



## Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division

# Request for Proposals for a Grantee to Provide Innovative Solutions for People with Disabilities to Achieve Integrated Life Outcomes

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### **Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:**

It is State of Minnesota policy to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion in making competitive grant awards. See Executive Order [19.01](#).

The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. See [OGM Policy 08-02](#).

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-431-3612 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact your agency's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator.

# Disability Services Innovation Grants

## 1. [Background, Purpose, and Outcomes](#)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, through its Disability Services Division (State or DSD), is seeking proposals (applications) from qualified applicants to support innovative strategies to improve outcomes for people with disabilities in Minnesota to:

- Live in integrated housing of their choice.
- Work in integrated, competitive employment.
- Access service providers of their choice through projects that help grow the capacity and strength of the direct care and support workforce.
- Maximize the capacity, strengths and unique abilities of families to best support their family member with a disability

Each application may address only one of these areas; however, applicants may submit more than one application.

## 2. [Services Sought:](#)

### a. [Housing](#)

The State seeks proposals that help people with disabilities locate and secure integrated housing of their choice. The Department of Justice defines the “most integrated setting” as “a setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible.”

Proposals focused on housing should align with the vision statement for housing in [Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan](#). People with disabilities will choose where they live, with whom, and in what type of housing. They can choose to have a lease or own their own home and live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Supports and services will allow sufficient flexibility to support people’s choices on where they live and how they engage in their communities.

For this grant, “their own home” is defined as a setting that:

- A participant owns, rents or leases in which the participant has full control of their housing and full choice of service providers; and
- The service provider does not have a financial interest in the participant’s home (i.e., the home is not owned, leased or operated by a service provider).

### b. [Employment](#)

The State seeks proposals that help people with disabilities attain integrated, competitive employment. Proposals focused on employment should align with the vision statement for employment in [Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan](#). People with disabilities will have choices for competitive, meaningful, and sustained employment in the most integrated setting.

Competitive, integrated employment is defined in the [Minnesota Employment First policy](#) as:

- Full-time, part-time, or self-employment with and without supports;

- In the competitive labor force;
- On the payroll of a competitive business or industry;
- Paying at least minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by workers without a disability; and
- Worker is fully integrated physically, functionally and socially, within the workplace.

#### c. Direct Care and Support Workforce

The State seeks proposals that support a robust direct care workforce to care for individuals with disabilities. The direct care/support workforce (workers) provides home and community-based services to children and adults with a variety of chronic conditions and challenges with activities of daily living. These workers are in Minnesota’s nursing facilities, assisted living centers, foster care, care centers, day training and habilitation centers, treatment clinics, and home care agencies. Most often, they work in people’s homes. The widespread inability to find direct care and support workers jeopardizes the health and well-being of Minnesotans with disabilities and older adults who depend on those services to remain in the most integrated settings possible.

Proposals focused on solutions for the direct care and support workforce shortage will address at least one of the seven recommendations from the [2018 report to the Olmstead Subcabinet](#):

- Expand the worker pool;
- Improve the workforce by enhancing training for direct care workers;
- Increase job satisfaction (including quality of the job);
- Increase worker wages or benefits;
- Raise public awareness by promoting direct care and support careers;
- Promote service innovation; and
- Enhance data collection.

#### d. Family-to-Family Connections

In partnership, the Department of Human Services and Department of Health seek proposals that offer innovative solutions to help build and strengthen family-to-family connections. Individuals with disabilities and special health needs, particularly those ages 21 and under, exist within family systems, and the State seeks to improve supports for these critical partners.

Recent interviews and surveys with Minnesota families of young people with disabilities and special health needs found that families strongly desire more connection and support from other families with shared life experiences. The goal of this effort is to help address social isolation experienced by families by offering peer-to-peer opportunities that help families learn from one another through information and skills sharing. The State encourages proposals that include agency partnerships. This grant is meant to respond to these needs which persisted well before, but in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, are now magnified.

Proposal requirements:

- Led by families of young people with disabilities/special health needs or families are heavily involved in designing and/or administering the proposed innovation idea.
- Offer new strategies or a major expansion/ improvement to an existing successful effort.
- Incorporate and adopt the [Charting the LifeCourse framework and tools for life planning](#).
- Address direct and indirect COVID-19 family impacts; and how your strategy will help.
- Build a sustainable solution that can continue after the grant period.
- Reach underserved areas and populations.

Note: Particular weight will be given to innovation proposals that connect families from traditionally underserved communities and/or have a state-wide or regional impact. Agency partnerships are encouraged.

### 3. [Funding Available:](#)

Applicants may request from \$5,000 up to \$50,000 per year. The State has approximately \$500,000 each fiscal year for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022, subject to the availability of appropriations and the agency's ultimate discretion. The grant period may be up to two years. Additional funding has been added specifically for the family to family connection grants, up to \$330,000 for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The State has the option to extend family to family connection contracts for a second year.

### 4. [Who Can Apply?](#)

The innovation grants are open to individuals or organizations that work with people with disabilities in Minnesota, including nonprofits, for-profits, tribes, local government units, community organizations, schools, colleges, businesses, support providers and others.

### 5. [How Can I Apply?](#)

The entire application process will take place on the State's Disability Services Division (DSD) online grant management system. To apply, follow instructions on the [DSD Innovation Grants Web Page](#).

Step 1. Log onto the DSD online grant management system and create an account

Step 2. Follow instructions on the DSD online grant web page to complete and submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) online, which is Step 1 of the process.

**All LOIs must be received by the State by 4:00 PM Central Time on Friday, June 26, 2020.**

Late or incomplete LOIs will not be considered.

### 6. [Proposal Requirements and Selection Process](#)

Step 1: Letter of Interest (LOI)

The LOI includes the following components:

1. Applicant full legal name
2. Applicant contact information
3. 501(c)(3) status, DUNS number, and SWIFT vendor number as applicable
4. Project name

5. Funding priority from Section 2 of this RFP.  
Each application may address only one service area. If you would like to apply for more than one service area, you must submit separate LOIs.
6. Amount requested per year
7. How the grant funds will be used
8. Number of years of funding requested
9. Project idea
10. What is innovative about the project
11. Target population for the project
12. Geographic area where project activities will take place

A review team will evaluate completed LOIs based on the following:

Components	Maximum points
Project idea	40
Project innovation	40
Target population	10
Geographic location	10
TOTAL:	100

State and professional staff, other than the evaluation team, may also assist in the evaluation process for LOIs as well as the application in Step 2, if applicants are selected. This assistance could include, but is not limited to, the initial mandatory requirements review, contacting of references, or answering technical questions from evaluators. The State expects to invite up to 40 applicants with the highest scores from the LOI submissions to submit a full application as described in Step 2 below.

The State reserves the right to alter the composition of the evaluation team and their specific responsibilities.

LOI review process from the time of submission to selection will take up to six (6) weeks. We anticipate notifying successful applicants by **JULY 24, 2020**. If your LOI is selected, the State will invite you to complete an application, the second step in the process. The State does not plan to notify unsuccessful applicants.

**You may not start any work until both the State and the grantee sign the contract and the State notifies the grantee that it may start work.**

### Step 2: Application

The online application includes the following components to expand on the LOI in Step 1:

1. Applicant background and expertise
2. Collaboration / partnership
3. Special focus
4. Project evaluation plan

5. Work plan
6. Budget
7. Required statements
  - a. [Responder \[Applicant\] Information/Declarations](#)
  - b. [Exceptions to Terms and Conditions](#)
  - c. [Affidavit of Non-collusion](#)
  - d. [Documentation to Establish Financial Stability - Grants](#)
  - e. [Disclosure of Funding form](#)
  - f. Proof of Insurance - You must submit valid proof of insurance that includes the type and dollar amount of coverage.
  - g. Professional Responsibility and Data Privacy

The application will be reviewed by a team of evaluators selected by the State as follows:

1. Required Statements. You should respond to each statement and complete each form, as directed. When each of the Required Statements are submitted and deemed satisfactory, the rest of the application will be reviewed.
2. Your application will be evaluated and points will be assigned as follows:

Components	Maximum Points
Applicant Background & Expertise	15
Collaboration/Partnership	15
Special Focus Areas	5
Evaluation Plan	10
Work plan	30
Budget	25
<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>	<b>100</b>

The State will contact successful applicants to provide additional information, to schedule a site visit and/or begin contract negotiations with State staff. All applicants will be notified after all of the available funds are committed.

## 7. [Responders' Conference](#)

A Responders' Conference webinar will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Central Time. Join the webinar:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/onstage/g.php?MTID=e57e5daf342d11f30ff01cf070194addf>

Audio is available over the computer or by phone (Dial in number: 866-726-7736, Conference ID: 6470519).

Responders may ask specific questions of State staff concerning the project and the application process. Attendance at the Responders' Conference is not mandatory but is recommended. Oral answers given at the conference will be non-binding. State will post written responses to questions asked at the conference to the [DSD Innovation Grants Web Page](#) after the conference. Questions

may also be e-mailed to [DSD.Innovation@state.mn.us](mailto:DSD.Innovation@state.mn.us) from March 24, 2020 through June 12, 2020. State will post all written responses on the [DSD Innovation Grants Web Page](#) by June 19, 2020.

## 8. [Contact](#)

You may direct your questions to [DSD.Innovation@state.mn.us](mailto:DSD.Innovation@state.mn.us). If you do not have a question but are interested in receiving notification when written responses have been posted online, submit a request using the email address listed above.

## 9. [Required Contract Terms and Conditions](#)

**A. Requirements.** All Responders must be willing to comply with all state and federal legal requirements regarding the performance of the grant contract. The full requirements are set forth throughout this RFP and are contained in the [sample grant contract \(Form G\\*\)](#). The sample grant contract should be reviewed for the terms and conditions that will likely govern any resulting contract from this RFP. Although this RFP establishes the basis for Responder Proposals, the detailed obligations and additional measures of performance will be defined in the final negotiated contract.

**B. Governing Law/Venue.** This RFP and any subsequent contract must be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota. Any and all legal proceedings arising from this RFP or any resulting contract in which State is made a party must be brought in the State of Minnesota, District Court of Ramsey County. The venue of any federal action or proceeding arising here from in which State is a party must be the United States District Court for the State of Minnesota in Ramsey County.

**C. Preparation Costs.** State is not liable for any cost incurred by Responders in the preparation and production of LOIs/applications. Any work performed prior to the issuance of a fully executed grant contract will be done only to the extent the Responder voluntarily assumes risk of non-payment.

## 10. [State's Authority](#)

1. The State may:

- A. Reject any and all LOIs/applications received in response to this RFP;
- B. Disqualify any Responder whose conduct or LOI/application fails to conform to the requirements of this RFP;
- C. Have unlimited rights to duplicate all materials submitted for purposes of RFP evaluation, and duplicate all public information in response to data requests regarding the LOI/application;
- D. At its sole discretion, reserve the right to waive any non-material deviations from the requirements and procedures of this RFP;
- E. Extend the grant contract, in increments determined by STATE, not to exceed a total contract term of five years;
- F. Cancel the RFP at any time and for any reason with no cost or penalty to State; and
- G. State will not be liable for any errors in the RFP or other responses related to the RFP.

2. If federal funds are used in funding a contract that results from this RFP, in accord with 45 C.F.R. § 92.34, for Works and Documents created and paid for under the contract, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will have a royalty free, non-exclusive, perpetual and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, the

Works or Documents created and paid for under a resulting contract for federal government purposes.

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