

Safety Grant Program: improving your odds; new online grant application

By Dave Ferkul, Workplace Safety Consultation Supervisor

Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation's Safety Grants Program awards matching funds up to \$10,000 to qualifying employers for projects designed to reduce the risk of injury and illness to their workers.

To qualify, an employer must meet the following conditions:

- the employer must have workers' compensation insurance;
- the employer must come under the jurisdiction of Minnesota OSHA;
- a qualified safety professional must have conducted an on-site inspection and there must be a written report with recommendations based on the inspection;
- the project must be consistent with the recommendations of the safety inspection and must reduce the risk of injury or disease to employees;
- the employer must have the knowledge and experience to complete the project, and must be committed to its implementation;
- the employer must be able to match the grant money awarded and all estimated project costs must be covered; and
- the project must be supported by all public entities involved and comply with federal, state and local regulations where applicable.

Improving your odds

The continued success of Workplace Safety Consultation's Safety Grant Program has increased demand for available grant funds. During a typical grant review cycle, the requests for grant funds greatly exceed available funds. To improve your odds for consideration for grant funding, focus on one of the key components of the application – the hazard assessment (inspection). This inspection provides the technical basis for the project proposed in the application.

Safety Grant Program rules state that an eligible project is one designed to reduce the risk of injury to employees pursuant to recommendations resulting from an on-site safety inspection. In other words, the project described in the grant application must be based on the findings of a hazard inspection conducted at the worksite. This inspection must identify the injury and illness risks associated with a work task or area, so recommended actions can be taken to eliminate or minimize the risks.

For safety grant purposes, the recommended actions can be in the form of equipment, training for equipment or tuition reimbursement. Only items referenced in the hazard inspection report can be considered eligible, within the proposed project.

The hazard inspection cannot simply be an endorsement for the grant application. In other words, a letter supporting an applicant's decision to apply for a safety grant is not a hazard inspection; applications that rely on this type of supporting documentation will not be considered for a grant. The hazard inspection is the technical basis for a grant project; therefore, it must provide sufficient supporting documentation for the proposed grant project.

In addition to the hazard inspection, the Safety Grant Program places priority on those projects that impact employment sites that provide goods, manufacturing or processing jobs for the majority of workers; businesses within the current MNOSHA strategic plan; and sites where safety shortcomings could result in jobs being lost or in jeopardy due to safety issues addressed in the application.

For more information, contact the WSC safety grants administrator at (651) 284-5162 or visit www.dli.mn.gov/WSC/Grants.asp.



New online grant application

Besides offering the grant application as a printable PDF file or Word document, an online safety grant application has recently been developed. It is available at www.dli.mn.gov/WSC/Grants.asp.

The online application allows applicants to submit information electronically, with the exception of the endorsement page of the application, which must be printed, signed and submitted to DLI's safety grants administrator.

For more information and application options:

– www.dli.mn.gov/Wsc/Grants.asp –



New team put in place to guide popular, expanding programs

By Dave Ferkul, Workplace Safety Consultation Supervisor

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Under the direction of Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation (WSC), the Minnesota STAR (MNSTAR) program and Minnesota Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (MNSHARP) have continued to excel, garnering interest from employers and employees throughout the state. With that success comes the long-term expectations the programs will continue to grow.

In an effort to more efficiently manage these cooperative programs as they continue to grow, and to effectively meet WSC's mission of providing safety and health consultations for smaller employers, a new VPP/SHARP team has been established.

The five-member VPP/SHARP team will take over responsibilities for completing required on-site evaluations and other administrative activities related to the programs. The team consists of both MNOSHA Compliance and WSC staff members and will gradually assume all responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the programs.

The team will report directly to the Department of Labor and Industry's Safety and Workers' Compensation Division assistant commissioner.

Both MNSTAR and MNSHARP recognize companies whose managers and employees work together to develop safety and health management systems that go beyond basic compliance with all applicable OSHA standards, and result in immediate and long-term prevention of job-related injuries and illnesses. Incentives for participant companies include assistance from MNOSHA, public recognition for employers and employees, and exemption from Minnesota OSHA scheduled compliance inspection lists.

For more information, contact Workplace Safety Consultation by phone at (651) 284-5060 or by e-mail at osha.consultation@state.mn.us, or visit www.dli.mn.gov/Wsc.asp.