

K-12 Telecommunications Grant Application Packet¹

I. Introduction

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) is charged with encouraging fair and reasonable competition for local exchange telephone service in a competitively neutral manner. Minnesota Statutes and the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 grant the Commission authority to facilitate competition and interconnection between competing local service providers. In its capacity granted by Congress and the Minnesota Legislature, and in its capacity as a neutral industry observer, the Commission will facilitate the distribution of a fund held by Qwest Corporation (dba CenturyLink). Qwest has periodically made contributions to this fund upon failure to meet specified wholesale service quality commitments. The Commission and Qwest have determined that this fund should be distributed through a grant process to promote telecommunications for institutions in Minnesota that provide primary and secondary education. This K-12 Telecommunications Fund is expected to provide single-time grants. The Commission does not expect to provide additional funds in the future. The Fund balance is approximately \$2.8 million.

II. Application Procedure

A complete application must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete an Application Cover Sheet. See Attachment 1 for a copy. Applicants may submit more than one proposal. Each project proposal must be submitted with a separate Application Cover Sheet.
2. Certify Use of Funds. See Attachment 2 for a copy. Each project proposal must be submitted with a separate **signed and notarized** Certification Statement.
3. Provide an Executive Summary briefly describing the project, the beneficiaries of the project, and the importance of the project for those beneficiaries.
4. Provide a detailed narrative that will fully describe the telecommunications equipment and/or services for which funding is sought. Include a discussion of how the project will be accomplished and by whom. Describe the resources that will be required, when the project will be initiated and completed (time-line), and where the project will be implemented. Discuss any anticipated problems

¹ This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio tape) by calling us at (651) 296-0406 (voice) or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY relay service) or 7-1-1 for those with hearing and/or speech disabilities.

or shortcomings. Detailed project budgets and costs with supporting documentation must be included. Include any other information that will support and clarify the proposal, such as diagrams, charts, specifications or other material. Clearly state the name, address and affiliation of the person that will be responsible for monitoring all funds and expenditures to ensure full compliance with the project agreement.

5. Address all eight (8) of the Application Elements listed in Section IV of the Application Packet.
6. Submit a time-line or similar outline of the critical events of the project, such as equipment purchasing, wiring, installation, interface connections, testing, etc.
7. Submit an original and six (6) complete copies of the application in hardcopy. Electronic copies will not be accepted. Except for drawings, charts, illustrations, etc., proposals should be typed using a 12-point font on standard 8.5" x 11" paper with a minimum 1" left margin.
8. Submit all copies of the completed application to the Commission at the following address:

K-12 Telecommunications Grant
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

9. **Submit all copies to the Commission no later than 4:30 p.m. on August 31, 2012.** Proposals received after that date will not receive consideration. Proposals may be modified at any time prior to the submission deadline. No modifications, changes, or alterations, will be accepted after the submission deadline. Proposals may be withdrawn from consideration at any time.

III. Threshold Eligibility

To meet threshold eligibility requirements, applicants must represent one of, or a combination of, the K-12 educational institutions listed below:

1. An elementary school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, Subd. 9,
2. A middle school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, Subd. 11,
3. A secondary school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05, Subd. 13,

4. A non-public school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 123B.41, Subds. 9 and 10. The Commission will **exclude** from this category all for-profit schools and schools that have an endowment of more than \$50,000,000 (Fifty Million Dollars)).

Additionally, all eligible projects must employ telecommunications equipment and/or services to directly improve the educational environment for students within the specified K-12 education range.

IV. Application Elements

Applicants should indicate how their proposals will meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate the direct educational benefits which the proposed project is expected to yield.
2. Demonstrate how effectively, efficiently and creatively the proposed project will utilize the funding sought.
3. Demonstrate that the proposed project can begin implementation by November 30, 2013, and that it can be completed by November 30, 2014.

Additionally, applicants must provide the following information:

4. Indicate how many K-12 students will benefit from the proposed project.
5. Indicate the number of K-12 students expected to benefit from the project that were eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program in the 2011-12 school year.
6. Indicate the number of K-12 students expected to benefit from the project for which the educational institution provides services for students with disabilities, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 125A.02, as reported in the November 30, 2011, Child Count.
7. Indicate the county and the Minnesota Public School District within which the proposed project will be implemented. Nonpublic school educators must also provide this information.
8. Indicate the extent to which the proposed project would receive matching funds from any other funding source.

V. Multiple and Joint Applications

Any applicant meeting the eligibility requirements set forth in Section III may submit more than one proposal. However, each proposal must be able to stand on its own merits. When multiple proposals are submitted, funding of one proposal does not guarantee the funding of the other proposals. Thus, where multiple proposals are dependent upon one another, the rejection of one proposal may result in the rejection of all proposals.

A group comprising institutions qualifying for eligibility pursuant to Section III, or a combination of eligible and non-eligible institutions may band together to form a consortium for the purpose of submitting project proposals. However, only the applicants that meet the eligibility criteria as set forth in Section III will be able to receive funding. Any funds granted to a consortium project must be spent only on K-12 students served by the eligible applicants.

Should a group of institutions form a consortium, one member of the group will be designated as the primary applicant and will be responsible for compliance by all the members with all the terms and conditions of the proposal and the project contract. Only an applicant satisfying the eligibility criteria stated in Section III may be designated as the primary applicant. All disbursement of funds will be made through that primary applicant. It will be that applicant's responsibility to distribute the funds to eligible members of the consortium.

VI. Selection of Projects

All eligible projects must employ telecommunications equipment and/or services to directly improve the educational environment for students within the specified K-12 education range.

The final decision on which projects will be funded will be made by the Commission. The Commission reserves the right to select or reject a project for funding without further discussion with the submitting institution. Applicants should ensure that submitted proposals are complete and accurate.

The Commission reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals if deemed in the best interest of the public. Neither the Commission, nor any other party participating in the selection process shall be liable for any cost incurred by the applicants and shall not be liable for any mistakes, omissions, errors or delays in any way associated with the selection of projects and the distribution of funds.

Selection of projects is expected to be made on or before November 30, 2012. Only those applicants whose projects have been approved for funding by the Commission will be contacted by the Commission.

VII. Project Agreement

Approval of a project will result in an obligation by the recipient of funds to complete the actions specified in the proposal within the approved time frame. Funds will be dispersed by Qwest Corporation. The successful applicant must agree to the following terms.

1. All funds will be used for the specific purposes outlined in the applicant's project proposal.
2. All projects may be subject to an audit by the Commission or any other entity designated by the Commission. If an audit reveals that the terms of the project proposal have not been followed, termination and/or a requirement to repay funding may result.
3. Upon completion of the project a Final Report must be filed with the Commission indicating how the funds were used to meet the stated project goals and requirements. Receipts and supporting documentation must be provided. Expenditures should be itemized using the following breakdown;

Labor, Training, Consulting
Hardware, Equipment, Supplies
Software
Interface and Connection Costs
Other

4. Projects must be completed, including submission of the final written report, by November 30, 2014.

VIII. Proprietary Information

Applicants should submit only public information as part of their proposals. Applicants should not submit confidential, proprietary or trade secret information with any proposal.

IX. Inquiries

Inquiries and requests for clarification should be directed to:

K-12 Telecommunications Grant
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147
Attn: Kevin O'Grady
Phone: 651-201-2218
Email: k12grant.puc@state.mn.us

Attachment 1
Application Cover Sheet

Organization type (Check all that apply):

- An elementary school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05(9).
- A middle school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05(11).
- A secondary school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 120A.05(13).
- A non-public school as defined by Minn. Stat. § 123B.41(9) and (10), (**excluding** for-profit schools and schools that have an endowment of more than \$50,000,000 (Fifty Million Dollars)).

Brief Project Description: _____

Amount Requested: \$ _____

Sequence No. (if submitting more than one project): _____ of _____

Applicant: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Designated Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

**Attachment 2
Certification Statement**

Applicant: _____

Name of Authorized Agent: _____

Title of Authorized Agent: _____

I certify that the information contained in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I submit this application on behalf of the applicant.

I certify that all funding received pursuant to this application will be used as described within this application.

Signature of Authorized Agent: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me,

a notary public, this _____ day of

_____, 2012

Notary Public

Seal