



Inclusive Higher Education Grant

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposal

Minnesota Statutes 135A.162

Important Dates

Proposal Available: June 10, 2024

Inclusive Higher Education Grant Proposal Workshop: June 24, 2024

Technical Question Deadline: July 18, 2024

Proposal Submission Deadline: July 25, 2024

Award Notice to Applicants: August 29, 2024

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: September 5, 2024

Project Period: September 2024- September 30, 2025

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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.

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Grant Overview

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for administering the Inclusive Higher Education Grants. The statute governing the grant program is located in Minnesota Statutes 135A.162 Inclusive Higher Education Grants (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/135A.162>) and correlates with 2023 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 41, Section 2, Subdivision 44.

The purpose of the Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program is to enable eligible colleges and universities throughout Minnesota to apply for initial funding to enhance existing or develop new inclusive higher education pathways established to enable students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to have all the rights, responsibilities, privileges, benefits, and outcomes that result from higher education, including academic growth, career advancement, and improved self-determined living.

OHE, in partnership with the Inclusive Higher Education Technical Assistance Center (TA Center), is actively leveraging resources provided by Minnesota state legislation to enhance access to higher education, competitive integrated employment, and self-determined living outcomes for students with IDD. This grant program presents a distinct opportunity to broaden the availability of high-quality postsecondary education options, leading to more individuals with IDD earning a meaningful credential, pursuing a career of their choice, and leading more self-determined lives.

The first grant cycle will focus on funding the development of new high-quality, inclusive higher education programs and enhancing existing postsecondary education options to address accessibility needs throughout Minnesota.

Definitions

Competitive Integrated Employment

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines [Competitive Integrated Employment](#)¹ (CIE) as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- Compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience;
- Receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities in similar positions;
- At a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- Presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

¹ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/cie>

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) created a postsecondary education pathway for students with intellectual disability – the [Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary²](#) (CTP) Program. The Act defined the requirements of CTP programs, defined "student with an intellectual disability" for these programs, and opened up access to federal student aid for students with intellectual disability attending an institution with the CTP designation, even if those students do not have a standard high school diploma or are not working towards a degree.

Developmental Disability (DD)

Developmental disabilities are a broad category of often lifelong disability that can be intellectual, physical, or both. It is defined in The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). More information can be found at: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/developmental-disabilities-assistance-and-bill-rights-act-2000>

Intellectual disability is a subcategory of developmental disabilities that doesn't include differences that are strictly physical in nature. Intellectual and developmental disabilities are when an individual has co-occurring disabilities, such as Down syndrome and congenital hearing loss.

Independent Evaluation

All grantees will be responsible for collecting data and reporting annually in collaboration with an independent evaluator (i.e., MIHEC TA Center) to meet the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards and reach current grant outcomes. This effort aims to monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program.

MIHEC TA Center will be responsible for serving as an independent evaluator that is not affiliated with the inclusive higher education program team to conduct an objective and impartial evaluation of an inclusive higher education program's effectiveness, outcomes, and impact.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDDs)

[Intellectual and developmental disabilities³](#) are conditions that are usually present at birth and that affect the trajectory of the individual's physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development. IDD is the term often used to describe when someone has intellectual disability and other disability attributes. Because it is common for individuals to have an intellectual and developmental disability, the IDD definition is used to describe the disability attributes of college students who may pursue a postsecondary education through an inclusive higher education initiative.

² <https://thinkcollege.net/resources/resources-by-topic/ctp-programs>

³ <https://mihec.ici.umn.edu/tools-and-resources/defining-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities-for-minnesota-inclusive-higher-education>

Person-Centered Planning (PCP) in Inclusive Higher Education

[Person-Centered Planning \(PCP\)](https://mnp.org/portfolio-items/person-centered-planning-big-picture/) (<https://mnp.org/portfolio-items/person-centered-planning-big-picture/>) in Inclusive Higher Education is used to develop and monitor the attainment of student goals based on the student's vision for their future. The student-focused plan is developed at the beginning of their postsecondary education experience and is updated throughout their time in college. Students control who participates in their planning activities. The student's interests, preferences, desires, and short and long-term goals are evident in:

- Course selection
- Career development experiences
- Campus activities
- Social connections
- Housing
- Student planning involves family input when desired by the student
- A student-focused process is used (e.g., STAR, PATH, Lifecourse) and documented

Student with an Intellectual Disability (ID)

A [student with an intellectual disability](#)⁴ means a student:

- With a cognitive impairment characterized by significant limitations in
 - Intellectual and cognitive functioning; and
 - Adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; and
- Who is currently, or was formerly, eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1401), including a student who was determined eligible for special education or related services under the IDEA but was home-schooled or attended private school.

Students with an ID may also have a developmental disability (DD) and their disability attributes can be identified as an intellectual and developmental disability (IDD).

Background

The Inclusive Higher Education Grant Program was established through the [Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act](#) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/135A.162>). The 2023 law was passed and allocated \$1,000,000/year to expand college pathways for students with IDD at eligible public and private Minnesota institutions of higher education.

Through a legislatively-named grant, OHE and the [Institute on Community Integration](https://ici.umn.edu/) (<https://ici.umn.edu/>), at the University of Minnesota, partnered to establish the [Technical Assistance Center](#)

⁴ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-668/subpart-O/section-668.231>

(<https://mihec.ici.umn.edu/>), to create access and support for self-sustaining, high-quality inclusive postsecondary education options throughout the state.

OHE administers the competitive grant program for eligible postsecondary institutions to develop new or enhance existing initiatives to increase overall enrollment and access for students with IDD. The goal is to increase the postsecondary education attainment rates, increase competitive integrated employment rates, and improve the self-determined living outcomes experienced by individuals with IDD.

The TA Center provides expertise and resources to institutions of higher education faculty and staff, Minnesotans with IDD, their families, educators, and other key stakeholders. The TA Center offers webinars and gatherings as part of the statewide outreach, awareness, and professional development opportunities. The TA Center's mission is to expand college options and increase access and affordability of high-quality, inclusive postsecondary education that leads to competitive integrated employment and community living for ALL interested youth, young adults, and adults with IDD from all ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

High-quality inclusive higher education pathways are designed to offer a meaningful credential that leads to competitive integrated employment and focuses on three primary components:

- Academic Growth
- Career Advancement
- Self-Determined Living

Historically and currently, the education, employment, and self-determined living outcomes for individuals with IDD have been significantly limited. A crucial challenge arises from the lack of access and opportunities to high-quality postsecondary education. The limited options available to obtain postsecondary education credentials contribute to unfavorable and stagnant educational opportunities, meaningful employment, and self-determined living outcomes.

Individuals with IDD continue to face exclusion from postsecondary education opportunities. However, inclusive higher education initiatives demonstrate that students with IDD experience numerous benefits from postsecondary education when provided with the opportunity and access. These benefits include higher employment rates and wages, greater access to competitive integrated employment, enhanced sense of community belonging, and improved quality of life.

Nationally, with over 300 postsecondary education programs available, inclusive higher education initiatives have progressively enhanced access and support for students with IDD within postsecondary education communities. Furthermore, their success is evidenced by positive postsecondary education, employment, and self-determined living outcomes.

Annually, around 1,000 individuals in Minnesota with IDD complete 12th grade; an estimated 5,000 students with IDD are within the college-age range of 18-22 years. However, students with IDD are systematically denied access to Minnesota postsecondary institutions and subsequent higher education opportunities. Additionally, students with IDD and their families are often unaware that attending college is possible. Barriers

include a lack of postsecondary education options, limited capacity in [Minnesota's three existing CTP programs](https://mihec.ici.umn.edu/mn-college-options) (<https://mihec.ici.umn.edu/mn-college-options>), cost of attendance, and limited funding.

Currently, there are four Minnesota colleges offering enrollment for students with IDD and these programs have a combined enrollment capacity of approximately 100 students per academic year. This translates to less than 3% of Minnesotans with IDD with access to postsecondary education opportunities, let alone earn a postsecondary education certificate or degree.

Students with IDD, like many college students, are faced with the barrier the cost of college poses. Equitable access to Federal and State financial aid is imperative for students with ID. Federal and State financial aid eligibility for students with ID is contingent upon attending a college or university with the CTP designation. To maximize Pell and state grant awards, the enrollment status for students with intellectual disabilities enrolled at a college or university with the CTP designation may also be determined using [credit hour equivalencies](#)⁵. These equivalent credits, earned from audited courses and other normally noncredit activities undertaken as part of the program of study for students with IDD, may be awarded to determine enrollment status. Only three of over 200 Minnesota higher education institutions have the CTP designation. State law in Minnesota recognizes the CTP designation as a criterion for students with ID to also be eligible for and considered for state financial aid.

The Inclusive Higher Education competitive grants address the limited funding available to eligible Minnesota postsecondary institutions for widening postsecondary education pathways to include students with IDD. These grants aim to break down the financial constraints by providing initial funding for colleges to plan and implement improvements or expansion until enrollment reaches a self-sustaining level.

In 2016, advocates worked to reduce financial barriers and widen inclusive postsecondary education pathways to include students with IDD. The 2016 and 2017 legislatures requested reports from Minnesota State and the University of Minnesota Morris on Programs for students with IDD. Furthermore, the 2017 legislature established the [Grants for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) (<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2295>).

Subsequently, the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act was proposed in 2022 to address the identified barriers outlined in the legislative reports. However, it was not until the 2023 legislative session that the proposed legislation was passed, leading to the establishment of the TA Center and the Inclusive Higher Education competitive grants.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards

The Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards are research-informed and align with the national accreditation standards for inclusive higher education.

Inclusive higher education (IHE) is institution-approved access to higher education for students with IDD that allows for the same rights, privileges, experiences, benefits, and outcomes that result from a college experience as an enrolled student. In developing, implementing, and evaluating IHE programs, faculty, and staff should

⁵ https://thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/credit_hour_equivalents_FSAhandbook_excerpt_0.pdf

continuously ask themselves, “How do we do this for any enrolled college student?” Enrolling in an IHE program allows students with IDD to actively earn meaningful credentials that prepare them to seek competitive integrated employment in their areas of interest and live self-determined lives in their community.

Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Framework

1. **Institution Approved.** The institution of higher education ensures that admissions, programs of study, courses, and credentials for students with IDD are approved through the institution’s formal process.
2. **Leverage Existing University Services and Systems.** The IHE utilizes existing university services, systems, policies, and procedures, which are expanded to include students with IDD. This approach embeds IHE into colleges and universities with minimal costs, aiding fiscal and programmatic self-sustainability.
3. **Financially Accessible.** The institution of higher education amends its U.S. Department of Education federal financial aid application to apply for the CTP program designation. Obtaining the CTP designation opens up federal financial aid eligibility for students with ID who attend a college or university with the CTP designation. Minnesota students with ID are also considered for Minnesota state financial aid if they attend a Minnesota college or university with the CTP designation.
4. **National Accreditation Standards Alignment** (<https://www.iheacouncil.org/>). Adherence to the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education standards ensures participating programs align with nationally recognized accreditation standards of inclusive higher education.
5. **Admissions.** The institution adopts admission requirements for students with IDD that do not require a high school diploma, GED, or a national standardized test or Adult Basic Education assessments. Admitted students with IDD have the student status that allows for the same rights, privileges, and benefits as any other enrolled student.
6. **Advising.** Institutional staff provide supplemental advising. This support extends beyond academics, including person-centered planning, transitioning to college life, and connecting students with IDD to resources, activities, services, and amenities on campus and in the greater community.
7. **Student Support.** IHE programs provide peer support for students with IDD in academics, employment, independent living, and social engagement. The peers, who are also enrolled students at the same institution, may be volunteers or direct employees. Some peers may have an option to earn academic credit toward their degree requirements. The collaborative relationships between students with IDD and their peers create an opportunity to learn with and from one another. The IHE staff oversees the recruitment, training, and continuous development of peer support to ensure effective support delivery.
8. **Program of Study Accessibility.** IHE staff must provide a process to outline the individual learning objectives for each student with IDD for their enrolled courses based on the course syllabi and learning objectives with accommodations and modifications as needed. Modifications are allowed for enrolled students with IDD if the course is being audited. The IHE staff encourages and supports the use of [Universal Design \(UD\)](#)⁶. Training and professional development are made available to all faculty.
9. **Guided by a Person-Centered Plan (PCP).** The IHE program is designed to ensure that student’s academic, employment, and self-determined living goals are supported and guided by their PCP. IHE staff are professionally trained in the provisions and processes of PCP. IHE program staff collaborate

⁶ <https://nccsd.ici.umn.edu/clearinghouse/audience-specific-resources/current-college-students/academics/ud>

with the student to develop, implement, and regularly update their PCP following their self-determined goals. The student decides who to invite and attends their PCP meetings.

Inclusive Higher Education Components

Academic program (Institution-approved credential and Program of Study)

Institutions of Higher Education must offer credential(s) (e.g., degree, certificate, or non-degree credential) that have been approved through a formal process at the institution.

- The student's program of study is comprised of the institution's current general catalog course offerings (i.e. segregated class instruction does not occur). Students select courses from multiple disciplines across the institution that are part of the curriculum for degree or certificate programs that align with their personal interests and career goals.
- The student's program of study must lead to competitive integrated employment opportunities in the student's chosen career area.
- If there is a First Year Experience, Introduction to College, or other required courses for incoming enrolled students, students with IDD's must have the same access to these courses.

Career Advancement

An integral component of an IHE credential is gaining relevant job experience, through internships and employment that aligns with the student's PCP. students with IDD's engage in career development activities, work experiences, internships, and paid jobs while enrolled. IHE programs must:

- Provide supported access to existing campus career services centers and other existing resources that any enrolled student on campus uses for career development, job fairs, resume preparation, interview planning, and job placement.
- Commit to and invest in the necessary staff/faculty resources and professional development for employment services and competitive integrated employment for individuals with IDD's. Two professional development options include the [VCU Supported Employment in College online course](#)⁷ and [Direct Course College of Employment Services](#)⁸ from the College of Direct Support.
- Facilitate and support work experiences for students enrolled in IHE programs through internships and employment to gain experience in interest areas identified in their PCP and as needed to fulfill the certificate requirements. The internships or jobs should be paid or serve as a credit-bearing course component in ways customary for the institution. Work experience must focus on the student's chosen career area.

⁷ <https://transition.vccurrtc.org/seincollege/login/index.cfm>

⁸ <https://directcourseonline.com/employment-services/>

Self-Determined Living (Independent Living and Social)

College is a time in every student's life to mature, explore their life goals, and become empowered for a self-determined life. To ensure that students enrolled in IHE programs have these same experiences, programs must:

- Utilize the student's PCP to guide their self-determined living goals.
- Support students in embracing college life, including but not limited to engaging in the campus community clubs, events, seminars, workshops, activities, and services afforded to them as college students.
- If on- or off-campus housing is made available to students, institutions will offer housing with additional support to students with IDD.

Funding Availability

This is the first release of the requests for application. Total appropriation for Inclusive Higher Education Grants during fiscal year 2024 is \$750,000. The appropriation includes up to five percent allocation for agency administrative costs. Thus, the total amount available for grant awards in this RFP is \$712,000.

Applicants may apply annually for and receive awards up to \$200,000 per year for up to four years. Applicants may apply annually for and receive awards up to \$100,000 per year in subsequent years for up to a total of ten years of funding.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a 25% match requirement for this award, either in-kind or monetary.

A committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge will review and score proposals through a competitive process. OHE will notify and announce grantees in August 2024. 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 be an eligible postsecondary institution.

Applicants must provide a letter of support from the institution's president or chancellor attesting to:

- Offer enrollment to students with an intellectual and developmental disability
- Commit to obtain a CTP program designation
- Join the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium
- Adhere to the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards
- Participate in independent program evaluation requirements
- Provide a 25% monetary or in-kind match for the grant funds

Applicants must submit the following item through this forms link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjlcN1asYZfNEmfjN_1Hv6QBUN09MOE9UUUNJNDU0UzgyR1dNRFY4NDY5WS4u

- Proposal cover sheet

In addition, applicants must email the following items to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us:

- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Letter(s) of support from Institution Leadership
- Resumes

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion and 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. 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 IDD. OHE is committed to promoting and supporting postsecondary attendance and retention projects. This commitment is demonstrated through a criterion in the proposal evaluation process

Grant outcomes will include:

- Establish new or expand existing inclusive higher education pathways
- Obtain the Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) designation
- Increase the number of postsecondary students served
- Increase postsecondary attainment rates
- Increase competitive integrated employment rates

Eligibility

Eligible Applicant

An eligible applicant must meet the eligibility requirements under section [136A.103](#) and be one of the following:

- Public Postsecondary Institutions
- Nonprofit Postsecondary Institutions
- Tribal Colleges

Competitive Priorities

OHE prioritizes awards to applicants that have submitted for or received a CTP program designation, or applicants with documented progress or intent toward submitting for federal approval.

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 program. 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 Project (**10 Points**):
 - a. Documents need for students with IDD and how project will meet their needs.
 - b. Identifies how project fits into larger framework/mission of the postsecondary institution.
 - c. Addresses the specific project focus within the broader goal of promoting postsecondary attendance, retention, and success.
 - d. If applicable, the extent to which the existing program has been successful.
2. Quality of Project Design (**40 Points**):
 - a. Goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable.
 - b. Project timeline and milestones for accomplishing tasks are clearly defined.
 - c. Incorporates the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards into the proposed initiative.
 - i. **Academics:** Addresses how the initiative will ensure inclusive access to courses across campus and in the student's program of study, use of accommodations and modifications, and other academic support services while maintaining high standards of excellence in the classroom.
 - ii. **Career:** Addresses how students with IDD will gain relevant job experience through internships and employment both on and off campus. Addresses how students with IDD will have the opportunity to engage in career development and exploration that leads to competitive integrated employment in the student's chosen career area.
 - iii. **Self-Determined Living:** Addresses how students with IDD will have the opportunity through their time in college to gain maturity, explore their life goals, and become empowered for a self-determined life of their choice. Documents the lived experiences and educational offerings available to develop important life skills including decision-making, self-advocacy, independent living, personal finance, time management, study skills, and healthy choices. Identifies how students with IDD will access residential on-campus housing, if applicable.

- d. Presents a student support plan including:
 - i. Supplemental advising through initiative staff.
 - ii. Peer support to ensure normative support across campus.
 - iii. Access to academic programs and courses.
 - iv. Person-centered planning for enrolled students.
 - e. Describes intent to develop plan that includes:
 - i. An institutionally approved credential.
 - ii. Leveraging existing university services and systems.
 - iii. A financially accessible postsecondary education offering.
 - iv. Alternative admission requirements for students with IDD to be traditionally enrolled.
3. Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (**20 Points**):
- a. Demonstrates commitment to expanding enrollment to include students with IDD (i.e. students who require additional support and alternative enrollment pathways, to access college).
 - b. Defines inclusion in higher education, outlines the broader university plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and specifically states how individuals with IDD are addressed in their plan. Identifies gaps or weaknesses in existing systems and services to successfully meet the needs of students with IDD will be addressed.
 - c. Demonstrates outreach and enrollment plans that address regional needs and include students with IDD from all ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
4. Quality of Project Evaluation (**5 Points**):
- a. The proposed project evaluation plan must include a commitment to participate in an independent evaluation of the inclusive higher education program during the period of performance. (This independent evaluation, conducted by an external party not directly involved in the project's implementation, will assess the success and impact of the proposed project. The goal of this evaluation is to ensure that the findings are unbiased, credible, and reliable.
5. Quality of Budget (**15 Points**):
- a. The extent to which the budget is cost-effective, appropriate, and reflective of project requirements, project objectives and outcomes, and the number of eligible students with IDD to be served.
 - b. The ten-year plan includes student enrollment projections for the sustainability of an initiative that is financially accessible and equitable for all interested students with IDDs.
 - c. The ten-year plan exemplifies long-term financial commitment to program self-sustainability.
 - d. Required 25% matching support is documented and additional resource support is provided.
6. Quality of Personnel, Resources, and Management (**10 Points**):
- a. Demonstrates their commitment to an Inclusive Higher Education initiative with a letter of approval and signature from the president or chancellor of the institution. The letter affirms the commitment to:
 - i. Offer enrollment to students with an intellectual and developmental disability.
 - ii. Obtain a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Program designation.
 - iii. Join the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium.
 - iv. Adhere to the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards.

- v. Participate in independent evaluation requirements.
- vi. Provide a 25% monetary or in-kind match for the grant funds.
- b. Provide a hiring plan to fully staff initiative.
- c. Resources are adequate to meet the project's goals and objectives.
- d. Adequacy of the management plan to achieve the proposed project on time and within budget.

Selection Process

The review committee will submit their evaluations of proposals to OHE for review and final award decisions. OHE determines awards through the following steps:

Step 1: Proposals are organized based upon competitive priorities

Step 2: Awards are granted based upon competitive priorities.

Step 3: Proposals are again organized based upon proposal evaluations (100-point scale). Awards are granted to applicants with the highest proposal evaluations. All available funds are awarded during this step. Remaining applicants will not be granted awards.

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

Technical Assistance Questions

Technical assistance is available for interpreting instructions or preparing proposals by emailing cha.her@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=2611>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **July 18, 2024**.

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

Proposal Content

Applicants must submit all proposal content by the deadline of 4:30 p.m. central time on **July 25, 2024**, through the online form:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjlcN1asYZfNEmfjN_1Hv6QBUN09MOE9UUUNJNDU0UzgyR1dNRFY4NDY5WS4u **and emailing additional required documents to** GWI.OHE@state.mn.us in order 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:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjlcN1asYZfNEmfjN_1Hv6QBUN09MOE9UUUNJNDU0UzgyR1dNRFY4NDY5WS4u

- Applicant authorized official (administers proposal process)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Project title
- Applicant organization
 - Name
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
 - Eligible Applicant Category (Public Postsecondary Institution, Non-Profit Postsecondary Institution, or Tribal College)
 - FEID federal ID
- Project funding
 - Requested grant amount
- Grantee authorized official (administers project upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Grantee authorized signatory (signs grant contract upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Program Approval
 - CTP Program Approval received
 - CTP Program Approval application submitted; or
 - Documents institution intends to submit application and its progress towards application
- Financial and Applicant Capacity Review (only applicable to nonprofit organizations)
 - Capacity response
 - Certification of no felony financial crime
 - Certification of good standing with Secretary of State

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is submitted via Word or PDF format and email to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us.

The proposal narrative must be published using 12-point font, have at least 1.5 line spacing, and not be more than 10 pages in total length. Reference the Minimum Requirements and Selection Criteria sections for further details.

The proposal narrative should:

- Address the criteria described in the Selection Criteria; and
 - Include a written plan to develop or enhance a sustainable inclusive higher education initiative that:
 - Offers the necessary support to students with IDD's to access the same rights, privileges, experiences, benefits, and outcomes of a typically matriculating student;
 - Includes the development of a meaningful credential for students with IDD's to attain upon successful completion of the student's postsecondary education;
 - Adopts admission standards that do not require students with IDD's to complete a curriculum-based, achievement college entrance exam that is administered nationwide;
 - Ensures that students with IDD's:
 - have access and choice in a wide array of academic courses to enroll in for credit or audit that align with the student's interest areas and are attended by students without disabilities;
 - have the option to live on or off campus in housing that is available to typically matriculating students;
 - have access and support for genuine membership in campus life, including events, social activities and organizations, institution facilities, and technology; and
 - are able to access and utilize campus resources available to typical matriculating students;
 - Provides students with IDD's with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive integrated employment;
 - Develops and promotes the self-determination skills of students with IDD's;
 - Utilizes peer mentors who support enrolled students with IDD's in academic, campus engagement, residence life, employment, and campus clubs and organizations;
 - Provides professional development and resources for university professors and instructors to utilize universal design for learning and differentiated instruction that supports and benefits all students; and
 - Presents a ten-year plan including student enrollment projections for sustainability of an initiative that is financially accessible and equitable for all interested students with IDD's.
- Applicants may use the 10-year budget template available at this link:
<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2492>.

Project Budget

The project budget is a fillable excel spreadsheet, available on the OHE website:

<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2611>

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

- Personnel costs
 - Salaries for grantee personnel
 - Fringe benefits based on salaries paid
- Personnel travel costs
 - Grantee authorized official
 - Other staff
- Consumable supplies and instructional materials
- Equipment Costs
- Marketing and communication
- Other services and direct costs
- Indirect costs (maximum of 8% of Personnel costs)

In addition, an applicant must complete a budget narrative by thoroughly describing each budget line item and providing justification for the expense.

Travel expenditures listed in the budget must directly relate to the project. Any travel occurring outside of the state of Minnesota must have prior approval from OHE.

Indirect expenditures must be limited to eight percent of the total personnel costs.

Letter of Support

A letter of support is submitted via Word or PDF format and email to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us.

An applicant must submit one letter of support from their Institution's leadership team (President or Chancellor). See Minimum Requirements for more details.

An applicant may elect to submit additional letters from other entities.

Resumes

Resumes are submitted via Word or PDF format and email to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us.

If funding from this grant will support a staff position related to the project, the applicant must submit a copy of the staff's resume. If the staff position is currently vacant, the applicant may submit a copy of the job posting or job description. Upon filling the position, whether during the application process or after notice of award, the applicant must submit a copy of the staff's resume.

An applicant may elect to submit additional resumes of staff who will be working on the project, but who will not be supported through funding from this grant. If this is the case, the applicant must ensure the resume documents are clearly labeled.

Financial and Grantee Capacity Review

Only applicable to nonprofit organizations.

In alignment with [Minnesota Statute §16B.981⁹](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.981), OHE requires applicants who are business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions 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.

In order to comply with this requirement, the following information will need to be answered and statements certified in the proposal cover sheet:

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.

Certification of no felony financial crime: Certify that no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years.

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’s Office.

Financial documents: OHE will locate and review the last three years of audited financial statements for the applicant. If financial documents are not already on file, OHE will require the applicant to provide all or remaining audited financial statements. If the most recent audited financial statement is incomplete, OHE will require the applicant to provide an explanation and estimated timeline for audit completion.

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, if the risk assessment identifies substantial financial, organizational, capacity, and/or management risks, OHE may:

- Request more information from the applicant for the purpose of satisfying the concerns
- Develop a risk mitigation plan that addresses the concerns and accompanies the grant contract agreement
 - Strategies may include enhanced monitoring, additional reporting, or technical assistance
- Provide enhanced technical assistance and oversight

⁹ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.981>

- Not award the grant

Applicants have 30 business days to respond to requests for additional information and/or work with OHE to develop a risk mitigation plan.

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.

Proposal Submission

OHE must receive all proposal content no later than 4:30 p.m. central time, on July 25, 2024. Utilize the forms link for processing proposal cover sheet:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjlcN1asYZfNEmfjN_1Hv6QBUN09MOE9UUUNJNDU0UzgyR1dNRFY4NDY5WS4u

In addition, applicants must email the following items to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us:

- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Letter(s) of support from institution's leadership team
- Resumes

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 ensure applicants meet all eligibility requirements and have complete proposals. If requirements are not met or proposals are incomplete, applicants' proposals will not be submitted to the review committee.

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete proposals received by the deadline.

OHE will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The award decisions of OHE are finale and not subject to appeal.

Request for Proposal posted on the OHE website: June 10, 2024

IHE Grant Proposal Workshop (11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. central time): June 24, 2024

Technical questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: July 18, 2024

Proposals due no later than 4:30 p.m. central time: **July 25, 2024**

Committee begins review of proposals: August 8, 2024

Committee recommendations submitted to OHE for review: August 22, 2024

Applicants notified of award decisions: **August 29, 2024**

Grantees publicly announced: September 4, 2024

Mandatory grantee orientation (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. central time): **September 5, 2024**

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>) and Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making 08-01 (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>).

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

Minnesota Statutes 135A.162 Inclusive Higher Education: <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2611>.

This is the first release of the requests for application. Total appropriation for Inclusive Higher Education Grants during fiscal year 2024 is \$750,000. The appropriation includes up to five percent allocation for agency administrative costs. Thus, the total amount available for grant awards in this RFP is \$712,000.

Applicants may apply annually for and receive awards up to \$200,000 per year for up to four years. Applicants may apply annually for and receive awards up to \$100,000 per year in subsequent years for up to a total of ten years of funding.

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

Orientation

September 5 2024 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. central time

Following award notification, OHE hosts a virtual mandatory two-hour orientation for the grantee. The purpose of orientation is to prepare grantees for the grant administration and encourage strategic planning.

Expenditures

Allowable expenditures are limited to the project as described in the proposal content and must align with the following budget categories:

- Personnel costs
 - Salaries for grantee personnel
 - Fringe benefits based on salaries paid
- Personnel travel costs (Any travel occurring outside of the state of Minnesota must have prior approval from OHE)
 - Grantee authorized official

- Other staff
- Student Support
- Marketing, communication, and outreach
- Program Evaluation
- Other program expenses
- Indirect costs (maximum of 8% of direct costs)

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Capital expenditures
- 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

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, personnel travel costs, student support, marketing, communications and outreach costs, program evaluation costs, and other program expenses. 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.

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 to the Inclusive Higher Education Initiative. 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.

Reporting and Accountability

Grant Payments

Per Office of Grants Management Policy 08-08 (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>), OHE will process payment requests through a method of reimbursement. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the current and approved work plan and budget documents. All grantee requests for reimbursement must include supporting documentation of expenditures. OHE will review each request for reimbursement 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 **February 2025 and July 2025**, 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.

Grant Reporting

Grantees must complete all monitoring and reporting documentation and visits as required by OHE. Grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility is contingent upon the 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 two narrative reports to OHE: Interim Narrative Reports (due **February 2025**) and a Final Narrative Report (due **July 2025**). OHE will inform grantees of the report content and format.

As required in Minnesota Statutes 135A.162 Subd. 6 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/135A.162>), grantees are required to provide reports to the TA Center Director. Reports must be submitted by August 1 and January 1 following a fiscal year in which a grant was received and for five years thereafter. Reports to the TA Center Director will include the status and outcomes of the initiative funded. At a minimum, the report must include the following performance indicators:

- Student recruitment and number of students enrolled
- Student retainment effort and retention rate
- Initiative goals and outcomes
- Student attainment rate
- Graduated student employment rates and salary levels at year one and year five after completion

Additional milestones, accountability, and performance indicators deemed relevant by the TA Center Director and OHE may also be included.

In addition, all grantees will be responsible for collecting data and reporting annually in collaboration with an independent evaluator (i.e., MIHEC TA Center) to meet the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Standards and reach current grant outcomes. This effort aims to monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program.

The TA Center will be responsible for serving as an independent evaluator that is not affiliated with the inclusive higher education program team to conduct an objective and impartial evaluation of an inclusive higher education program's effectiveness, outcomes, and impact. The TA Center will contact grantees directly on this process.

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/>) 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
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

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.

Audit

Per Minnesota Statutes 16B.98 Grants Management Process, 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 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.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Requirements

- 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 (Minnesota Statute 363A.02 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/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 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/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 Minnesota Statutes 201.162 Duties of State Agencies (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/201.162>) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Contact Information

Cha Her
Program Administrator
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Email: cha.her@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-259-3991

Proposal Documents Available Online

General information about the Inclusive Higher Education Grant and the proposal process is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2611>.