

Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP)

Request for Proposal

Cover page

Available funding:	Up to \$1,003,432 available. Applicants may request a maximum of \$100,000.
Purpose:	LEAP grant funding aims to facilitate the participation and/or retention of people of color, Indigenous people, and women in registered apprenticeship programs
Period of performance:	Sept. 1, 2025, or the date the contract is fully executed, whichever occurs later, until March 31, 2027.
Application due date:	<p>Applications will have an initial deadline of June 27, 2025, and then be accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed monthly, and will continue until all funds have been awarded or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first.</p> <p>Submit applications by email to: lyla.brown@state.mn.us</p> <p>If you would like to submit an application by mail, send to:</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Attn.: Nou Yang, Apprenticeship 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN 55155</p>
Questions:	<p>Questions may be submitted by phone or email.</p> <p>Frequently asked questions and answers will be updated weekly.</p> <p>Please submit questions to: lyla.brown@state.mn.us</p> <p>If needed, our agency has access to Language Line, a free language translation service for limited-English speakers. Contact us at 651-284-5005 or 800-342-5354 and we will get in touch with an interpreter.</p>
Notification of award:	First round of applicant awards will be announced in August 2025; subsequent awards will be announced on a rolling basis within three months of submitting an application until all available grant funds have been expended.

All RFP and application documents can be found at:

dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant

1. Name of grant program

Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP)

2. Purpose of grant: background, objectives, focus populations and outcomes

Background

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI) mission is to ensure Minnesota's work and living environments are equitable, healthy, and safe. The department serves employees, employers and the public by regulating buildings and workplaces through education and enforcement. DLI will advance equity by identifying disparities and creating systemic change to better serve and protect all Minnesotans.

The Apprenticeship Division at DLI supports Minnesota's economy by promoting, facilitating and developing quality registered apprenticeship programs that recruit, train and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

Apprenticeship is an earn-as-you-learn workforce training model that allows people to earn a good living while mastering in-demand skills. Apprentices receive classroom instruction and on-the-job training (OJT) with the industry-specific knowledge needed to perform highly skilled work. At the end of their apprenticeship, they will have the skills and training necessary to be successful in a high-demand industry and earn a nationally recognized credential.

The Minnesota state legislature allocated up to \$1 million annually for the Labor Education Advancement Grant Program to facilitate the participation or retention of people of color, Indigenous people, and women in registered apprenticeship programs (Minn. Stat. 178.11, Minn. Rules 5227).

Objective

To facilitate the participation and/or retention of people of color, Indigenous people, and women in registered apprenticeship programs through various means including outreach, education, assessment, preparation, support services, instruction, training, placement and retention activities.

Focus populations

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.

The Minnesota Department of Administration's Office of Grants Management (OGM) [Policy 08-02](#) 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 Minnesotans who are 18 years of age and older and prioritize those who are:

- People of color
- Indigenous people
- Women

Grant program participants include both prospective and current registered apprentices.

Grant outcomes

- Increased enrollment of priority population individuals into registered apprenticeship programs.
- Increased retention of priority population individuals as apprentices in registered apprenticeship programs.

3. Grant activities

Applicants can achieve desired outreach, education and technical assistance outcomes through a variety of activities, including but not limited to:

Outreach and recruitment

Outreach and recruitment seek to connect with potential participants, increasing their awareness of both pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities. Activities could include but are not limited to:

- Outreach events for potential participants
- Develop and distribute recruitment materials
- Sponsor and/or employer outreach
- Marketing

Supportive Services

Supportive services reduce barriers to employment for participants and increase their success and retention within both pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs.

Applicants are highly encouraged to include a plan to provide supportive services and how these services will be made available to participants.

Supportive services include but are not limited to the following:

- Addressing substance abuse
- Childcare – must be a licensed provider
- Disability accommodations / access
- Financial literacy
- Interpreting / Translation services
- Math refresher courses / English language training
- Mental health services
- Obtaining a driver's license

- Obtaining high school equivalency diploma or GED
- Personal safety equipment
- Testing fees related to apprenticeship placement
- Tools
- Transportation – gas cards, Uber / Lyft, public transit passes, etc.
- Work boots and clothing

Retention Support

LEAP programs should consider what support services may be required by participants to sustain their participation in registered apprenticeship programs. Follow-up retention services include, but are not limited to:

- Individual coaching and advising
- Employment connections / referrals
- Communicating criminal background to employers
- Expungement programs
- Career guidance, navigation and counseling
- Mentoring
- Additional training

Other activities

- Hire and compensate staff who work on grant activities
- Purchase office and training supplies related to the grant program

4. Eligible applicants and minimum eligibility requirements

Eligible applicants

The grant program seeks proposals from:

- Community-based or nonprofit organizations, including 501(c)3 and 501(c)5 organizations registered with the Secretary of State in Minnesota
- Minnesota Tribal governments as defined in [Minn. Stat. §10.65](#)

Programs that received LEAP grant funding in the 2025 grant round are ineligible to apply for additional funding to avoid overlapping grant contracts. If you are uncertain of your status, please email Lyla Brown at lyla.brown@state.mn.us.

This grant does not allow formal, multi-organizational collaborations. However, partnering with a registered apprenticeship program is required for applicants who are not registered apprenticeship programs.

Minimum eligibility requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements below to be considered for an award of funding. If an application does not fully meet these requirements it will not be further reviewed.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- 1) meet the application deadline;
- 2) be an eligible applicant;
- 3) identify any matching funds (matches are **not** required for this funding, although they do need to be identified if used); and,
- 4) if the applicant is not a registered apprenticeship program, it must provide a minimum of one signed letter of agreement from a registered apprenticeship program confirming details as to how the applicant and partner will work together, demonstrating a pipeline for participants. **Note:** this letter should not be a vague letter of support; it should confirm commitments to activities as outlined in the workplan.

5. Funding availability

- Total funds allocated for this grant: up to \$1,003,432.
- The maximum amount applicants can request is \$100,000
- DLI plans to award funding to approximately 10 to 12 applicants.

6. Eligible and ineligible expenses

- 1) Eligible expenses include but may not be limited to:

Budget categories	Examples of allowable expenses
Salaries and Wages (including Fringe Costs)	<p>Employee salaries and wages plus fringe costs directly related to grant funded personnel. This includes employees who are delivering program activities and responsible for reporting.</p> <p>Please identify the position/s funded by this grant, the hourly rate, number of hours billed to the grant and the total.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: Project Coordinator, \$31.25 / hr x 80 hrs = \$2,500</i></p>
Travel	<p>Travel costs pertaining to grant-funded personnel. This can include lodging, per diem, mileage, parking, tolls and transportation. Please use the current approved Federal mileage reimbursement rate.</p> <p>Please breakout your travel expenses, where possible.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: hotel for 2 nights at \$170 / night = \$340; mileage at .67-cents / mile x 700 miles = \$469; per diem at \$50 / day x 2 days = \$100</i></p>
Supplies / Materials	<p>Office supplies, training materials and curricula expenses related to supporting LEAP participants.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: work readiness materials \$50 / participant x 10 = \$500; non-durable project materials (lumber, screws, nails, glue, thinset, etc.) estimated at \$1500 / cohort</i></p>

Communications / Outreach	<p>Costs related to recruiting program participants.</p> <p>Please outline your estimated expenses where possible.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: \$200 for radio ads; \$1,000 for social media posts.</i></p>
Supportive Services	<p>Participant assessment services, mentoring, and training. Participant bus/rail ticket fare, gas cards, daycare expenses, tools, boots, and personal safety equipment related to the apprenticeship placement.</p> <p>Please give a rough breakdown of expenses.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: 10 \$100 gas cards - \$1000; 3 x \$250 / set of tools = \$750</i></p>
Contractual	<p>Vendor services necessary to provide grant program activities and services.</p> <p>Please breakout your contractual expenses, where possible.</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: \$5,000 to mental health provider</i></p>
Administrative costs (Cannot exceed 10% of the total grant amount)	<p>Expenses incurred by grant recipients in support of the day-to-day operations of their organization that are not directly tied to a specific program purpose. Administrative costs may include, but are not limited to, administrative oversight, accounting support, insurance and facility rent or overhead. Staff listed in Salaries and Wages above cannot also be funded through Administrative costs.</p> <p>Administrative costs cannot exceed 10% of the total grant budget.</p>

All costs submitted for reimbursement must be allowable by the terms of the grant, reasonable and necessary, rationally allocated and adequately documented. No costs can be double funded using other sources. In-kind and matching funds are **not** required for this grant.

Documentation of grant expenses includes, but is not limited to, showing the costs occurred (payroll records, quotes/bids, contracts, purchase orders, invoices, mileage reimbursement forms, itemized receipts, etc.) and showing payment occurred (cancelled checks, bank statements, cash receipts, etc.).

2) Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Apprenticeship wages and/or benefits while in training, or wage subsidies for program participants
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll
- 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.

- Food, beverages, party supplies

7. Reviewing and scoring applications

The committee will be reviewing each application on a 100-point scale. The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on the points awarded to applicants who provide evidence of the organization's need and capacity to successfully accomplish the grant programming requirements and intent.

The review criteria below will be used to evaluate proposals in each scoring category. Review criteria are based both on the grant program requirements and on an applicant's ability to achieve the requirements of the grant.

Scoring factor	Scoring Criteria	Total points possible
Statement of Need	Clearly summarized goals and the major activities and/or services they will provide to meet each of those goals and intended outcomes.	20
Registered apprenticeship program partner/s	Clearly identified the commitments of the registered apprenticeship program partner/s.	15
Equity	Articulated an outreach strategy to key populations that is culturally relevant and accessible.	15
Program activities and services	Described in detail work to be performed to achieve their planned grant outcomes.	15
Work plan	Included a realistic timeline for major program activities, resources, registered apprenticeship program involvement, and grant outcomes.	20
Outcomes	Provided quantitative measures for both grant program activities and services. The measures are sufficient to demonstrate work was completed.	15
Budget and budget narrative	Provided a listing of budgeted line-items that are within the allowable expense category and any mandated limitations.	pass/fail

	<p>Proposed a budget that is appropriate for anticipated uses.</p> <p>Provided a budget narrative with a detailed account for proposed expenditures.</p>	
	Total score available	100

8. Grantee reporting requirements

The grantee must submit quarterly reports, using templates provided by DLI. Reporting will include:

- 1) Reimbursement Payment Request (RPR)
- 2) Expense Summary
- 3) Participant Log
- 4) Quarterly Narrative Report
- 5) Mid-Grant Report
- 6) Final Report

All reports and required supporting documentation must be submitted on a quarterly basis as follows:

- Jan. 1 – March 31 due May 1
- April 1 – June 30 due Aug. 1
- July 1 – Sept. 30 due Nov. 1
- Oct. 1 – Dec. 31 due Feb. 1

Grantees must also provide a final grant report which summarizes all grant activity. The final grant report must be provided within 30 business days of the end of the grant period of performance and final invoices must be submitted within 60 days of the end of the grant period of performance, or as specified in the contract.

Grantees may also be asked to participate in technical assistance meetings on an ad hoc basis.

9. DLI monitoring of grantee performance

[Minn. Stat. §16B.97](#) and [Policy 08-10](#) Grant Monitoring 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.

10. Payments to grantee

Per [Policy 08-08](#) reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The state shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless DLI has given the grantee a written extension. Payments will be made through the state's SWIFT accounting system.

11. Required financial and grantee capacity review

Minn. Stat. §16B.981/[Chapter 62 - MN Laws](#), Article 7, Section 11 requires that a pre-award risk assessment is conducted for grant awards of \$50,000 or more.

All grantees as defined in Minn. Stat. §16B.981 Subd. 1 (c) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial and capacity review prior to a grant award of \$50,000 and higher.

In order to comply with this requirement, the following information and documents will need to be submitted before the grant contract agreement is fully executed.

I. Capacity Responses: All potential grantees: Exhibit A

- a) Please describe your history of performing the work that will be funded by the grant:
 - This includes describing your organization's current staffing, current budget and agency capacity to successfully conduct and administer grant programming.

II. Certification: No current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years: All potential Grantees: Exhibit B

III. Evidence of good standing: Nonprofit potential grantees: Exhibit C

- Nonprofit grantees: Filed and up-to-date with the Secretary of State

IV. Nonprofit grantees as applicable

- Most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ
- Most recent 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 [Minn. Stat. §309.53](#)
- Most recent board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded, and evidence of exemption

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 Minn. Stat. §16B.981/[Chapter 62 - MN Laws](#), Article 7, Section 11, Subd. 3-5 establishes the authority for a granting agency to:

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from a potential grantee to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the potential grantee cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement.
 - The potential grantee 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 this determination to not award the grant to the grantee and the commissioner of the Minnesota Department 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

12. Audit of grantee's records

Under [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) Subd. 8, 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 the Minnesota Department of Administration, 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 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.

13. Grantee requirements when bidding grant related work

1. For nongovernmental organizations:

A. 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.

B. The grantee 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](#)
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#)
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)

C. The grantee 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.
- 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.

- D. The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in Minnesota: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)
- E. For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers, workers and mechanics should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

14. Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that processes are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#).

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 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.

15. Public access to applicant's data

[Per Minn. Stat. § 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 [§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.
- All data created or maintained by DLI as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§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.

16. Affirmative action and non-discrimination requirements for grantees:

- A. As per [Minn. Stat. §363A.02](#) 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, familial status or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. 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](#).
- 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.

17. Grantee voter registration requirement

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

18. Required application materials

Required material to submit with application:

- 1) Application Form (with Exhibits)
- 2) Copy of your organization's Workers Compensation Policy
- 3) Copy of your organization Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- 4) Copy of your organization's most recent 990 or audit
- 5) As appropriate, letters from Registered Apprenticeship Program/s

If the grant applicant is a nongovernmental organization, submit the applicable financial statements as required in [Policy 08-06](#) (see section 9. *Financial review process* of this document).

Do not submit any other materials (binders, photos, etc.). Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.

19. How to submit applications

Email to:

Lyla Brown

Email: lyla.brown@state.mn.us

If you would like to submit an application by mail, contact Lyla Brown at the email above for additional information.

First round applications are due at noon, CDT, on Friday, June 27, 2025. Subsequent applications will be received on a rolling basis until all available grant funds have been expended. The applicant will incur all costs associated with applying to this RFP.

20. Questions

If you have questions and would like more information about this RFP, contact:

- Questions may be submitted by phone or email to: Lyla Brown – lyla.brown@state.mn.us
- Frequently asked questions and answers will be updated weekly. The FAQ may be accessed at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant.

21. Review process and timeline

Applications have an initial deadline of noon, CDT, June 27, 2025, and then be accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed monthly, and will continue until all funds have been awarded or June 30, 2026, whichever comes first. The Review Committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications on a monthly basis. DLI will review committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions.

22. Attachments

The following documents and additional support materials can be found at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant

- Application Form (with required Exhibits)
- FAQ
- Grant Definitions