



Early Childhood and Family Education Teacher Shortage Grant

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposal
Minnesota Session Laws 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 54, Sec 20. Subd. 3

Important Dates

Proposal Available: May 15, 2024

Technical Question Deadline: June 5, 2024

Proposal Submission Deadline: June 12, 2024

Award Notice to Applicants: July 15, 2024

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: July 31, 2024

Project Period: August 2024 – August 31, 2025

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About the Office of Higher Education

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

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

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Grant Overview

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for administering the Early Childhood and Family Education Teacher Shortage Grant program. The state law governing the grant program is located in Minnesota Session Laws 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 54, Sec 20. Subd. 3

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/54/>).

The Early Childhood and Family Education Teacher Shortage Grant program (ECFE Teacher Shortage Grant) provides grants to postsecondary institutions to address the early childhood and family education teacher shortage.

The ECFE Teacher Shortage Grant reimburses grantees for eligible expenses related to providing tuition relief and other supports for students enrolled in early childhood and family education teacher preparation programs in Minnesota.

Funding Availability

This is the first release of the request for proposal. Based upon received appropriations, up to **\$950,000** is available for this grant round. The intention is to award as many grants as possible within the means of available funds. Any future grant rounds will be contingent upon available funds.

Applicants are not limited by a maximum grant amount. However, applicants may receive partial grant awards based upon budget efficiency, and/or availability of grant funds.

A committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge will review and score proposals through a competitive process. OHE will notify applicants 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.

- Proposal cover sheet
- Proposal narrative
- Project budget
- Letter(s) of support
- Financial and grantee capacity review

Commitment to Diversity, 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](#)¹ 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 postsecondary students in Minnesota enrolled in educator preparation programs that lead to Early Childhood and Family Education related teacher licensure. 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

Eligible applicants must meet all of the following:

- Minnesota postsecondary institutions
- Offer a PELSB-Approved teacher preparation program that leads to one of the following teacher licenses (initial license, additional license, or endorsement):
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Parent and Family Education
 - Preprimary Education
 - Special Education: Early Childhood

Eligible Student

Students are eligible to benefit from grant funds either directly or indirectly if they meet all of the following:

- Enrolled, as a regular student, in an eligible postsecondary institution who has applied for and received a grant from this program
- Enrolled in a PELSB-Approved teacher preparation program that leads to one of the following teacher licenses (initial license, additional license, or endorsement):
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Parent and Family Education
 - Preprimary Education
 - Special Education: Early Childhood

¹ https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-02%20Grants%20Policy%20Revision%20September%202017%20final_tcm36-312046.pdf

Collaboration

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

Selection Criteria

A review committee of community experts convenes 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 the need for high-quality licensed teachers in Early Childhood Family Education related licensure areas and particularly those licensure areas in which the applicant's programs prepare teachers
 - b. Documents the needs of eligible students enrolled at their institution
 - c. Identifies how services provided will meet the needs of eligible students and support retention and completion
 - d. Identifies how project fits into larger framework/mission of the institution
2. Quality of Project Design (25 Points):
 - a. Goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable
 - b. If providing funds directly to students, the plan for determining student eligibility and disbursing funds is documented
 - c. Commitment to cross-departmental collaboration, including the financial aid office, is demonstrated
 - d. Project will complement and coordinate with other programming
 - e. Timeline and milestones for accomplishing tasks are clearly defined and achievable
 - f. Staff size, time commitment, and responsibilities are clearly defined and are appropriate for the project
3. Commitment to Equitable Access, Outreach, Recruitment, and Student Support (25 Points)
 - a. Outreach plan is targeted to students who have been traditionally underrepresented in Early Childhood Family Education related teacher preparation programs
 - b. Implementation plan ensures services and support will be equitably available by the student population especially as it relates to students that experience significant barriers to postsecondary attainment
 - c. Through outreach, recruitment, and support the project's commitment to serving students throughout Minnesota is demonstrated
4. Quality of Project Evaluation (10 Points)
 - a. Is objective and adequately measures achievement of goals and effectiveness of activities
 - b. Assesses the appropriate participant outcomes
 - c. Assesses the project's impact on student success
5. Quality of Budget (10 Points)
 - a. Budget is cost effective and reflective of requirements, goals, objectives, and outcomes

6. Quality of Personnel, Resources, and Management (5 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

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

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

Each week, OHE will post responses to technical questions online here:

<https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2492>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **June 5, 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 **June 12, 2024**, through the online Proposal Cover Sheet <https://forms.office.com/g/vkU3bKwbZz> and email 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/vkU3bKwbZz>:

- Project title
- Postsecondary institution (Applicant)
 - Address (street, city, state, zip)
- Applicant authorized official (administers proposal process)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Grantee authorized official (administers project upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Grantee authorized signatory (signs grant contract upon award)
 - Name (first, last)
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
- Requested grant amount
- Financial and Applicant Capacity Review (only applicable to business entities and nonprofit organizations)
 - Capacity response
 - Certification of no felony financial crime
 - Certification of good standing with Secretary of State

Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative is submitted via email (Word or PDF format) to GWI.OHE@state.mn.us after submitting the Proposal Cover Sheet.

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=2636>.

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
- Tuition and Fees Relief
- Other student supports
- Indirect costs (maximum of 8% of total personnel costs)

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

Operational costs are limited to expenses necessary to effectively and efficiently administer the program. Grant funds may provide support for tuition and fee relief, other student supports, and related program expenses.

Indirect expenditures must be limited to eight percent of the total personnel costs, which are reimbursable through this grant.

Letters of Support

Letters of support are submitted via (Word or PDF format) email to GWI.OHE@state.mn.edu.

An applicant must submit one letter from institution leadership documenting support of the grant application.

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

Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

Only applicable to eligible business entities and nonprofit organizations.

In alignment with [Minnesota Statute §16B.981²](#), OHE requires applicants who are business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions to undergo a risk assessment prior to grant award to determine whether a risk mitigation plan and/or enhanced oversight is required to responsibly award the grant.

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

Capacity response: Describe the applicant’s history of performing the work that will be funded by this grant. This includes describing the applicant’s current staffing, organization structure, and budget.

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

² <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.981>

Certification of good standing with Secretary of State: Certify that applicant has filed and is up-to-date with the Secretary of State. OHE will verify applicant’s status with the Secretary of State’s Office.

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

Addressing Substantial Risks

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

Based on [Minnesota Statute §16B.981](#), if the risk assessment identifies substantial financial, organizational, capacity, and/or management risks, OHE may:

- Request more information from the applicant for the purpose of satisfying the concerns
- Develop a risk mitigation plan that addresses the concerns and accompanies the grant contract agreement
 - Strategies may include enhanced monitoring, additional reporting, or technical assistance
- Provide enhanced technical assistance and oversight
- 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 a complete proposal no later than 4:00 p.m. central time, on **June 12, 2024**.

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

Review Process and Timeline

OHE in collaboration with DLI will ensure applicants meet all eligibility requirements. If requirements are not met, the proposal will not be submitted to the review committee.

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

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

Request for Proposal posted on OHE website: May 15, 2024

Technical questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: June 5, 2024

Proposals due no later than 4:00 p.m. central time: **June 12, 2024**

Committee begins review of proposals: June 19, 2024

Committee recommendations submitted to OHE for review: July 8, 2024

Applicants notified of award decisions: **July 15, 2024**

Grantees publicly announced: July 22, 2024

Mandatory Grantee Orientation: July 31, 2024 (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest in reference to applicants, reviewers, and administrators per Minnesota Statutes 16B.98 Grants Management Process (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>) and 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department 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 parties 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 the purposes of this grant, when all 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 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.37>)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

Grant Provisions

Minnesota Session Laws 2023, Regular Session, Chapter 54, Sec 20. Subd. 3

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/54/>)

This is the first release of the request for proposal. The total appropriation available for grants is \$950,000.

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 31, 2024

Following award notification, OHE hosts a virtual mandatory two-hour orientation for the grantees. 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
- Tuition and Fees Relief
- Other student supports
- Indirect costs (maximum of 8% of total personnel costs)

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Capital expenditures
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations
- 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 as a grant contract amendment may be required in some situations.

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, tuition and fee relief, and other student support 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 as a grant contract amendment may be required in some situations.

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 August 2025**, which corresponds with the grant narrative report timeline.

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

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

Grant Reporting

Grantees must complete all monitoring and reporting documentation and visits as required by OHE. Grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility is contingent upon 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 2025**). 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.

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 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 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

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified (Minnesota Statute 363A.02). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/5000.3500/>).
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration

The grantee will comply with Minnesota Statutes 201.162 Duties of State Agencies (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/201.162>) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Contact Information

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

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