

SFY 2013 MINNESOTA ADULT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

Background

During 2011's special session, legislators authorized \$2,735,000 (with \$136,750 for administrative costs) from the General and Workforce Development funds for the adult workforce development competitive grant pilot program. The Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) has developed and plans to implement a competitive grant program for adult workforce development activities including job training, job search, job placement, pre-employment and job readiness skills, progressive development and employment opportunities. These programs will be designed for individuals living with disabilities, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those in transition to work from public assistance. Through our design consultation, DEED staff, together with the GWDC, designed a program that would assist the aforementioned groups along with veterans, older workers, and individuals who identify with minority ethnic/race groups in obtaining, retaining, and advancing along a career or educational path.

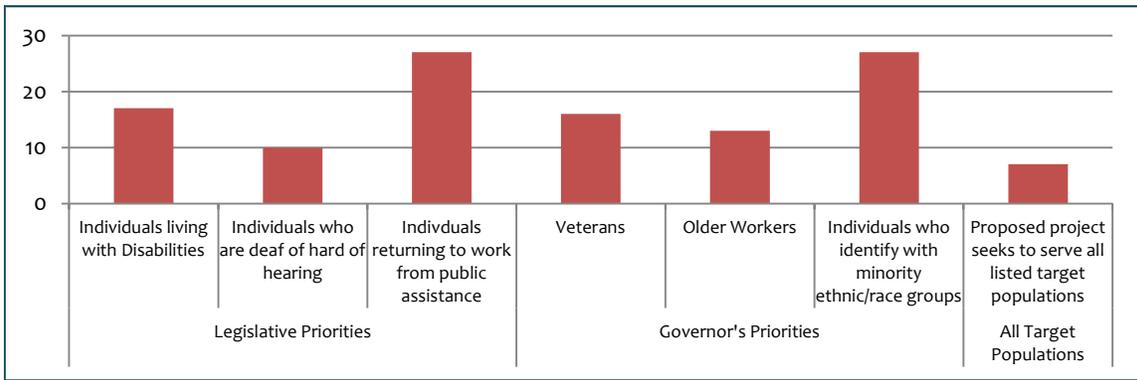
- Laws of Minnesota, 2011 Special Session 1, Chapter 4 (S.F. 2), Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision (m)

Total Funding Available and Awarded: \$2,598,250

Total Amount Requested: \$12,592,233.71

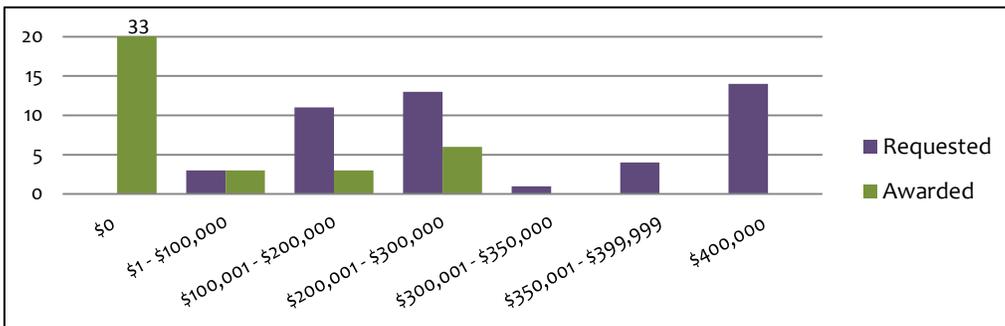
- 55 letters of intent were submitted on or before February 9, 2012.
- 45 full proposals were submitted on or before March 2, 2012.
- Geographic breakdown of full proposals:
 - Three proposals to serve residents throughout all of Minnesota;
 - Four proposals to serve residents within a part of the Twin Cities and a separate, additional part of Minnesota;
 - Seventeen proposals to serve residents of greater Minnesota; and
 - Twenty-one proposals to serve residents in some combination of counties within or directly surrounding the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area.

Demographic breakdown of full proposals:



Note: Number of proposals will not total 45 as most proposals sought to serve multiple populations.

Summary of Funding Requested and Awarded: Of the 45 proposals received, 12 were selected to receive funding.



Timeline: While we originally planned to notify all applicants of grant selections no later than Monday, April 16, we had to adjust our timeline. Due to an unexpectedly large number of program proposals, DEED staff required additional time to make funding decisions. We notified all applicants of this delay on Wednesday, April 11 via e-mail.

We are now committed to notifying all applicants no later than COB on Friday, May 18.

Synopsis of Evaluation Process:

This competitive grant proposal program contains an unusually wide scope and minimal detail, in regards to the populations policymakers wish to serve and what additional criteria they wish to apply. Faced with this challenge, DEED undertook a rigorous evaluation process that ensured varied perspectives and fair application of those parameters that were clear in the legislation.

The evaluation team consisted of a dozen agency program experts representing at least five different units across the agency: Adult Services, Dislocated Worker/Trade Adjustment Assistance, the agency's Office of Innovation, Rehabilitation Services, and Veterans' Employment. Every one of these experts has documented experience with pass-through grant administration, competitive process, and/or program evaluation.

Every proposal received a reading and scoring by at least five members of this team, using the criteria established in the Request for Proposals. To provide a robust average of proposal scores, we discarded the high and low score for each proposal. This resulted in a list of fifteen proposals with a clear advantage over the remainder, in that each of the five units could identify their top three choices within that set.

This "final fifteen" represented a strong pool for consideration, but was not focused enough to meet clear legislative intent. Policymakers had passed specific language on demographics; in addition, the budget was a result of statewide policy seeking maximum impact and a strong return on investment. Therefore, program coordinators ranked the final fifteen proposals using a relative scoring method that gave precedence to those proposals that either (a) reached specifically named target populations that no (or few) other proposals did; (b) reached areas of the state that no (or few) other proposals did; and/or (c) provided a clear plan for reaching scale – that is, large numbers of employed and/or retained workers.

Proposals that ranked highly on one or more of these criteria received the maximum award of \$300,000. (While staff had hoped to award maximum grants up to \$400,000, doing so would have left insufficient funding for grants that reached unique targeted populations, as identified by the legislature.) Any such ranking proposals for less than \$300,000 received very close to their full request.

Proposals that ranked moderately high on one or more of these criteria received the second-tier award of \$200,000 (or very close to their full request if less than \$200,000). Proposals that ranked lower received \$100,000, or no funding.

The results of this system are:

- 1) **Twelve proposals identified for funding:**
 - a. Of these twelve, four have received direct workforce development and/or general budget funding in the past;
 - b. two are local Workforce Service Areas who have received statutory workforce development funding (through the Dislocated Worker program) in the past; and
 - c. the remaining six represent new direct grantees from these funds;
- 2) An appropriate emphasis on **legislatively mandated populations:**
 - a. individuals living with disabilities;
 - b. individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; and
 - c. individuals who are returning to work after receiving public assistance),
as well as suitable considerations for
 - d. veterans,
 - e. older workers, and/or
 - f. populations identifying with minority groups;
- 3) **Greater statewide impact**, with the chosen proposals representing even greater geographic diversity than the bundle of previously funded programs could manage.

All aspects of the process are public, and staff can make details on each proposal available upon written request. Please contact Anthony Alongi (Anthony.Alongi@state.mn.us) or Annie Welch (Annie.Welch@state.mn.us) with such requests.

SFY 2013 MINNESOTA ADULT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

Proposals Recommended for Funding: Awardees are listed by recommended funding tier, and then alphabetically.

Organization	Target Population to Serve	Area to Serve	Previous Pass-through Funding	Requested Funding	Recommended Funding
Lifetrack Resources	Refugees and Immigrants; individuals who identify with minority groups	Twin Cities Metropolitan area and Southern Minnesota	\$300,000	\$400,000.00	\$300,000
Minnesota Employment Center (MEC), Rise Inc.	Individuals who are deaf, deaf blind, or hard of hearing	19 county direct service area including the Twin Cities, Central MN, and northeaster, MN (Twin Cities, St. Cloud and Duluth metro areas. All of Minnesota supported via distance service technologies).	\$320,000	\$400,000.00	\$300,000
RESOURCE	ALL Target Populations	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, Duluth, and St. Cloud	n/a	\$400,000.00	\$300,000
Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council	ALL Target Populations	Southwest Minnesota (WSA 6)	n/a	\$400,000.00	\$300,000
Twin Cities RISE!	Low-income Adults	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	\$455,000	\$400,000.00	\$300,000
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services	Older workers, targeting veterans and individuals who identify with minority groups	Central Minnesota (WSA 5)	n/a	\$268,400.00	\$263,110
Goodwill/Easter Seals	ALL Target Populations	Seven county metro area focusing on Dakota and Ramsey County communities	n/a	\$346,581.12	\$200,000
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Individuals returning to work from public assistance, women; also anticipate working with a number of other targeted groups; individuals living with disabilities, veterans and individuals who identify with minority ethnic/race groups	Lake County (NE Minnesota)	n/a	\$185,722.00	\$180,432
International Institute of Minnesota	Refugees and Immigrants	St. Paul and Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs	n/a	\$160,000.00	\$154,708
American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center	ALL Target Populations	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	Part of \$1,375,000 for all OICs	\$400,000.00	\$100,000
Project for Pride in Living, Inc.	Racial and ethnic minorities, individuals living with disabilities, low income individuals moving into the workforce out of public support programs, and veterans	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	n/a	\$400,000.00	\$100,000
SOAR Careers	Unemployed/underemployed adults, adults living below the poverty level, individuals living with disabilities, mental health diagnoses, and individuals who identify with minority ethnic and race groups.	Duluth and the surrounding metro area	n/a	\$123,805.00	\$100,000
Total Funding Requested and Awarded:				\$3,884,508	\$2,598,250