



Minnesota Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2025 Request for Proposals

Laws of Minnesota 2023 Chapter 41, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 19

Important Dates

Proposal Available: **February 26, 2025**

Applicant Webinar: **March 12, 2025**

User Registration Deadline: **April 1, 2025**

Technical Questions Deadline: **April 11, 2025**

Proposal Submission Deadline: **4:30 p.m. Central Time, April 23, 2025**

Presentation Notifications: **No later than June 13, 2025**

Presentations: **June 26, 2025**

Award Notice to Applicants: **No later than July 11, 2025**

Author

Laura Benson
Program Administrator
Tel: 651-259-3906
laura.benson@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 Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program began on July 1, 2015 per Minnesota 2015 Session Law, Chapter 69 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2015/0/Session+Law/Chapter/69/>), directing the Commissioner of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to establish a grant program for institutions in Minnesota for research into new and innovative treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries.

The overall objective of this program is to foster and encourage innovative research that leads to a cure, novel treatments, and/or rehabilitative techniques for spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries.

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.902>)

Funding Availability

\$3,000,000 is appropriated each year of the 2024/2025 biennium to support the Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Grant Program, with three percent of this appropriation for program administration.

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/41/>)

The Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, in consultation with the program's advisory council, shall award 50 percent of the available grant funds for research focused on spinal cord injuries and 50 percent to research focused on traumatic brain injuries. Therefore, \$1,455,000 is available for SCI grants and \$1,455,000 is available for TBI grants.

Should there be additional funding available for this grant cycle, it will be included in the total funds awarded and divided 50/50 by content area.

In fiscal year 2025, three funding options are available through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Each tier, with maximum allowable request, base project time, and project requirements are listed below:

Tier 1: Pilot Project Grant

- Max Request: \$125,000
- Project Time: 2 years + 1 year no-cost extension*
- Project Details: Reflects early investment as the researcher prepares to seek a larger grant award from a federal program or nonprofit organization. Preliminary data is not required but encouraged.

Tier 2: Standard Research Grant

- Max Request: \$250,000
- Project Time: 2 years + 1 year no-cost extension*
- Project Details: Primarily for research with strong supporting/preliminary data. If the budget is justifiable, the Standard Research Grant may also fund pilot projects. Applicants are encouraged to attach papers; in-press, pre-published drafts, and accepted papers may be cited or submitted

separately as an appendix.

Tier 3: Clinical/Translational Research Grant

- Max request: \$500,000
- Project Time: 3 years + 2 year no-cost extension*
- Project Details: Projects must have concurrent application for, or funding from federal or industry sources. Preliminary data must be published or in press in a scientific journal and cited or submitted separately as an appendix. Projects including human subjects are preferred.

Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury research proposals will be funded up to the maximum request per funding tier for the Fiscal Year 2025 grant period, which includes indirect costs at a maximum of 8% of personnel costs, including salaries/fringe costs. Proposals may be partially funded depending on the availability of funds and/or budget efficiency.

Please reference the [Extensions](#) section below for more information on the timelines listed in this section.

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 individuals with spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries. This commitment is demonstrated through criteria in the proposal evaluation process and outcomes for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries.

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 managements system at <https://gwi-oh.intelligrants.com/IGXLogin>.

- Proposal Abstract
- Research Plan
- Financial and Applicant Capacity Review Responses, if applicable
- Budget and Budget Justification
- References Attachment
- Senior/Key Personnel Attachment

- Biographical Sketch of Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel Attachment
- Other Grant Support for Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel Attachment

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Eligible grant applicants are institutions/organizations located within Minnesota and fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Public/state-controlled institution of higher education
- Private institution of higher education
- Nonprofit with 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institution of higher education)
- Nonprofit without 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institution of higher education)
- Small business
- For-profit organization (other than small business).

The principal investigator(s) listed on the application must be affiliated with the grant applicant.

Eligible Principal Investigators

Eligible principal investigators must have the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research. This program is not for postdoctoral fellowships or residents (non-board eligible/board certified physicians); postdoctoral fellows and residents will not be considered as principal investigators. Postdoctorates, residents, or other individuals are eligible to be listed as key personnel or consultants.

Eligible Projects

Successful proposals will be relative to the topic of spinal cord and brain injury and have high scientific merit.

Project subjects should align with the following according to Tiers:

- **Tier One Project Details:** Reflects early investment as the researcher prepares to seek a larger grant award from a federal program or nonprofit organization. Preliminary data is not required but encouraged.
- **Tier Two Project Details:** Primarily for research with strong supporting/preliminary data. If the budget is justifiable, the Standard Research Grant may also fund pilot projects. Applicants are encouraged to attach papers; in-press, pre-published drafts, and accepted papers may be cited or submitted separately as an appendix.
- **Tier Three Project Details:** Projects must have concurrent application for, or funding from federal or industry sources. Preliminary data must be published or in press in a scientific journal and cited or submitted separately as an appendix. Projects including human subjects are preferred.

Collaboration

Applicants, principal investigators, and researchers may collaborate with others on the content of the proposal, regardless of their location. Applicants must reside in Minnesota, write the proposal, and submit the proposal.

Selection Criteria and Weight

A review committee of community experts convenes to review and utilize a rubric to evaluate proposals based upon the following 45-point scale:

1. Significance (1-9 points)
 - The proposed project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field.
 - If the aims of the project are achieved, scientific knowledge, technical capacity, and/or clinical practice will be improved.
 - Successful completion of proposed project aims will change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatment, or rehabilitative services that drive this field.
2. Innovation (1-9 points)
 - The proposal challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
 - A refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions is proposed.
3. Approach (1-9 points)
 - The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses are well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed project.
 - Potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for successes are presented.
 - If the project is in the early stages of development, the proposed strategy will establish feasibility and manage particularly risky aspects of the proposed project.
 - If the project involves human subjects and/or NIH-defined clinical research, plans are in place for Protection of Human Subjects and inclusion (or exclusion) of individuals on the basis of sex/gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as the inclusion (or exclusion) of children, justified in terms of the proposed scientific goals and research strategy.
4. Investigator(s) (1-9 points)
 - The PI, collaborators, and other researchers are well suited for the project.
 - Early-Stage Investigators or New Investigators have appropriate experience and training.
 - Established Investigators have demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s).

- If the project is collaborative or multi-PI, the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise and their leadership approach, governance, and organizational structure are appropriate for the project.
5. Appropriateness of Facilities/Environment (1-9 points)
- The scientific environment in which the work will be done will contribute to the probability of success.
 - Institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators are adequate for the proposed project.
 - The project will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements.
6. Budget (narrative evaluation comments only)
- The budget is clear, concise, and justified by the narrative describing proposed costs.
 - The budget is cost effective and reflective of the RFP and program objectives.

The assignment of points during the proposal review process will be reflective of National Institutes of Health guidelines.

Selection Process

The Selection Process is as follows:

1. OHE reviews proposals for minimum requirements. Incomplete proposals, late proposals, proposals not responding to submission guidelines, and proposals from ineligible applicants will not be considered.
2. Each eligible proposal will be reviewed and scored by a committee of community experts in accordance with the criteria described under Selection Criteria.
3. Highest scoring proposals will be moved forward to present (and respond to Q&A) for reviewers virtually on June 26, 2025. Invitations to present will be sent no later than June 13, 2025.
4. Committees submit their final evaluations to OHE.
5. Members of the Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council review committee evaluations and make funding decisions.
6. OHE awards available funds.

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 must 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 must 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 must 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, organizations, 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 technical questions online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/CG.cfm>. **Technical questions must be submitted no later than April 11, 2025.**

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

Proposal Content

The SCI-TBI Request for Proposal is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/CG.cfm>.

All proposal content is submitted through a secure online grants management system (<https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>). The grants management system requires user registration. OHE reviews and approves each user registration within three business days. User registration submitted after April 1, 2025 may not be reviewed and approved prior to the proposal deadline.

Applicants must submit proposal content by **4:30 pm Central Time on April 23, 2025** for OHE to consider the proposal as complete. There is no limit to the number of proposals that an eligible applicant may submit.

Only eligible applicants will be considered for this grant opportunity.

Upon receipt by OHE, proposals will be reviewed to determine if all required materials are included and if the proposal responds to program requirements. Incomplete proposals, late proposals, proposals not responding to submission guidelines, and proposals from ineligible applicants will not be considered.

The full proposal must include:

1. **Program Abstract** summarizing the focus, delivery, and desired outcome of the proposed research. The Program Abstract MUST be written in lay-persons terms and be accessible to a reviewer with little-to- no existing science knowledge.
 - a. Background to the Research Topic
 - b. The Question(s) or Central Hypothesis of the Research
 - c. The General Methodology to be Used
 - d. Innovative Elements of the Project
 - e. Impact on Treatments and Rehabilitative Efforts for Functional Improvement of People With Spinal Cord or Traumatic Brain Injuries
2. **Research Plan** (if uploaded into the grants portal, should not exceed ten (10) numbered, double-spaced pages)
 - a. Provide an explicit description of how the proposed research will meet the goals of the research grant program. Review the most significant previous work, and describe the current status of research in the field. Document with references. Describe any preliminary work the principal investigator/collaborator has done which lead to this proposal.
 - b. List the specific aims.
 - c. Give details of the research plan, including a description of the proposed work; the hypothesis being tested, methods, animal model and species/genetic background, and techniques to be used; the kinds of data expected to be obtained; statistical analysis plan including the interpretations and discussion of alternative explanations, and benchmarks for success. If clinical studies are involved, give details of responsibility for patient selection, patient care, and process of informed consent and protection of vulnerable populations. Include a discussion of pitfalls that might be encountered and limitations of the procedures proposed. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to study personnel and the precautions to be exercised (list any SOPs regarding appropriate personal protective equipment, biological waste management and spill containment as a separate appendix if applicable). Illustrate the tentative timeline in which experiments will be conducted in order to meet the study goals within the funding period.
 - d. Describe how the proposed project addresses a critical need or barrier to progress in the field. Discuss any new and innovative ideas and contributions that the project offers, and its translational impact should aims be met. Discuss any new and innovative ideas and contributions that the project offers. Make clear the potential importance of the proposed project for stimulating further research or attracting federal grant support and described the planned efforts to secured such future funding.
 - e. Describe the facilities available for this project including laboratories, clinical resources, office space, animal quarters, etc. List major items of equipment available for the proposed work.
 - f. If the proposed project requires collaboration with other investigators, describe the collaboration and provide evidence to assure the reviewers that the other collaborators agree (letters of support in the appendix).
3. **Financial and Capacity Review Responses** (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.

- 4. Budget and Budget Justification.** List the direct costs for all budget categories. Supplies and other costs must relate directly to performance of the project(s). Indirect costs cannot exceed 8% of total personnel costs (salaries/fringe). Sub-awards must be listed in the budget and budget justification.
- 5. Attachments:**
 - a. References citing research-based references that support proposed activities and lists the PubMed central reference number (PMCID) at the end of the full journal citation, if available.
 - b. Senior/Key Personnel. Provide required information for senior/key personnel.
 - c. Biographical Sketch of Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel including bibliographies (4-page maximum for each individual).

- d. Other Grant Support for Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel. Indicate current support relevant to the proposed project (three page maximum for each individual).

Additional appendices are allowed and may contain such items as letters of agreement from collaborators, letters of support, additional scientific materials, etc. DO NOT include the applicant institution's public relations or promotional materials. Appendices shall be uploaded in word or PDF format.

Proposal Submission

OHE must receive a complete proposal within the grants management system (<https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>) no later than **4:30 pm Central Time on April 23, 2025**.

Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in 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. If requirements are not met, the proposal 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 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.

February 26, 2025	Request for Proposals available to applicants
March 12, 2025	Request for Proposal Workshop
April 1, 2025	User Registration Deadline
April 11, 2025	Technical Questions Deadline
<u>4:30 p.m., April 23, 2025</u>	<u>Deadline for receipt of full proposals</u>
No later than May 15, 2025	Committee begins review of applications
No later than June 13, 2025	Presentation Scheduling Notifications
June 26, 2025	Presentations with Review Committee
No later than July 11, 2025	Funding Decisions Finalized
No later than July 11, 2025	Applicants Notified

Full proposals must be submitted online via the Online Portal (<https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>) by 4:30 p.m. Central Time, April 23, 2025.

Grantee contracts will be finalized in July 2025. The grant becomes effective when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the contract has reached the effective date, and the State's Authorized Representative has notified the grantee that work may commence.

Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants, 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 the 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 and Administrative Regulations

The 2024 Minnesota Statutes 136A.901 is available online at

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.901>

Office of Grants Management – Grant contract agreement templates are available for review online at

<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>.

Orientation

Following award notification, OHE will host a virtual mandatory orientation for the grantees. Other entities involved in the success of the project are encouraged but not required to attend orientation. The purpose of orientation is to prepare grantees for the grant process. The orientation will take place in August 2025. More specifics will be provided in July 2025.

Expenditures

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.

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
- Consultant Costs/Sub Awards
- Supplies
- Patient Care Costs
- Travel (In-State)
- Travel (Out of State)
- Other (Direct) Expenses
- Indirect costs (no more than 8% of total Personnel Costs)

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations
- Capital expenditures

Work Plan and Budget

A grantee must complete and submit Work Plan and Budget documents following award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE.

Requests to change project activities, project personnel, or to move funds between approved budget lines must be submitted in advance with appropriate justification. Unexpended funds must be returned to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Fiscal Procedures

All Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program funds should be assigned to individual accounts which can be readily identified and verified. If an institution receives more than one grant, separate accounts should be established for each grant. Once a grant contract has been fully executed, the grant period will begin.

If a Principal Investigator moves to a different institution, the grant will remain with the Grantee Institution.

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.

Contracts

All necessary grantee and OHE staff must sign the grant contract through an electronic system as determined by OHE. The grant becomes effective when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the contract has reached the effective date, and the State's Authorized Representative 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.

Organizations selected for a fiscal year 2025 award may have limited to no input on the State grant agreement. OHE recommends reviewing the draft 2025 grant contract agreement prior to award. Contract templates can be found on the OHE website. (<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/CG.cfm>)

Reporting and Accountability

Grantees must adhere to all accountability and reporting requirements. Grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility is contingent upon fulfillment of requirements.

Grant Payments

Per Office of Grants Management Policy 08-08, OHE will process payment requests through a method of reimbursement. The Grantee must provide a General Ledger report or other similar documentation that reflect expenses included in the Reimbursement Request. OHE will review each request for reimbursement and supporting documentation 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.

OHE will reimburse grantees only for eligible expenditures. The submission process will be through the online grants management system and include the following items:

- Invoice
- Supporting Documents, including a General Ledger

OHE reserves the right to request additional documentation for verification prior to approval for reimbursement. Grantees must respond and complete follow-up items within 15 days of receiving a request for additional documentation from OHE. OHE will issue payment to a grantee within 30 days of a completed and approved reimbursement request.

Grant Bidding Requirement

Nongovernmental Organizations and for-profit businesses

Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:

- State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: Minnesota Unified Certification Program
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Program

The grantee must maintain:

- Written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.

- Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation of verbal quotes or bids and justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information

For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per; Minn. Stat. §§177.41 through 177.44. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

Municipalities

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in Minn. Stat. §471.345
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per Minn. Stat. §§177.41 through 177.44. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information

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.

Grant Reporting

Each approved project must submit an annual interim narrative report no later than July 30 for each year of their grant period, and one final report at the conclusion of the grant, due no later than August 31. At a minimum, the annual narrative report must document progress made on the objectives of the research project.

Copies of materials which resulted from the grant should be submitted along with the annual narrative report, or as materials are subsequently published.

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.

OHE reserves the right to select additional grantees for monitoring who may not be addressed in the above scenarios. OHE will notify such grantees within a reasonable amount of time to allow preparation for the monitoring process. OHE will also consider requests from grantees to conduct monitoring services.

OHE will base monitoring schedules upon the availability of all parties who are required to be in attendance.

Grantee Performance Evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, OHE will evaluate the performance of all grantees. OHE considers the following information during 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 Outcomes
- 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.

Attribution

Program material must bear the following acknowledgement:

“Funds for this research project were provided by the State of Minnesota Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.”

Publications from Funded Research Projects

Copies of all publications from funded research projects must be provided to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Ownership of Copyrights and Patents

Ownership of any copyrights, patents, or other proprietary interests that may result from grant activities, shall be governed by applicable federal and state regulations and local institutional/organizational policies.

Extensions

Additional No – Cost Extensions may be available on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances and as limited by Minnesota State Statute, not to exceed five years. Grant extensions/no-cost extensions must be requested at least 45 days prior to the grant contract expiration date.

Data Sharing

All grant recipients are strongly encouraged to share results with open data commons, to fulfill compliance recommendations for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable data consistent with new NIH standards. For example, SCI grantees may use SCI-Open Data Commons.

Audit

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.

Non-Transferability

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

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination

- 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). 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

For more information about this Request for Proposal, please contact:

Laura Benson
Program Administrator
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Email: laura.benson@state.mn.us
Phone: (651) 259-3906