



# **Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) engagement and education grant**

Request for proposals (RFP)

State fiscal year 2022

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## Grant overview

### *Grant purpose*

This grant funding is to promote education, outreach, communication, engagement, and training to build worker and employer understanding of Minnesota laws relating to pregnant and lactating employee rights to pregnancy accommodations and to express milk in the workplace and state pregnancy and parental leave. These laws were originally passed or modified under the Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA) and will be collectively referred to as WESA throughout this document. Grant work will highlight 2021 statutory changes to WESA that broadened employee rights and employer requirements. Detailed information about existing and new requirements can be found at [www.dli.mn.gov/newparents](http://www.dli.mn.gov/newparents).

This grant will:

- Promote the workplace rights of pregnant and new parent employees
- Educate employers on their responsibilities under WESA.
- Include a focus on reaching workers in underserved communities and lower wage industries, including workers whose primary language is not English.
- Increase employer compliance with WESA laws overseen by DLI, including industries such as healthcare and social assistance, hospitality, construction, agriculture, retail and other service industries.
- Increase employee knowledge of WESA laws overseen by DLI and resources and remedies available to address possible violations of these laws, including related services and resources provided by Labor Standards.
- Promote longer-term worker and infant health by increasing duration of breastfeeding, providing needed workplace accommodations to pregnant employees and ensuring pregnancy and parenting leave from work to focus on childbirth and infant bonding.

### *Agency overview*

The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) ensures Minnesota’s work and living environments are equitable, healthy and safe. The agency oversees the state’s programs for apprenticeship, construction codes and licensing, dual-training pipeline, occupational safety and health, wage and hour standards, workers' compensation and youth skills training programs. The Labor Standards and Apprenticeship Division of DLI is charged with WESA enforcement and outreach efforts.

Labor Standards ensures workers are paid correctly and workplace rights and responsibilities are enforced for all workers. Additionally, the division helps employers prevent employment law violations before they occur. Labor Standards answers wage and hour questions about breaks, minimum wage, overtime, parental leave, prevailing wage, misclassification and wage theft.

DLI’s equity goal:

*DLI will advance equity by identifying disparities and creating systemic change to better serve and protect all Minnesotans.*

## Funding availability

Up to \$60,000 in total grant funding is available. The grant period of performance is from November 2021 (or the date of fully executed contracts) to April 30, 2022. Funds may be awarded to one to five organizations with the total grant amount of \$60,000 to be split among awardees.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content and community knowledge. DLI expects to announce selected grantees within three weeks of the proposal deadline date. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

## Minimum requirements:

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

- [Be a non-profit organization, state or local government unit, business organization or association, non-profit alternative secondary institution, non-profit post-secondary institution, and/or a labor organization.](#)
- [Submit their proposal on or before the deadline to submit.](#)

## Priorities

This grant will prioritize the inclusive engagement of diverse Minnesotans including those from communities of color, immigrants, economically disadvantaged individuals, people with disabilities and others from historically underserved communities. Impact may occur through direct worker engagement or by engaging employers and industries where diverse Minnesotans work and/or through service providers and organizations that assist those same individuals.

It is the policy of the state of Minnesota to ensure fairness, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

## Sample grant activities

Grantee project activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Distribution of written materials to employees and/or employers about WESA rights<sup>1</sup> and responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>
- Distribution of online and social messaging to employees and/or employers about WESA rights and responsibilities.
- Conducting and participating in trainings, educational events, and other types of engagement activities.
- Working with health care providers, childcare providers or other related industries that interact with pregnant and new parents to provide information about WESA rights and responsibilities.
- Other creative ideas to engage and inform employees, employers, and the public about WESA rights and responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.dli.mn.gov/newparents](http://www.dli.mn.gov/newparents).

<sup>2</sup> In Spring 2021, DLI created a new WESA brochure covering pregnancy accommodations, pregnancy and parental leave and workplace lactation rights. These brochures are available in four languages (English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong) and would be available for grantees to distribute as part of this project. Brochures are viewable on [www.dli.mn.us/newparents](http://www.dli.mn.us/newparents).

## Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed but not required.

## Selection criteria and weight

The review committee will be reviewing each proposal based on a 1,000-point scale. The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are:

- Executive Summary and Project Design
- Equity Analysis
- Project Details
- Workplan/timeline
- Evaluation and reporting
- Budget and fiscal capacity

## Proposal contents

(You are required to fill out information for all proposal contents sections.)

<b>Section 1: Executive Summary and Project Design</b>	<b>Total points: 75</b>
Please limit this section to one page. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Please describe your organization.</li><li>2. Provide an overview of the proposed project.</li><li>3. Describe the ability of your organization to accomplish project milestones and achieve results.</li><li>4. Describe your organization’s network, reach and ability to reach those your proposal seeks to engage.</li></ol>	
<b>Section 2: Equity Analysis</b>	<b>Total points: 200</b>
Please limit this section to one page. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe your organization’s experience with individuals from diverse populations and underserved communities.</li><li>2. Describe how you will engage and serve individuals from diverse populations and underserved communities.</li><li>3. Describe how project engagement will be delivered in a culturally competent way.</li></ol>	
<b>Section 3: Project Details</b>	<b>Total points: 375</b>

Please limit this section to three pages.

1. Describe your project and how you will engage employees and/or employers.
  - a. Who will work on this project?
  - b. What engagement, training, and education processes will you utilize?
  - c. Provide examples of outreach activities, events and other engagements. Highlight any innovative methods your organization will utilize to engage the target populations.
2. What are the foreseeable challenges and how you will overcome them?
3. State the geographical location(s) your project will serve and the need for the project in that area.
4. If partners or collaborations will be utilized, describe those partners, networks, or collaborations, what role they will play, and what experience or expertise they bring to this project. *Note: Partners are not required for this project.*

**Section 4: Workplan/timeline**

**Total points: 75**

Please limit this section to one page. Use of a table, bullet points or other simplified information presentation methods are preferred for this section.

1. Create a workplan that calls out grant program activities, milestones and dates.

**Section 5: Evaluation and Reporting**

**Total points: 75**

Please limit this section to one page.

1. Describe how your organization plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and the data that will be collected.
2. Provide information about who will be responsible for data collection and submission of required reports.

**Section 6: Budget and Fiscal Capacity**

**Total points: 200**

1. Complete Exhibit A: Budget and Fiscal Capacity. Exhibit A includes a budget form and budget narrative section.
2. Note: the total budget request may not exceed \$60,000<sup>3</sup>.
  - a. No more than 10% may be allocated for indirect costs.

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<sup>3</sup> DLI is likely to fund three to five organizations with a total grant amount of \$60,000 to be split among awardees.

	<b>Total points: 1,000</b>
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## Financial review process

All Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher.

In order to comply with [Policy 08-06](#), Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations, please submit one of the following documents with your application, based on the following criteria:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit should submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 should submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 should submit their most recent certified financial audit.

## Questions

- Questions may be submitted by email to David Skovholt at [david.skovholt@state.mn.us](mailto:david.skovholt@state.mn.us).
- All answers to questions submitted will be posted within three business days at [www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/wesa-engagement-and-education-grant](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/wesa-engagement-and-education-grant).
- Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m., Central Time, on 10/7/2021.

## Application content

Applicants must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete:

- Cover page with the name of your organization, name of your project, name of contact person and contact information
- Proposal Narrative as outlined in the table above including:
  - Executive Summary and Project Design
  - Equity Analysis
  - Project Details
  - Workplan/timeline
  - Evaluation and Reporting
  - Exhibit A: Budget and Fiscal Capacity
- If the grant applicant is a nongovernmental organization, submit the applicable financial statements as required in [Policy 08-06](#)

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

## Application submission:

**All applications must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on 10/19/2021.** Late applications will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

Applications may be submitted by email to David Skovholt at: [david.skovholt@state.mn.us](mailto:david.skovholt@state.mn.us).

## Review process and timeline

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. The Department of Labor and Industry will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. *The award decisions of the Department of Labor and Industry are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFP posted on the Department of Labor and Industry web site	09/20/2021
Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time	10/7/2021
Responses to questions will be posted no later than	10/12/2021
Applications due no later than 4:30 pm central time	10/19/2021
Committee begins review of applications	10/21/2021
Selected grantees announced; grant agreement negotiations begin	11/08/2021

### *Conflicts of interest*

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures 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 effective date 1/1/21](#).

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.

## Public 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, when all grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by [State agency] 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, when all grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

## Grant provisions

DLI has approval to award grants through Minnesota Statute 175.17.

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at: [Office of Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms/Forms and FAQs tab.](#)

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

## Accountability and reporting

Grantees will be expected to submit a bimonthly report of project activities by using a template similar to Exhibit B. Report due dates will be established when the project contract between the grantee and the state is completed.

## Grant payments

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 supporting documentation, 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.

Grantees can submit invoices on a bimonthly basis, at the time bimonthly reports are due.

## Grant monitoring

[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.

## Grantee bidding requirements

(For Non-Governmental Organizations)

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 (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

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 and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

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](#)

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 justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN:

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/debarredreport.asp>.

## Grantee bidding requirements continued:

(For municipalities)

Grantees that are municipalities must follow:

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in [Minn. Stat. §471.345](#)
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#) These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN:

[www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/debarredreport.asp](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/debarredreport.asp).

## Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) Subdivision 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 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.

## Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all grantees:

- 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. [Minn. Stat. §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](#)
- 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 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.

## **Contact information**

For more information about this RFP, contact:

David Skovholt  
Systems, Communications and Educational Interventions Principal  
Department of Labor and Industry  
443 Lafayette Road North  
Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55155  
[david.skovholt@state.mn.us](mailto:david.skovholt@state.mn.us)

## **Attachments**

- Exhibit A: Budget and fiscal capacity
- Exhibit B: Sample quarterly report template
- Sample grant contract agreement