

Minnesota Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program

Report to the Legislature
as required by Laws of Minnesota, 2011 Special Session 1, Chapter 4, Article I, Section 3,
Subdivision 3(u)

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Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot Program Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Background

The Minnesota Legislature authorized the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot program in 2011 Session Laws, Chapter 4, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 3(u). The Commissioner, in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Council, shall develop and implement a competitive grant program to provide workforce development activities and training to youth in Minnesota. \$2,848,000 the second year is from the workforce development fund for the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot program. [Note: the enabling legislation also permits DEED to retain five percent of these funds for administrative purposes, making the amount available for grants equal to \$2,705,600.]

In awarding grants under this subdivision, consideration must be given to programs that target deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind students. Subdivision 5 of the authorizing legislation further specifies that an organization which receives a direct appropriation under Section 3 is not eligible to participate in the competitive grant program for the same Fiscal Year in which the direct appropriation is received.

Methodologies and Processes for Soliciting and Evaluating Grant Proposals

The legislation requires DEED to develop and implement a competitive grant program to provide workforce development activities and training to youth in Minnesota, in consultation with the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC). DEED staff consulted with the GWDC during the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Pilot. A subcommittee of GWDC members, selected by the GWDC Chair based on their experience with youth programs, met with the DEED Commissioner and DEED staff to formally approve the RFP on October 26, 2011.

The RFP was published on the Contract and Grant Opportunities section of DEED's website on October 31, 2011:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/About_Us/Notices_Announcements/Contract-Grant_Opportunities/index.aspx.

In addition, the RFP was also posted on DEED's Office of Youth Development webpage on October 31, 2011:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/RFP_for_Competitive_Youth_Funding/index.aspx.

Notice of the RFP was published in the State Register on Monday, November 7, 2011:

http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/stateregister/36_16.pdf.

DEED established the following timeline for the solicitation and evaluation of grant proposals:

GWDC Approval of RFP:	Wednesday, October 26, 2011
RFP Release: <i>(published in the Minnesota State Register)</i>	Monday, November 7, 2011
Statement of Intent Due:	Monday, January 9, 2012
Proposals Due:	Friday, February 10, 2012 by 4:00 p.m.
Review and Selection Period:	February 13, 2012 to March 2, 2012
Notification to Bidders:	March 9, 2012
Contract Start Date:	July 1, 2012

The RFP directed potential applicants to submit any questions following the release of the RFP in writing via e-mail to a specified DEED staff contact person. All questions submitted in writing relating to the RFP will be answered and published on DEED's website on a weekly basis until February 12, 2012 at http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/RFP_for_Competitive_Youth_Funding/index.aspx.

Criteria and Methodology for Selecting Grant Recipients

The criteria against which proposals will be evaluated is described in the RFP. Proposals will be rated on a 100-point scale and must address the following areas: Project Description; Project Goals, Activities and Timetables; Partnerships; Assessment and Evaluation; Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience; Budget; and Letters of Commitment. All applicants must also complete and submit a Fiscal Capacity Checklist.

Applications submitted by eligible applicants that include all the required components will be read and scored by a panel of reviewers. A separate review panel will read and score proposals for projects that primarily address the service needs of deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind youth.

All reviewers will be required to maintain confidentiality during the review process (as per M.S. 13.599) and sign a conflict of interest disclosure form. All final funding decisions (including the amounts awarded) will be made by the DEED Commissioner.

Methods and Procedures for Monitoring the Use of Grant Awards

Grant recipients will be required to adhere to standard DEED policies regarding the use of funds and reporting of expenditures on the grant. DEED policies require grantees to submit monthly Financial Status Reports (FSRs), reporting all accrued expenditures during the grant period. Grantees may use no more than five percent of the grant funding for administrative costs, as stated in the RFP. The FSRs are reviewed and approved by the DEED program manager each month. DEED staff will monitor all fiscal expenditures, planned vs. actual, including administrative expenditures each month.

Each grant will be monitored on site by DEED during the grant period to ensure that the use of funds is consistent with the approved plan and contract and the intent of the Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant pilot program.

Methods for Measuring Outcomes and Accomplishments of Grant Recipients

The reporting requirements for the Youth Competitive Grantees were developed by DEED to meet the requirements established in State Statute and to allow appropriate evaluation of the programs. All participant data and fiscal data will be reviewed by DEED on a monthly basis to assure that the grantee's expenditures and youth outcomes are on track to meet approved plans.

Department Expenditures Related to the Administration and Monitoring of Grants

Costs incurred by DEED thus far reflect staff costs for time spent on the development of the RFP and review and selection process, and the creation of a reporting system for selected grantees. As of November 30, 2011, these administrative costs total approximately \$6,867.