reimbursement for meals including tax and gratuity is currently (subject to change) \$43/day, broken down in the table below.

Meal	Limit
Breakfast	\$11
Lunch	\$13
Dinner	\$19

## Items Requiring MDH Prior Approval

The following items require prior approval before a contract is signed or an expense is incurred. *MDH has the authority to deny the items requiring prior approval listed below.*

### Communication Pieces

The following communication pieces require prior approval:

- Radio, television, and movie theater ads.
- Advertisements in newspapers, magazines, journals, trade or association publications, electronic newsletters, or websites.
- Advertisements on billboards, bus stops, etc.

Please email your grant manager a copy of your proposed draft for review *before production*. Your grant manager will strive to get back to you with feedback or approval within 5 business

days. Please ensure enough time in the planning process to incorporate MDH feedback or questions. For more detailed information, please refer to the **Communication Approval Requirements** section above.

## Contractual Services

You may contract (also known as subcontracting) with another person or organization to perform part of the grantee duties. That person or organization is referred to as the contractor or subcontractor. **Prior approval is required for contracts/subcontracts not already included in the budget and work plan.**

If a subcontractor is already named in your most recently approved budget, approval for their selection is not necessary. If the subcontractor is *not* named in your approved budget (for instance, if you indicated “To be named” or “TBD”), approval (and a budget revision) is required once you have identified the potential person or organization. Please email your grant manager information about the proposed subcontractor for approval. In your email, include Subcontractor Name, Method of Selection, Period of Performance, Scope of Work, Method of Accountability, and Itemized/Revised Budget. MDH does not review or require that you submit copies of subcontracts.

**Grantee funding restrictions apply to all subcontractors.** You are responsible for holding any subcontractors to the same required grant fiscal standards, and for ensuring that any subcontracting entities comply with the [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act \(www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.01\)](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.01) as it applies to all data created, gathered, generated, or acquired under the grant agreement. All costs billed against the grant must be allowable costs.

### Requirements for consultants or contractors:

- Must be selected and vetted based on demonstrated expertise and merit.
- Work must be directly grant related.
- Must be included in the most recently approved work plan and/or budget.
- May not be selected if listed on the state’s prohibited vendors list.
- May not be selected if they have a conflict of interest to employees or officials of the grant.
- May not receive payment for grant writing.

## Equipment and Electronics

Equipment over \$3,000 and electronics purchases such as digital cameras, computers, phones, GPS units, interactive whiteboards, video cameras, LCD Projector, etc. require prior approval. Please note that any individual piece of equipment that costs more than \$5,000 is not allowed under this grant.

If an equipment/electronics purchase is already included in your most recently approved budget, additional approval is not necessary. If an equipment/electronics purchase is *not* included in your approved budget, prior approval (and a budget revision) is required. Please email your grant manager a proposed revised budget with the equipment/electronics purchase included for approval.

## Promotional Materials

Promotional materials that directly contribute to your grant objectives and are limited in cost may be approved on a case-by-case basis. If the promotional materials are already included in your most recently approved budget, additional approval is not necessary. If the promotional materials are *not* included in your approved budget, prior approval (and a budget revision) is required. Please email your grant manager a proposed revised budget with the promotional materials included for approval.

## Incentives and Stipends

The Long COVID Program recognizes the importance of compensating community members for their time and expertise. Both incentives and stipends are allowable expenses that require prior approval. MDH differentiates between incentives and stipends as follows:

- **Incentives** are gift cards given to participants in a program to encourage participation in something that is for their own benefit (e.g., a gift card for getting a cancer screening or attending an educational session) or for the evaluation of a program. Incentives may not be cash.
- **Stipends** are gift cards or payment given to an individual who provides some kind of *work or service* for the program itself. For example, a stipend given to advisory board members who spend two hours per month helping develop or guide the program. Another example would be a peer mentor who goes out into the community to teach others about HIV/AIDS transmission and protection.

The costs of incentives are to be reasonable in their nature and amount; not exceeding what a prudent person would deem appropriate under the circumstances at the time the decision was made to incur the cost.

**Gift cards** purchased as incentives and/or stipends must be **carefully managed and tracked** per requirements of the grant agreement and are subject to financial reconciliations and audits. Grantees must keep logs of gift card recipients and the date the gift card was received by participant. Incentives must be always kept in a **secure locked location** (ex: locked drawer, locked cabinet). If the incentives and/or stipends are already included in your most recently approved budget, additional approval is not necessary. If the incentives and/or stipends are *not* included in your approved budget, prior approval (and a budget revision) is required. Please email your grant manager a proposed revised budget with the incentives and/or stipends included for approval.

## Out-of-state Travel

Out-of-state travel expenses include but are not limited to:

- Conference or workshop registration fees.
- Commercial transportation (air, light rail, bus, shuttle bus, taxi, etc.) provided that no air transportation is by first class unless authorized by MDH. Fares for light rail, bus, shuttle bus, and taxi will be reimbursed from the airport to hotel and from the hotel to airport.
- Reasonable checked baggage fees for flights.

- Meals in accordance with the [Commissioner's Plan \(https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp). Meal reimbursement rates vary for out-of-state metropolitan areas.

All out-of-state travel requires prior approval and must relate to grant duties or activities. If the out-of-state travel is already included in your approved budget and work plan, additional approval is not necessary. If the out-of-state travel is *not* included in your approved budget and work plan, prior approval (and a budget revision) is required. Please email your grant manager a proposed revised budget and work plan with the out-of-state travel included for approval along with a brief justification of how the out-of-state travel will support your Long COVID Program objectives.

## Allowable Uses of Long COVID Program Funds

Allowable uses of grant funds include, but are not limited to:

- a. Approved prevention or screening services
- b. Building networks and collaborations, including, supporting the organization's leaders to engage with other partners in collective efforts to inform policy, system, and environmental conditions that increase health opportunities for priority populations (e.g., participating in advisory groups or building cross-sector partnerships)
- c. Childcare for program participants (grantees may provide group childcare for participants but may not reimburse participants for childcare expenses)
- d. Computers that will be directly used for your proposed activities
- e. Costs associated with attending any required MDH-sponsored events (e.g., mileage, meals, lodging)
- f. Developing and training community leaders, including, staff development related to the project, in order to build a community's capacity to act to address health inequities related to long COVID and related conditions and/or better support those in need
- g. Food and refreshments for community meetings, sessions, etc. may be allowed as appropriate. Refer to the **Food and Beverage Costs** section for restrictions and food costs limits.
- h. Office supplies that are not included in the organization's indirect cost pool
- i. Project implementation, including, program operations, staff salaries, benefits, etc.
- j. Project planning, including, community assessment or data collection activities to inform project development (e.g., mapping community assets and needs or engaging stakeholders in developing creative, sustainable solutions)
- k. Promotional materials such as buttons, stickers, magnets, etc. that are intended to generate visibility or interest in your project, generate awareness, etc.
- l. Speaker fees directly related to the Long COVID project
- m. Transportation for program participants in the form of non-cash support, such as bus tokens, cab rides, etc.; *all grantees* may provide program-provided transportation in an organization vehicle, rented bus, etc.)

## Unallowable Uses of Long COVID Program Funds

Unallowable costs are expenditures for which grant funds cannot be used. MDH has the authority to disallow expenditures not preapproved. MDH staff review invoices and reserve the right to question or take action on inappropriate uses of funds. Unallowable uses of Long COVID Program funds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Alcohol or any illegal substance
- b. Any cost not directly related to the Long COVID grant
- c. Any expenses that do not directly contribute to the activities or deliverables in the work plan
- d. Any individual piece of equipment that costs more than \$5,000
- e. Bad debts or personal debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- f. Capital improvements or alterations
- g. Cash assistance paid directly to individuals to meet their personal or family needs, including cash payments to participants (stipends must be non-cash)
- h. Conducting compliance checks
- i. Contingencies
- j. Contributions or donations
- k. Costs incurred prior to or after the grant award (unless otherwise indicated)
- l. Fines and penalties
- m. Fundraising
- n. Gifts or bonuses for staff
- o. Goods or services for staff personal use
- p. Grant writing
- q. Interest
- r. Lobbying, political contributions
- s. Losses on agreements or contracts
- t. Ongoing medical care or treatment of a disease or disability
- u. Political campaigns on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office
- v. Purchase of vehicle(s) for program use or expenses related to a vehicle's license tabs, maintenance, etc. (the IRS mileage rate includes depreciation, maintenance and repairs, tires, gasoline, oil, insurance, and license and registration fees)
- w. Research
- x. Sponsorships of events, trainings, or advertisements that are not directly related to the Long COVID grant
- y. Staff meals (except during approved travel)
- z. Supplanting of funds from other sources
- aa. Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services

## Lobbying Restrictions

Long COVID projects, especially projects working on Level of Change 3, may potentially involve advocating for change in local, regional, tribal, or state policy. **Grant funds may not be used for lobbying**, which MDH defines as advocating for a specific public policy after it has been formally introduced to a legislative body. However, **grantees may use grant funds to educate stakeholders about the importance of policies as a public health strategy**. Education includes providing facts, assessment data, reports, program descriptions, and information about budget issues and population impacts without making a recommendation on a specific piece of legislation. Education may be provided to public policy makers, other decision makers, specific stakeholders, and the general community.

Lobbying restrictions do *not* apply to informal or private policies. Informal or private policies, sometimes called “voluntary” policies, are policies passed by an organization. For example, an apartment building may establish its own smoke-free policy (one not required by law). You *may* choose to advocate or lobby for or against these kinds of policies.

Educational materials related to long COVID and related conditions may be made available to the public and governmental bodies, officials, and employees. These materials may not advocate for the adoption or rejection of an official action, but may contain facts, analysis, studies, and research. Grant funds may not be used to participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

Other funding sources may be used to influence an official action of a governmental unit or tribal government related to long COVID and related conditions, in accordance with federal and state law, and grantee policy and funding restrictions, but they must clearly document which activities are covered by which funding source. Volunteers of a grantee who spend more than \$250 of their own funds in any year to influence state legislation or administrative rules may need to register as a lobbyist under Minnesota Statute 10A.01, subdivision 21. Information about registration is available from the state Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board at 1-800-657-3889.

If you have questions about navigating the line between advocacy and lobbying, contact your grant manager *before you begin the activity*.

## Maximizing Your Long COVID Funds

Grantees are *strongly* encouraged to closely monitor spending to ensure that *all* grant funds awarded to your organization are used for the Long COVID project within the grant period.

State money legislated for use in grants comes with spending deadlines. If encumbered prior to a state fiscal year’s (SFY) close, funds may be used for up to 12 months after the SFY end date. Funding for the Long COVID Program was awarded starting in SFY24, which ends on June 30, 2024. This is important for the grantees as it affects their ability to carryforward funds from one budget year to the next.

Most Long COVID grants have a start date of June 28, 2024, and a Year 1 budget supported by SFY24 funds. Because of State spending rules, Year 1 grant budgets should be fully spent by June 30, 2025. After this date, SFY24 funds must be closed out and can’t be carried forward into Year 2.



Long COVID grants with a start date of July 1, 2024 or after have Year 1 budgets supported by SFY25 funding. The end date for SFY25 is June 30, 2025. Since State spending rules allow funds to be used up to 12 months after the SFY ends (June 30, 2026), these grantees may be able to carryforward unspent Year 1 funds. This will depend on performance and prior approval by the grant manager.

The funding source used for each grant was solely related to the Program maximizing use of available funds.

Regardless of which funding set-up applies to your grant, it is difficult to make the case for additional funding when a portion of grant funds remains unused each cycle. **We strongly recommend that you check program spending against your budget at least quarterly to ensure spending is on track and that a plan is in place to spend your entire award amount.** Your grant manager is available to provide support around spending matters, and around revising budgets and work plans as needed to maximize your funding. Talk to your grant manager if you have any questions or concerns about your spending or budgeting.

## Budget and Work Plan Revisions

### Budget Revisions: More than 10% of the Budget Line

Funds must be spent in accordance with the negotiated line-item budget summary and budget approved by MDH. **If you anticipate changes that are greater than 10% of any of the approved overall budget lines, you must request a budget revision.** (Budget revisions are not allowed in the last month of a biennium. Biennium refers to the State’s funding cycle. The legislature approves the State budget for a two-year period. The Long COVID grants are starting in the biennium that runs from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025.) Any change to the indirect rate listed in the Grant Agreement requires prior approval by MDH.

For example, if you would like to move \$4,578 from *Supplies* to *Salary & Fringe* because you are anticipating needing extra staff time during a transition period, first check to see if \$4,578 is 10% or more of either the *Supplies* or the *Salary & Fringe* line. In the example below, the total *Salary & Fringe* line is \$80,016 (10% is \$8,002) and the total *Supplies* line is \$19,255 (10% is \$1,925). Because the \$4,578 you want to move is more than 10% of the *Supplies* line total (\$1,925), you must request a budget revision before the change in spending occurs.

### Budget Summary

2-year Budget Summary	
Line/Category	TOTAL
Salary & Fringe Benefits	\$ 80,016.00
Contractual Services	\$ 33,000.00
Travel	\$ 5,450.00
Supplies	\$ 19,255.00
Other	\$ 9,800.00
<b>Subtotal (direct costs)</b>	<b>\$ 147,521.00</b>
Indirect Costs	\$ 14,208.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 161,729.00</b>

To request a budget revision, make the proposed changes to a copy of your most recently approved budget. Please underline new text or **highlight cells** or write in a new **color** and ~~strikethrough old text~~. For example:

## Salary & Fringe Line

Year 4 (July 2022 - June 2023)					
Staff position	Staff Name	Salary Charged to Grant	% Fringe (if applicable)	Fringe Total (if applicable)	Line Total
Community Health Worker	Jose Rodriguez	<del>\$ 49,675.00</del>	17.64%	<del>\$ 8,762.67</del>	
Community Health Worker	Jose Rodriguez	\$ 51,577.00	17.64%	\$ 9,098.18	\$ 60,675.18
Community Health Supervisor	Aisha Abdi	\$ 5,055.25	17.64%	\$ 891.75	\$ 5,947.00
Public Health Nurse	Sara Smith	\$ 15,277.00	17.64%	\$ 2,694.86	\$ 17,971.86
<b>Year 4 Total for Salary &amp; Fringe</b>					<b>\$ 84,594.04</b>

Note: Please delete the Line Total amount for the salary you are revising. Feel free to add or remove budget line/s, but ensure the total for salary & fringe calculation includes the newly added salary line/s to match the intended amount.

## Supplies Line

Supplies (office supplies, program supplies, mailing, phone services, food, etc.)			
Full 2-year			
Description	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total
Dinner for advisory group (15 people) at \$100 per meeting X 12 meeting	100	\$ 12.000	\$ 1,200.00
Computer for Program Coordinator (prorated at 75%)	1	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
IT Costs (prorated at 15% of agency cost)	1	\$ 3,255.00	\$ 3,255.00
Office Supplies		<del>\$ 5,000.00</del>	
Office Supplies	1	\$ 1,422.00	\$ 1,422.00
Printing, Copying and Postage	1	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Books and supplies for Classes		<del>\$ 4,000.00</del>	
Books and supplies for Classes	30	\$ 100.00	\$ 3,000.00
Snacks for Program Participants	160	\$ 20.00	\$ 3,200.00
<b>2-Year Total for Supplies</b>			<b>\$ 14,677.00</b>

Once you have revised your budget to reflect the changes you would like to request, **email a copy of the proposed budget to your grant manager. Include a brief description of and justification for the change in the body of the email.**

Your grant manager will review your proposed changes and get back to you with any questions, requests for revisions (generally within five business days). Please ensure enough time in your planning process to allow for revisions if needed. *MDH has authority to deny budget revision requests.*

## Other Reasons to Request a Budget Revision

In addition to changes of more than 10% to a budget line, **grantees should request a budget revision anytime the budget expenditures change significantly.** For example, if a grantee:

- Has a staffing change on the Long COVID project.
- Has a new spending need, such as a new computer or additional supplies not already listed in the budget.

- Needs to remove something from the budget that will no longer be needed, such as a professional development opportunity or supplies for an event.

It is important to remember that your spending must always align with your most recently approved budget on file. If you have a question about whether a budget revision is needed or have any questions about an allowable expense, please contact your grant manager.

## Budget Modifications: 10% or Less of Budget Line

If you would like to make a change to your budget that is 10% or less of the budget lines in question, you do not need to request a budget revision. Simply make the changes to your most recently approved budget as shown above and email the changes to your grant manager. **Grant managers must be notified of budget modifications to ensure your budget in your MDH grant file is always up-to-date and aligns with your spending.**

## Work Plan Revisions

Grantees must request a work plan revision if an activity, objective, or strategy is changing and is no longer consistent with your most recently approved work plan. To request a work plan revision, make the proposed changes to a copy of your most recently approved work plan. Please underline new text and ~~striketrough old text~~. For example:

**OBJECTIVE 1B: By June 30, 2021, 75 percent of program participants will see reductions in the level of risk factors that can lead to diabetes and its complications.**

STRATEGY 1B.1: Educate people with prediabetes or at risk for diabetes on how to prevent diabetes.

ACTIVITY	LEAD PERSON & SUPPORT STAFF	PARTNERS INVOLVED	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY OUTPUT
Activity 1: Implement the <u>Together We Prevent Diabetes Program (Juntos Evitamos la Diabetes)</u> , † <u>CAN Prevent Diabetes Program (ICANPD) tailored to culturally-designed programs for the Somali and Latino communities</u>	Project Coordinator  Diabetes Educators	University of Minnesota Extension (Family Development-Health & Nutrition)  <u>Latinx Health Resource Organization (LHRO)</u>  <u>Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota</u>	September 2019-June 2020  August 2020-May 2021	10 Somali and 10 Latino participants recruited per cycle  80 percent of participants complete <del>ICANPD</del> <u>Together We Prevent Diabetes Program (Juntos Evitamos la Diabetes)</u>  16 initial sessions conducted 6 follow-up sessions conducted  Pre-post tests administered to all participants and results compiled

Once you have revised your work plan to reflect the changes you would like to request, **email a copy of the proposed work plan to your grant manager. Include a brief description of and justification for the change in the body of the email.**

Your grant manager will review your proposed changes and get back to you with any questions, requests for revisions (generally within five business days). *MDH has authority to deny work plan revision requests.*

## Payment and Invoice Procedures

### Invoice Instructions

Grantees must submit invoices using the [invoice form](#) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/docs/invoiceform.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/docs/invoiceform.pdf)) provided on our website. Please submit invoices as an e-mail attachment to [emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us](mailto:emerson.wheeler@state.mn.us).

Financial transactions will be on a reimbursement basis. Grantee reimbursement requests must correspond to the way expenses were budgeted in your most recently approved budget. For example, if you budgeted for food at a project advisory board meeting under “Supplies,” then the food expenses should be invoiced under the “Supplies” line. MDH staff will review each invoice against the approved grant budget and grant expenditures to-date before approving payment. You do **not** need to separate evaluation spending from implementation spending on your monthly invoices.

When completing the invoice, once you enter your total expenses in each line-item, the invoice form will auto-calculate your subtotal for you. Once you have a subtotal, please enter the appropriate amount of indirect based on the rate approved in your budget (e.g., if you were approved at 10% indirect, enter 10% of your subtotal in the “Indirect” line). The form will then auto-calculate your total for the invoice period. Please note that the template is password-protected to avoid any accidental errors.

Please note, **indirect costs may not be charged to the grant during periods when no work related to the Long COVID grant has been performed.** Indirect costs must always be proportional to the direct costs on your invoice.

As stated in your grant agreement, **invoices must be submitted in a timely fashion and are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the following month the end of the quarterly invoice period.** For example, if an expense is incurred during July to September 2024, an invoice must be submitted for this expense by October 15, 2024. If you would like to request an alternative payment schedule (e.g., monthly or bimonthly) please send a written request to your grant manager.

If you have any questions about how to submit an invoice, please contact your grant manager.

## Payment Procedure

MDH staff will review invoices as soon as possible and send them to the MDH Finance Department for additional processing and payment. Payment will be sent to the location each grantee specified when the organization registered as a vendor with the State of Minnesota. If you have questions about your payment, please contact your grant manager.

**MDH has authority to deny invoices submitted more than 30 days after the submission dates specified in your grant agreement. By statute, the state has 30 days from the receipt of the invoice at MDH to issue payment.** If your organization or grant program is having trouble with spending grant funds or meeting financial requirements, please notify your grant manager as soon as possible and we will work to support you.

Per your grant agreement, if deliverables are not completed satisfactorily, the state has the authority to withhold funds, recover funds, or both, as well as to terminate the grant agreement. Refer to your grant agreement for more details.

MDH has authority to deny reimbursement for work deemed unsatisfactory, or performed in violation of federal, state or local law, ordinance, rule or regulation, as well as costs not preapproved nor in accordance with approved work plan activities and strategies, as noted in this guide.