



Rural Community Health Center Apprenticeship Grant

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Minnesota Department of Health
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10/01/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5154.

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RFP Part 1: Overview

1.1 General Information

- **Announcement Title:** Rural Community Health Center Apprenticeship Grant
- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Program Website:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/index.html#rchca>
- **Application Deadline:** November 1, 2024, 4:30 p.m. CT

1.2 Program Description

The Rural Community Health Center Apprenticeship Grant supports registered apprenticeship programs in federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) operating in rural Minnesota. The goal of the funding is to support the rural primary care workforce by establishing new FQHC registered apprenticeship programs or funding costs of existing FQHC registered apprenticeship programs in rural parts of the state. This grant program is being administered by the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care within the Minnesota Department of Health.

1.3 Funding and Project Dates

Funding

This program uses federal funds from a grant from the Centers for Disease Control, CDC-RFA-OT21-2103: National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities. 100% of the costs are funded with federal money, and 0% of the costs are funded by non-governmental sources.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	\$25,000
Estimated Number of Awards	2
Estimated Award Maximum	\$50,000
Estimated Award Minimum	\$10,000

Match Requirement

There is no match requirement.

Project Dates

- RFP published October 1, 2024
- Grant Application due to MDH November 1, 2024
- Grant Announcement to Recipients (estimate) December 6, 2024
- Grant Agreements begin (estimate) January 1, 2025
- Grant Agreements end March 31, 2025
- Final Reporting date April 30, 2025

1.4 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include federally qualified health centers and nonprofit associations of community health centers that are operating registered apprenticeship programs at FQHCs located in rural Minnesota outside of the Twin Cities Seven County Metro Area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington.) The applicant does not need to be located in greater Minnesota, but must use the funds to support registered apprenticeship programs at FQHCs located in rural parts of the state.

Grant funds are not transferrable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Collaboration

Applicants who are not FQHCs are required to collaborate with FQHCs located in rural Minnesota.

1.5 Questions and Answers

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email or phone to katie.hentges@state.mn.us or 651-201-5154. All answers will be posted within five business days at

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/index.html#rchca>.

Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time (CT), on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.

To ensure the proper and fair evaluation of all applications, other communications regarding this RFP including verbal, telephone, written or internet initiated by or on behalf of any applicant to any employee of the Department, other than questions submitted to as outlined above, are prohibited. **Any violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

RFP Part 2: Program Details

2.1 Priorities

Health Equity Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

The grant aims to increase health equity by increasing access to health care in rural Minnesota. It will do so by supporting apprenticeship programs that enable people to become health care professionals such as medical assistants or dental assistants.

This grant will serve:

- Populations living in greater Minnesota

Grant outcomes will include:

- Increased primary care workforce in greater Minnesota, as measured by the number of participants in rural FQHC registered apprenticeship programs

2.2 Eligible Projects

Funding can be used to support the establishment or operation of registered apprenticeship programs at Federally Qualified Health Centers located in greater Minnesota, defined as outside the Twin Cities Seven County Metro Area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington.) Examples of registered apprenticeship programs include but are not limited to programs training medical assistants and dental assistants. Programs must recruit apprentices from FQHC staff and the population in the geographic area served by the FQHC.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Solicitating donations
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Food

2.3 Grant Management Responsibilities

Grant Agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant agreement. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grantee should read the grant agreement, sign, and once signed, comply with all conditions of the grant agreement.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place and the State's Authorized Representative has notified the Grantee that work may start.

The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Accountability and Reporting Requirements

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

The reporting schedule will be:

- One program and financial report on April 30th, 2025, for all program expenses.

Grant Monitoring

"Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 and Policy on Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants over \$50,000
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants over \$250,000
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants over \$50,000.

There will be one monitoring visit if the grant is over \$50,000.

Grant Payments

Per State Policy on Grant Payments, reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless MDH has given the grantee a written extension.

The invoicing and payment schedule will be: One program and financial report on April 30th, 2025, for all program expenses.

2.4 Grant Provisions

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

(a) Municipalities A grantee that is a municipality, defined as a county, town, city, school district or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state authorized by law to enter into contracts is subject to the contracting requirements set forth under [Minn. Stat. § 471.345](#). Projects that involve construction work are subject to the applicable prevailing wage laws, including those under [Minn. Stat. § 177.41](#), et. seq.

(b) Non-municipalities Grantees that are not municipalities must adhere to the following standards in the event that duties assigned to the Grantee are to be subcontracted out to a third party:

- i. Any services or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process consistent with the standards set forth under Minnesota Statutes 16B.
- ii. Services or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- iii. Services or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- iv. The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
 - Minnesota Department of Administration’s Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List ([Equity in Procurement \(TG/ED/VO\) Directory / Minnesota Office of State Procurement \(mn.gov\)](#));
 - Metropolitan Council’s Targeted Vendor list: Minnesota Unified Certification Program (<https://mnuccp.metc.state.mn.us/>) or
 - Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Program (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/contract-compliance-business-development-9>).
- v. The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- vi. The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records,

including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

- vii. Notwithstanding (i) - (iv) above, State may waive bidding process requirements when:
 - Vendors included in response to competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant or
 - There is only one legitimate or practical source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- viii. Projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, are subject to applicable prevailing wage laws, including those under Minnesota Statutes 177.41 through 177.44.
- ix. Grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in Minnesota: The list of debarred vendors is available at: <https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/suspended-debarred/>.

Conflicts of Interest

MDH will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and the Office of Grants Management’s Policy 08-01, “Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making.”

Applicants must complete the Applicant Conflict of Disclosure form and submit it as part of the completed application. Failure to complete and submit this form will result in disqualification from the review process.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice
- a grantee’s or applicant’s objectivity in performing the grant work is or might be otherwise impaired
- a grantee or applicant has an unfair competitive advantage

Individual conflicts of interest occur when:

- an applicant, or any of its employees, uses their position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to MDH’s time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, prestige, or influence
- An applicant, or any of its employees, receives or accepts money, or anything else of value, from another state grantee or grant applicant with respect to the specific project covered by this RFP/project.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, has equity or a financial interest in, or partial or whole ownership of, a competing grant applicant organization.

- An applicant, or any of its employees, is an employee of MDH or is a relative of an employee of MDH.

In cases where a conflict of interest is perceived, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Public Data and Trade Secret Materials

All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the State. In accordance with [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), all applications and their contents are private or nonpublic until the applications are opened.

Once the applications are opened, the name and address of each applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process, which is defined by statute as when MDH has completed negotiating the grant agreement with the selected applicant.

After MDH has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), subd. 1(b). A statement by an applicant that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application or its contents. ([Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), subd. 3(a)).

If an applicant submits any information in an application that it believes to be trade secret information, as defined by [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), the applicant must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its application at the time it is submitted,
- Include a statement attached to its application justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and
- Defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless MDH and the State of Minnesota, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense.
- This indemnification survives MDH's award of a grant agreement. In submitting an application in response to this RFP, the applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of MDH. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

MDH reserves the right to reject a claim that any particular information in an application is trade secret information if it determines the applicant has not met the burden of establishing that the information constitutes a trade secret. MDH will not consider the budgets submitted by applicants to be proprietary or trade secret materials. Use of generic trade secret language encompassing substantial portions of the application or simple assertions of trade secret without substantial explanation of the basis for that designation will be insufficient to warrant a trade secret designation.

If a grant is awarded to an applicant, MDH may use or disclose the trade secret data to the extent provided by law. Any decision by the State to disclose information determined to be trade secret information will be made consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act ([Ch. 13 MN Statutes](#)) and other relevant laws and regulations.

If certain information is found to constitute trade secret information, the remainder of the application will become public; in the event a data request is received for application information, only the trade secret data will be removed and remain nonpublic.

Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#), subd. 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Requirements for all Grantees

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. [Minn. Stat. § 363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minn. Rules, part [5000.3550](#).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Non-Transferability

Grant funds are not transferrable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

2.5 Review and Selection Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content specialists. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

MDH will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. **The award decisions of MDH are final and not subject to appeal.** Additionally:

- MDH reserves the right to withhold the distribution of funds in cases where proposals submitted do not meet the necessary criteria.
- The RFP does not obligate MDH to award a grant agreement or complete the project, and MDH reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest.
- MDH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or request additional information to further clarify or validate information submitted in the application, provided the application, as submitted, substantially complies with the requirements of this RFP. There is, however, no guarantee MDH will look for information or clarification outside of the submitted written application. Therefore, it is important that all applicants ensure that all sections of their application are complete to avoid the possibility of failing an evaluation phase or having their score reduced for lack of information.

Selection Criteria and Weight

The review committee will be reviewing each applicant on a 100 point scale. A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the selection criteria.

The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged is detailed in attachment A.

Grantee Past Performance and Due Diligence Review Process

- It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them.
- State policy requires states to conduct a pre-award risk assessment prior to a grant award. Additional information may be required for proposed budgets of \$50,000 and higher to a potential applicant in order to comply with [Policy on Pre-Award Risk Assessment for Potential Grantees](#).

Notification

MDH anticipates notifying all applicants via email of funding decisions by December 6, 2024.

RFP Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions

3.1 Application Deadline

All applications **must** be received by MDH no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on November 1, 2024.

Late applications will not be accepted. It is the applicant’s sole responsibility to allow sufficient time to address all potential delays caused by any reason whatsoever. MDH will not be responsible for delays caused by mail, delivery, computer, or technology problems.

Acknowledgement of application receipt. The online Grants Portal will send an automated email to the user who submitted the application to confirm the submission of your application. Additionally, the application status will change from “Draft” to “Submitted” on the Applicant Dashboard and record the date the application was submitted. If the application is still in draft status by the application deadline, you will no longer be able to edit or submit the application. If you do not receive an automated email confirming submission, or encounter any other issues with the online application, please contact us promptly at katie.hentges@state.mn.us. We encourage you to submit in advance of the deadline to allow time to address any technical issues.

3.2 Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted electronically through the ORHPC online [Grants Portal](#).

Please reference the [Grant Guide](#) for information on account creation, password recovery, application creation, and collaboration.

- Existing users: If your organization has a grant with the ORHPC, and you already have a user account, please enter your credentials and log-in. If you forgot your passwords, please use the “Forgot your Password?” link to reset your password.
- New users: If your organization does not already have a profile in the system, you will need to create an account. Please click on “Create New Account” to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.
- Not sure? If you think that you or someone at your organization has already registered your organization in the system, do not create a new account. Please contact the program administrator at clinical.dental.education.innovation.MDH@state.mn.us to receive a username and password.

Once in the system, click on the link “apply” located on the upper tool bar on the home page. You will be redirected to a list of open applications in the system; select the appropriate program. Read “[RFP: Application Instructions](#)” within the request for proposal for further instructions on how to address application questions outlined in the online portal.

If you have any questions, please submit them to: katie.hentges@state.mn.us.

3.3 Application Instructions

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete:

Organization and Applicant Information:

Basic information about the applicant entity is requested, including legal and business name, address, and tax identification. This information will be used for contracting purposes.

Contact Information

This section requests contact information for the organization. All applicants must identify the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). This person is often the CEO of the organization and must have the authority to enter a contract with the State. An additional program contact is also advised.

Project Narrative

The online form will ask the following questions about the applicant organization and proposed program model:

- Organizational Overview
 - Provide a summary of your organization. Include your organization’s mission, location, legal structure, populations served, and partners.
- Statement of Need
 - Include a statement of need for the proposed project and explain how the project will address this need.
 - Describe how the proposed apprenticeship program will have a positive impact on the state’s health professional workforce.
 - Describe how the proposed apprenticeship program will impact health equity.
- Project Description
 - Include a narrative of project activities, including the location of the rural FQHC hosting or participating in the apprenticeship program, the professions apprentices will be trained in, and an overview of activities that will take place.

Work Plan

Applicants will provide data about the program they are proposing. If your application is selected for award, this will be used to develop the activity work plan that will serve as the basis of a contract. Applicants will break their project down into activities, and answer the following:

- Description of the activity
- Staff role/title of the staff person responsible for the activity. If subcontracted, note the company or provider
- Start date
- End date

Budget and Budget Narrative

Applicants will provide a detailed justification of the budget. The narrative will be broken down by each budget category, and provide information on the need for specific expenditures and how they will support the work plan.

- Salary:
 - This category should be used for program personnel that work directly for the applicant organization.
- Fringe:
 - Applicants would provide the cost of benefits and fringe based on their own organization's allocation schedules or plans. Provide an explanation for the fringe rate and a summary of what costs are included.
- Travel:
 - This line should be used by grantees to detail costs for mileage and lodging.
 - In-State room and board for students and trainers requiring accommodations to participate in trainings is an allowable expense and will be reimbursed in the same manner and in no greater amount than provided in the current ["Commissioner's Plan"](#) promulgated by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget; or, at the Grantee's established rate (for all travel related costs), whichever is lower, at the time travel occurred.
 - Mileage must be calculated at the current IRS approved rate of \$0.655.
- Supplies:
 - Outline estimated costs for supplies and materials.
- Contracted:
 - This category should be used for any external contracts required to offer the trainings or reach proposed grant objectives.
- Other:
 - Grantee will list project specific costs here that are not already addressed and provide a brief description of the costs.
- Indirect:
 - An indirect cost rate is a percentage used to distribute indirect costs to all of an organization's programs that benefit from them. Grantees cannot claim indirect costs in excess of the indirect cost rate that applies to their organization. Grantees must submit and retain on-file, the corresponding documentation of that indirect cost rate as outlined below:
 - Grantees with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate can use grant funds for indirect costs in an amount up to but not exceeding that rate. Grantees must submit proof of the federally negotiated indirect cost rate as an attachment to this application.

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that the rate is not applied to direct costs that are excluded from the indirect rate.

- Grantees without a federally negotiated indirect cost rate can use grant funds for indirect costs in an amount up to but not exceeding 10% of total direct costs.

Required and Optional Attachments

- Required Attachments
 - [Due Diligence Review Form](#)
 - i. Tribal Nations and Community Health Boards do not need to submit a Due Diligence Review Form.
- Optional Attachments
 - Organization’s Geographic Service Area

Conflict of Interest

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requires all applicants to complete a conflict of interest statement prior to award of funds in accordance with federal, state and agency policies. **The Conflict of Interest form is a required part of the online application.**

You may find a list of the questions that you will be asked to complete in the online application form at: [Applicant/Recipient Conflict of Interest Form \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf).

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated.

Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated. **MDH reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.**

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the applicant.

RFP Part 4: Attachments

- 1) Included in the RFP Document:
 - a) Attachment A: Application Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Attachment A: Application Evaluation Criteria

A numerical scoring system will be used to evaluate eligible applications. Scores will be used to develop final recommendations.

All complete applications from eligible applicants will be scored on a 100-point scale. Below is a breakdown of that scale, and the component of the application where the information must be presented.

- Need (20 points)
 - Does the narrative clearly state the need for this proposed project?
- Impact (30 points)
 - Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the location and population that will be served by this project?
 - Does the statement of need explain how the proposed apprenticeship program have a positive impact on the state’s health professional workforce?
 - Does the statement of need explain how the proposed apprenticeship program will impact health equity?
- Project Description (30 points)
 - Does the project description include the following elements?
 - Location of the rural FQHC hosting or participating in the apprenticeship program
 - Professions apprentices will be trained in
 - Overview of activities that will take place.
- Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points)
 - Does the budget include a justification and breakdown for each requested budget line item?
 - Is the budget reasonable for successful completion of the proposed activities, and does the narrative give adequate details on how the funds will be used?