



# Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Minnesota Newborn Screening Program  
PO Box 64899  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-201-5466  
[health.newbornscreening@state.mn.us](mailto:health.newbornscreening@state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

09/30/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5466.

# Table of Contents

Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births	1
RFP Part 1: Overview	3
1.1 General Information	3
1.2 Program Description	3
1.3 Funding and Project Dates	3
1.4 Eligible Applicants	4
1.5 Questions and Answers	4
RFP Part 2: Program Details	5
2.1 Priorities	5
2.2 Eligible Projects	5
2.3 Grant Management Responsibilities	6
2.4 Grant Provisions	7
2.5 Review and Selection Process	9
RFP Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions	11
3.1 Application Deadline	11
3.2 Application Submission Instructions	11
3.3 Application Instructions	11
RFP Part 4: Attachments	13

# RFP Part 1: Overview

## 1.1 General Information

- **Announcement Title:** Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births
- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Program Website:** [Newborn Screening Program \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/newbornscreening/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/newbornscreening/index.html)
- **Application Deadline:** 11/29/2024

## 1.2 Program Description

The purpose of the Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births funding is to minimize barriers to newborn hearing and pulse oximetry screening in out-of-hospital birth settings. Increasing access to portable screening equipment will provide timely results for infants and children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) as early as possible and connect those children/families to timely and appropriate services and interventions.

Newborn hearing screening in Minnesota became mandated in 2007. [Minn. Stat. § 144.966](#) requires health professionals attending a birth outside of a hospital to provide both oral and written information to parents about the importance of hearing screening. Additionally, as stated in the statute, the professional conducting the procedure must report the results to the parents, primary care provider, and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Out-of-hospital birth providers who are trained as hearing screeners and have full access to equipment to screen infants can offer the newborn hearing screen instead of having to refer clients elsewhere or delaying the screen due to limited access.

Babies found with critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) are sometimes sent home without care because they appear healthy. At home, these babies can develop serious health problems and often require emergency care. If CCHD is detected early, however, infants can be treated and lead healthier lives.

Pulse oximetry screening in Minnesota became mandated in 2013. [Minn. Stat. § 144.1251](#) requires birth providers to provide screening for critical congenital heart disease to all newborns prior to discharge; results of the screening must be reported to MDH. Out-of-Hospital birth providers with access to pulse oximetry devices can provide this important screening in a timely manner.

## 1.3 Funding and Project Dates

### Funding

The funding for this grant opportunity is from Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), to MDH; award numbers: 6 H4NMC49264-01-0, and 2 H61MC00035-24-00. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date, whichever is later. Funding will be allocated through a competitive process.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	\$5,519 per grant for hearing screening and ear probes \$595 per grant for pulse oximetry screening equipment
Estimated Number of Awards	10 hearing screening equipment awards 30 pulse oximetry screening equipment awards
Estimated Award Maximum	\$6,114
Estimated Award Minimum	\$595

**Match Requirement**

There are no match requirements.

**Project Dates**

09/30/2024-11/29/2024

**1.4 Eligible Applicants**

- Midwives practicing in the state of Minnesota

Mandatory requirements for applicants include adhering to [Minn. Stat. § 144.966](#) and/or [Minn. Stat. § 144.1251](#); requiring the screening, communication, and reporting of results to parents, primary care providers, and MDH.

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**

Multi-organization collaboration is not allowed.

**1.5 Questions and Answers**

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email or phone to [health.newbornscreening@state.mn.us](mailto:health.newbornscreening@state.mn.us). All answers will be posted within five business days on MDH’s [Newborn Screening Program Information: Announcements](#) page.

Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), on Monday, November 25, 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 employees of MDH, 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 purpose of the Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births funding is to minimize barriers to newborn hearing and pulse oximetry screening in out-of-hospital birth settings.

This grant will serve:

- Midwives practicing in Minnesota
- All regions of Minnesota

Grant outcomes will include:

- Increased access to newborn hearing and pulse oximetry screening to out-of-hospital birth providers.
- An increase of reported screening results submitted to the Minnesota Newborn Screening Program as mandated by statute.

### Other Competitive Priorities

Grant applicants can earn extra points if their practice includes screening:

- Non-Metro Minnesota infants  
Non-Metro is defined as living outside of the counties: Anoka, Ramsey, Washington, Hennepin, Carver, Dakota, and Scott.

## 2.2 Eligible Projects

- Purchase portable hearing and/or pulse oximetry equipment and supplies before the end of the grant period.

### 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
- Salary
- Travel
- Fundraising

## 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. The grantee is expected to read the grant agreement, sign, and comply with all conditions of the grant agreement. Grantee should provide a copy of the grant agreement to all grantee staff working on the grant.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place and MDH'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

Receipt proving the purchase of hearing and/or pulse oximetry screening must be provided to MDH's Newborn Screening Program.

Grantees will be expected to comply with [Minn. Stat. § 144.966](#) and or [Minn. Stat. § 144.1251](#) as applicable.

Minnesota licensed birthing professionals are required to submit hearing and pulse oximetry results to MDH through [MNScreen](#) for each newborn under the care of the state-licensed birthing center. Families can refuse or delay newborn screening, for which a [Parental Refusal or Delay of Newborn Screening](#) form must be submitted.

Grantees will be required to submit periodic progress reports. MDH will provide grantees with form and date such reports are required.

### Grant Monitoring

The monitoring schedule will be at the discretion of MDH. Grantees will be notified and required to provide but are not limited to providing equipment invoice and/or equipment serial number(s).

### 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: no later than 6 months after funding is awarded.

## 2.4 Grant Provisions

### 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 applicants is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice.
- A grantees 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 MDH's Newborn Screening and EHDI Programs. 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. 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 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 40-point scale (60 points if applying for both hearing and pulse oximetry screening equipment). A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the selection criteria. Consideration will be given to distributing funding throughout the state and/or regions and meeting the funding priorities identified in the legislation.

The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on the level of need (determined by the Increasing Access for Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births application) for hearing and/or pulse oximetry screening equipment, capacity to complete newborn hearing and pulse oximetry screening, and a completed work plan stating how their screening program will change after receiving newborn hearing and/or pulse oximetry screening equipment. In addition to the capacity to submit screening results to MDH. See the [Grant Application Score Sheet Guide](#) for further information about how your application will be scored.

## **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 MDH 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**

It is anticipated that grant award decisions will be made in December 2024. Applicants will be notified by email of the decision whether the grant application is selected for funding or not.

# 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 Friday, November 29, 2024. If applications are mailed, they must be received by MDH by the deadline.

**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.** MDH will "reply all" to the email address that submitted the application to acknowledge receipt of your application within one business day of the receipt of an application. If you do not receive an acknowledgment email within that time frame from when you submitted the application, it means MDH did not receive your application/documents. Please contact Samantha Colston, [sam.colston@state.mn.us](mailto:sam.colston@state.mn.us) after that time frame for further instructions.

## 3.2 Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted to Ron Brown via mail or email to:

Ron Brown  
Newborn Screening Operations Supervisor  
Minnesota Department of Health  
601 Robert St. N.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155  
[ron.brown@state.mn.us](mailto:ron.brown@state.mn.us)

## 3.3 Application Instructions

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

1. [Grant Application Score Sheet Guide](#)
2. [Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#)
3. [Newborn hearing screening work plan](#) (if applicable)
4. [Newborn pulse oximetry screening work plan](#) (if applicable)
5. [Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births application](#)

Incomplete applications will be denied 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.**

### **After granting newborn hearing and pulse oximetry screening supplies**

At the discretion of MDH, grantees will be notified for additional information the grantee will be required to provide, which includes:

- Equipment make-and-model
- Equipment manufacturer training
- Equipment serial number
- Practice visit and/or training by MDH

## RFP Part 4: Attachments

1. [Grant Application Score Sheet Guide](#)
2. [Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#)
3. [Newborn hearing screening work plan](#) (if applicable)
4. [Newborn pulse oximetry screening work plan](#) (if applicable)
5. [Increasing Access to Newborn Hearing and Pulse Oximetry Screening in Out-of-Hospital Births application](#)