



Go MN! Service Provider Grant

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Vocational Rehabilitation Services
180 East Fifth Street, Suite 1200
Saint Paul, MN 55101
<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/>

12/11/2025

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-356-3674.

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Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 1: Overview

Grant Overview

- Grant Name: Go MN! Service Provider Grant
- <https://careerforce.mn.gov/goMN>
- Open for Applications: December 22, 2025
- Application Due Date: January 30, 2026

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED-VRS) is requesting proposals from VRS Community Partners with a VRS Professional and Technical (P/T) contract to partner on VRS's Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant model demonstration project titled Go MN! and provide Progressive Employment services to individuals at risk of or earning subminimum wages in our Winona pilot location. This grant will provide funding to qualified responders to attend "Jobsville" team meetings twice per month as part of implementing the Progressive Employment model, as well as to attend Progressive Employment training and other related meetings and trainings. These funds will be provided to qualified responders to supplement the provision of work-based learning activities and employment services to participants of the Go MN! program.

The DIF grants are awarded by the U.S. Department of Education's [Rehabilitation Services Administration](#) (RSA). DEED-VRS was awarded with a Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment ([SWTCIE](#)) demonstration project. The purpose of these grants is to decrease the use of subminimum wages and increase access to competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities.

The Go MN! project will offer people with disabilities in or contemplating subminimum wage work settings opportunities to explore careers with businesses in the Winona service area. The project will adopt the Progressive Employment Model as a dual-customer strategy to connect students, youth, and adults with work experience opportunities in different industries. The project seeks to increase the number of adults and youth engaged in and contemplating subminimum wage employment who apply to the VR agency for services, the number of jobseekers with disabilities who have work-based learning experiences, the number of partnering businesses, and ultimately, the number of adults and youth with disabilities who transition from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment and meet the workforce needs in the Winona service area.

Funding Availability

As authorized in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260), 134 Stat. 1602, up to \$30,000 for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 is available for grants under the Go MN! Service Provider Grant.

Up to 3 qualified responders are eligible for up to \$10,000 for up to 2 staff members per responder who would work under this grant at \$5,000 per staff member.

This grant will provide funding to qualified responders to participate in the Go MN! program through June 30th, 2026, however funding is available to extend this grant.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge. We expect to announce selected grantees in February. 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.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must have a Professional/Technical contract with DEED-VRS and be a 245D licensed provider. The P/T contract must include Workers Compensation Insurance and Liability Coverage.

As partners in the Go MN! project, qualified responders must commit to:

- Attending 1.5-hour Jobsville meetings twice per month.
- Attending Progressive Employment and other Go MN! training and related meetings.
- Sharing Job Leads with other Jobsville attendees.
- Providing Progressive Employment work-based activities for participants.

These requirements must be met by every applicant in order to be considered.

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. [Office of Grants Management \(OGM\) Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities. The purpose of this grant is to provide services to adults currently working or contemplating work in subminimum wage employment and for youth who are considering subminimum wage employment to explore careers with businesses in the Winona service area. This grant will be limited to working with individuals in the pilot area and the Go MN! project will help participants explore employment opportunities across different industries.

This grant will provide supplementary funding to providers with existing P/T contracts with VRS to attend Jobsville meetings twice a month and to attend Progressive Employment trainings to support the successful provision of Progressive Employment activities for participants. This grant will provide funding in tandem with the standard funding provided to VRS Community Partners for providing services to participants under a P/T contract.

Jobsville meetings are a component of Progressive Employment where Go MN! staff, VR counselors, VR Community Partner staff, and other relevant stakeholders work together to identify, coordinate, and support Progressive Employment activities for participants of the Go MN! program. Attendance of Jobsville meetings is critical to the successful implementation of Progressive Employment, and qualified responders are expected to attend each meeting, as well as participate actively and share job leads. Jobsville meetings are anticipated to be held twice a month for an hour and a half, and providers will be reimbursed for their time in the event that a Jobsville meeting needs to be cancelled.

Qualified responders will also be expected to attend Progressive Employment trainings to learn more about how the Progressive Employment model works and how to successfully provide Progressive Employment services to participants of the Go MN! program. We estimate that providers will attend up to 8 hours of Progressive Employment training under this grant.

A function of this grant includes ongoing evaluation by the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston and the national evaluator Mathematica. Under this grant, providers will be asked to participate in evaluation and data collection efforts that assess the impact of this initiative.

Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is not allowed for this grant.

Selection Criteria and Weight

The review committee will be reviewing each applicant on a 50-point scale. DEED-VRS P/T contracted agencies interested in becoming an Employment Services Provider Agency should submit a proposal to DEED-VRS which includes the information in items 1-5 below.

1. Agency name, address, primary contact, and organizational chart which includes the personnel involved with job placement, and job coaching services, and supervision. (Pass/Fail)
2. Indicate if the agency is licensed by the MN Department of Human Services as a 245D licensed employment services provider. (Pass/Fail)
3. A description of the agency's interest in being selected as a partner and a summary of how personnel will attend and participate in all activities related to this funding opportunity with the Go MN! project. (20 points)
4. A description of the work-based learning services that the agency offers. (20 points)
5. Provide relevant agency policies and procedures that demonstrate compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations regarding nondiscrimination against any other employee, applicant for employment or student on the basis of age, race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability or in any manner prohibited by law. (10 points)

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. The review committee will include members of the Go MN! team and VR staff that will be participating the Go MN! project. This team will include the VRS Director of Strategic Initiatives, the Go MN! Manager, the Winona Vocational Rehabilitation Area Manager, and the VRS Regional Director. Please note that past performance will be considered in proposal evaluation.

Questions, Technical Assistance and Information Sessions

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to tyler.sadek@state.mn.us. Questions and answers will be posted within three business days of receipt at <https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/open-rfp.jsp>.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 2: Submission

Applications must be received no later than 4:30pm Central Time, on January 30, 2026. Late applications will not be accepted. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

Applications may be submitted by email by January 30, 2026 to:

Tyler Sadek
Go MN! Manager
DEED-VRS
Email: tyler.sadek@state.mn.us
Contact phone number for questions: (651) 356-3674

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 3: Application Review Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee that will include members of the Go MN! team and VR staff that will be participating in the Go MN! project. This team will include the VRS Director of Strategic Initiatives, the Go MN! Manager, the Winona Vocational Rehabilitation Area Manager, and the VRS Regional Director. The review committee will use the point scale provided above to evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. For applicants that receive a pass score on the first two requirements listed in the **Selection Criteria and Weight** section above, reviewers will meet and discuss the proposals and then put forth their recommendations. The Commissioner of Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be by email to applicants.

Timeline

RFP posted on the web site: Monday, December 22, 2025

Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time: Friday, January 23, 2026

Applications due no later than 4:30 pm central time: Friday, January 30, 2026

Committee begins review of applications: Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Selected grantees announced: Friday, February 13, 2026

Work plans approved and grant begins: Monday, March 9, 2026

Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is in question or disclosed, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to, revising the grant work plan or grantee duties to mitigate the risk, requesting the grant applicant to submit an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Public Data

Per [Minnesota Statutes § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants and amount requested will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by DEED-VRS as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, Data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 4: Award Requirements and Grant Management Responsibilities

Preaward Risk Assessment and Financial Review

Grant applicants may be required to submit financial, capacity, and internal control documents prior to a grant award based on state or federal requirements.

- Nonprofits may be required to submit their most recent board reviewed financial statements, an IRS Form 990, or their most recent certified financial audit.
- All applicants may be required to submit additional documents, including descriptions of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds.

Grant Contract Agreements

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grantees should read the grant contract 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 contract 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.

Grant Payments

Per [Policy 08-08](#), reimbursement is the preferred 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 DEED-VRS has given the grantee a written extension.

The invoicing and payment schedule will be: Quarterly.

Authorized Representatives

Pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes §16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#), grantees must clearly post on the grantee's website the names of, and contact information for, the grantee's leadership and the employee or other person who directly manages and oversees a grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee.

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

A. Municipalities

Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- A. Municipalities are required to comply with [Minnesota Statutes § 471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#).
- B. The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§ 177.41 through 177.50](#), as applicable.
- C. Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).
- D. 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.

B. Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities must use these guidelines:

- A. Services and/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 or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- B. Services and/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.
- C. 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:
 - a. [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
 - b. [Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business Program](#)
 - c. Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Directory](#)
- D. 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.
- E. The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- F. Notwithstanding the above, the State may waive bidding process requirements when:
 - a. Vendors included in response to competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
 - b. It is determined there is only one reasonable and available source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- G. The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§177.41](#) through [177.50](#), as applicable.
- H. The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

Audits

Per [Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98 Subdivision 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 Commissioner of Administration, the state 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 contract 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.

Grant Provisions

The statutory authority for the program is the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260), 134 Stat. 1602. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is authorized to make grants for vocational rehabilitation services under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act for “innovative activities aimed at increasing CIE as defined in section 7 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act) (29 U.S.C. 705(5)), for youth and other individuals with disabilities.”

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at: [Office of Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms/Forms and FAQs tab.](#)

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

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 per [Minnesota Statutes § 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. Minnesota Rules, Part [5000.3500](#).

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.

Voter Registration

The grantee will comply with [Minnesota Statutes § 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.