Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-3650
health.ehdi@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html

8/11/2026

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3650.

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RFP Part 1: Overview

1.1 General information

- **Announcement Title:** Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program
- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Program Website**: www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html
- **Notice of Intent Deadline**: September 1, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST)
- **Application Deadline**: September 14, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. CST

1.2 Program description

The Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (CYSHN) section is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to administer a statewide hearing aid and instrument loan bank program to families with children newly diagnosed with hearing loss from birth to the age of ten. In 2007, the State of Minnesota approved funding for the administration of such a statewide hearing aid and instrument loan bank. See Minnesota 2007 Session Law Chapter 147 HF 1078 Art 19 Sec 4 Subd. 2 (www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2007/0/147/).

1.3 Funding and project dates

Funding

This grant uses state funding. Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date, whichever is later.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	$69,000 per year
Estimated Number of Awards	1
Estimated Award Maximum	$69,000 per year for a total of $345,000 total over a 5-year period
Estimated Award Minimum	N/A

Match Requirement

There are no match requirements.

Project Dates

The estimated start of this grant program is January 1, 2027 and the estimated end date of this grant program is December 31, 2031.

1.4 Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include organizations with knowledge and experience with best practices for fitting children with amplification (hearing devices) with the ability to serve families across the entire state of Minnesota.

Grant funds are not transferable to any other entity unless through formal subgrant or subcontract of which MDH has been consulted with and has approved. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is allowable.

1.5 Questions and answers

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to health.ehdi@state.mn.us with "Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program RFP" in the subject line. All answers will be posted within two business days on the Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program (www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html) webpage.

Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. on September 8, 2026.

To ensure the proper and fair evaluation of all applications, other communications regarding this RFP including verbal, telephone, written, or internet-initiated by or on behalf of any applicant to any employee of MDH, other than questions submitted to as outlined above, are prohibited. **Any violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

RFP information meeting

MDH will host a one-hour RFP information meeting on August 24 from 1–2 p.m. The meeting will be hosted virtually on Zoom. All prospective applicants are encouraged to attend, but attendance is not required. All questions and answers from the one-hour session will be posted to the Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program (www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html) webpage.

Attendees must register in advance in order to receive the Zoom link. To register, visit the RFP webpage or the Zoom registration (www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/we56Z7FbQPWvSsp2bqUlbw) webpage. If you need an accommodation (i.e. American Sign Language) to attend, you must register and note the requested accommodation by 4 p.m. on August 18, 2026.

RFP Part 2: Program details

2.1 Background

In 2007, Minnesota Statute section 144.966 mandated the reporting of newborn hearing screening results and added hearing loss to the panel of more than 50 rare conditions for which every newborn in Minnesota is screened. Each year, over 200 infants and children birth through age 10 are identified as deaf or hard of hearing in Minnesota.

Also in 2007, the State of Minnesota approved funding for the administration of a statewide hearing aid and instrument loan bank for families of children birth through age 10. See Minnesota 2007 Session Law Chapter 147 HF 1078 Art 19 Sec 4 Subd. 2 (www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2007/0/147/).

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing who are identified and provided with access to language early are more likely to meet language milestones typical of other children their age. Families have various choices for communication, and hearing devices are one of many options. For families who choose hearing devices, timely access to devices is important for their child's language acquisition.

2.2 Priorities

Health equity 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. The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review (https://mn.gov/grants/assets/POL_08-02_RatingCriteriaforCompetitiveGrantReview_2017-09-15_tcm1093-749640.pdf) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

Purpose, goals and outcomes

The purpose of this grant is to support the implementation of a statewide pediatric hearing device and instrument loan bank for families of children in Minnesota who are newly identified as deaf or hard of hearing from birth to the age of 10.

This grant will serve:

- Children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) whose families have chosen to use hearing devices.
- Audiologists who are ordering the devices on behalf of families.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Grantee will loan hearing devices to providers serving children statewide who are DHH.
- Children who are DHH will have timely access to hearing technology that will support their goals for language development.
- Written materials sent with hearing devices will be available in family's preferred language whenever possible.

2.3 Eligible projects

The applicant awarded the Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program grant should:

- Ensure that devices in program inventory are current technology (consignment devices, donated and purchased devices from manufacturers will be reflective of the marketplace).
- Maintain devices in inventory in good working order, with clear procedures for check-in and cleaning process of loaned devices.
- Demonstrate excellent customer service.
- Process device orders in a timely manner.
- Assess and address barriers to families and providers using the program.
- Communicate effectively with and respond to needs of providers and families.
- Maintain data in a secure system. Grantees can propose their own data/reservation system and budget for software subscription or development. Grantees can also propose to use Hearbank (https://hearbank.web.health.state.mn.us/home.xhtml), the current MDH web application for device reservations. MDH expects that the Hearbank application will be available for use by the grantee for the initial year(s) of the grant cycle, however potential grantees should plan for the contingency that Hearbank, as a legacy application that is funded separately by MDH, could no longer be available sometime during the grant period due to unforeseen software or hardware needs or changes in funding.
- Collaborate with MDH on updating web application as needed and maintain current standard operating procedures regarding administrator's use of the web application.
- Ensure ongoing quality improvement of processes and sustainability of devices available to loan.
- Assess and report on consumer satisfaction with the program's services. This may include surveys of parents and providers.

Mandatory requirement:

The applicant awarded the Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program must provide hearing aid and instrument loans statewide to Minnesota families with children newly diagnosed with a hearing loss from birth to age ten.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Soliciting donations
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds

2.4 Grant management responsibilities

Grant agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant agreement. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. The grantee should read the grant agreement, sign, and once signed, comply with all conditions of the grant agreement.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place and MDH's Authorized Representative has notified the grantee that work may start.

The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Accountability and reporting requirements

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

The reporting schedule will be:

- Grantee will submit quarterly written reports on grant progress. These reports will be due by the 20th of the month following the end of each quarter. Written reports will be submitted in an MDH-approved format.

Grant monitoring

The monitoring schedule will be:

Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 and Policy on Grant Monitoring (https://mn.gov/admin/assets/grants_policy_08-10_tcm36-207117.pdf) require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants over $50,000
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants over $250,000
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of the grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants over $50,000.

Technical assistance

- MDH will provide technical assistance as needed for the grantee to use the Hearbank application (if applicable).
- MDH will provide technical assistance as needed by the grantee regarding best practices on pediatric amplification.

Grant payments

Per State Policy on Grant Payments (https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-08%20Policy%20on%20Grant%20Payments%20FY21%20_tcm36-438962.pdf), reimbursement is the 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 MDH has given the grantee a written extension.

The invoicing and payment schedule will be:

- Grantee may invoice MDH quarterly or monthly, but not more often than monthly.

2.5 Grant provisions

Affirmative action and non-discrimination requirements for all grantees

The grantee agrees to comply with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination.

Minnesota's nondiscrimination law is the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) (Minn. Stat. § 363A; See e.g. Minn. Stat. § 363A.02. The MHRA is enforced by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (https://mn.gov/mdhr/). Some, but not all, MHRA requirements are reflected below. All grantees are responsible for knowing and complying with nondiscrimination and other applicable laws.

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.

The grantee agrees not to discriminate in public accommodations because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

The grantee agrees not to discriminate in public services because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance.

The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

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. Minn. Rules, part 5000.3550.

Audits

Per 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 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.

Conflicts of interest

MDH will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per Minn. Stat.§ 16B.98 and the Office of Grants Management's Policy 08-01, "Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making."

Applicants must complete the Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure form (Attachment G) and submit it as part of the completed application. Failure to complete and submit this form will result in disqualification from the review process.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in performing the grant work is or might be otherwise impaired
- a grantee or applicant has an unfair competitive advantage

Individual conflicts of interest occur when:

- An applicant, or any of its employees, uses their position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to MDH's time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, prestige, or influence
- An applicant, or any of its employees, receives or accepts money, or anything else of value, from another state grantee or grant applicant with respect to the specific project covered by this RFP/project.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, has equity or a financial interest in, or partial or whole ownership of, a competing grant applicant organization.

- An applicant, or any of its employees, is an employee of MDH or is a relative of an employee of MDH.

In cases where a conflict of interest is perceived, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Non-transferability

Grant funds are not transferable to any other entity. Applicants that are aware of any upcoming mergers, acquisitions, or any other changes in their organization or legal standing, must disclose this information to MDH in their application, or as soon as they are aware of it.

Public data and trade secret materials

All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the State. In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 13.599, all applications and their contents are private or nonpublic until the applications are opened.

Once the applications are opened, the name and address of each applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process, which is defined by statute as when MDH has completed negotiating the grant agreement with the selected applicant.

After MDH has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37, subd. 1(b). A statement by an applicant that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application or its contents. (Minn. Stat. § 13.599, subd. 3(a)).

If an applicant submits any information in an application that it believes to be trade secret information, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37, the applicant must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its application at the time it is submitted,
- Include a statement attached to its application justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and
- Defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless MDH and the State of Minnesota, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense.
- This indemnification survives MDH's award of a grant agreement. In submitting an application in response to this RFP, the applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of MDH. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

MDH reserves the right to reject a claim that any particular information in an application is trade secret information if it determines the applicant has not met the burden of establishing

that the information constitutes a trade secret. MDH will not consider the budgets submitted by applicants to be proprietary or trade secret materials. Use of generic trade secret language encompassing substantial portions of the application or simple assertions of trade secret without substantial explanation of the basis for that designation will be insufficient to warrant a trade secret designation.

If a grant is awarded to an applicant, MDH may use or disclose the trade secret data to the extent provided by law. Any decision by the State to disclose information determined to be trade secret information will be made consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Ch. 13 MN Statutes) and other relevant laws and regulations.

If certain information is found to constitute trade secret information, the remainder of the application will become public; in the event a data request is received for application information, only the trade secret data will be removed and remain nonpublic.

2.6 Review and selection process

Review process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content and community specialists with knowledge of pediatric amplification. Reviewers may include MDH staff, staff from state agencies with experience related to grant management, or individuals who are familiar with or who have provided services to children who are DHH. Reviewers will be required to identify any conflicts of interest and will not review an application if a conflict is identified. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

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

- MDH reserves the right to withhold the distribution of funds in cases where proposals submitted do not meet the necessary criteria.
- The RFP does not obligate MDH to award a grant agreement or complete the project, and MDH reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest.
- MDH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or request additional information to further clarify or validate information submitted in the application, provided the application, as submitted, substantially complies with the requirements of this RFP. There is, however, no guarantee MDH will look for information or clarification outside of the submitted written application. Therefore, it is important that all applicants ensure that all sections of their application are complete to avoid the possibility of failing an evaluation phase or having their score reduced for lack of information.

Selection criteria and weight

The review committee will be reviewing each applicant on a 150 point scale. A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the selection criteria.

The scoring factors and weights by which applications will be judged are based on the scoring criteria in Attachment F: Application score sheet.

Grantee past performance and due diligence review process

- It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them.
- State policy requires states to conduct a pre-award risk assessment prior to a grant award. Additional information may be required for proposed budgets of $50,000 and higher to a potential applicant in order to comply with Policy on Pre-award Risk Assessment.

Notification

MDH anticipates notifying all applicants via email of funding decisions by October 16, 2026.

RFP Part 3: Application and submission instructions

NOTICE OF INTENT

Applicants MUST submit a Notice of Intent by September 1, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. If the Notice of Intent is not received by the deadline, then any application in response to this RFP will **NOT** be accepted and considered. Submitting a Notice of Intent does not obligate the sender to submit an application to this RFP.

The Notice of Intent must be submitted via email to health.ehdi@state.mn.us.

3.1 Application deadline

All applications *must* be received by MDH no later than 4:30 p.m. on September 14, 2026.

Late applications will not be accepted. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to allow sufficient time to address all potential delays caused by any reason whatsoever. MDH will not be responsible for delays caused by mail, delivery, computer, or technology problems.

Acknowledgement of application receipt. When an application is successfully submitted, an automated email will be sent by MDH's grant interface portal, Foundant (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=mdcfh). If you do not receive an acknowledgment email within one business day after submitting the application, it means MDH did not receive your application/documents. Please contact Darcia.Dierking@state.mn.us for further instructions.

3.2 Application submission instructions

Please submit all materials listed on the Application Checklist (Attachment A) for the application to be considered complete. MDH requires application submissions to be made through the grant interface portal, Foundant (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=mdcfh). Tutorials on how to set up accounts and apply for grant funds (https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4479853059991-GLM-Applicant-Tutorial) are available. **We recommend that you set up or log into your Foundant account right away.**

- **New users:** Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.
- **Existing users:** Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left on the logon screen to reset your password.
- **Not sure:** If you think that you or someone at your organization has already registered in Foundant, do not create a new account. Please contact our MDH Children and Youth with Special Health Needs staff at health.cyshn@state.mn.us for assistance.

Once in the system, click on the "apply" button located on the upper tool bar on the home page. You will be redirected to a list of open applications in the system. Select "Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program Grant (January 2027-December 2031)".

3.3 Application instructions

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete.

1. **Grant applicant face sheet** *(online entry; not scored)*

   Applicants shall complete and submit Attachment B: Grant applicant face sheet as part of their application. Basic information about the applicant entity is requested, including legal and business name (as entered in SWIFT), address, and tax identification. All applicants must identify the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). This person is often the CEO of the organization and must have the authority to enter into a legally binding contract with the State. This information will be used for contracting purposes.

2. **Project narrative** *(online entry/upload; scored)*

   Applicants shall complete and submit Attachment C: Project narrative as part of their application.

3. **Work plan** *(Word or Excel document upload; scored)*

   Applicants shall complete and submit Attachment D: Work plan for year one as part of their application. Applicants can edit the work plan to adapt objectives and activities to meet the needs of their priority population, and if awarded, should submit a final work plan similar in scope. A work plan template is available within the RFP and can be found on the RFP webpage www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html.

4. **Budget details and justification** *(Excel workbook upload; scored)*

   Applicants shall complete and submit Attachment E: Budget details and justification as part of their application. Please submit a one-year budget. (If awarded, a grantee would be expected to submit annual budgets for review and approval in subsequent years.) The file must be submitted as an Excel Workbook; a PDF will not be reviewed. A budget template is available with the RFP and can be found on the RFP webpage www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html.

5. **Supplemental documents** *(online entry/upload; not scored)*

   Applicants must submit the following supporting documents to be eligible for review:

   - Attachment G: Applicant conflict of interest disclosure form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf)
   - Attachment H: Due diligence form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf)

- Attachment I: Indirect cost questionnaire (www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/womentshealth/attachhindqst.pdf)

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated.

Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated. **MDH reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.**

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the applicant.

RFP Part 4: Attachments

- Attachment A: Application checklist
- Attachment B: Grant applicant face sheet
- Attachment C: Project narrative
- Attachment D: Work plan
- Attachment E: Budget details and justification
- Attachment F: Application score sheet
- Attachment G: Applicant conflict of interest disclosure form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf)
- Attachment H: Due diligence form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf)
- Attachment I: Indirect cost questionnaire (www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/womentshealth/attachhindqst.pdf)

Attachment A: Application checklist

- Notice of Intent due by 4:30 p.m. on September 1, 2026. Submit email to health.ehdi@state.mn.us.
- SWIFT vendor account: All applicants must have a SWIFT vendor account. Please go to SWIFT and log in to confirm that your organization's name, address, locations, banking information, phone numbers, and other contact information are correct. MDH strongly encourages applicants to initiate direct deposit. To access, visit: SWIFT Vendor Resources (https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/).
- Copy of letter granting 501c3 status (not-for-profit applicants only).
- If applicant has tax exempt status from the Minnesota Department of Revenue, include a copy of exemption letter.
- Attachment B: Grant applicant face sheet
- Attachment C: Project narrative
- Attachment D: Work plan
- Attachment E: Budget details and justification
- Attachment F: Application score sheet
- Attachment G: Applicant conflict of interest disclosure form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf)
- Attachment H: Due diligence form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf)
- Attachment I: Indirect cost questionnaire (www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/womentshealth/attachhindqst.pdf)

Attachment B: Grant applicant face sheet

The following information must be entered into Foundant. By submitting the following information, respondent acknowledges the following:

I certify that the information contained above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge; that I have informed this agency's governing board of the agency's intent to apply for this grant; and, that I have received approval from the governing board to submit this application on behalf of the agency.

General applicant information

- Project Name: Please name your application "Your Agency Name – Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program Grant 2026"
- Applicant's Legal Name (do not use a "doing business as" name):
    - This should be the same name used when a federal tax identification number was obtained.
- Applicant's Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Applicant's Minnesota Tax Identification Number:
- Applicant's Federal Tax Identification Number:
- SWIFT Vendor ID number (if you have one):

Director of applicant agency

- Name:
- Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Phone Number:
- Email:

Financial contact, or fiscal agent, for this grant

- Name of Financial Contact for this grant:
- Name of Fiscal Agent for this grant, if applicable:
- Phone Number:
- Email:

Contact person for the grant

- Name:
- Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Phone Number:
- Email

Requested funding

- Total Amount on Proposed Budget: $
- Signature of Authorized Agent for Applicant
- Date of signature

Attachment C: Project narrative

The project narrative is your opportunity to describe your organization's capacity, experience, and proposed approach to fulfilling the goals and outcomes of the Pediatric Hearing Device Loan Program grant. Responses should be clear, concise, and aligned with the expectations outlined in the RFP.

The project narrative is submitted via online form in the grant application system. We recommend drafting your responses in Word before copying them into the form.

The project narrative is divided into distinct sections and should be submitted in the following sequence:

1. Applicant information
2. Organizational capacity
3. Linkages and collaborations
4. Work plans – goals, objectives, and strategies

1. Applicant information

Please describe the purpose of your organization and the services your organization provides. Include descriptions of the following:

a. Level of expertise and experience with hearing devices, including credentials and licenses (if applicable) of program personnel.
b. Your organization's history of working with children who are DHH.
c. Your knowledge of Minnesota's demographics and of Minnesota's children who are DHH and how your program expects to serve them.
d. How you plan to structure your loan program (i.e. length of loan period, efforts to reduce costs incurred by parents or professionals as a result of using the program, etc.)
e. Use of best practices, efforts to promote health equity in your program, etc.

2. Organizational capacity

Please describe:

a. The physical location where you will house the loaner program, including a description of how you will ensure data privacy.
b. Your hearing device inventory available for loan (including how you will build and maintain this inventory). Purchasing devices for inventory will be allowed in the program's budget. In addition, MDH has the right to transfer hearing devices purchased with grant funds from the previous grantee cycle for use by the next awardee.
c. Your current access to or need for equipment, including hearing device analyzers, computers, and other equipment needed to administer a loaner program.
d. Staff needed for implementing program, including role, expertise needed for that role, and expected hours of work per week.

3. Linkages and collaborations

Please describe:

a. Your collaborations with other device programs and manufacturers to ensure quality and sustainability of your program.
b. Your collaborations with Minnesota hearing professionals.
c. Your collaborations with community organizations and Minnesota families.
d. Any other sources of funding for your program.

4. Project Goals

Describe high level goals and what you want your project to accomplish in 500 words or less.

Attachment D: Work plan

The work plan is where you describe in detail how you intend to accomplish the project goals you outlined in your project narrative.

Please use Attachment D as an example for writing your year one work plan. Add as many goals, objectives, program activities/timelines and performance measures as needed to explain what you are proposing and how you will measure your program's effectiveness. Only the first six objectives under required goal one will be scored. Your work plan should give reviewers a clear idea of the experiences of providers and families while interacting with your program. Be specific about how your program will utilize resources needed to achieve goals, address health equity, and quality improvement.

Refer to 2.3 Eligible Projects on page 7 to ensure that your work plan includes those elements at minimum.

The content/format in Attachment D on the RFP webpage is provided as an example only. You are not required to use this template. Please use either Microsoft Word or Excel document type for your work plan.

Note: If the application is approved and funded at the level requested, the work plan will be incorporated into the grant agreement between MDH and the applicant as grantee's duties. Work plans for subsequent years of the grant will be required annually. Work plans must be completed so they can be separated easily from the rest of the application.

Attachment E: Budget details and justification

Introduction

You will need to account for all your grant program costs for one year under six different line items for this budget. The following paragraphs provide detailed information on what costs can go into those six lines. You will be required to show detailed calculations to support your costs. Failure to include the required details could result in a delayed grant agreement if your application is selected for

funding. Please note that the budget details and justification are for the first year of the grant period.

All costs under this grant must be prorated to reflect fair share of the expense to this program. For example, if a computer is purchased for one staff person who works .5 FTE on this grant and .5 FTE on another program, the cost for that computer should be split 50 – 50 by this grant and the other program.

If the grant agreement is not fully executed in a timely manner, the award funded may be pro-rated to reflect the actual time frame the grant is in effect.

It is strongly suggested that applicants incorporate into their budgets the costs of appropriate financial staff to provide financial oversight to the grant. This could be through contracting with an individual or organization or a direct hire.

For all categories, the budget narrative should provide a brief but sufficient explanation of how funds are proposed over the grant period. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the Microsoft Excel template provided on the grant webpage www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/improveehdi/pedhearingrfp.html.

The budget template and justification is a scored section for a total of 20 out of 150 points.

Salary and fringe

Grant funds can be used for salaries and fringe benefits for staff members directly involved in applicant's proposed activities. For each proposed funded position, please list:

- Job title
- Full time equivalent (FTE) on this grant (see example below).
- Expected rate of pay
- Fringe rate (percentage) and what it includes (e.g., FICA, Medicare, insurance)
- Total annual salary and fringe
- Amount charged to this grant

Full time equivalent (FTE): The percentage of time a person will work on this grant project. Each position that will work on this grant should show the following information:

EXAMPLE:

Public Health Nurse: $30.40/hourly rate

x 2,080/annual hours (or whatever your agency annual standard is) =

$63,232 annual salary

Multiply annual salary by your agency's fringe rate:

$63,232 annual salary

x 23% fringe rate (use your agency fringe rate, 23% is just an example) =

$14,543 fringe amount

Provide the breakdown of what your fringe rate includes: 6.20% FICA + 1.45% Medicare + 3.00% Retirement + 12.35% Insurance = 23.00% Total Fringe Rate

Now add the annual salary and the fringe amount together:

$63,232 annual salary

+ $14,543 fringe =

$77,775/annual salary and fringe total

Multiply the annual salary and fringe total by the FTE being charged to this grant:

$77,775 annual salary and fringe total

x .50 FTE assigned to grant=

$38,888 total to be charged to grant for this position

Any salaries from administrative support, accounting, human resources, or IT support, **MUST** be supported by some type of time tracking in order to be included in the salary and fringe line. Salary and fringe expenses not supported by time reporting documentation may be included in the indirect line if these unsupported salaries and fringe were included on the indirect cost questionnaire form and approved by MDH. Any salary and fringe expenses not supported, not included on the indirect cost questionnaire, and not approved by MDH are unallowable and may not be charged to this grant.

Contractual services

Applicants must identify any subcontracts that will occur as part of carrying out the duties of this grant program as part of the contractual services budget line item in the proposed budget. The use of contractual services is subject to State review and may change based on final work plan and budget negotiations with selected grantees. Applicants will be responsible for monitoring any subcontractors to ensure they are following all State, Federal, and programmatic regulations including proper accounting methods.

Applicant responses must include:

- Description of services to be contracted.
- Anticipated contractor/consultant's name (if known) or selection process to be used.
- Length of time the services will be provided.
- Total amount to be paid to the contractor.

Travel

List the expected travel costs for staff working on the grant, including mileage, parking, hotel, and meals. List any minimum travel requirements of the grant such as attending statewide training/conference, etc. If project staff will travel as part of their work or for attendance at educational events, itemize the costs, frequency, and the nature of the travel. Grant funds

cannot be used for out-of-state travel without prior written approval from MDH. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Non-tribal applicants:

Budget for travel costs (mileage, lodging, and meals) using the rates listed in the State of Minnesota's Nonrepresented Employees Compensation Plan (https://mn.gov/mmb-stat/000/az/labor-relations/unrepresented-plan/unrepresented-plan.pdf).

Hotel and motel expenses should be reasonable and consistent with the facilities available. Grantees are expected to exercise good judgement when incurring lodging expenses.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate at the time of travel.

Tribal Nation applicants:

Budget for travel costs (mileage, lodging, and meals) using the rates provided by the General Services Administration Lodging (www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/lodging). Current lodging amounts and meal reimbursement rates vary depending on where the travel occurs in Minnesota.

Consult the breakdown of the General Services Administration (GSA) Meals and Incidental Expense Rates (www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdowns) for current rates for Tribal Nations.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate at the time of travel.

Supplies and expenses

Briefly explain the expected costs for items and services the applicant will purchase to run the program. These might include additional telephone equipment; postage; printing; photocopying; office supplies; training materials; and equipment. Include the costs expected to be incurred to ensure that community representatives, partners, or clients who are included in the applicant's process or program can participate fully. Examples of these costs are fees paid to translators or interpreters. Grant funds may be used to purchase hearing devices and some specialty devices that could exceed $5000 will be allowable if approved in the budget by the MDH grant manager. Grant funds may not be used to purchase any other individual piece of equipment that costs more than $5,000, or for major capital improvements to property. Supplies, including device costs, are expected to be included in yearly operating expenses. In addition, MDH has the right to transfer hearing devices purchased with grant funds from the previous grantee cycle for use by the next awardee (since devices are currently being loaned, the exact amount of devices available is unknown at this time).

Other

Include in this section any expenses the applicant expects to have for other items that do not fit in any other category. Some examples include but are not limited to: staff training and incentives. Grant funds cannot be used for capital purchases, permanent improvements; cash

assistance paid directly to individuals; or any cost not directly related to the grant. Expenses in the "Other" line should represent the appropriate fair share to the grant.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are expenses of doing business that cannot be directly attributed to a specific grant program or budget line item. These costs are often allocated across an entire agency and may include administrative, executive and/or supervisory salaries and fringe, rent, facilities maintenance, insurance premiums, etc.

The following are examples that could be included in indirect costs:

- Your department pays a general percentage to the city/county attorney's office or the sheriff's department and these costs cannot be specifically attributed to an individual grant.
- Your Community Health Board (CBH) or department pays a fee or percentage to the county/city human resources department and these costs are not tied to a specific grant.
- The CHBs accounting system does not allow community health services (CHS) administrator's time to be directly attributed to specific grant activities.

In contrast, administrative costs are expenses not directly related to delivering grant objectives, but necessary to support a particular grant program. These are items that while general expenses, can be attributed and appropriately tracked to specific awards. These items should be included in the grantee budget as direct expenses in the appropriate lines of Salaries and Fringe, Supplies, Contractual Services, or Other. They should not be included in the Indirect line.

The following are examples of administrative costs that should be included in direct lines of the budget and/or invoice:

- The CHS administrator's time that can be tracked through time studies to a specific grant (include in the Salary/Fringe line).
- A portion of secretarial/administrative support, accounting, human resources or IT support staff expenses that can be tracked through time studies to a specific grant (include in the Salary/Fringe line).
- Printing and supplies that your accounting system is able to track (for example through copy codes) to a specific grant (include in the Supply line).

Any salary costs included in the Salary and Fringe line of the budget and/or invoice must be if supported by proper time documentation. The total allowed for indirect costs can be charged up to your federally approved indirect rate, or up to a maximum of 10%. If the applicant will be using a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, you will need to submit with your application your most current federally approved indirect rate.

Attachment F: Application score sheet

A numerical scoring system will be used to evaluate eligible applications. Scores will be used to develop final recommendations.

Applicants are encouraged to score their own application using the evaluation score-sheet before submitting their application. This step is not required but may help ensure applications address the criteria evaluators will use to score applications.

Scoring guidelines – key principles for reviewers

Please keep the following key principles in mind while scoring proposals:

- Evaluate the proposal using the selection criteria provided.
- Evaluate and score the proposal only on the information contained in the proposal.
- When scoring, each factor is weighted equally. Do not give more weight to one factor over another. Rather, follow the scoring as designated for criteria.
- When assigning a score, start in "the middle" of the total possible points and add or subtract points depending on the quality of the response. (Example: If the factor you are scoring is worth 5 points, start at 2.5 points and add or subtract points from there.)
- Only assign 0 points to a criterion or factor if it is missing or not addressed at all.

Rating guide

Score	**Description of rating**
Excellent, 5 points	Outstanding level of quality; significantly exceeds all aspects of the minimum requirements; high probability of success; no significant weaknesses, reviewers could not think of a better answer.
Very good, 4 points	Substantial response: meets in all aspects and in some cases exceeds, the minimum requirements; good probability of success; no significant weaknesses.
Good, 3 points	Generally meets minimum requirements; probability of success; significant weaknesses, but correctable.
Marginal, 2 points	Lack of essential information; low probability for success; significant weaknesses, but correctable.
Unsatisfactory, 1 point	Fails to meet minimum requirements; little likelihood of success; needs major revision to make it acceptable.

Writing comments (for reviewers)

- The numerical scores you assign to a proposal's response to the selection criteria must be consistent with your comments. Therefore, if a criterion has almost a perfect score, you should have substantially more strengths than weaknesses.
- If the proposal is poorly written or organized, it should be noted as such. However, if the relevant information is found anywhere in the proposal, it should be considered in the score.
- When referring to a specific part of the proposal in your comments, indicate the page number.
- Write or electronically enter comments that are clear, legible, and well-justified.
- Write comments that reflect a thorough review of the entire proposal.
- Use complete sentences and thoughts.
- Clearly state "no strengths" or "no weaknesses" when applicable.
- The comments should evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, not just simply rehash the information contained in the submitted document.

Scoring criteria

Applicant information (25 points)

- Previous experience and level of expertise of program personnel with hearing devices (up to 5 points).
- Organization's history of working with children who are DHH (up to 5 points.)
- Knowledge of Minnesota demographics/needs of children who are DHH (up to 5 points).
- Description of loan program structure (up to 5 points).
- Use of best practices (up to 5 points).

Organizational capacity (20 points)

- Facility: Physical location of loaner program ensures security of devices and data privacy (up to 5 points).
- Program has adequate supplies needed for administration or a plan to acquire needed supplies (up to 5 points).
- Program has access to needed equipment (i.e. hearing aid analyzers) (up to 5 points).
- Description of staff needed for implementing program, including role, expertise needed for that role, and expected hours of work per week (up to 5 points).

Linkages and collaborations (20 points)

- Collaborations with manufacturers of hearing devices (up to 5 points).
- Description of collaborations with Minnesota hearing professionals, including how you will inform professionals about the program (up to 5 points).
- Collaborations with community organizations and Minnesota families, including how you will promote the program to families (up to 5 points).
- Description of other possible sources of funding (up to 5 points).

Project goals (5 points)

- Description of project goals and what the project will accomplish (up to 5 points).

Work plans – goals, objectives, and strategies (60 points)

- Applicants are required to have a **minimum of six objectives** in their work plan that support the required *Goal 1: Provide hearing aid and instrument loans to Minnesota families with children newly diagnosed with a hearing loss from birth to age ten.*
- For each of the first six objectives of Goal 1, the following will be scored:
    - Description of methods, activities and strategies to meet objectives - to what extent are the activities/strategies proven or likely to be effective with the target population (up to 5 points).
    - Data collected/evaluations completed for program evaluation purposes including assessment timeline and performance indicators to show progress on objectives (up to 5 points).
- Applicants can include additional goals and objectives; however additional objectives will not be scored in this section.

Budget (20 points)

- Is the information contained in the budget and work plan consistent? (up to 5 points)
- Does the proposed budget contain adequate supplies/device expenses (up to 5 points)?
- Are the projected direct costs reasonable, cost-effective and sufficient to accomplish the proposed activities? (up to 5 points)
- Is the proposed indirect rate reasonable for this grant to accomplish proposed objectives? (up to 5 points)

Attachment G: Conflict of interest form

Refer to the Applicant/Recipient Conflict of Interest Form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf).

Attachment H: Due diligence form

Refer to the Due Diligence Review Form (www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf).

Attachment I: Indirect cost questionnaire

Refer to the Indirect Cost Questionnaire (www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/womentshealth/attachhindqst.pdf).