# Youth Support Services

# Competitive Grant Program Policy

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Youth Support Services website:

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/youth-support/>

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## Section 1: Program Overview and Eligibility

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated $1,000,000 each year in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024 and 2025 for a competitive grant program to provide grants to organizations that provide support services for individuals. Of this appropriation, $475,000 per SFY was available for grant awards under the Youth Support Services competitive grant program. ([Minnesota Session Laws – 2023, Chapter 53, S.F. 3035, Article 20, Section 2, Subdivision 3(k)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/53/))

Eligible applicants or “eligible organizations” include local government units (including tribal governments), nonprofit/community-based organizations, community action agencies and public-school districts.

### Allowable Activities:

Services provided through this program must serve individuals from the eligible populations in one or more of the following areas:

* Job training,
* Employment preparation,
* Internships,
* Job assistance to parents,
* Financial literacy,
* Academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and/or
* Youth intervention activities

### Participant Eligibility:

Projects must focus on young adults (ages 14-24) who are individuals from low-income communities, and/or from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and/or individuals from communities of color. Below are the definitions used for the classifications in the grant:

**Low-income community** - A geographic area, usually at least a census tract, that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent.

**Intergenerational poverty** - Low-income status in two or more successive generations in a family.

**Economically disadvantaged youth -** An individual who received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the higher of:

* the official poverty level, for an equivalent period; or
* 70% of the lower living standard income level.

Please follow this [link](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter7_tcm1045-134289.docx) for the current Income Eligibility Table that includes both Poverty Levels and Lower Living Standard Income Level.

Youth who are eligible to receive or are receiving free school lunch are considered to be economically disadvantaged.

### Supporting Youth Support Services Participants to Obtain Documents:

Youth Support Services grantees can work with individuals to obtain necessary documents for employment, such as driver’s license or identification card, a social security card, and/or birth certificate. **Youth Support Services funds can be used to pay for fees to obtain such documents.** Youth Support Services grantees are encouraged to refer individuals to partner organizations for assistance, as well as to partner with organizations that provide support to populations with barriers to employment such as homeless individuals, or justice-involved individuals.

## Section 2: Collaboration

Partnerships are highly encouraged and projects should align with high growth and in-demand jobs in their region. Projects are encouraged, but not required, to leverage non-state or private-sector funds for their project. Leveraged resources may be for any amount, cash or in-kind.

## Section 3: Earned Safe and Sick Time

Effective January 1, 2024, required Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) benefits would be considered fringe benefits similar to Worker’s Compensation. Expenses related to ESST should be budgeted in the Direct Customer Training cost category for the Youth Support Services Program. If your agency wishes to modify your Youth Support Services budget to account for these additional expenses, please contact your program manager.

## Section 4: Use of Stipends and/or Incentives

Grantees are allowed to provide stipends to youth participants. Often, stipends are provided to youth while they are completing classroom training, on-the-job training, occupational training, or other training activities. Additionally, stipends may be offered to youth in place of a wage. Regardless, Youth Support Services grantees need to have a stipend policy in place. Note: stipends are considered taxable income to program participants and participants must be notified of IRS implications.

Incentives may also be provided to Youth participants. In line with federal regulations, incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. The local program must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments; align with the local program’s organizational policies. Incentive payments must not include entertainment, such as movie, sporting events, tickets, or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.

Incentive payment must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program tied to work experience, education, or training. Incentives provided for achievement could include the acquisition of a credential or other successful outcome.

Copies of stipend and incentive policies must be sent to the grant coordinator. Incentive policies must include type of achievement, paper documentation of achievement, and amount payable. For example:

| Type of Achievement | Paper Documentation | Amount Payable |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Completion of GED test (incentive can be offered for **each** test completed) | Copy of official document showing passed test | The successful completion of each test = $20. |

Example stipend and incentive policies can be found here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/>

## Section 5: Reporting

Accountability and reporting information will be used to monitor grantee service delivery, confirm grant reimbursement requests, and measure performance. Grantees are required to:

1. Submit quarterly narrative and data reports – due 30 business days after each quarter end. See Youth Support Services Quarterly report template: <https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-support-services-quarterly-template_tcm1045-408554.docx>
2. Enter participant data into DEED’s internet-based, online case management system WorkforceOne (WF1)

### Workforce One:

Grantees are expected to enter case managed Youth Support Services program participant information into the State of Minnesota’s case management system, Workforce One (WF1). Programs should enter participant information at enrollment, establish and track participant activities, regularly document case notes as necessary, and exit participants in a timely manner. The data that needs to be entered in and then reported from WF1 is summarized in the Youth Support Services Quarterly Data Report template. Data must be entered according to the Data Summary Definitions, listed in the Quarterly Data Report template: <https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-support-services-quarterly-template_tcm1045-408554.docx>.

DEED understands that not all organizations collect information on each of the characteristics listed in the data summary. However, it is in the best interest of the program to have the information collected, in order to better address barriers that youth participants may be facing and for the program to report more completely the participants served.

Programs that only provide services in a group setting (classroom presentations, job fairs, etc.) may not be required to use the WorkforceOne case management system. Contact the grant coordinator about receiving an exemption from this requirement.

Training is provided to organization at no-cost. Training is provided by DEED’s Workforce One team. Information about Employment and Training Programs (ETP) Workforce One training sessions can be found here: <https://www.mnworkforceone.com/ManagePrograms/SessionSearch.aspx>.

## Section 6: Reimbursement

Grantees must submit monthly Reimbursement Payment Request Forms (RPRs) or Financial Status Reports (FSRs) to a grant administrator within DEED. These RPR or FSRs must accurately reflect expenditures and obligations, per cost category, consistent with programing and participation, which grant administrators must be able to track. For more information on each cost category, refer to the Youth Support Services Budget Category Definitions: <https://mn.gov/deed/assets/budget-category-definitions_tcm1045-408555.docx>

## Section 7: Grant Modifications and Extensions

Youth Support Services grantees may request a grant modification if there is a need to change the program model or other programmatic changes. These requests will be handled on an individual basis. Contact the grant coordinator if a grant modification is needed.

Grant extensions are also possible. DEED expects grantees to fully expend grant funds by the end of the grant contract. However, unexpected program disruptions occur, and extensions will be taken into consideration. Contact the grant coordinator if a grant extension is needed.