



Student Parent Support Initiative Grant

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposal

Minnesota Statutes 136A.1251

Important Dates

Proposal Available: April 15, 2024

Technical Question Deadline: May 23 2024

Proposal Submission Deadline: May 30 2024

Award Notice to Applicants: July 16 2024

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: July 25, 2024

Project Period: July 2024-June 2026

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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 Student Parent Support Initiative (SPSI) Grant. The statute governing the grant program is located in Minnesota Statutes 136A.1251 Student Parent Support Initiative <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.1251>).

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is currently accepting proposals to improve the retention and completion of pregnant and parenting students. Grants will be awarded to Minnesota post-secondary institutions of higher education, professional organizations, community-based organizations, or other applicants as deemed appropriate by the commissioner to be used to offer services that support the academic goals, health, and wellbeing of pregnant and parenting students (2023 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 41, subd. 1). Through the SPSI grant program, OHE will allocate grant funds to include, but not limited to, the following services and costs: program development costs; costs related to the start-up of on-campus child care; evaluation and data collection; and direct assistance to pregnant and parenting students (scholarships, basic needs support, and expenses related to child care).

The primary goal of the program is to address the health and educational needs of pregnant and parenting students and their families to encourage persistence and completion of their higher education credentials. The broad, over-arching objective is to eliminate barriers that could result in a pregnant or parenting student not completing their term or program due to issues related to parenting, while increasing students' resiliency and self-efficacy as individuals.

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from Minnesota post-secondary institutions of higher education, professional organizations, community-based organizations, or other applicants as deemed appropriate by the commissioner; conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on criteria listed herein; and select the proposals able to show the most potential to: 1) offer services that support the academic goals, health, and well-being of pregnant and parenting students and their children, 2) demonstrate the ability to partner with existing campus and community services to continue, expand, or develop robust referral and support networks that help pregnant and parenting students meet their basic needs, and 3) take a whole family, or two-generation, approach to support pregnant and parenting students.

Background

From 2013-17, the Minnesota Department of Health had a collaborative grant program with the Office of Higher Education and nine Minnesota Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to support Student Parent Support Centers. Results from that program's evaluation demonstrated that Student Parent Support Programs positively affect student parents' academic achievement and self-sufficiency goals, and that IHEs are well positioned to implement educational and public health activities and services for parenting students. This RFP and the SPSI grant, builds upon this original work to address the health and educational needs of pregnant and parenting students across Minnesota.

Pregnant and parenting students face multiple barriers to college enrollment, persistence, and completion. These barriers include, but are not limited to, constraints with time and money, lack of childcare resources and academic support, or diminished motivation as they are more likely to return to college after an extended absence and feel excluded from traditional campus support services. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, re-enrollment rates of students with children dropped dramatically, likely due to health concerns, job and income losses, and the challenges of remote learning for their children and themselves. Additionally, for students who reported having dependents on their FAFSA, admissions applications are down 13% in 2022 over previous years¹.

Pregnant and parenting students also face challenges to their mental and physical health. While mental health issues are a concern for all college students; students who are also parents experience additional stressors which places them at greater risk. Younger student parents (under 25 years of age) have even greater disparities in mental health outcomes when compared to older student parents.² A 2019 study found that academic- and parenting-based stress negatively influenced the physical health of student parents in secondary education.³ Current and prospective college students are at high risk for unintended pregnancies, unhealthy behaviors during pregnancy, and are at a crucial time in their lives for building their future through postsecondary education.

Higher education has a direct correlation to future earning potential. Completion of a higher education program also has shown to improve health and other wellbeing outcomes for both the student and their children.⁴ Research shows that unintended pregnancies are associated with decreased lifetime education and income. Women in Minnesota reporting an unintended pregnancy were less likely to report having "some college" or "college or more" (Reichlin Cruse, et al., 2021).

By supporting parenting students during college, Minnesota invests in greater economic stability not only for these students and their families, but for the state as a whole, through their participation in the workforce, increased tax revenue, and savings in public assistance programs. Research indicates that access to intensive case management services, increased financial support, and access to high-quality, convenient childcare can increase student parent's ability to successfully complete their higher education credential (Reichlin Cruse, et al., 2021).

Through critical supports to pregnant and parenting students, Minnesota is able to take a two-generation approach to reducing poverty and improving life outcomes for children and their families. Through programs funded by the SPSI grant families will have increased access to crucial resources and services within their community, overall ensuring that children have a healthy start and families have access to affordable and quality

¹ Data retrieved by Minnesota Office of Higher Education on August 11, 2021.

² Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2021). Improving Mental Health of Student Parents: A Framework for Higher Education. Available at: https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MentalHealthFramework_Final.pdf

³ Scharp, K.M. & Dorrance Hall, E. (2019). Examining the Relationship Between Undergraduate Student Parent Social Support – Seeking Factors, Stress, and Somatic Symptoms: A Two-Model Comparison of Direct and Indirect Effects. *Health Communication* 34(1), 54-64

⁴ US Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.) Healthy People 2030. Available at: <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

childcare and early education; access to mental health and other health supports; and basic needs support. By helping stabilize their needs in college, this program sets the foundation for future success for pregnant and parenting students as well as their child(ren).

Best Practice Framework

The following section is meant to be a guide for applicants as they prepare proposals.

The SPSI grant will provide funds to create or expand existing institutional student parent support programs. **The following program values guide the work of the SPSI grant program and should serve as a guiding star in program design and delivery, with room for customization based on varied regional or individual student needs.**

Model SPSI-funded programs will:

Trust Students: Regardless of what parameters are set around eligibility and accountability, granting money to students requires a significant amount of trust. Grantee institutions will need to actively listen to and validate the experiences of students who pursue this intervention.

Students who are systemically disadvantaged, such as pregnant and parenting students, and choose to seek assistance from your institution are also being challenged to display a level of trust that may be perceived as a risk. Trust in students and their autonomy is essential in building student trust in the institution. Whenever possible, including pregnant and parenting students voices and perspectives in program design, program delivery approach, feedback, etc. is highly encouraged.

Be Timely: Family and financial crises can derail a students' future in a matter of days. A key component to the SPSI grant is creating a process that works quickly and efficiently, so there is not a disruption in the students' learning or academic progress. This may mean thinking creatively to streamline inter-departmental processes that may normally require more time.

Utilize a Whole-Family Approach: Pregnant and parenting students have unique needs and life circumstances that may impact their ability to persist and achieve their educational goals. Grantees will need to incorporate a whole-family approach to supporting pregnant and parenting students, one that recognizes family circumstances as an important aspect of the pregnant and parenting students' well-being and works intentionally to support the needs of the pregnant and parenting students and the needs of their family.

Create a Network of Support: Creating a network of support for pregnant and parenting students is a primary goal for this grant program. Grantees will have a plan in place to support pregnant and parenting students' resilience and persistence in college and support the health and wellbeing of pregnant and parenting students and their children. This may mean collaborating with social service agencies, nonprofits, school districts, local public health, and other community health providers in addition to services already offered within the college.

Commit to Health and Wellbeing Activities: Grantees show a commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing needs of pregnant and parenting students and their families.

Funding Availability

This is the first release of the requests for application. The total appropriation for 2024-2026 is \$6,000,000.

Contracts will extend to cover a two-year period; funded projects will begin in Fall 2024 (the date that the contract is fully executed), and cover expenses incurred through June 30, 2026. There will not be a separate competition for FY2025 grant funds.

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 **July 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 submit the following item through this forms link: <https://forms.office.com/g/L7LDsb1udR>

- 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
- Resumes
- Financial and applicant capacity review, if applicable

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 pregnant and parenting students enrolled in a postsecondary institution in Minnesota. OHE is committed to promoting and supporting programs with postsecondary attendance and retention projects. This commitment is demonstrated through a criterion in the proposal evaluation process.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Number of eligible postsecondary students served
- Description of program activities
- Description of program goals
- Summary of program outcomes

Eligibility

Eligible Applicant

An eligible applicant must be one of the following:

- Minnesota postsecondary institutions
- Professional organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Political Subdivisions
- Tribal Sovereign Nations
- Child Care Providers

The following entities may be eligible to apply if they fit within the organization types listed above:

- **Business entity:** An organization that is formed under Minnesota statutes (Chapters 300-324A) pertaining to corporations, cooperative associations, partnerships, limited partnerships, or limited liability companies and that has filed documents with the secretary of state
- **Nonprofit organization:** A charitable organization that is formed for the purpose of fulfilling a mission to improve the common good of society rather than to acquire and distribute profits. The organization meets the definition in Chapter 317A (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/317A>), Minnesota Statutes 309.50, Subdivision 4 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/309.50#stat.309.50.4>), or meets the definitions defined in the Internal Revenue Service code, with the most common type being a 501 (c)(3)
- **Political subdivision:** A county, town, city, school district, or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state authorized by law to enter into contracts
- **State of Minnesota:** Any state agency that meets the definition in Minnesota Statutes 16B.01 Definitions, Subdivision 2 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.01>), University of Minnesota, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- **Tribal Sovereign Nation:** Any Indian Tribe or band acknowledged as a sovereign nation by the U.S. constitution

An eligible applicant must demonstrate they serve pregnant and parenting students. Funds are intended to primarily benefit parenting students who are Minnesota residents. For the purposes of the SPSI grant, the terms “student parent” and “parenting student” refer to students who are enrolled at a Minnesota Institution of Higher Education and who are the parent, legal guardian, or can claim as a dependent of a child under the age of 18, and for students who are pregnant.

Applicants can demonstrate that they serve pregnant and parenting students by submitting one of the following items:

- Recently-conducted research on the prevalence of pregnant and parenting students on their campus or, for community-based applicants, within the population served;
- Limited data collected as a part of other social service programs on campus (i.e. collecting participant information at a campus food shelf or student-parent center); or
- Summative reports that demonstrate the prevalence of pregnant and parenting students among the population served.

If an applicant has not conducted any quantitative research around parenting status, OHE may consider their proposal if the institution submits a written commitment to conducting research on the prevalence of parenting students on their campus within one calendar year.

Eligible Services

Funds awarded to grantees must be used to provide services that support the educational goals of pregnant and parenting students. This may include:

- Program development costs (including staff salaries);
- Costs related to the start-up of on-campus child care;
- Evaluation and data collection; and
- Direct assistance to pregnant and parenting students including:
 - Scholarships;
 - Basic needs support; and
 - Expenses related to child care.

Postsecondary institutions may act as the fiscal agents in partnership with a local nongovernmental agency, child care center, or other organization that serves pregnant and parenting students. A written description of the proposed partnership and letters of commitment from the partnering agency or organization must be included in the application.

Eligible Participant

All pregnant and parenting students who are enrolled at, or receive services from, an SPSI grantee are eligible to benefit from these services. Pregnant and parenting students may include undocumented students, international students, and graduate students. Direct assistance to pregnant and parenting students should

primarily go to students who are Minnesota residents, however, they do not have to have resident status as long as they are enrolled in a Minnesota institution.

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

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 (25 Points):**
 - a. Documents need for eligible participants and provides services to meet the needs of eligible participants
 - b. Identifies how project fits into larger framework/mission of the organization or institution
 - c. Fills a gap in services for target population and/or geographic area
 - d. Addresses the specific project focus within the broader goal of promoting postsecondary attendance, retention, and success
 - e. Discuss health and wellbeing needs of pregnant and parenting students and their families
 - f. Is scalable, flexible, and makes an impact on the community
 - g. If applicable, the extent to which the existing program has been successful
2. **Quality of Project Design (25 Points):**
 - a. Goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable
 - b. Recruitment plan ensures participation by eligible participants
 - c. Project compliments and coordinates with other appropriate organizational, community, and/or educational resources, agencies, and organizations serving the target population
 - d. The proposal documents how grant program implementation will implement a two generation approach, including how program will address the health and wellbeing needs of program participants and their family.
3. **Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (15 Points):**
 - a. Utilizes asset-based framework to capitalize on eligible participant's strengths and support their achievements
 - b. Uses translation and/or interpreter services when communicating with eligible participants, if appropriate
 - c. Incorporates culturally-specific pedagogies and activities into learning so that students can see themselves reflected in the content, if appropriate

- d. Staff, tutors, volunteers, etc. reflect the eligible participants that they serve
- e. Services will assure success for eligible participants
- 4. Quality of Project Evaluation (**15 Points**):
 - a. Is objective and adequately measures achievement of goals and effectiveness of activities
 - b. Assesses the participant outcomes like changes in knowledge, performance, and practices
 - c. Assesses the project's impact on student success in postsecondary education
- 5. Quality of Budget (**10 Points**):
 - a. Extent to which the budget is cost effective, appropriate, and reflective of project requirements, project objectives and outcomes, and number of eligible participants to be served
 - b. Required matching support is documented and additional resource support is provided, as needed
- 6. Quality of Personnel, Resources, and Management (**10 Points**):
 - a. Qualifications, training, and experience of key personnel are appropriate for their assignments
 - b. Resources are adequate to meet project's goals and objectives
 - c. Adequacy of the management plan to achieve the proposed project on time and within budget
 - d. Project timeline and milestones for accomplishing tasks are clearly defined

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:

Proposals are 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.

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=2608>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **May 23, 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 date of **May 30, 2024**, through the online form: <https://forms.office.com/g/L7LDsb1udR> 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/g/L7LDsb1udR>:

- 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 (Minnesota postsecondary institution, professional organization, community-based organization, Political Subdivision, Tribal Sovereign Nation, or Child Care Provider)
 - Type (Business Entity, Nonprofit Organization, Political Subdivision, State of Minnesota, or Tribal Sovereign Nation)
 - 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)

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is uploaded (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 [Selection Criteria](#) section of this proposal for further details about the following sections of the narrative:

- Need and Significance of Project (25 Points)
- Quality of Project Design (25 Points)
- Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (15 Points)
- Quality of Project Evaluation (15 Points)
- Quality of Budget (10 Points)
- Quality of Personnel, Resources, and Management (10 Points)

Project Budget

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

<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2601>

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 and occur within the state of Minnesota.

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

Letter of Support

A letter of support is uploaded (Word or PDF format) and email to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us.

An applicant must submit one letter from a supportive or partnering entity, outside of the applicant's organization.

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

Resumes

Resumes are uploaded (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 business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

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/>), 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.

Business entities will complete the following review components:

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

Nonprofit organizations will complete the following review components:

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

Political subdivisions will complete the following review components:

1. Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

Once an applicant submits their Proposal Cover Sheet and selects business entities, nonprofit organizations or political subdivisions, they will receive instructions and materials to complete a financial and capacity review.

Applicant Capacity Review

The Applicant Capacity Review section includes the following fields:

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?
 - Yes
 - If yes, please list the grant program and fiscal year
 - FY2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)
 - FY2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
 - FY2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)
 - FY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)
 - FY2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)
 - No – will not need to fill anything out
- Has the applicant been awarded or have an active grant from another State of Minnesota Agency in the past 5 years?
 - Yes
 - If yes, please list the grant program and fiscal year
 - FY2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)
 - FY2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
 - FY2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)
 - FY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)
 - FY2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)
 - No – then will not need to fill anything out

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.

- Signature, Title, Date
- Please upload an organizational chart or list of principals that you certify with the above statement.

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. Is your organization (for-profit or nonprofit) registered with the Secretary of State and has a status of "In Good Standing"?
 - Yes
 - No

Financial Review

OHE requires applicants 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.

Once an applicant submits their Proposal Cover Sheet and selects business entities, nonprofit organizations or political subdivisions, they will receive instructions and materials to complete a financial and capacity review.

Addressing Substantial Risks

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

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

- 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
- 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 11:59 p.m. central time, on May 30, 2024. Utilize the forms link for processing proposal cover sheet: <https://forms.office.com/g/L7LDsb1udR>

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

- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Letter(s) of support
- Resumes
- Financial and applicant capacity review, if applicable

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: April 15, 2024

Technical questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: May 23, 2024

Proposals due no later than 11:59 p.m. central time: **May 30, 2024**

Committee begins review of proposals: June 13, 2024

Committee recommendations submitted to OHE for review: June 27, 2024

Applicants notified of award decisions: **July 16, 2024**

Grantees publicly announced: July 23, 2024

Mandatory grantee orientation (2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. central time): **July 25, 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 136A.1251 Student Parent Support Initiatives:
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.1251>

This is the first release of the request for proposal. The total appropriation for 2024-2026 is \$6,000,000.

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

Orientation

July 25 2024 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. central time

Following award notification, OHE hosts a virtual mandatory two-hour orientation for the (1) grantee and (2) partnering entities. 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
 - Grantee authorized official
 - Other staff
- Consumable supplies and instructional materials
- Equipment expenditures
- Marketing and communication
- Other services and direct costs
- Indirect costs (maximum of 8% of direct costs)

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Baseline research on pregnant and parenting students population
- 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
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses.
 - Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

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, consumable supplies and instruction material costs, equipment costs, marketing and communications costs, and other services and direct costs. Once the Budget is approved, the grantee has the ability to make changes within the scope of the project, but must consult with OHE prior to making changes to the Budget.

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 Student Parent Support Initiatives. 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 2026**, 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 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 Report (due **February 2025**), and Final Narrative Report (due **July 2026**). OHE will inform grantees of the report content and format.

Grant Monitoring

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

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 Student Parent Support Initiatives Grant and the proposal process is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2601>.