



Student Parent Support Initiative Grant

Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposal

Minnesota Statutes 136A.1251

Important Dates

Proposal Available: April 21, 2025

Student Parent Support Initiative Grant Proposal Workshop: May 5, 2025

Technical Question Deadline: May 19, 2025

Proposal Submission Deadline: May 29, 2025

Award Notice to Applicants: July 7 2025

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: July 24, 2025

Project Period: August 1, 2025- July 31, 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 postsecondary institutions, 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 .

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 (ex. scholarships, basic needs support, emergency grants, 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. OHE is committed to supporting pregnant and parenting students in their postsecondary goals. OHE's mission is "to support the pursuit and completion of a higher education credential by every Minnesotan, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status, in order to enhance our democracy, the State's economic vitality, and individual quality of life."

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from Minnesota postsecondary institutions , 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.

Recent research indicates that about 20% of undergraduate students are parents¹. They face a variety of barriers to college enrollment, persistence, and completion, including constraints with time and money, lack of access to childcare and academic support, as well as difficulty meeting their basic needs and family responsibilities alongside school responsibilities. Many pregnant and parenting students have few financial resources and time is limited. Minnesota has the fourth highest cost for infant care compared to other states and families often spend more than 20% of their annual income on care for one infant. Additionally, student parents making minimum wage in Minnesota need to work nearly 50 hours each week to cover public tuition and childcare costs².

The stakes are even higher for single student parents. Recent state financial aid application data shows that more than 50% of unmarried student parents who applied for state financial aid had annual incomes under \$20,000³. National research finds that while single mothers who earn college degrees experience significant benefits for themselves and their families, they are some of the least likely to complete their degree; only 8% of single mother undergraduates complete an associate or bachelor's degree within six years of initial enrollment, compared to nearly half of non-parenting women in college⁴.

Providing the support and resources pregnant and parenting students need to persist and complete their postsecondary goals can dramatically impact outcomes for their children. Parental education is linked to upward

¹ Reichlin Cruse, L., Holtzman, T., Gault, B., Croom, D., & Polk, P. (2019). Parents in College by the Numbers. Institute for Women's Policy Research and Ascend at the Aspen Institute. Retrieved on December 20, 2021, from [Parents in College By the Numbers - IWPR](https://iwpr.org/parents-in-college-by-the-numbers) (<https://iwpr.org/parents-in-college-by-the-numbers>).

² Williams, B., Bitar, J., Polk, P., Nguyen, A., Montague, G., Gillispie, C., & Waller, A. (2022). For Student Parents, the Biggest Hurdles to a Higher Education are Cost and Finding Child Care. The Education Trust.

³ Whelan, N. (2021). Minnesota state grant end-of-year statistics fiscal year 2020. Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Retrieved January 15, 2021, from [Minnesota State Grant End-of-Year Statistics, Fiscal Year 2020](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/state-grant-statistics-2020.pdf) (<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/state-grant-statistics-2020.pdf>).

⁴ Reichlin Cruse, L., Millie, J., Contreras-Mendez, S., Holtzman, T., & Gault, B. (2021). Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education in Minnesota: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Publication #: R624. Retrieved January 5, 2023, from [Minnesota](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Minnesota.pdf) (<https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Minnesota.pdf>).

mobility in their children through increased lifetime earnings⁵, improved reading and mathematics skills, improved health, increased college enrollment, persistence, and completion, in addition to decreased incarceration, teenage pregnancy, and poverty rates (Reichlin Cruse, et al., 2019).

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.⁶ A 2019 study found that academic- and parenting-based stress negatively influenced the physical health of student parents in secondary education.⁷ 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.

Completion of a higher education program also has shown to improve health and other wellbeing outcomes for both the student and their children.⁸ 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 pregnant and parenting students during college with SPSP, 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 (Reichlin Cruse, et al., 2021). For instance, mothers who complete a postsecondary credential earned 28% more per year than mothers who did not pursue a college education⁹. Additionally, single parents who complete either an associate or bachelor's degree are 48% and 75% less likely to live in poverty, respectively (Reichlin Cruse, et al., 2021). 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 the critical supports provided to pregnant and parenting students with SPSP, Minnesota is able to take a two-generation approach to reducing poverty and improving life outcomes for these students and their families.

⁵ Hertz, T. (2006). Understanding mobility in America. Center for American Progress. Retrieved on September 13, 2024, from [Understanding Mobility in America - Center for American Progress](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/understanding-mobility-in-america) (<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/understanding-mobility-in-america>).

⁶ Ascend at the Aspen Institute (2021). Improving Mental Health of Student Parents: A Framework for Higher Education. Available at: [MentalHealthFramework_Final.pdf](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MentalHealthFramework_Final.pdf) (https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MentalHealthFramework_Final.pdf)

⁷ 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.

⁸ US Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.) Healthy People 2030. Available at <https://health.gov/healthypeople>

⁹ Anderson, T. (2022). What if Mom Went Back to School? Urban Institute. Retrieved on April 2, 2025, from [What If Mom Went Back to School](https://www.urban.org/What-If-Mom-Went-Back-to-School) (<https://www.urban.org/What-If-Mom-Went-Back-to-School>)

A two-generation, or whole family approach, intentionally creates opportunities for families by addressing the needs of both parents and their children together¹⁰.

Through programs funded by the SPSI grant, pregnant and parenting students will have increased access to crucial resources and services within their community, overall ensuring that their children have a healthy start and families have access to affordable and quality 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 children.

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 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 identify in their application how all of these elements are modeled in their program design:

Trust Students: Regardless of what parameters are set around eligibility and accountability, granting money to students requires a significant amount of trust. Grantees who plan to provide direct financial assistance to pregnant and parenting students 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 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. 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 program 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

¹⁰ Mosle, A. & Patel, N. (2012). Two generations, one future: Moving parents and children beyond poverty together. The Aspen Institute. Retrieved on April 2, 2025, from [Two Generations, One Future - Ascend at the Aspen Institute](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources) (https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources).

whole-family approach to supporting pregnant and parenting students, one that recognizes family circumstances as an important aspect of the pregnant and parenting students' wellbeing 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 need to 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 will need to show a commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing needs of pregnant and parenting students and their families.

Funding Availability

This is the second release of the requests for proposals. In anticipation of continued state appropriations to SPSI during the 2025 legislative session, OHE estimates that \$2,662,000 will be appropriated for SPSI grants in Fiscal Year 2026.

The maximum grant amount is \$250,000 for the year. This is subject to change based on the outcomes of the 2025 legislative session. Please note that current SPSI grantees are ineligible to apply this funding cycle.

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 2025**. 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.

Proposals may be partially funded depending on the availability of funds and/or budget efficiency.

Minimum Requirements

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

Applicants must submit the following items through the OHE Competitive Grants Management system <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>:

- Proposal cover sheet
- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Project budget narrative
- Letter(s) of support, if applicable

- Resume(s), if applicable
- Financial and applicant capacity review, if applicable

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 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
- Number of referrals to internal and external resources/providers
- Description of program activities
- Description of program goals
- Summary of program outcomes
- Retention of participating students from term to term and/or credential completion, when this data is available
- Development and use of an intake form
- Development and tracking of a referral and follow-up process
- Identification of key partnerships with external resources/providers

Eligibility

Eligible Applicant

An eligible applicant must be one of the following (current SPSI grantees are ineligible to apply this funding cycle):

- 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 postsecondary institution 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 including data from one or more of the following items in the Proposal Narrative:

- 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 includes a Letter of Support that indicates a 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;
- Health and Wellness activities for pregnant and parenting students and/or their children
- Evaluation and data collection; and
- Direct financial assistance to pregnant and parenting students including:
 - Scholarships
 - Basic needs support (food, housing, diapers, and other support not that is not an emergency grant) emergency grants as defined by Federal Student Aid 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 grantee.

Collaboration

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

Applicants are encouraged to think creatively about community partnerships that support SPSI goals and outcomes. Applicants must include one health or wellness partner (i.e., local public health, WIC program, local medical clinic/provider) as a part of this initiative. Additional partnership examples can include, but are not limited to, childcare centers/providers, community resource centers, local food banks/pantries, etc.

Selection Criteria and Weight

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

1. Need and Significance of Project **(20 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
 - o Principles of [best practice framework](#) incorporated into project design
 - 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 project implementation will implement a two generation approach
 - e. Discuss planned partnerships and collaboration activities that support project outcomes. Applicants must include one health or wellness partner (i.e., local public health, WIC program, local medical clinic/provider) as a part of this initiative
 - f. Applicants will receive additional points awarded for project plans that identify measurable health and wellness activities that benefit pregnant and parenting students and/or their children. This should be addressed in the proposal narrative, project budget, and project budget narrative.
3. Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes **(20 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 including outcome data related to the following:
 - Number of eligible postsecondary students served
 - Key partnerships with external resources/providers developed and/or maintained
 - Development and use of an intake form
 - Development of a referral and follow-up process including tracking of referral outcome
 - b. Assesses the participant outcomes like changes in knowledge, performance, and practices
 - c. Assesses the project's impact on student success in postsecondary education
 - Retention of participating students from term to term or credential completion, when collected
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.

Proposals are organized based upon proposal evaluations (100-point scale). Awards are granted to applicants with the highest proposal evaluations.

While the review committee will evaluate and score proposals, final decisions are made at the discretion of the Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education. After OHE publicly announces grantees, all applicants will receive copies of their evaluation records.

Please note that current SPSI grantees are ineligible to apply for this funding cycle.

Required Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

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

In alignment with Minnesota Statute §16B.981, Minnesota Session Laws Chapter 62, Article 7, Section 11, Subdivisions 2-5 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/62/>) and OHE policies require

applicable applicants to undergo a risk assessment prior to grant award to determine whether a risk mitigation plan and/or enhanced oversight is required to responsibly award the grant.

Business entities will complete the following review components:

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

Nonprofit organizations will complete the following review components:

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

Political subdivisions will complete the following review components:

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

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

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

Addressing Substantial Risks

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

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

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from applicant to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the applicant cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement
 - The applicant has 30 business days to respond
- Develop a plan to address the risk or concerns identified

- Not award the grant
 - The granting agency must provide notice of the determination to not award the grant to the applicant and the Commissioner of Administration
 - The notice must include the following:
 - The reason for postponing/not awarding the grant
 - The timeline for the process for contesting the agency's decision

OHE has the authority to not award a competitive grant source. OHE must notify the applicant and provide reasons for not awarding the grant. The applicant may contest the decision to not award within 15 business days. OHE must consider any additional information the applicant provides with an additional 15 business days. As a final decision, OHE may affirm, reverse, or modify the initial decision to not award a grant. If OHE's final decision is not to award the grant, OHE must notify the applicant and the Commissioner of Administration. The applicant may contest OHE's final decision within 30 business days of the agency's notifications about the decision.

Technical Assistance Questions

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

Each week, OHE will post responses to frequently asked technical questions online here: <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2601>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **May 19, 2025**.

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

Proposal Content

The Student Parent Support Initiative Grant Request for Proposal is available online at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2601>.

All proposal content is submitted through a secure online grants management system at <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>. The grants management system requires user registration.

Applicants must submit all proposal content by **4:00 p.m. central time, on May 29, 2025** for OHE to consider the proposal as complete.

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

Proposal Cover Sheet

The proposal cover sheet is fillable online through the OHE Competitive Grants Management system and includes the following:

- Applicant Information
 - Institution or organization
 - Organization type (Private, non-profit postsecondary institutions or Minnesota Tribal College)
 - Address
- Applicant authorized official (administers proposal process)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Grantee authorized signatory (signs grant contract upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Grantee authorized official (administers project upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Project Title

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is provided online through the OHE Competitive Grants Management System.

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

- Need and Significance of Project (20 Points)
- Quality of Project Design (25 Points)
- Commitment to Equitable Services and Outcomes (20 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 provided online through the OHE Competitive Grants Management System.

An applicant must populate a budget form which will 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) to the OHE Competitive Grants Management System.

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) through OHE Competitive Grants Management System.

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 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.

The financial and applicant capacity review provides the state grant administering agency confirmation that the applicant has the capacity to meet the requirements of the grant funds, if awarded. Financial and grantee capacity review forms are completed online through the [online grants management system](#).

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

- Capacity response
- Certification of no felony financial crime
- Certification of good standing with Secretary of State
- Nonprofit organization financial documents
- Business entity certification disclosure and financial documents

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

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

Applicant Capacity Review

Capacity Response

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

Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

- Certify that no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years. 16B.981 Subd. 2 (6) requires that no current principals of a grantee have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity or to determine how those funds are used. By signing below, I warrant that no current principal of my organization has been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. I certify that this information is true, correct, and reliable. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me/my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. *The response must be completed by business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

Certification of Good Standing with Secretary of State

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

Financial Review

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

Nonprofit Organization Financial Documents

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

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

Business Entity Financial Documents

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

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

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

Proposal Submission

OHE must receive all proposal content no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **May 29, 2025**. Utilize the OHE Competitive Grants Management System for processing proposal content:

<https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>

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

Review Process and Timeline

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

Request for Proposal posted on the OHE website: April 21, 2025

SPSI Grant Proposal Workshop (11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. central time): May 5, 2025

Technical questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: May 19, 2025

Proposals due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: **May 29, 2025**

Committee begins review of proposals: June 10, 2025

Committee recommendations submitted to OHE for review: June 23, 2025

Applicants notified of award decisions: **July 7, 2025**

Grantees publicly announced: July 14, 2025

Mandatory grantee orientation (1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. central time): **July 24, 2025**

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

Conflicts of Interest

OHE takes steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants, reviewers, and administrators per Minnesota Statute §16B.98, Subdivision 2-3 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>) 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>

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 hosts a virtual mandatory orientation for all grantees on Mandatory grantee orientation (1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. central time): **July 24, 2025**. Supportive or partnering entities involved in the success of the program are encouraged but not required to attend orientation. The purpose of orientation is to prepare grantees for the grant process and encourage strategic planning.

Work Plan

A grantee must complete and submit a Work Plan in the OHE Competitive Grants Management System, <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>, following award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The Work Plan includes detailed information about the program 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 program but must consult with OHE prior to making changes to the Work Plan.

Budget

A grantee must complete and submit a Budget **in** the OHE Competitive Grants Management System, <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>, following the award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The Budget includes detailed information about personnel costs, participant costs, consumable supplies and instruction materials, marking and communications, and other services and direct costs. Once the Budget is approved, the grantee has the ability to make changes within the scope of the program but must consult with OHE prior to making changes to the Budget.

Expenditures

The OHE program administrator is allowed to request additional documentation for any expenditure being submitted for reimbursement through SPSI. The submission will be made in the in the OHE Competitive Grants Management System, <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

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 total personnel costs)

Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures contain items that are not eligible for reimbursement through the SPSI Grant. 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.

* **Taxes:** The employee contribution percentage of payroll taxes should already be accounted for under gross salary which is reimbursable. The employer contribution percentage of payroll taxes can be reimbursable, if you show proof of payment during the reimbursement process.

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.

Accountability and Reporting

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. Grantees must provide a general ledger report or other similar documentation that reflects expenses included in the reimbursement request. OHE will review each reimbursement request along with supporting documentation against the approved work plan, budget, expenditures to-date, and latest grant progress report prior to approving reimbursement. 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. Grantees must submit reimbursement requests through the grants management system at <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>. Grantees must submit reimbursement requests indicated in the timeline, below.

Grantees must submit requests for reimbursement in **February 2026, and July 2026**, which corresponds with the progress report timeline.

Reimbursement requests must include an accounting transaction report for project specific expenditures (ledger or similar documentation)

OHE reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify the reimbursement request. Grantees must respond with follow-up items within 15 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.

Grantee Bidding Requirements

Nongovernmental organizations and for-profit businesses must meet the following grantee bidding requirements for 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 verbal quotes or bids
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor

Nongovernmental organizations and for-profit businesses 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:
 - <https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/procuregoodsandgeneralservices/tgedvo-directory/>
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor List – Minnesota Unified Certification Program:
 - <https://mnucp.metc.state.mn.us/>
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul:
 - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/central-cert-certification-program>

Postsecondary institutions 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. Grantees must 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.

All grantees must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in Minnesota per the Department of Administration's report: <https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/suspended-debarred/>.

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

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 progress reports to OHE: Interim Progress Report (due **February 2026**), and Final Progress 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.

Grantee Performance Evaluation

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

- Grantee name, grant amount, start and end dates of the grant period award, and amount of grant paid to grantee
- Grant description, purpose, and proposed grant outcomes

- Description of actual grant outcome
- Compliance with reporting requirements
- Grant monitoring visits and financial reconciliation results, if applicable
- If applicable:
 - Additional conditions placed on the grant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process
 - If there were any fraud, waste, or abuse concerns
 - If the grant was terminated for cause
- Significant changes that arose during the grant award period
- Status of any financial/audit concerns involving the grantee

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

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

Audits

Per Minnesota Statutes 16B.98 Grants Management Process, Subdivision 8 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

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

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.

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/>).

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>.

All proposal procedures and documents are available online through the grants management system at <https://applicationportal.ohe.mn.gov/Competitive-Grant-Applications/>.