

Minnesota Department of Administration Office of Grants Management

Operating Policy and Procedure

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Policy on Writing and Publicizing Grants Notices and Requests for Proposal

[Minn. Stat. §16B.97](#)

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Minn. Stat. §16B.97 Subd. 4(a)(1) provides that the Commissioner of Administration shall “create general grants management policies and procedures that are applicable to all executive agencies.”

Policy

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to include sufficient information in notices of grant opportunities and requests for proposal (RFPs) for all grants over \$5,000 so that potential applicants may make informed decisions about applying for and managing state grants. It is also the policy of the State of Minnesota to publicize competitive grant opportunities broadly.

Notices of grant opportunities and RFPs shall include information about the grant program, application criteria, application and proposal requirements, state agency contacts and grant reporting requirements.

Competitive grant opportunities shall be publicized as broadly as possible. At a minimum, competitive grant opportunities must be posted on the granting agencies’ websites per M.S. 15.994.

Agencies should pursue additional methods to reach potential applicants that may include: targeting communities and parts of the state that have not historically participated in the grant application process, culturally-specific and community-based organizations, e-mail, agency distribution lists, targeted newspapers, notifying prior applicants and recipients and the Minnesota State Register.

Competitive grant opportunities that are posted on state agency websites will be linked to <https://mn.gov/grants/>, the one-stop website for state grant opportunities.

State agencies may, with or without reason, withdraw a grant notice or RFP at anytime after it has been made public.

Scope of Coverage

This policy applies to grant-making at all executive branch agencies, boards, committees, councils, authorities, and task forces that make grants. This policy applies only to competitive grant review processes. Grants under \$5,000, legislatively-named, formula and sole/single source grant processes are not subject to this policy.

This policy supersedes other state agency policies that concern publicizing competitive grant opportunities except when the existing state agency policy is stricter.

Grant programs that seek an exception to this policy must complete a Grants Policy Exception Request and submit it to the Office of Grants Management for the approval of the Commissioner of Administration.

Definitions

Competitive Grant:

A competitive grant is a grant that is awarded through an application process in which multiple grant applications are solicited through a notice of grant opportunity or RFP and reviewed by the state agency. In a competitive grants process, grants are awarded to those applicants that most closely meet the selection criteria identified by the granting agency, based on the availability of grant funds.

Notice of Grant Opportunity/RFP:

A notice of grant opportunity or request for proposal is a document that notifies grantseekers of a competitive grant opportunity and includes information on grant requirements, selection criteria, timelines, and process.

Diversity in Grant-Making:

A process that intentionally identifies how a grant program serves diverse populations, and especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

Diverse populations include:

- Racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians
- LGBTQI communities
- Disability status
- Veterans
- Geographic diversity within and across Minnesota – including greater MN, urban/metro

Agencies can identify diverse populations served through grant outcomes by pointing to under-served, targeted, and/or grantee populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities past grant funding has not adequately addressed.

Inclusion in Grant-making:

A process that identifies how the grantee community is included in the grant review process.

Procedures

1. The notice of a grant opportunity or RFP is drafted by appropriate staff and incorporates grantee community input. Agencies should recruit and utilize community-based grant reviewers and provide stipends whenever possible.
2. Notices of grant opportunities and RFPs must clearly communicate grants program information that will help potential applicants determine whether and how to submit an application. Agencies should pursue additional methods and identify multiple ways to share grant request for proposals through existing and diverse networks and community relationships to provide clear instructions to potential applicants such as webinars, conference calls, etc. These documents and resources must also identify important program requirements for grantees.
3. Essential elements of a notice of a grant opportunity or RFP include:
 - a description of the grant program
 - the state's goals and priorities in making the grants
 - the grant program's diversity and inclusion needs including how the grant program serves diverse populations
 - eligibility requirements for applicants
 - a statement on whether a multi-organization collaboration is required, welcome or not allowed for this grant program
 - grant outcome expectations and reporting requirements
 - deadlines and timelines for each step in the application and award process
 - amount of money for distribution and how it will be allocated
 - selection criteria and weight
 - detailed application formatting instructions or an application template
 - general information about the review process and a general overview of the composition of the review committee
 - requirements for in-kind or matching funds
 - the name and contact information of a contact person at the state agency
 - a statement about when information in their grant application becomes public data
4. At a minimum, the notice of a grant opportunity or RFP must be posted on the granting agency's website per M.S. 15.994. Agencies should pursue additional methods to reach potential applicants that may include: targeting communities and parts of the state that have not historically participated in the grant application process, culturally-specific and community-based organizations, e-mail, agency distribution lists, targeted newspapers, notifying prior applicants and recipients and the Minnesota State Register.