

**American Rescue Plan (ARP) State
Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF)
Request Form**

Please complete this form in accordance with
the process instructions.

Agency/Point of Contact: Margaret Kelly, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health

Title of Request: Expanded Community-based Testing Strategies for Minnesotans

Date: 1/7/2022

Request Amount: \$ 40,000,000

Expenditure Time Period: 1/14/2022 to 6/30/2023 (no later than 6/30/2023)

Brief Summary of Request: (Summary must be complete on this page with supporting information attached)

The Minnesota Department of Health is requesting \$40 million to continue its community-based testing strategies. Since June 2020, we have been offering barrier free testing throughout the state, including testing in response to outbreaks, enhanced testing in congregate settings such as long term care, group homes, residential facilities, homeless shelters, and corrections. This fall we expanded availability of testing at K12 schools and child care facilities. In addition MDH continues to offer access to no cost barrier free testing throughout the state at community based testing locations with both PCR and rapid antigen tests.

Testing remains a key tool to slow the spread of the virus. Up to 45% of cases are asymptomatic. People who develop symptoms are most contagious in the days prior to symptom onset. Given the current rates of community transmission, additional testing availability is critical to ensure barrier free and easy access in order to slow the spread of the disease.

Minnesota is just beginning to experience the rapid increase in cases due to the Omicron variant. During the first week in January 2022, MDH has reported more than 46,000 positive cases including more than 10,000 on a single day which was the highest number of cases reported on a single day during the pandemic at that point in time. Average positivity was 15.6% on January 7, 2022, also a pandemic record. It is critical that particularly in our most vulnerable settings including child care and congregate care we are able to retain our testing infrastructure and options that best meet the needs of Minnesotans. MDH is working closely with the federal government, health care systems, pharmacies and local public health to fill gaps in the existing testing infrastructure and ensure Minnesotans have access to COVID tests.

This funding will allow us to further expand and strengthen the state's testing program to include distribution of rapid over the counter and point of care tests for a variety of settings, including child care and congregate care. It will also allow us to distribute tests more broadly in the community to meet a variety of needs. Minnesota's testing program continues to prioritize those Minnesotans who are at greatest risk of severe illness but also ensures barrier free access to those Minnesotans needing access to testing. Funding will cover the costs of operating testing distribution sites, testing supplies, shipping and staffing costs.

Margaret Kelly

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Department Head Signature

Date