

Fiscal Year 2026 Pathway Preparation Grants

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)
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Saint Paul, MN 55108
mn.gov/pelsb

10/10/2025

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-539-5994. TTY users should contact the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 and request assistance in contacting PELSB

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Key Terms

District: For the purposes of this grant, “district” means a public-school district or charter school.

Field: A “field,” “licensure area,” or “subject area” means the content area in which a teacher may become licensed to teach.

Initial Professional License: A grantee’s first professional teaching license.

License: Authorization granted by PELSB to teach in a public-school district or charter school. Only licenses that allow an individual to serve as a “teacher of record” as a classroom teacher, itinerant teacher, or related services school professional are included. The following license types are not included in this definition: substitute, administrative, supervisor, and director. All tiers are included.

Professional License: A license with unlimited renewals that is transferable to any school district, including a Tier 3 or 4 License.

Shortage area: (1) Licensure fields and economic development regions reported by the commissioner of education or the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as experiencing a teacher shortage; and (2) Economic development regions where there is a shortage of licensed teachers who reflect the racial or ethnic diversity of students in the region, where the aggregate percentage of Indigenous teachers and teachers of color in the region is lower than the aggregate percentage of kindergarten through grade 12 Indigenous students and students of color in that region. Only individuals who close the gap between these percentages qualify as filling a shortage by this definition, as stated in Minn. Stat §120B.113.

Teacher: A teacher is defined in Minn. Stat §122A.06 as “a classroom teacher or other similar professional employee required to hold a license from the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board.”

Teacher Education Institution: For the purposes of this grant, “teacher education institution” means a teacher preparation provider appointed by PELSB.

Teacher Educator Institution: For the purposes of this grant, “teacher educator institution” means a teacher preparation provider approved by PELSB.

Tier 1 License: A one-year license that requires most individuals to hold a bachelor’s degree and the district to show that no “acceptable” teacher holding a Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 License applied for the position. The license is limited to the district verifying the need and has limited renewals.

Tier 2 License: A two-year license that requires the individual to have either a master’s degree in the content, enrollment in teacher preparation, or completed a teacher preparation program but does not yet meet requirements for a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license. The license requires a job offer from a Minnesota public school district, charter school, or other educational institution. The license is limited to the district offering the job and has limited renewals.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 1: Overview

Grant Overview

- Grant Name: Pathway Preparation Grant
- <https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/grants/>
- Open for Applications: November 7, 2025
- Application Due Date: November 20, 2025

PELSB makes this competitive state grant funding available to support teachers seeking a Tier 3 or 4 license under [Minnesota Laws 2025, Chapter 10, Article 3, Section 16, Subd. 5](#). The Pathway Preparation Grant (PPG) Program first began in 2023.

To support teachers holding a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license who are working toward a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license, \$400,000 is allocated for fiscal year 2026. The following are eligible for grants under this subdivision: school districts, charter schools, service cooperatives, and partnerships between one or more teacher preparation providers, school districts, or charter schools.

Grant funds must be used to support teachers holding a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license and seeking a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process. A grant recipient must provide teachers holding a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license with professional development, mentorship, and coursework aligned to state standards for teacher licensure.

Funding Availability

This grant opportunity provides \$400,000 dollars in fiscal year 2026 in state funding [Minnesota Laws 2025, Chapter 10, Article 3, Section 16, Subd. 5](#) for the support of Tier 1 or Tier 2 teachers seeking a Tier 3 or 4 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee for a two-year period. Grantees will be announced by late December/early January.

The state reserves the right to offer award amounts that differ from the applicant's request.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

Project Dates

Estimated dates are January 15, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be considered for this grant opportunity.

Applicant eligibility for this RFP follows the Pathway Preparation Grant applicant eligibility, as defined under [Minnesota Laws 2025, Chapter 10, Article 3, Section 16, Subd. 5](#). The grant program seeks proposals from entities that aim to support Tier 1 or Tier 2 teachers seeking a Tier 3 or 4 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process. Applicants must be a school district, charter school, service cooperative, or partnership between one or more teacher preparation providers, school districts, or charter schools.

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. [Office of Grants Management \(OGM\) Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

The grant will serve:

- School districts, charter schools, service cooperatives, or partnerships between one or more teacher preparation providers, school districts, or charter schools.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Tier 1 or Tier 2 teachers obtaining a Tier 3 or 4 license through completion of a teacher preparation program or the licensure via portfolio process.

Collaboration

The following may apply for a Pathway Preparation Grant: a school district, a charter school district, an education service cooperative or a partnership between one or more teacher preparation providers and school districts, including charter schools.

Selection Criteria and Weight

PHASE 1: Screening

Applications that meet the following criteria will be forwarded for review.

1. Received in the designated email box by the due date and time.
2. Applicant meets the eligibility requirements.
3. Application includes a narrative and budget.

PHASE 2: Application Components Reviewed and Scored

The components to be scored are summarized below. Total points possible are 100.

Pathway Preparation Grant has the following weighted criteria in measurable outcomes and in reaching diverse populations:

Criteria	Not Recommended	Recommended	Highly Recommended
Section 2 Program Narrative (40 Points)	29 Points: The proposal does not provide a sufficient explanation of each program activity or who will be served. The proposal does not address the funding requirements for this grant program and/or several proposed activities are not allowable by statute.	35 Points: The proposal provides a reasonable explanation of each program activity aligned with the funding requirements for this grant program, including the types of teachers who will be served, how they will be supported.	40 Points: The proposal provides a clear and detailed explanation of each program activity aligned with the funding requirements for this grant program, including the types of teachers who will be served, how they will be supported.
Section 3 Teacher Participants (35 Points)	21 Points: Explanation of need is not clear and local data is either not provided or does not sufficiently support a case for the need to receive grant funds in order to have the capacity to support teachers seeking an initial professional license.	30 Points: Proposed programs will provide support to teachers seeking an initial professional license. Explanation of program need, as well as data on program participants demonstrates reasonable need and ability to execute the proposed program activities.	35 Points: Explanation of program need, as well as data on program participants provide a very clear and compelling case, emphasizing support to teachers of color and Indigenous teachers, and/or teachers in license shortage areas. A high number or proportion of the district's teachers will be served.

Section 4 Capacity for Teacher Support (20 Points)	11 Points: The applicant's explanation of capacity leaves questions about their ability to execute the proposed programs successfully and/or achieve intended outcomes.	15 Points: The applicant demonstrates a reasonable capacity to execute the proposed activities.	20 Points: More than most other applicants, the applicant demonstrates a clear and strong capacity to execute the proposed programs, through a detailed explanation of capacity.
Section 5 Budget (5 Points)	2 Points: The budget is not itemized and/or does not clearly match what is described in the rest of the proposal. Requested funds are not necessary or reasonable.	3 Points: The budget provides an itemized description of how necessary and reasonable funds will be spent.	5 Points: The budget provides a clear, itemized description of how necessary and reasonable funds will be spent. Each item matches what is described in the rest of the proposal. All items align with grant funding purpose.

PHASE 3: Review of Outcomes

PELSB staff will review the outcomes resulting from the reviewers' evaluation of applications. PELSB may offer grant award amounts that differ from the applicant's grant request, including award amounts for specific program items. During this phase, PELSB staff or grant services staff may contact an applicant to obtain clarification on one or more sections of their application. PELSB staff or grant services staff may contact reviewers to obtain clarification on their feedback. All funding decisions made by PELSB are final.

Delays

OTHER - The following may result in a delay of preparation of any grant awards:

- Clarifications to the budget or work plan
- Invalid SWIFT VENDOR ID Number
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment Review

Questions, Technical Assistance and Information Sessions

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to grants.pelsb@state.mn.us. Questions should be emailed using "PPG" (Pathway Preparation Grant) in the subject line. Questions and answers will be posted within 7 of receipt at mn.gov/pelsb/pathways/ppg/.

Questions related to the grant opportunity may only be answered by PELSB's program contact, Melissa Miller, or their successor. Information received from an unauthorized source is not binding and could result in misinformation.

All prospective applicants are encouraged to attend an information session. A virtual informational session for interested applicants will be held on October 28, 2025 at 4:00 pm.

Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 2: Submission

Statement of Intent

PELSB will use Intent to Submit emails to plan for proposal review and to understand the scope of the competition.

Intent to Submit communications must be sent by November 7, 2025.

Please send a simple statement identifying an intention to submit a grant application with the name of the main applicant as well as any partnering organizations, units, or districts and the MN Economic Development Region (EDR) that your district, charter school district, or partnership *predominately* serves, to grants.PELSB@state.mn.us.

Application

Applications must be received no later than 4:30pm Central Time, on November 20, 2025. Applications must be emailed to grants.pelsb@state.mn.us by 4:30PM on Thursday, November 20, 2025.

Applications sent to any other email address will not be accepted. No paper submissions will be accepted. Please do not cc any other PELSB email address. Only one application per school district is eligible for review. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

All proposals will be acknowledged upon receipt. **Each late or ineligible applicant will be notified that their proposal will not be considered.**

Submit the application in the following format:

1. In the subject line of the email put "FY26 Pathway Preparation Grant Application – [Your Organization's Name]."
2. Save and attach your signed application as a PDF and budget as a combined PDF.
3. Save and attach your budget as an Excel document as well.
4. Label your documents with the name of your organization. Example: "[Organization Name] FY26 Teacher Preparation Pathway Proposal"

Please save or print Google documents to PDF for submission. Links, zip files, and Google documents will not be accepted. Costs associated with preparing the application must be borne by the applicant. The burden of proof of timely submission is on the applicant.

Application Content

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete.

1. **Application Coversheet:** The application coversheet must include:
 1. An original signature from the Identified Official with Authority (IOwA) to sign on behalf of the applicant.
 2. Contact information for the agency, agency head, the program contact and the accounting or business office manager.
 3. Identify the grant amount requested.
2. **Required State Financial Identification Number**
 1. SWIFT (Minnesota's Statewide Integrated Financial Tool System) Vendor/Supplier Number: *It is likely your organization already has this number; check with your business office.*
 2. This number is required for all applicants. If you are applying with a fiscal agent, the SWIFT number must be for the fiscal agent who will be receiving and administering the grant funds.
 3. To acquire a SWIFT Vendor Number please visit:
<https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/>.
3. **Application Narrative Components and Budget**
 1. Use the application template to develop clear and complete narrative responses for the following components based on the grant period.
 2. The total page count for the narrative components must not exceed 8 pages.
 3. Applicants are welcome to submit supporting documents as appendices.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated.

PELSB reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the applicant.

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 3: Application Review Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing education and teaching specialists. The review committee will use the point scale provided above to evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. Reviewers will meet and discuss the proposals and then put forth their recommendations. The director of PELSB will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be by email to applicants.

Timeline

RFP posted on the PELSB web site: Thursday, October 23, 2025

Deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit: Friday, November 7, 2025

Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Applications due no later than 4:30 pm central time: Thursday, November 20, 2025

Committee begins review of applications: late November 2025

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: December 2025

Selected grantees announced; grant contract agreement negotiations begin: late December 2025/early January

Work plans approved and grant begins: January 15, 2026

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 Statutes § 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 contract agreement.

Public Data

Per [Minnesota Statutes § 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 contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by PELSB 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 contract agreements have been fully executed.

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 4: Award Requirements and Grant Management Responsibilities

Preaward Risk Assessment and Financial Review

In accordance with [Minnesota Statute §16B.981](#) and [OGM Policy 08-06: Preaward Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees](#), it is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants of \$50,000 or more. Granting agencies will request, review, and analyze information, including Exhibits C-H, as referenced in this RFP, as applicable.

Grant Contract Agreements

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grantees should read the grant contract agreement, sign, and once signed, comply with all conditions of the grant contract agreement. No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and the State's Authorized Representative has notified the Grantee that work may start. The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Accountability and Reporting Requirements

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant contract agreement have been met.

Grant recipients must submit a report to PELSB by **September 30** of each year after receiving an award, for each year that grant funds are active. If the due date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the report is due by 4:30PM the prior workday. **Even though the grant contract agreement extends for a two-year period, reports on the use of grant funds each state fiscal year are due each year.**

The report must detail the number of teachers enrolled in a teacher preparation program, the number of teachers working on licensure via portfolio, licensure area demographics, and progress toward licensure.

Grant recipients must maintain a ledger to track the grant budget expenditures and payment reimbursements, plus all documents that support budget line-item expenses.

If subcontracting is an allowable expenditure in the approved budget, follow applicable state and federal procurement laws and select "responsible vendors" who are not debarred or suspended, not engaged in unlawful practices and who are qualified.

Grant Monitoring

[Minnesota Statutes § 16B.97](#) and [Policy on Grant Monitoring](#) require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants over \$50,000
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants over \$250,000

- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants over \$50,000

The monitoring schedule will be on an annual basis.

Grant Payments

Per [State Policy on Grant Payments](#), reimbursement is the 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 PELSB has given the grantee a written extension.

One PELSB-generated invoice coversheet summarizing line-items being submitted for reimbursement, with proof of expenditure for each item, must be submitted in a timely manner upon completion of the services and may be submitted at any time throughout the state fiscal year.

Authorized Representatives

Pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes §16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#), grantees must clearly post on the grantee's website the names of, and contact information for, the grantee's leadership and the employee or other person who directly manages and oversees a grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee.

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

A. Municipalities

Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with [Minnesota Statutes §471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#).
- The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§ 177.41](#) through [177.50](#), as applicable.
- Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).
- 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 contracts.

B. Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities must use these guidelines:

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost 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 Underutilized Business Program](#)
 - Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Directory](#)

- E. 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 contracts.
- F. The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- G. Notwithstanding the above, the State may waive bidding process requirements when:
 - a. Vendors included in response to competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
 - b. It is determined there is only one reasonably able and available source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- H. The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§177.41 through 177.50](#), as applicable.
- I. The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

Audits

Per [Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98 Subdivision 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, the State Auditor, the Attorney General, and the Legislative Auditor as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract 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.

Grant Provisions

[Minnesota Laws 2025, Chapter 10, Article 3, Section 16, Subd. 5](#)

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

Ineligible Expenses

As referenced in [Minnesota Laws 2025, Chapter 10, Article 3, Section 16, Subd. 5](#), ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

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 per [Minnesota Statutes § 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.

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](#).

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.

Voter Registration

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

Grant Administration Regulations

Administrative guidelines will be sent to grantees which will outline details on the grant award process, applicable regulations, monitoring expectations, fiscal procedures, reporting requirements, and more, upon contract execution.

Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Attachments

- 1 Pathway Preparation Grant Application**
- 2 Exhibit C: Capacity Responses**
- 3 Exhibit D: Certification that the entity is not suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government**
- 4 Exhibit E: Evidence of Good Standing**
- 5 Exhibit F: Nonprofit grantee as applicable**
- 6 Exhibit G: For-Profit Certification Disclosure and Required Documents**
- 7 Exhibit H: Certification that no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years**
- 8 Affidavit of non-collusion**