
Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Grant program

Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals

Important Dates

Proposal Available: March 24th, 2025

Technical Question Deadline: April 28th, 2025

Proposal Submission Deadline: **May 8th, 2025 at 4:00pm central time**

Award Notice to Applicants: June 6th, 2025

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: June 18, 2025

Project Period: Grant Contract Start Date to June 30, 2027

Contacts

Cha Her

Program Administrator of Grants and
Workforce Initiatives

Tel: 651-259-3991

cha.her@state.mn.us

About the Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding more than \$224 million annually in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350

Saint Paul, MN 55108-5227

Tel: 651.642.0567 or 800.657.3866

TTY Relay: 800.627.3529

Fax: 651.642.0675

Email: info.ohe@state.mn.us

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Grant Overview

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for administering the Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students (EAPS) competitive grant program. The authority to administer this program as well as the funds to make awards under it, are provided each biennium through appropriations law. In anticipation of continued authority and appropriations to administer this program, OHE is publishing this Request for Proposals. The appropriations law governing the most recent grants for this program is 2023 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 41, subd. 24 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/41/>).

The EAPS competitive grant program provides funding to eligible postsecondary institutions to provide direct emergency grants to students to meet immediate student needs that could result in a student not completing the term or their program.

The primary goal of the program is to act as a crisis intervention for students who lack resources and experience an unforeseen emergency that may impact their college attendance. The broad, over-arching objective is to eliminate immediate barriers that could result in a low-income student not completing their term or program due to issues related to poverty, while increasing students' resiliency and self-efficacy as individuals.

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from private nonprofit and Tribal colleges/universities; conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on criteria listed herein; and select the proposals able to show the most potential to: 1) improve the short-term outcomes for students experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, 2) demonstrate the capacity to holistically assist and refer students who seek assistance, and 3) take a community approach to support students who are experiencing an unforeseen financial emergency.

Background

Many students from lower-income backgrounds lack the financial support or family resources to meet unexpected expenses while attending college. In addition, students with children or who are supporting other family members, while working 20 or more hours/week while in school, often must choose between college attendance and tending to basic needs such as food, housing, or transportation.

Food and housing insecurity pose barriers to postsecondary attendance, persistence and completion, which can aid in building pathways out of poverty. The EAPS grant program aims to act as an intervention to keep students with low-incomes in college amidst unforeseen financial challenges that occur throughout their academic career. Support provided to students through EAPS-supported emergency grant programs is meant to provide "just-in-time funds" to overcome a personal financial crisis, so that students no longer have to choose between paying an unexpectedly large bill and staying in college.

Funding Availability

In anticipation of continued state appropriations to EAPS for the 2026-2027 biennium, OHE estimates that \$500,000 will be available in fiscal year (FY) 2026, and \$500,000 will be available for FY27 for grant awards. The intention is to award as many grants as possible within the means of available funds.

The maximum grant amount is \$150,000 for the biennium; \$75,000 per year. This is subject to change based on the outcomes of the 2025 legislative session. Grant contracts will cover a two-year period; funded projects will begin on July 1, 2025 (or the date that the contract is fully executed), and cover expenses incurred through June 30, 2027. There will not be a separate competition for FY27 grant funds.

Grant funding is awarded through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge. The review committee may include representatives of postsecondary institutions, organizations specializing in basic needs services, students, and others deemed appropriate by the commissioner. Applicants are scored using a 100-point review scale.

If selected, a grantee may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract is fully executed and the grant has reached its effective date. OHE is not permitted to make an exception to this rule.

Minimum Requirements

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

Applicants must submit the following items through the online Grants Portal (<https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>):

- Proposal cover sheet
- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Project budget narrative
- Financial and applicant capacity review

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

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. Department of Administration Office of Grants Management (OGM) Policy 08-02 (https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-02%20Grants%20Policy%20Revision%20September%202017%20final_tcm36-312046.pdf) establishes the

expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

This grant will serve students with immediate and unplanned expenses. This population often includes students with low-incomes and students who lack the financial support or family resources to meet unexpected expenses while attending college. OHE is committed to promoting and supporting postsecondary attendance and retention projects that provide historically underserved students with the resources to succeed in postsecondary education. This commitment is demonstrated through a criterion in the proposal evaluation process.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Number of students served
- Total amount of emergency grants provided to students
- Summary of the occurrences of emergency issues identified by students who applied for and were awarded emergency grants
- Description of program goals
- Summary of program outcomes

Eligibility

Eligible Applicant

Eligible applicants include the following organizations, located in Minnesota, that provide eligible services to eligible students:

- Nonprofit, private postsecondary institutions physically located in Minnesota and registered with the Office of Higher Education under section [136A.63](#)
- Minnesota Tribal colleges

Eligible applicants must also have a demonstrable homeless student population. The State of Minnesota defines “homeless” as *any individual, unaccompanied youth or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation*. By this definition, students who are doubling-up (staying with a friend or family member, i.e. “crashing” or “couch-surfing”) are considered homeless.

Colleges or universities can demonstrate that they serve students experiencing homelessness by submitting one of the following items:

- Recently conducted research on the prevalence of student homelessness on their campus;
- Limited data collected as a part of other social service programs on campus (i.e. collecting participant information at a campus food shelf or student-parent center); or
- Summative reports that demonstrate the prevalence of homelessness among the population served.

If a college or university has not conducted any quantitative research around housing insecurity within their institution, OHE may consider their proposal if the institution submits a written commitment to conducting research on the prevalence of student homelessness on their campus within one calendar year. EAPS funds may not be used to support this research.

Eligible Services

Funds awarded must be used to provide direct emergency grants to eligible students. Funds may be used to purchase and provide gift cards to eligible students to meet emergency needs. However, grantees will only be reimbursed for gift card expenses if they provide documentation showing gift cards were provided to students, not just purchased. Funds may also be used to make a payment to a third-party on an eligible student's behalf.

Funds may be used by eligible students to pay for immediate needs that could result in them not completing the term or their program. These expenses include, but are not limited to, rent/mortgage payments, emergency shelter (i.e. hotel room), utility bills, transportation to/from campus or work, gas, automotive repairs, groceries, hot meals, childcare items, hygiene products, medical devices such as eyeglasses, medical services, and other expenses deemed eligible by the institution.

Funds may not be used for: tuition and fees, meal plans, books, or other expected fees related to attending college.

Eligible Students

All students enrolled in a grantee's postsecondary institution are eligible to directly benefit from grant funds. All students must demonstrate appropriate need and enrollment in college.

Any additional requirements or limitations regarding student eligibility may be set by the grantee.

Collaboration

Applicants and supporting or partnering organizations may collaborate on the content of proposals. Applicants must write and submit proposals.

Selection Criteria

During the request for proposal process, an applicant will address all of the following criteria based upon their project. A committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge will convene to review and utilize a rubric to evaluate proposals based upon the following 100-point scale:

1. Need and Significance of the Project (25 points):
 - a. Prevalence of homelessness in their student body

- b. Student population to be served such as: race, ethnicity, student-parent status, disability status, citizenship status, LGBTQ+, etc. and their barriers to postsecondary attainment that will be met by the project
 - c. Identifies how project fits into larger framework/mission of the institution
 - d. If applicable, the extent to which an existing emergency grant program has been successful
- 2. Quality of Project Design (25 points)
 - a. Goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable
 - b. Commitment to cross-departmental collaboration is demonstrated and integrated into the project
 - c. Commitment to collaboration with external (community) resources is demonstrated and integrated into the project plan
 - d. Process for determining student eligibility, application review, and payment is well documented and achievable
 - e. If project administration will differ from the suggested processes in the [Guidance on Emergency Grant Program Administration](#) of this RFP, the differences are clearly specified and achievable
 - f. If the project will include the provision of gift cards to students, the process for documenting when gift cards are provided and to which students is clearly specified and achievable
 - g. Marketing/outreach plan is targeted and reduces stigma
- 3. Sustainability and Feasibility (20 points)
 - a. Implementation plan and timeline are appropriate for the scale of the project and grant period
 - b. Resources dedicated to this project are adequate and demonstrate commitment
 - c. Additional resources dedicated to other student basic needs initiatives at the institution including grants and other funding sources for the purpose of meeting student basic needs is demonstrated
 - d. Commitment and support from campus leadership is demonstrated
 - e. Commitment from other internal or external partners is demonstrated
- 4. Approach and Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (10 points)
 - a. Institution has established equity goals and how the project supports and/or contributes to meeting those goals is demonstrated
 - b. Institution demonstrated trust in students, student autonomy, and student contribution to project
 - c. Implementation plan ensures services will be equitably available by the student population especially as it relates to students that experience significant barriers to postsecondary attainment
- 5. Quality of Project Evaluation (10 points)
 - a. The goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable
 - b. Evaluation addresses the following:
 - i. Successful resolution of the student's immediate needs
 - ii. Persistence to end of term and/or completion of program of students who receive emergency grants
 - iii. Collection of data on other potential or ongoing barriers students who apply for and receive emergency grants are experiencing
 - iv. Student referrals to other relevant services

6. Quality of Budget (10 points)

- a. The budget is appropriate and reflective of project requirements, project objectives, and outcomes

Selection Process

The review committee will submit their evaluations of proposals to OHE for review and final award decisions.

While the review panel will evaluate and score proposals, final decisions are made at the discretion of the Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education.

Proposals are organized based upon proposal evaluations (100-point scale). Awards are granted to applicants with the highest proposal evaluations first. All available funds are awarded during this step.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education maintains the right to partially-fund projects based on funding availability.

After OHE publicly announces grantees, all applicants will receive copies of their evaluation records.

Required Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

Only applicable to business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions. Tribal Nations, University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are not subject to the financial and applicant capacity review.

In alignment with Minnesota Statute §16B.981, Minnesota Session Laws Chapter 62, Article 7, Section 11, Subdivisions 2-5 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/62/>) and OHE policies require applicable applicants to undergo a risk assessment prior to grant award to determine whether a risk mitigation plan and/or enhanced oversight is required to responsibly award the grant.

Business entities will complete the following review components:

1. Capacity Response
2. Certification of No Felony Financial Crime
3. Certifications of Good Standing with Secretary of State
4. Business Entity Financial Documents

Nonprofit organizations will complete the following review components:

1. Capacity Response
2. Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

3. Certifications of Good Standing with Secretary of State
4. Nonprofit Organization Financial Documents

Political subdivisions will complete the following review components:

1. Capacity Response
2. Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

Applicants who are required to submit financial documents as part of the review process, must adhere to the following based upon requested grant amount:

- Grant Request Amount: Less than \$50,000
 - Financial documents representing most recently completed year (1 year total)
- Grant Requested Amount: \$50,000 or higher
 - Financial documents representing most recently completed three years (3 years total)

Addressing Substantial Risks

The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject an organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.

Based on Minnesota Statute §16B.981, Minnesota Session Laws Chapter 62, Article 7, Section 11, Subdivision 2-5 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/62/>), if the risk assessment identifies substantial financial, organizational, capacity, and/or management risks, OHE may:

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from applicant to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the applicant cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement
 - The applicant has 30 business days to respond
- Develop a plan to address the risk or concerns identified
- Not award the grant
 - The granting agency must provide notice of the determination to not award the grant to the applicant and the Commissioner of Administration
 - The notice must include the following:
 - The reason for postponing/not awarding the grant
 - The timeline for the process for contesting the agency's decision

OHE has the authority to not award a competitive grant source. OHE must notify the applicant and provide reasons for not awarding the grant. The applicant may contest the decision to not award within 15 business days. OHE must consider any additional information the applicant provides with an additional 15 business days. As a final decision, OHE may affirm, reverse, or modify the initial decision to not award a grant. If OHE's final decision is not to award the grant, OHE must notify the applicant and the Commissioner of Administration. The

applicant may contest OHE's final decision within 30 business days of the agency's notifications about the decision.

Technical Assistance Questions

Technical assistance is available for interpreting instructions or preparing proposals by emailing gwi.ohe@state.mn.us. Please review all available materials before emailing your inquiry.

Each week, OHE will post responses to frequently asked technical questions online here: <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2260>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **April 28, 2025**.

To ensure fair and equitable processing of proposals, OHE will not review and/or comment on draft proposals.

Proposal Content

The Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Request for Proposal is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2260>.

All proposal content is submitted through a secure online grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>. The grants management system requires user registration. OHE reviews and approves each user registration within three business days. User registrations submitted after **May 2, 2025** may not be reviewed and approved prior to the proposal deadline.

Applicants must submit all proposal content by **4:00 p.m. central time, on May 8, 2025** for OHE to consider the proposal as complete.

OHE does not discriminate on the basis of preference in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment, in its programs or activities. OHE will provide applicants with proposal materials in an alternative format upon request.

Proposal Cover Sheet

The proposal cover sheet is fillable online through the Grants Portal and includes the following:

- Applicant Information
 - Institution or organization
 - Organization type (Private, non-profit postsecondary institutions or Minnesota Tribal College)
 - Address

- Applicant authorized official (administers proposal process)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Grantee authorized signatory (signs grant contract upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Grantee authorized official (administers project upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Project Title

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is provided online through the OHE Grants Portal.

Reference the Selection Criteria section for further details about the following sections of the narrative:

- Need and Significance of Project (25 Points)
- Quality of Project Design (25 Points)
- Sustainability and Feasibility (20 Points)
- Approach and Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (10 points)
- Quality of Project Evaluation (10 Points)
- Quality of Budget (10 Points)

Project Budget

The project budget is provided online through the OHE Grants Portal.

An applicant must populate a budget form which will include the following items:

- Emergency Grants provided directly to students

In addition, an applicant must complete a budget narrative where they must describe in what form(s) they intend to provide Emergency Grants directly to students (i.e. gift cards, funds paid to students, funds paid third-parties on student behalf).

Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

Financial and applicant capacity review forms are fillable and uploaded (Word or PDF format) online through the Grants Portal.

Reference the [Required Financial and Applicant Capacity Review](#) section of this proposal for further details about the following items:

- Capacity response
- Certification of no felony financial crime
- Certification of good standing with Secretary of State
- Nonprofit organization financial documents

Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

Only applicable to business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

To complete the Financial and Applicant Capacity Review form, applicants must describe and acknowledge components of their organization, list other grant funds, and/or provide financial documentation.

The Financial and Applicant Capacity Review form includes the following fields of which some may pre-populate based upon previous forms in the proposal process:

Applicant Capacity Review

Capacity Response

- Describe the applicant's history of performing the work that will be funded by this grant. This includes describing the applicant's current staffing, organization structure, and budget.
- Has the applicant been awarded or have an active grant from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education in the past 5 years? If yes, list each grant program and fiscal year it was granted in.
- Has the applicant been awarded or have an active grant from another State of Minnesota Agency in the past 5 years? If yes, list each grant program and fiscal year it was granted in.
- If applicant has a substantial number of awarded or active grants from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and/or State of Minnesota, please upload a document listing (1) Grant Program and (2) Fiscal Year.

Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

- Certify that no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years. 16B.981 Subd. 2 (6) requires that no current principals of a grantee have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity or to determine how those funds are used. By signing below, I warrant that no current principal of my

organization has been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. I certify that this information is true, correct, and reliable. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me/my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. *The response must be completed by business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

Certification of Good Standing with Secretary of State

- Certify that applicant has filed and is up-to-date with the Secretary of State. OHE will verify applicant's status with the Secretary of State Office. Potential grantee must certify that the organization has a status of "In Good Standing" with the Secretary of State as required by 16B.981 Subd. 2 (3) and as part of the response to this Grant Request for Proposal. *The response must be completed by business entities and nonprofit organizations.

Financial Review

OHE requires applicants that are business entities and nonprofit organizations to submit financial information as part of the grant proposal process. OHE audit staff will review the applicant's financial documents and perform a risk assessment to ensure the organization is financially stable. The types of financial documents and certifications required by applicants vary by type and size of organizations, as described in the sections below.

Nonprofit Organization Financial Documents

Nonprofit organizations requesting less than \$50,000 in total grant amount will submit the following documents for the **most recently completed year**. Nonprofit organizations requesting \$50,000 or higher in total grant amount will submit the following documents for the **most recently completed three years**:

- IRS Form(s) 990 or Form(s) 990-EZ
- Audited financial statement of a charitable organization which has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement per Minnesota Statutes 309.53 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/309.53>)
- If the nonprofit organization is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ or has not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or audit, the organization will be required to submit their board-reviewed financial statements, proof of tax-exempt status, and documentation of internal controls.

Business Entity Financial Documents

Business entity requesting less than \$50,000 in total grant amount will submit the following documents for the **most recently completed year**. Business entity requesting \$50,000 or higher in total grant amount will submit the following documents for the **most recently completed three years**:

- Federal and state tax returns

- Financial statements
- If the business entity has not been in business long enough to have filed a tax return, the business will be required to submit documentation of their internal controls and their current financial statements.

A business entity will also certify that the business is not under bankruptcy proceedings and disclosure any liens on assets.

Proposal Submission

OHE must receive all proposal content no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **May 8, 2025**. Utilize the OHE Grants Portal for submitting all proposal content: <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs associated with applying to this request for proposal. By submission of proposal content, the applicant affirms the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for a potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification.

Review Process and Timeline

OHE will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. *The award decisions of OHE are final and not subject to appeal.* OHE retains the right to offer partial or reduced awards based on an assessment of the overall grantee pool and funding availability. The Request for Proposal does not obligate OHE to award a grant. OHE reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposal, if in the best interest of the program, agency, and/or State of Minnesota.

- Request for Proposal posted on the OHE website: March 24, 2025
- Technical questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: April 28, 2025
- Proposals due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: **May 8, 2025**
- Committee begins review of proposals: May 19, 2025
- Committee recommendations submitted to OHE for review: May 29, 2025
- Applicants notified of award decisions: **June 6, 2025**
- Grantees publicly announced: June 20, 2025
- Mandatory grantee orientation (1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. central time): **June 18, 2025**

Preparation of grant documents will begin following grantee orientation. Upon completion of grant documents, grantees will enter into a grant contract with OHE. **Only upon full execution of the grant contract may a grantee begin incurring project expenses which will be reimbursable through the grant.**

Conflicts of Interest

OHE takes steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants, reviewers, and administrators per Minnesota Statute §16B.98, Subdivision 2-3

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>), Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making 08-01 (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>), and OHE Grant Administration policies.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to OHE 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 Grants (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/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 Minnesota Statutes 13.37 General Nonpublic Data (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.37>)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For 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 OHE as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minnesota Statutes 13.37 General Nonpublic Data) will be public data after the evaluation process is complete (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

Grant Provisions

The authority to administer this program as well as the funds to make awards under it, are provided each biennium through appropriations law. In anticipation of continued authority and appropriations to administer this program, OHE is publishing this Request for Proposals. The appropriations law governing the most recent grants for this program is 2023 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 41, subd. 24 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/41/>).

Office of Grants Management – Grant contract agreement templates are available for review online at <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>.

Expenditures

Allowable expenditures are limited to emergency grants provided directly to students. Emergency grants may be provided in different forms including:

- Funds paid to students
- Funds paid to third-parties on behalf of students
- Gift cards provided to students
 - Documentation must be retained demonstrating gift cards were provided to students, not just purchased

Ineligible Expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Tuition and fees
- Books and other required materials
- Student Meal Plans
- Other expected fees related to attending college
- Equipment purchases and capital expenditures
- Fundraising
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds of the grantee
- Parking violations and traffic violations of the grantee
- Unapproved out of state transportation and travel expenses
 - Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state

Guidance on Emergency Grant Program Administration

Grantees are required to follow the requirements listed below. Additional written guidance may be provided to grantees by email.

1. Individual emergency grants must not exceed \$1,500 per student at any one time

- a. Should a need specific to housing exceed \$1500, the grantee may make an exception based on the cost of living within the region in which the student resides
2. Grantees must set a limit on the number of times one student may receive an individual emergency grant over a specific period of time (ex. term, semester, academic year)
3. All contact with students related to this project must be documented by grantee staff
 - a. Conversations in person or over the phone can be documented by grantee staff through written notes
4. If a grantee chooses to provide emergency grant funds to students using gift cards, the grantee must have a process to document the provision of the gift card to a student including the name of the student and when the gift card was provided
 - a. Grantees will not be reimbursed for gift cards purchased but not provided to students
5. Grantees must abide requirements in the [Expenditures](#) section of this RFP

The following processes are suggested for project-delivery. If your project differs from what is suggested here, please clearly state how your proposed model differs from this in detail in your proposal.

1. **Identify Students with a Financial Emergency:** Grantees should have a plan in place to create a student-centered, proactive “front line” to identify and refer students to apply for an emergency grant. This “front line” cannot be centralized into one role; multiple supportive staff across departments should be able to refer students to this project when there is potential for these funds to benefit them. Ideally, students will be walked or “handed off” to the appropriate office where they can apply for an emergency grant and access other supportive services.
2. **Application Process:** Through a discussion of the students’ financial issue and the grant application/award process, staff assess the student for eligibility and begin to collect information for potential referrals that could be helpful for the student. Sometimes, there will be a clear case for a student to proceed in the process. Often, it may take a deeper look at the student’s situation to determine if there is indeed an unforeseen financial event involved and if/how the event is tied to chronic issues.
3. **Determine Student Eligibility:** Each grantee determines their own standards for financial eligibility based on demonstrated need using FAFSA/Minnesota State Aid Application data. Financial eligibility may differ from region to region based on local context and student demographics. For example, one institution may choose to use Student Aid Index (SAI) and unmet need to determine student eligibility, while another may use Pell Grant eligibility. The eligibility standards that are decided by grantee should be followed consistently, unless there are significant extenuating circumstances.

An example of an “extenuating circumstance” might be the institution makes an exception for a student who cannot request aid from family due to abusive behavior or fear of retribution (where the student is, in effect, living independently) when those concerns are clearly stated.

While the program is intended to address issues of poverty among college students, it is encouraged that institutions use their own discretion (based on specific context) in order to award the funds to students equitably.

4. **Application Review:** Once student eligibility is determined, the students' application should be reviewed by a committee. This committee should determine whether or not the student request is granted based on standards set by the grantee (i.e. a judgment made based on the students' financial need, specific circumstance, and likelihood of dropout). It is recommended that the committee is cross-departmental and includes 2-3 staff/faculty, but the committee structure may differ by institution depending on available staff time and resources.
5. **Notify Student:** Students should be notified if they are approved or denied for an emergency grant. Next steps and clear expectations should be outlined in the notification. If the student was not recommended for an emergency grant, a notification should be sent to them explaining the decision made in addition to referrals and resources that may help alleviate the situation.
6. **Payment:** Payments may come from the grantee's business office or other capable staff. Payments should be made within 3-4 business days of the submission of a complete application. Grant funds cannot be used to pay for ineligible expenses including tuition, fees, or books. If a grantee decides to award emergency grants using student accounts, they should clearly state in their proposal how they will ensure the funds are not used toward ineligible expenses.

Eligible forms of "payment" include:

- a. Check written directly to the student
 - b. Check written to a third-party vendor
 - c. Electronic transfer into a student account
 - d. Gift card/prepaid credit card
7. **Follow-up:** The office that administers the emergency grant project should follow up with the student at least once within 10 days, and then again within 45 days. Follow-up should include a comprehensive referral to campus and community resources in addition to ensuring the student received the emergency grant and utilized it to meet their immediate need. A key aspect of this follow-up is to collect information around whether or not this intervention was successful and alleviated the *immediate* barrier to college attendance. A student satisfaction survey can be used by grantees with evaluative questions around the impact of the project.

If a student was not chosen to receive an emergency grant, the office should still follow up with them within five days of submitting a complete application. This would be a good time to refer the student to other resources from the grantee or in the community, if those referrals have not already been made.

Work Plan

A grantee must complete and submit a Work Plan document following award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The Work Plan includes detailed information about the project target population, objectives, timeline, outcomes, and evaluation methods. Once the plan is approved, the grantee has the ability

to make changes within the scope of the project but must consult with OHE prior to making changes to the Work Plan.

Budget

A grantee must complete and submit a Budget document following award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The Budget includes detailed information about personnel costs, course preview consumable supplies and instruction material costs, and other direct costs. Once the Budget is approved, the grantee has the ability to make changes within the scope of the project but must consult with OHE prior to making changes to the Budget.

Grant Payments

Per Office of Grants Management Policy 08-08 (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) and OHE Grant Administration Policies, OHE will process payment requests through a method of reimbursement. All grantee Reimbursement Requests must:

- Align with the grant contract and current and approved work plan and budget
- Include supporting documentation of expenditures including by not limited to a General Ledger report or other similar report documenting the expenditures

OHE will review each Reimbursement Request against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date, and the latest grant report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due reports unless OHE has given the grantee a written extension.

Grantees must submit requests for reimbursement in **January 31, 2026 and July 31, 2026 for Year 1 and January 31, 2027 and July 31, 2027 for Year 2**, which corresponds with the grant narrative report timeline.

OHE reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify the reimbursement request. Grantees must respond with follow-up items within 14 days of receiving the request from OHE. Failure to submit documentation within the timeline will result in a void invoice and the grantee must submit an updated reimbursement request.

OHE will promptly issue payment to grantees within 30 days of receiving all required reimbursement documents.

Business with the State

A grantee must register as a vendor with the State of Minnesota's SWIFT System (<https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/>) prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The grantee's federal tax identification number is required to complete registration. Contracts and grant reimbursement will be processed through the SWIFT vendor portal. Grantees who are already registered as vendors but do not remember

information, should contact Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) vendor helpline at (651) 201-8106 or efthelpline.mmb@state.mn.us.

Grant Contract

A grantee must have an effective contract prior to incurring expenditures. The grantee authorized official and OHE financial services staff must sign the grant contract through an electronic system as determined by the Agency. The grant becomes effective when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the contract has reached the effective date, and the State's authorized official has notified the grantee that work may commence. Grantees can only incur eligible expenditures upon the grant contract effective or execution date, whichever is later. Expenditures incurred prior are not eligible for reimbursement through the grant.

Grant Financial Reconciliation

All grantees are required to undergo Financial Reconciliation for expenditures at least once during the grant period before final payment is made. Financial Reconciliation may be conducted on a more frequent basis. The process involves reconciling a grantee's reimbursement request for a given period with supporting documentation for that request, such as purchase orders, receipts and payroll records.

Audits

Per Minnesota Statutes 16B.98 Grants Management Process, Subdivision 8 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>), 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 and either the legislative auditor or the state 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.

Grantee Performance Evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, OHE will evaluate the performance of all grantees. OHE includes the following information in the evaluation process:

- Grantee name, grant amount, start and end dates of the grant period award, and amount of grant paid to grantee
- Grant description, purpose, and proposed grant outcomes
- Description of actual grant outcome
- Compliance with reporting requirements
- Grant monitoring visits and financial reconciliation results, if applicable
- If applicable:
 - Additional conditions placed on the grant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process

- If there were any fraud, waste, or abuse concerns
- If the grant was terminated for cause
- Significant changes that arose during the grant award period
- Status of any financial/audit concerns involving the grantee

Evaluations of grantee performance for grant contract agreements over \$25,000 must be provided by OHE to the Minnesota Department of Administration. In addition, OHE will share grantee performance evaluations with other state agencies upon request. Evaluations are considered public per Minnesota Statute 13.599 Grants (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2023/cite/13.599?keyword_type=all&keyword=13.599).

OHE considers past grantee performance before awarding subsequent grants to grantees.

Reporting and Accountability

Grantee Reporting

Grantees must complete all monitoring and reporting documentation and visits as required by OHE. Grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility are contingent upon fulfillment of reporting requirements. Grantees must also adhere to audit, affirmative action and non-discrimination requirements, and voter registration requirement.

All grantees are required to submit four narrative reports to OHE: Interim Narrative Report (due **January 31, 2026 and January 31, 2027**), and Final Narrative Report (due **July 31, 2026 and July 31, 2027**). OHE will inform grantees of the report content and format.

Grant Monitoring

Minnesota Statutes 16B.97 and Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10 Grant Monitoring (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) and OHE Grant Administration Policies require the following:

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

In circumstances of OHE not being required to monitor a grantee based upon the above scenarios, OHE will consider requests from grantees to conduct monitoring services.

OHE will base monitoring schedules upon the availability of staff and grantee. To the extent possible, monitoring will be conducted at the location of the grantee and will occur within six months of the contract effective date.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees

- A. 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. [Minn. Stat. §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.
- B. 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](#)
- C. 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 Requirement

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

Non-Transferability

Grant funds are not transferrable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to OHE in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Contact Information

Cha Her

State Program Administrator
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350 Saint Paul, MN 55108
Email: cha.her@state.mn.us | Phone: (651) 259-3391

Proposal Documents Available Online

General information about the program and the proposal process is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2260>.

All proposal procedures and documents are available online through the Grants Portal at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.