

State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2026 and 2027 Request for Proposals: Pathways to Prosperity - Bridge to Career Pathways Competitive Grant

Please read through this Request for Proposals (RFP) in its entirety and review the Pathways to Prosperity Bridge to Career Pathways Program Application Packet and all associated attachments BEFORE you begin drafting application materials.

Office of Adult Career Pathways

Pathways to Prosperity Bridge to Career Pathways Program is a competitive grant funding opportunity through the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED's) Office of Adult Career Pathways. The Office of Adult Career Pathways (ACP) serves Minnesotans at all stages of their educational and career journeys through the development and implementation of workforce training programs. ACP serves adults who traditionally face multiple barriers to employment, need enhanced educational services, wrap-around support, and supportive services in order to be successful in securing long-term family-sustaining wages. Services are intended to help eliminate racial disparities and large economic gaps for the purpose of increasing Minnesotans' literacy and access to high-growth, high-wage jobs.

Grant Overview

DEED, through its Adult Career Pathways Programs, is seeking proposals from qualified responders to provide services through the Pathways to Prosperity Adult Workforce competitive grant programs.

This RFP is for the Pathways to Prosperity **Bridge to Career Pathways** program, which seeks to serve participants from one or more of the [Target Population](#) groups who have multiple barriers to employment. Bridge to Career Pathways will target those who are prepared to enter credential level training.

Participants will receive navigation services, wraparound support services, and training. At this level, training will culminate in one or more industry-recognized credentials. From Bridge to Career Pathways, participants will either continue their education at the next step in their path or enter employment at a family sustaining wage. Employer partners are imperative and programs with strong employer partners will be given prioritization for funding.

Funding Availability

As authorized in the [Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1st Spec. Sess. Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3\(c\)](#), \$18,300,000¹ is available for State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2026-2027 for all the Pathways to Prosperity Competitive Grant Programs.

- Organizations may apply for up to **\$200,000** each year, for a maximum of **\$400,000** total under the Pathways to Prosperity Bridge to Career Pathways RFP.

¹ DEED may use up to five (5) percent of this amount for the administration and monitoring of the program;
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>.

- Awards will be divided equally between SFY 2026 and SFY 2027.
- Awards allocated for SFY 2026 will run from grant agreement execution date to 06/30/2027.
- Awarded funds for SFY 2027 will be available 7/1/2026 through 6/30/2027.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. The review committee will consist of DEED staff and community members with expertise in workforce development, education and training, and/or program-specific business and industry. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

To the extent possible, DEED will avoid offering partial awards. However, to meet the geographic and community equity objectives of this funding, DEED may offer partial awards to ensure more areas and communities of the state can benefit from these services. If your proposal is offered a partial award, DEED will proportionally reduce the outcomes based on the original cost per participant proposed.

If an awarded organization is unable to expend the award or complete the grant, DEED reserves the right to reallocate awarded funds to other organizations who have been awarded Pathways to Prosperity Competitive Grant funds and who can demonstrate satisfactory grant performance and the ability to utilize additional funds.

Timeline

RFP posted on the DEED website	July 14, 2025
Informational webinar	July 23, 2025
Questions accepted via email	July 14 to August 28, 2025
Proposals due no later than 5:00 p.m. CST.....	September 4, 2025
Award notification	October 15, 2025
Grant start date.....	Date all parties sign
Grant end date.....	June 30, 2027

Disclaimer: All costs incurred in responding to the RFP will be borne by responder. This RFP does not obligate the State to award a grant agreement or complete the project. The State also receives the right to cancel the solicitation if it is in its best interest.

Alternative Format: Upon request, these materials will be made available in alternative formats and additional languages.

Awards are expected to be announced on or around October 15, 2025. If selected, no costs may be incurred prior to the grant execution date (date all parties sign). Any costs incurred prior to the grant execution date will not be reimbursed.

If awarded, DEED reserves the right to require changes to the awarded proposal at time of grant agreement negotiations.

Grant Application Writing Training Sessions

DEED offered three virtual training sessions, which may be used as a resource for any workforce development organization seeking funding, regardless of the organization's level of experience in grant writing. All sessions were recorded and will be available for viewing by July 15, 2025, at <https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/open-rfp.jsp>. Related resources are posted along with the session recordings.

State Grant Ready: Building Stronger Applications One Step at a Time Training Sessions:

STATE GRANT APPLICATIONS: Getting It Right from the Start - *Learn how to navigate RFPs and identify key components. Ensure organizational eligibility and application completeness. Avoid the most common compliance pitfalls.*

WHAT WORKS: Real Tips to Strengthen Your Grant Narrative *Align proposals with funder priorities and scoring rubrics. Write clear, compelling narratives that address evaluation criteria. Craft effective work plans and outcome strategies.*

BUILDING BETTER BUDGETS: Why it Matters *Understand the connection between project budget, scope of work, and outcomes. Develop a budget using allowable, allocable and reasonable costs. Create a basic budget justification/narrative.*

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Introduction

DEED is committed to empowering the growth of the Minnesota economy for everyone. DEED facilitates an economic environment to produce jobs and improve the quality of the state's workforce.

Within DEED's Employment & Training Division, programs will be focused on awarding proposals that place an emphasis on the following:

Equity

DEED's Employment & Training Division programs seek to build an inclusive, skilled workforce and reduce disparities based on race, disability, and gender. Equity priorities to consider are as follows:

- Ensuring that training participants with the most significant barriers to employment have equitable access to training and employment opportunities.
- Ensuring that organizations serving hardest-to-serve populations reflect the community accessing the services and incorporating human-centered design into their programs.
- Reducing and eliminating disparities by empowering all members of our workforce to result in a more equitable and prosperous Minnesota for individuals, families, businesses, and communities.

Innovation

DEED's Employment & Training Division recognizes that new solutions must be developed to respond to new and ongoing challenges in our workforce and communities. Examples are:

- Programs that are mission-driven, utilizing best practices while having an innovation mindset to creatively imagine and apply new approaches to success.
- Initiatives that clearly show the development of innovative approaches to outreach and recruitment, reaching those who have been disconnected and disenfranchised from the workforce.
- The design and implementation of new, efficient, and effective systems for workforce development programs that address skills shortages, remove barriers to lifelong learning, and help workers improve their employability.

DEED will facilitate the growth of innovative programs by providing resources to ensure the program's ability to grow and expand.

Performance

DEED's Employment & Training Division programs are built on a foundation of partnerships, most significantly between program providers and employers to further develop opportunities for participants and increase provider performance.

- **Employment/Job Placement:** Employer partners that will offer livable wage jobs and job advancement to program participants.
- **Job Retention:** Programs that provide intentional support for participants to retain employment and advance in their chosen field.
- **Median Earnings:** Programs that pursue training and/or development that target industries and jobs with livable wages.

- **Credential Attainment Rate:** Programs that yield measurable results demonstrated by attainment of foundational skills and industry specific qualifications.

Minimum Requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must be an eligible applicant as listed in the [eligibility section](#), and submit a completed and signed [application](#) with required forms and attachments by 5:00 PM on September 4, 2025.

Applicant organizations and their partners must have a registration in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State. Nonprofit organizations must have 501(c)(3) status or other recognized tax-exempt designation and be in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). All applicants must have a physical location open to the public at designated times, in the State of Minnesota. These requirements must be met at the time of application and throughout the term of the grant.

These requirements must be met by every applicant to be considered for funding under this RFP.

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.

[Department of Administration, Office of Grants Management \(OGM\) Policy 08-02](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. This grant will serve persons from communities of color and/or low-income communities.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Outcomes as required in [Minnesota Statute 116L.98](#)
- Outcomes as listed within the “Measurable Outcomes” section of “Form 3. Work Plan” in the application.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible organizations must be one of the following:

- Nonprofit organization
- State or local government units, including Tribal governments
- Community action agencies
- Business organizations or trade associations
- Alternative secondary institutions or post-secondary institutions
- Labor organizations

Applicant organizations and their partners must have a registration in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State. All nonprofit organizations must have 501(c)(3) status or other recognized tax-exempt designation and be in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). All applicants must have a physical location open to the public at designated times, in the State of Minnesota. These requirements must be met at the time of application and throughout the term of the grant.

An organization may submit two (2) proposals as primary Grantee but may be listed as a partner on other proposals. If submitting multiple proposals, each proposal must have a clearly different targeted industry sector.

For all Adult Career Pathways Grant Program Competitive Grants, funding will be prioritized to serving areas with historically high unemployment rates, low academic achievement rates, and where median income is below family sustainable wage (Less than \$50,000).

Target Populations

Programs must serve Minnesota residents at least 18 years old², not enrolled in any K-12 school, who face multiple barriers to employment, and who need enhanced educational and supportive services to be successful in securing long-term family sustaining wages.

All participants enrolled must be authorized to work in the United States and must be part of one or more of the following target populations:

- Individuals of color
- Individuals lacking stable housing
- Individuals who are or have been justice involved
- Individuals without a high school diploma or equivalent
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals who have been unemployed for 26 or more of the past 52 weeks
- Individuals with limited English or math proficiency
- Individuals at or below [200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline](#).

Eligible Services

Proposals submitted must align with DEED's Bridge to Career Pathways framework and include all the [program components](#) as described below.

DEED's Pathways to Prosperity programs are an approach to workforce development that supports workers making multiple transitions between education and employment. Each program is supported by an integrated collection of services that identify in-demand career opportunities, provide continuous education and training, support, and place participants in in-demand careers. Each program requires specific partnerships with employers, education, and workforce development partners to be successful.

Bridge to Career Pathways

Bridge to Career Pathways will serve those who have multiple barriers to employment, are from one or more of the [Target Population](#) groups, and participants who are prepared to enter credential level training.

Services must be aligned with industry sector(s), leading participants to earn an **industry-recognized credential(s)** and enter employment or continue on a career pathway to acquire higher-level skills.

Bridge to Career Pathways instruction is designed to build the foundational skills of individuals whose academic skills do not meet the minimum requirements of a degree or certificate program. Effective Bridge programs are built by a partnership in order to allow the participant to start from their current skill level and

² A waiver for the age minimum may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Students enrolled in a K-12 school are ineligible regardless of age.

provide them with the extra instructional time and contextualized foundational training to develop the basic skills they need to begin a training program.

This skilled training will result in an **industry-recognized credential** that is relevant to a key industry sector coupled with work readiness skills training and navigation services to assist participants to remove barriers.

Successful participants include those who:

- Attain an **industry-recognized credential** that is relevant to a key industry sector coupled with **work readiness skills training**
 - **AND**
- Exit to **employment**
- **OR** enter a [verified Registered Apprenticeship](#)
- **OR** continue to an **identified³ training as next steps within participants' career pathway or related post-secondary education**

Program Components

The primary objective for all grants under this RFP is to provide [targeted populations](#) with the ability to connect to and receive quality workforce development services from organizations that are culturally and linguistically relevant in their community. These organizations will be required to mitigate barriers to employment, provide industry-specific training, and move people into careers that lead to a family-sustaining wage. All activities funded under this RFP must align with this objective.

DEED reserves the right to require adjustments to awarded submissions during the final grant negotiating process.

Bridge to Career Pathways requires the following seven (7) components with few exceptions:

1. Industry Sectors:

Applicants are required to align their proposal with high growth and in-demand jobs in their [region](#) as identified in applicant's Regional Workforce Development Area. All training grants must prepare participants for employment that will enable economic self-sufficiency or continue training on their career pathway. On a limited basis, exceptions may be made for proposals demonstrating need and rationale for not aligning to the regionally identified industry sectors.

Each region has identified the following industry sectors:

- a. **Region 1 – Northwest:** Education, Agriculture, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation, Wholesale Distribution
- b. **Region 2 – Northeast:** Health Care & Social Assistance, Construction, Manufacturing, Business/Professional Services (Information Technology), Transportation & Logistics, Educational Services, Leisure & Hospitality
- c. **Region 3 – Central:** Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, Construction, Transportation, Natural Resources & Agriculture, Professional & Business Services (Information Technology)

³ Bridge programs must identify at least one post-secondary program accessible to participants that the Bridge program will prepare them to enter.

- d. **Region 4 – Twin Cities/Metro:** Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, Construction, Transportation, Natural Resources & Agriculture, Professional & Business Services (Information Technology), Finance & Insurance, Leisure & Hospitality, Transportation & Material Moving, and Green Energy
- e. **Region 5 – Southwest:** Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing
- f. **Region 6 – Southeast:** Health Care, Manufacturing, Services & Trades, Information Technology, Agriculture, Transportation

Clean Energy, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) trainings are also allowable and encouraged for all regions. Applicants proposing other industries should be able to demonstrate how the proposed service is needed and will lead to family sustainable wage employment.

Research and data assistance is available to strengthen grant proposal by finding relevant and timely data on the economy and labor market including in-demand careers, industries and jobs in your region. These tools are available at no cost from our research analysts and Labor Market Information (LMI) office / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (mn.gov).

- [Employment Outlook \(Employment Projections\) / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#)
- [Occupations in Demand \(OID\) / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#)

2. Multiple Entry and Exit Points for Participants:

- a. Programs must provide multiple entry points for participants, allowing individuals of varying skill levels to enter the program.
- b. Programs must identify at least one post-secondary program accessible to participants that participation in Bridge program will prepare them to enter.
- c. Program must demonstrate multiple exit points for Bridge graduates to exit to employment, enter a [verified Registered Apprenticeship](#) or continue their career pathway with organizational support or advance within an industry sector.

3. Partner Involvement:

Programs **must** deliver components in partnership with other organizations. These partnerships must be comprised of at least one employer partner⁴, one workforce development organization⁵, one Adult Basic Education partner, and one educational institution. One partner may fill multiple roles. All partners must be listed in the Partnership Chart.

- a. Providers **must** partner with an Adult Basic Education partner who is an active [MN Department of Education ABE consortia](#), (MDE ABE) member. If you need assistance with verifying the eligibility of your ABE partner, contact Julie Dincau at the Minnesota Department of Education. Julie.Dincau@state.mn.us

⁴ Employer partners may contribute in multiple ways: discussing hiring needs, skills, competencies; advise on curricula; contract training; hire graduates; provide job site tours, speakers, mock interviews, internships, needs assessments, loan or donate equipment, recruit; develop pathway curriculum; act as adjunct faculty and preceptors; and/or contribute to college-employer sectoral partnerships.

⁵ Workforce development organizations are defined to include community-based organizations that provide workforce development services.

- b. All training providers issuing credentials to be counted in your Bridge to Career Pathways program must be [Minnesota Office of Higher Education compliant](#), meaning they are licensed and registered or exempted from licensing and registration or compliant with the regulatory body who has oversight, as applicable.
- c. **Significant** employer partners are required and applicants with a level 3 employer partner(s) will be given prioritization for funding. Employer Partnerships are outlined as follows:
 - i. **Level 1** employer partner; provide a letter of support with no commitment to program involvement.
 - ii. **Level 2** employer partner; provide a letter of commitment to participate in classroom training (mock interviews, facility tours, classroom speakers, etc.) or inform and help deliver curriculum.
 - iii. **Level 3** employer partner; includes level 2 commitment and additionally provides a commitment to hire program graduates and/or prioritize graduates for open positions within the company and may offer internships or paid/unpaid work experience.

4. Participant Certificate Attainment:

Programs must culminate in the award of one or more industry-recognized credentials.

- a. Bridge - The **credential(s)** must meet the definition of an industry-recognized credential as defined by the [US Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#): verification of qualification or competence issued to an individual by a third party with the relevant authority or jurisdiction to issue such credentials (such as an accredited educational institution, an industry-recognized association, or an occupational association or professional society).

5. Comprehensive Support Services:

- a. Programs must have a central point of contact and provide wrap-around support services tailored for working adults to meet their needs. These services must enhance participants' planning and informed decision-making and increase success in participants achieving both education and employment goals. Formal support services might include but are not limited to transportation, housing/rental assistance, health and medical costs, legal aid, personal counseling, clothing, tools, etc. Informal supports might include but are not limited to peer support groups, mentor programs, and job or life coaching.

6. Navigation Strategy:

- a. Programs must have one or more skilled Navigator(s) - a central or single point of contact strategy. The Navigator is responsible for helping participants connect to existing resources (workforce development, post-secondary, community, etc.) rather than duplicating those resources in addition to providing case management. Navigators are also the consistent point of contact for participants to better implement an individualized strategy throughout the program. The Navigator functions as the primary Case Manager for participants.
- b. Programs must provide retention services to ensure success at the job for at least 90 days post placement.

7. Contextualized Education:

- a. Programs must provide tailored curriculum and instructional strategies that make work central to learning and help students attain work readiness skills. Curriculum must be drawn from real-life application and be structured to maximize transferrable skills.
- b. Programs should be designed to be culturally responsive to the needs of participants, their backgrounds, and/or those intimidated by exclusively academic environments.
- c. Curriculum should be developed with employers and/or educational institutions. Cohort models and/or learning communities are also encouraged.

Collaboration

Partnerships are **required** for Pathway to Prosperity Programs. Applicants are required to include a letter of support from each agency or other partner with which they will be engaged in order to provide the services set forth in the proposal. Include all established partnerships in the Partnership Chart within the [application](#).

All partners listed on the partnership chart are required to have a letter of support or intent to contract attached. Quality partnership letters are not form letters. Letters should be unique to the partner. Within the letter include the role of the partner in the grant, their relevant experience, and any existing collaborations.

Examples of types of partnerships include:

- **Educational partners:** For certification or credential level training programs, accredited institutions of higher education or private career schools licensed by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.
- **Employer partners:** An employer who has collaborated in the development of the grant program and commits to providing participants with opportunities for placement, work-based learning or prioritizing graduates for open positions with the company.
 - For employer partners, include how the proposed training program will align to employer needs, any required credentials necessary for employment with the partner, and any commitment to offer placement, work-based learning such as work experience and internship opportunities.

Partners may include:

- Subgrantees (individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses, trade associations or any other entities) that WILL be receiving compensation from the grant.
- Individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses/employers, trade associations or other entities that will NOT be receiving compensation for their participation in this grant.

If a partner has a potential or perceived conflict of interest, such as providing donations to the applicant or sitting on the applicant's board of directors, ownership interests, attach a letter of disclosure explaining the relationship of the partner to the applicant organization.

Tasks/Deliverables

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Utilize Workforce One as the case management system for the grant, in compliance with [Minnesota Statute 116L.98](#).
- Enter and enroll all participants in Workforce One within 15 business days of the participant application date.
- Maintain current Workforce One data entry throughout the grant agreement period. All information must be entered into Workforce One within 15 business days of the event date.
- Enter all case notes, activities, credentials, employment data, etc. within 15 business days of the event date into Workforce One.
- Participate in grantee onboarding training within the first 60 days of grant agreement execution.
- Submit a quarterly narrative that describes the progress of the grant (due the 30th of the month following the end of the quarter).
- Participate in 30, 60, and 90-day check-in meetings with the ACP Grant Coordinator.
- Participate in quarterly engagement sessions with other grantees.
- Actively participate in evaluation and data collection efforts that assess the impact of this initiative.

- Submit monthly Reimbursement Payment Request Forms (RPRs) to designated contact within DEED. RPRs must accurately reflect actual grant expenditures and obligations consistent with rates of participation which grant administrators will be able to track.
- Purchases of equipment over \$5,000 must be pre-approved by DEED, outlined within the agreed upon grant agreement, and follow the bidding process outlined within the [Adult Career Pathways Program Operations Guide](#).
- Comply with applicable state and Federal requirements/policies. Applicable policies may include but are not limited to: Federal Regulations, DEED policies, State Statutes, Uniform Guidance, and the OGM Policies.

Grantees providing direct services to individuals are required to follow DEED program administration guidelines including reviewing and following all program requirements as outlined in the [Adult Career Pathways Program Operations Guide](#).

Additional Considerations

A program providing work-based learning must ensure the employer on record complies with the employee safeguard laws: Sick and Safe Time and Paid Family and Medical Leave.

Earned Sick and Safe Time; [Effective Jan. 1, 2024](#), Minnesota's earned sick and safe time law requires employers to provide paid leave to employees who work in the state. For more information see: <https://www.dli.mn.gov/sick-leave>

Paid Family and Medical Leave; Effective January 1, 2026, paid family and medical leave benefits to provide Minnesotans with paid time off when a serious health condition prevents them from working, when they need time to care for a family member or a new child, for certain military-related events or for certain personal safety issues.

The two main types of leave:

- **Family Leave** to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or if they're bonding with a new baby or child in their family.
- **Medical Leave** when their own serious health condition prevents them from working.

Additionally, Minnesotans will be able to take leave to support a family member in the military deploying overseas, or if they or a family member are facing a significant personal safety issue. For more information see: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/paid-family/>.

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 describe how the applicant will be rated on the various criteria and used by reviewers to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the criteria.

Proposals will be reviewed, and scored by reviewers who will provide a recommendation to the Commissioner for final review and award decisions. The review committee will consist of DEED staff and community members with expertise in Workforce Development, Education and Training, and/or program-specific Business and Industry. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

The Commissioner of DEED will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The Commissioner of DEED reserves the right to prioritize resources to proposals that address racial equity and geographical location, and to increase or decrease the amount of the funding requested. The award decisions of DEED are final and not subject to appeal.

Scoring

Scoring will be on a 100-point scale with points available in 7 sections:

1. Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience (10 points)
2. Program Description (20 points)
3. Program Implementation Workplan (20 points)
4. Outreach and Community Engagement Workplan (10 points)
5. Partnerships and Collaboration (15 points)
6. Performance, Evaluation and Reporting (15 points)
7. Budget/Fiscal Capacity (10 points)

The [Application](#) is in a question/answer format and must be completed in its entirety. The following is a list of the sections within the application with recommendations on what to include to be considered a strong proposal.

1. Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience (10 points)

- a. Strong proposals will include:
 - i. Relevant staff expertise and cultural competency amongst target populations;
 - ii. An organizational history of providing successful career training to individuals and communities who have faced barriers to education and/or employment;
 - iii. Past success in coordinating collaborative, partnership-based efforts;
 - iv. Organizational experience in grants management; and
 - v. Complete Cover Sheet with a realistic estimated cost per participant.

2. Program Description (20 points)

- a. Strong proposals will:
 - i. Clearly articulate the proposed training and workforce program.
 - ii. Provide a strong justification for the request for support, demonstrating need and explaining how the program will meet the program objectives.

3. Program Implementation Workplan (20 points)

- a. Strong proposals will:
 - i. Effectively operationalize the project description by breaking it down into action steps; and
 - ii. Provide a detailed and realistic project timeline.
 - iii. Include a completed Workplan Table with realistic projections.

4. Outreach and Community Engagement Workplan (10 points)

- a. Strong proposals will:
 - i. Clearly explain how the applicant organization and its partners plan to engage target populations.
 - ii. Include innovative outreach methodologies to reach those who are not currently engaged in the education or workforce systems.
 - iii. Include information about employer engagement.

5. Partnerships and Collaboration (15 points)

- a. Strong proposals will include:

- i. Partners that are complementary and offer unique expertise needed to successfully implement the proposed program; and
- ii. A clear division of both programmatic and administrative responsibilities.
- iii. Information about employer engagement.
- iv. A completed Partnership Chart with companion letters of support/intent to contract.

6. Performance, Evaluation and Reporting (15 points)

- a. Strong proposals will:
 - i. Outline detailed plans for defining, tracking, and measuring project outcomes; and
 - ii. Demonstrate a plan to enter and maintain data in the Workforce One (WF1) system.

7. Budget/Fiscal (10 points)

- a. Strong proposals will feature:
 - i. A balanced organizational budget;
 - ii. A realistic project budget;
 - iii. Information on any leveraging of matching funds, if available; and
 - iv. A completed Budget table.

Additionally, the ACP team will review each application on criteria such as program services, past performance (if applicable), reviewer scores, geographical area served, organizational eligibility, completeness of application, and partnerships.

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is a **critical element of accountability for public resources**. During the funding period, DEED will enhance its review and evaluation of program performance by examining the multiple performance data reported in Workforce One. Some key performance measurements will be: Job Placements, Wage Rate, Job Retention and Credential Attainment.

DEED believes that these four critical performance indicators, along with quality demographic data will highlight the comprehensive work our partners perform, and it will provide reliable data on the effectiveness and efficiency of the funded programs, and thereafter help with making future program and funding decisions.

All programs funded in whole or in part by state funds are subject to the requirements in the RFP, and as found in [Minnesota Statute 116L.98 Workforce Program Outcomes](#).

In accordance with [OGM Policy 08-13](#) past performance on awarded and closed Minnesota state grants will be considered when evaluating proposals for future grants. New Grantees will not be held to this policy, and former Grantees who have met outcomes as defined in the grant agreement will be considered compliant.

The Commissioner of DEED will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The Commissioner of DEED reserves the right to prioritize resources to proposals that address racial equity and geographical location, and to increase or decrease the amount of the funding requested. The award decisions of DEED are final and not subject to appeal.

Required Financial and Grantee Capacity Review

[Minnesota Statute 16B.981](#) requires that a pre-award risk assessment is conducted for grant awards of \$50,000 or more.

All grantees as defined in [Minnesota Statute 16B.981 Subd. 1 \(c\)](#) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial and capacity review prior to a grant award of \$50,000 and higher.

In order to comply with this requirement, the following information and documents (all forms are included within the application) will need to be submitted before the grant agreement is fully executed:

A. Capacity Responses: All potential grantees: Form 9

Please describe your history of performing the work that will be funded by the grant. Include a description of your organization's current staffing, current budget, and capacity to perform the work required under this grant.

B. Certification: No current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years: All potential Grantees: Form 10

C. Evidence of good standing: For-profit and nonprofit potential grantees: Form 11

For-profit and nonprofit grantees: Filed and up to date with the Secretary of State

D. Nonprofit grantees as applicable: Form 12

- Most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ
- Most recent audited financial statement of a charitable organization which has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement per [Minnesota Statute 309.53](#)
- Most recent board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded, and evidence of exemption

The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant agreement award and may subject an organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.

[Minnesota Statute 16B.981, Subd. 3-5](#) establishes the authority for a granting agency to:

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from a potential grantee to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the potential grantee cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement.
 - The potential grantee has 30 business days to respond
- Develop a plan to address the risk or concerns identified
- Not award the grant.
 - The granting agency must provide notice of this determination to not award the grant to the grantee and the Commissioner of Administration.
 - The notice must include the following:
 - The reason for postponing/not awarding the grant
 - The timeline for the process for contesting the agency's decision

Questions:

- All questions must be submitted in writing via email to Jenilee Drilling, Jenilee.drilling@state.mn.us
- All answers will be posted weekly at <https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/open-rfp.jsp>
- Please submit questions no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time, on August 28, 2025. Questions will not be accepted after this date.
- An informational webinar will be held for interested responders on: Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. This webinar will be recorded and posted to the DEED Competitive Grants and Contracts webpage.

Link to webinar:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=ma7e4692d5ba232cbeb0b3987f0c95fae>

Application Content

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

- Form 1: Cover Sheet
- Form 2: Narrative Responses
- Form 3: Work Plan
- Form 4: Budget
- Form 5: Partnership Chart
 - Letters of Support or Intent to Contract
 - Partnership Conflict of Interest Disclosure Letters (If applicable)
- Form 6: Unemployment Insurance Account Consent
- Form 7: Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
- Form 8: Affidavit of Non-Collusion
- Form 9: Performance Capacity
- Form 10: No Conviction of Felony Financial Crime by Principal
 - Include applicant organizational chart or a list of principals that you are certifying for
- Form 11: Evidence of Good Standing
- Form 12: Required Nonprofit Grantee Documents
 - Applicant financial statements as listed on Form 12

Please do not submit any other materials (binders, photos, etc.)

Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.

IMPORTANT: Applicants may be required to supplement their proposals at the request of the Commissioner of DEED and/or the Governor's Office.

Application Submission Instructions

The application and all forms should be saved and submitted as **one PDF** (.pdf). To submit a proposal, you must email the completed application packet including the required forms to ACPgrants.deed@state.mn.us with the subject line "P2P Bridge Application – [insert your organization name]." The application packet must be completed in its entirety, or the submission will not be considered for funding.

All applications must be time stamp received by DEED via email no later than 5:00 p.m. Central Time, on Thursday, September 4th, 2025. Late applications will not be considered. The submission must include the signed and completed Application and all required forms.

Applications must be submitted via email as one PDF to:

DEED Employment and Training Division

Office of Adult Career Pathways

Email: ACPgrants.deed@state.mn.us

The state is not responsible for any errors or delays caused by technology-related issues. Applicants should anticipate delays in the application getting through DEED's system, and therefore should submit their application before the deadline time.

Applicants will receive an auto-reply confirmation of receipt of their submission. If your submission does not receive an auto-reply confirmation within one hour of submission, please contact: jenilee.drilling@state.mn.us

Disclaimer: All costs incurred in responding to the RFP will be borne by the responder. This RFP does not obligate the State to award a grant agreement or complete the project. The State also reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interests.

Review Process and Timeline

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DEED will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions.

RFP posted on the DEED website	July 14, 2025
Questions due no later than 5:00 pm CST	August 28, 2025
Applications due no later than 5:00 pm CST	September 4, 2025
Committee begins review of applications	September 11, 2025
Selected grantees announced; grant agreement negotiation begins	October 15, 2025

Post Selection Requirements

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 Statute 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 agreement.

Grantees must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest with any subgrantee/contractor/vendor/trainers to be compensated with state grant funds listed in the Partnership Chart upon grant agreement execution and/or disbursing payments to the partners. All grantees are required to comply with [OGM Policy 08-01](#), with particular attention to “Organizational Conflicts of Interest”. All partners to be compensated with state grant funds must complete a [Compensated Partner Information Form](#).

Public Data

Per [Minnesota Statute 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 agreements have been fully executed.

All data created or maintained by DEED 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 agreements have been fully executed.

Grant Provisions

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

Accountability and Reporting

Grantees are required to collect and report data on participants during service delivery. Grantees must input participant data into DEED's case management system – Workforce One. Workforce One participant data entry ensures programs maintain performance measures as defined and governed by the [Workforce Program Outcomes Statute](#). Grantees must learn and commit to using Workforce One.

Grantees are also required to submit quarterly grant reports, and monthly financial reports each year of the grant period.

This information will be used to monitor grantees' service delivery, confirm grant reimbursement requests, and measure performance.

Tax Identification and UEI Numbers

DEED grantees are required to have both state and federal tax identification numbers and are encouraged to have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number created in SAM.gov. A UEI number is a unique, twelve-digit identification number for each physical location of your business. UEI numbers are free for all state vendors and can be obtained via the [SAM.gov](#) website.

Vendor Registration

Grant recipients new to DEED-funded grants must complete a grant agreement before DEED will disburse any funds. The State of Minnesota's accounting and procurement system is called State-Wide Integrated Financial Tools (SWIFT). Every organization or sub-grantee doing business with the state is considered a vendor. Vendors must be registered with the State of Minnesota. Vendors can interact with the state through the [Supplier Portal](#), which is part of SWIFT. The Supplier Portal allows vendors to login and view payment detail as well as maintain address and contact information related to their vendor record. For new prospective grantees (vendors), if you are awarded a grant, it will be necessary to register as vendor via the [Vendor Registration link](#).

Grant Payments

Per [OGM 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 has given the grantee a written extension.

Grant Monitoring

[Minnesota Statute 16B.97](#) and [OGM Policy 08-10](#) Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of the grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

Grantee Bidding Requirements

Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- 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.

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:

- [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#)
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)

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 grant agreements.

- Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation of verbal quotes or bids and justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)

For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per; [Minnesota Statute 177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

Audits

Per [Minnesota Statute 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 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 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:

- A. 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. [Minnesota Statute 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.
- B. 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](#)
- C. 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](#).

Other State and Federal Requirements

DEED grantees must also comply with all state and federal requirements including, but not limited to:

- Worker's compensation;

- Affirmative action;
- Data privacy;
- Equal Employment Opportunity;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Voter Registration;
- Unemployment Insurance*

*A grantee's Unemployment Insurance account must be current.

SNAP Employment and Training Reimbursement Program

Grantees serving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Plan (SNAP) participants may be eligible for the state's SNAP E&T Reimbursement Program. DEED may reimburse grantees enrolled in the program 50% of the non-federal funds used to train SNAP participants.

Voter Registration Requirement

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

Contact Information

For more information about this RFP, contact:

Employment and Training Division, Office of Adult Career Pathways

Jenilee Drilling; Lead ACP Program Coordinator

Email: Jenilee.drilling@state.mn.us

Individuals with disabilities who need alternative formats can contact DEED at 651-259-7530 for assistance.