



Quit Partner™ Ambassadors

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Minnesota Department of Health
Commercial Tobacco Prevention and Control
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www.health.state.mn.us/tobacco

12/19/2025

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3535.

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Part 1: Overview

1.1 General information

- **Announcement title:** Quit Partner™ Ambassadors
- **Request for proposals webpage:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/ambassadorsrfp.html>
- **Recorded informational presentation:** available on the RFP webpage by Dec. 23, 2025
- **Notice of Intent Deadline:** Dec. 29, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. Central Time (strongly encouraged but not required)
- **Application Deadline:** Jan. 30, 2026, by 4:00 p.m. Central Time

1.2 Program description

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH or “the department”) requests proposals from community organizations to engage community members and increase knowledge of Quit Partner programs. The goal of this work is to increase knowledge and reach of Quit Partner programs and ultimately reduce commercial tobacco use rates among adults in Minnesota.

The department receives state funding to administer Minnesota’s statewide commercial tobacco use treatment services including the state quitline, [Quit Partner](https://www.quitpartnermn.com/) (<https://www.quitpartnermn.com/>). Quit Partner launched in April 2020 and provides Minnesota residents with free programs and tools to quit commercial tobacco use, like smoking, vaping (using e-cigarettes), or using chew. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to raise awareness and knowledge of Quit Partner programs among communities disproportionately impacted by commercial tobacco use and targeted marketing by the tobacco industry. The Quit Partner Ambassadors program is funded through Minn. Stat. § 144.397 Statewide Tobacco Cessation Services.¹

Commercial tobacco products are tobacco products manufactured and sold by the tobacco industry, like cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, and chew. Commercial tobacco is different from traditional or sacred tobacco, also known as Cansasa, Asemaa, or Kinnikinnick, and which are used by American Indian communities for sacred purposes.²

Background

Quit Partner™: Quit Partner is Minnesota’s family of commercial tobacco treatment programs, that offers free services and support to Minnesota residents who use any form of commercial tobacco, including cigarettes, cigarillos, e-cigarettes (vapes), and chew. Support includes:

- Phone and online coaching
- Text, email, and web programs
- Quit medication (nicotine patches, gum or lozenges) delivered by mail

Services are available in English and Spanish – other languages are provided using interpreters. Those who are deaf or hard of hearing are served using TTY (teletypewriter) relay.

Quit Partner Individual Support Tools: Any Minnesota resident can sign up for individual Quit Partner support tools. There are three options:

- A two-week starter kit of quit medications (patches, gum or lozenges - any Minnesota resident who is at least 18 years old can sign up for this tool two times per year).
- Text message support, including tips, reminders and encouragement sent directly to the individual's phone.
- Regular emails to support an individual's quit – email and text message support are available to any Minnesota resident who is at least 13 years old.

Quit Partner Behavioral Health Program: Quit Partner offers specialized support for people living with substance use disorder or a mental illness, such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, or bipolar disorder. Quit Partner coaches can help people understand their commercial tobacco use in connection to their mood, thoughts, and behaviors. Coaches can help order quit medications, develop coping techniques and a quit plan, provide relapse prevention tips, and provide support to help people stay quit. Once enrolled, people can call any time for additional support.

Quit Partner Pregnancy Program: Quit Partner offers judgement-free support to help pregnant and postpartum people quit. People who enroll are paired with a specially trained and dedicated female coach. The program is personalized to a person's needs, whether they are planning to get pregnant, are currently pregnant, or have just had a baby.

The American Indian Quitline: The American Indian Quitline from Quit Partner is free and available for any Minnesota residents that identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. The American Indian Quitline has a dedicated team of American Indian coaches who understand and respect native culture and traditions. In addition to one-on-one coaching, the American Indian Quitline offers email and text support, educational materials, and quit medication (nicotine patches, gum or lozenges) delivered by mail.

The department will work in partnership with the funded organizations to provide in-depth information, such as trainings, brochures, and PowerPoint presentations, on all Quit Partner programs. The department will also provide information on existing culturally specific and general population marketing strategies and campaigns. Applications are strongly encouraged from organizations serving communities that are disproportionately impacted by commercial tobacco and may have been targeted by the tobacco industry (see Table 1).

Disparities in commercial tobacco use

Effective, evidence-based commercial tobacco policies implemented in the last few decades have resulted in a decline in Minnesota's smoking rates. Among Minnesota adults, the percent who smoke cigarettes has decreased from 19.1% in 2011 to 12.2% in 2023.³ A variety of broad-based, state and local policy, practices, systems, and environmental changes have increased commercial tobacco-free environments, raised the price of commercial tobacco, and reduced access to commercial tobacco products – all of which have contributed to the decrease in cigarette smoking in Minnesota.

Despite this historic progress, commercial tobacco use in Minnesota is still a problem. As noted above, 12.2% of Minnesota adults smoke cigarettes, 7.0% use e-cigarettes, 3.2% use chewing

tobacco, snuff, or snus, and around 2% of Minnesota adults use cigars or cigarillos, nicotine pouches, or hookah. Minnesota adults using e-cigarettes has increased from 3.7% in 2016 to 7.0% in 2023.³

More concerning is the decline in quit attempts over the past decade among adults who currently smoke. In 2023, only 34.5% of Minnesota adults who smoke reported a quit attempt in the past year, compared to 57.5% in 2011.³ This data suggest that Minnesotans who smoke need additional support to successfully quit.

Data also show that specific populations continue to use commercial tobacco products at higher rates than the general population. Due to decades of targeting by the tobacco industry, certain communities have above-average smoking rates.^{4,5} This can lead to addiction and lifelong health conditions that make people more susceptible to many chronic health conditions and illnesses. Table 1 shows Minnesota adult smoking prevalence by community group, many of which are higher than the rate for the general population.

Table 1: Minnesota adult smoking prevalence by community group, 2023

Community Group	Smoking Prevalence
American Indian (data from TTUP II, 2023)	46.0%
American Indian	35.3%
Lesbian, gay, or bisexual	14.1%
African American	13.5%
Hispanic/Latino	10.7%
Asian American	8.0%
Live in greater Minnesota	16.8%
Receiving treatment for mental health condition	16.0%
Diagnosed with depression	17.2%
Minnesota adults overall	12.2%

Table 1: Data source is 2023 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), except where noted. For the American Indian community, Tribal Tobacco Use Project II data is preferable as its sample of American Indian respondents is larger and more accurately represents American Indian populations in Minnesota than other data sources.

1.3 Funding and project dates

Funding

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, the applicant may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date, whichever is later. See Table 2 for estimated funding amounts.

Table 2: Estimated annual funding amounts

Annual Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	\$195,000
Estimated Number of Awards	2-3
Estimated Award Maximum	\$97,500
Estimated Award Minimum	\$65,000

The funding period is based on availability of funds.

Match requirement

There is no match requirement for this grant program.

Project dates

Grants are anticipated to start in early May 2026, and end in April 2028. The grant period will be two years, with the potential to extend the grant up to three additional years, contingent on satisfactory grantee performance and funding availability.

1.4 Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to:

- Community-based organizations
- Non-profit organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community clinics
- Tribal governments
- Tribal clinics

For-profit entities are not eligible for the funding, and no grants will be awarded to individuals or informal groups of individuals.

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Applicants must have state or federal recognition as a formal organization or entity, such as a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Organizations without recognition as a formal organization or entity may apply with a *fiscal agent*.*

Grant funds are not transferrable 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.

Applicants must be located in and conduct grant activities in Minnesota, but fiscal agents may be located outside of Minnesota. Eligible applicants who wish to work together but have not formed a legal partnership must designate one organization as a fiscal agent.

Eligible organizations and Tribal Nations currently receiving other grant funds from the department may apply for this funding opportunity. These grant funds may not be used to duplicate existing efforts funded through MDH or other sources, meaning these grant funds must be used for new or different activities not otherwise being funded.

If a non-profit receives a Quit Partner Ambassadors grant, it would not affect its ability to apply for other funding opportunities from the department.

Collaboration

Collaboration between organizations or entities is welcomed but not required. A single application must be submitted on behalf of all collaborating organizations – the application should identify one *lead organization*.†

The lead organization does not need to be the fiscal agent. The lead organization will be the entity that will be responsible for the legal grant agreement and fiscal requirements.

MDH recognizes the sovereignty of Tribal Nations. MDH will only fund non-Tribal-led projects in Tribal communities if the applicant has full support of the Tribal government. If a non-Tribal applicant proposes to work with a Tribal government or Tribal community, the applicant must be prepared to provide written verification that the Tribal government approves of the project before a grant award is offered.

1.5 Questions and answers

All questions about this RFP must be submitted through the RFP webpage <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/ambassadorsrfp.html>. Answers will be posted on the RFP webpage weekly on Tuesdays, no later than 4:00 p.m.

* A fiscal agent is an organization that assumes full legal and contractual responsibility for the fiscal management and award conditions of the grant funds and has authority to sign the grant agreement. A fiscal agent is often a different organization than the operating organization (which performs the work). In a multi-organization collaboration, however, one organization must be designated as the fiscal agent.

† The lead organization is the primary entity leading and carrying out the project within the proposal.

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Central Time through Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026. The last date to submit questions is Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. Central Time.

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 the Department, other than questions submitted to as outlined above, are prohibited. **Any violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

Informational presentation

Applicants are strongly encouraged to view the recorded informational presentation. The presentation will be available on the RFP webpage by Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025.

Part 2: Program Details

2.1 Priorities

Health equity

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* establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.⁶

MDH seeks applicant organizations that reach adults experiencing disproportionately high commercial tobacco use rates. Applications are strongly encouraged from organizations serving communities that are disproportionately impacted by commercial tobacco and may have been targeted by the tobacco industry. Applicants should identify which communities they will serve as well as how they assessed community need. Awardees will measure performance in reaching diverse populations through their annual work plans, progress reporting, and program monitoring.

Other competitive priorities

Other competitive priorities include demonstrated experience working with the community(ies) the applicant proposes to serve.

2.2 Eligible projects

Applicants must have established relationships within the community they serve and provide examples of existing partnerships with community leaders or organizing community-led events. Experience helping people who use commercial tobacco quit may be helpful, but it is not required to apply for funding. The department is looking for the expertise of organizations that work directly within their communities throughout Minnesota.

Proposals must demonstrate the applicant's ability to develop an innovative approach to engaging community members through promoting Quit Partner to increase knowledge and reach. The work may also include referrals to Quit Partner programs. Applicants must identify strategies that build on their community-level work to achieve the goals of the RFP. These grant funds may not be used to duplicate existing efforts funded through MDH or other sources, meaning these grant funds must be used for new or different activities not otherwise being funded.

Project goals

The primary focus of the Quit Partner Ambassadors program is to promote Quit Partner. By the end of the grant period, grantees are expected to achieve the following project goals:

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- Increase knowledge and awareness of Quit Partner
- Increase reach of Quit Partner

In this RFP, reach is defined as the number engaging in project activities, such as counts of individuals attending an educational session or number of materials distributed.

Applicants should describe the strategies and activities they will use to achieve the project goals. **Awardees will receive support from the department on how to measure their success.**

Project strategies

Below are examples of project strategies that may be used to achieve their project goals. *These specific strategies are only examples and are not required.*

- Increase knowledge and awareness of Quit Partner among community leaders, key partners, or other organizations.
- Increase efficacy of partners and community members to promote Quit Partner within the community.
- Increase promotion of Quit Partner to individuals within the applicant's organization or partner organizations, including among health care providers.
- Implement a referral process within the applicant's organization or partner organizations.
- Collaborate with local health care providers to promote Quit Partner and implement a referral process.
- Build on existing Quit Partner promotions and communication activities, including development of community media plans to promote Quit Partner in relevant outlets and formats.

Project activities

Below are examples of activities that may be used within strategies to achieve project goals. These specific activities are not required.

- Hire or fund community health workers or other staff for community outreach and engagement around Quit Partner programs and referrals.
- Distribute Quit Partner materials available in other languages at community outreach events.
- Develop culturally appropriate materials to connect the community with Quit Partner.
- Develop activities and operations to conduct Quit Partner enrollment assistance.
- Develop training sessions for staff and partner organizations on making referrals to Quit Partner.
- Leverage cultural events or community festivals to host Quit Partner information booths or health education sessions.
- Purchase carbon monoxide monitors to demonstrate the immediate impact of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke at community events while promoting Quit Partner.
- Purchase a limited number of items to promote Quit Partner, including but not limited to pens, stress balls, water bottles, and other reasonable items that can be associated with the programmatic goals and objectives for the project.

- Track and share stories that demonstrate the impact and value of this work.

Staffing

Grant staffing should be adequate to ensure accountability to carry out work plan activities and maintain overall support and coordination of the work. Annual budget amounts are intended to support adequate staffing. Staffing plans should include a project coordinator as a main point of contact who leads the grant work. Staffing plans may include a small team of key staff who work closely together to coordinate activities.

Unallowable expenses

The following expenses are not allowed with these funds:

- Work that primarily focuses on people under the age of 18
- Direct treatment services, medical care, or clinical care (e.g., conducting individual, face-to-face counseling or creating a treatment group)
- Nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) or treatment medication
- Pre-paid gift cards
- Vape detectors
- Vape disposal boxes

Commercial tobacco-free organizational commitment

Applicants are required to make an organizational commitment to addressing the harms of commercial tobacco through organizational policy change.

Applicants must have or be working towards a commercial tobacco-free grounds policy (excluding traditional tobacco gardens or traditional tobacco used for ceremonial purposes) and may not accept funding from tobacco companies nor their subsidiaries or parent companies during the grant period.

Creating commercial tobacco-free environments and not accepting tobacco industry funds contribute to changing community social norms, supporting cessation support, and rejecting tobacco industry influences.

Applicants without a commercial tobacco-free grounds policy must indicate they will work toward adopting a policy during the grant period. Applicants must acknowledge their commitment as part of their application.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Costs not directly related to the grant
- Costs incurred prior to the grant award
- Capital improvements or alterations
- Cash assistance paid directly to individuals to meet their personal or family needs

- Fundraising
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Research
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Solicitating donations
- Alcohol, gifts for staff, staff meals (except approved travel), or parties

2.3 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 is expected to read the grant agreement, sign, and comply with all conditions of the grant agreement. Grantee should provide a copy of the grant agreement to all grantee staff working on the grant.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place.

A sample grant agreement is attached as Attachment G (see Part 4: Attachments). Applicants should be aware of the terms and conditions of the standard grant agreement in preparing their applications. Much of the language reflected in the sample agreement is required by statute. If an applicant takes exception to any of the terms, conditions or language in the sample grant agreement, the applicant must indicate those exceptions, in writing, in their application in response to this RFP. Certain exceptions may result in an application being disqualified from further review and evaluation. Only those exceptions indicated in an application will be available for discussion or negotiation.

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 the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

The reporting schedule includes:

- Monthly check-in calls with the department grant manager
- Quarterly progress reports
- Annual progress report
- Updates as needed for the department's reporting and biennial report to the Minnesota legislature
- Evaluation activities

Grant Monitoring

Throughout the grant period MDH will monitor grantees' progress and performance. Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 and *State Policy on Grant Monitoring* require the following:^{7,8}

- 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 grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants over \$50,000

MDH reserves the right to conduct more monitoring than what is listed above.

Technical assistance

The department will provide technical assistance and training to grantees through the grant period. Grantees will participate in department-sponsored technical assistance trainings, meetings, and calls. The department will also work to foster peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing among the grantees. MDH recognizes the importance of peer learning and collaboration.

Grant Payments

Per *State Policy on Grant Payments*, reimbursement is the method for making grant payments.⁹ All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The department 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 the department has given the grantee a written extension.

Invoices will be due by the last day of the month for the preceding month. The department has up to 30 days to pay an invoice. A standard invoice template will be provided to grantees.

Quit Partner branding

All new outreach materials must follow Quit Partner brand guidelines, including the correct use of the logo, colors, and text. By carefully applying these guidelines, grantees help maintain consistent, unified messaging that strengthens recognition and trust in the Quit Partner brand. It also reinforces the program's mission and credibility across Minnesota communities.

The official Quit Partner style guide includes logo variations, layout options, color specifications, fonts, writing guidelines, and instructions for referencing Quit Partner in text. You can download the Quit Partner style guide at [Toolkit Materials | Quit Partner](https://www.quitpartnermn.com/toolkit-materials/) (<https://www.quitpartnermn.com/toolkit-materials/>).

The Toolkit Materials page also provides access to current Quit Partner promotional materials, including rack cards, posters, and palm cards for Quit Partner and its specialty programs. These materials are available both as print-ready files and as free physical copies for use in communities or healthcare settings.

2.4 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);¹⁰ See e.g. [Minn. Stat. § 363A.02 \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A.02\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A.02). The MHRA is enforced by the [Minnesota Department of Human Rights \(https://mn.gov/mdhr/\)](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.¹¹

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.¹² 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

The department 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*.^{12,13}

Applicants must complete and submit Attachment D: Conflict of Interest Disclosure with their application (see Part 4: Attachments). 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 the department'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 transferrable 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 the department 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.¹⁴

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 the department has completed negotiating the grant agreement with the selected applicant.

After the department 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).¹⁵ 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)).¹⁴

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:¹⁵

- 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 the department 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 the department'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 the department. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

The department 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. The department 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 MDH 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.¹⁶

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.

Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Minn. Stat. § 13, is a state law that controls how government data are collected, created, stored (maintained), used and released (disseminated). The MGDPA sets out certain requirements relating to the right of the public to access government data and the rights of individuals who are the subjects of government data.

Under this act, any data collected under a grant or contract becomes property of the state. Data collected would likely be classified as "public data" and could be requested via a Minnesota Government Data request process. This includes data on Tribal Nations or submitted by Tribal Nations. If an organization is proposing to work with Tribal Nations, MDH requires the organization to inform the Tribal Nation of this provision.

2.5 Review and selection process

Review process

Awards will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content specialists with relevant knowledge and experiences with commercial tobacco treatment and community engagement. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

The department will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. **These award decisions 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 the department 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 the department 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

Each eligible application will be reviewed and scored by multiple reviewers. The review committee will review each applicant on a 100-point scale. A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the selection criteria. Review team members will submit final scores and make recommendations for funding to MDH based on scoring criteria.

The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on the scoring criteria in Attachment F: Scoring Criteria (see Part 4: Attachments).

The department will make final decisions on all applications and will balance the recommendations by the review teams with other factors including, but not limited to:

- Review team scores
- Geographic distribution
- Community distribution and needs
- Priority organizations, including those that have not historically had access to state grant funding, as well as consideration of the total funds an organization is receiving from the department
- Applicant's history as a state grantee and capacity to perform the work
- Total funding available

Applicants are encouraged to score their own application using the Scoring Criteria before submitting their application. This step is not required but may help ensure applications address the criteria evaluators will use to score applications. This is for the benefit of the applicant. Do not include sample score sheets with your application.

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 Preaward Risk Assessment.¹⁷

Notification

The department anticipates notifying all applicants of funding decisions by Friday, March 27, 2026. All notices of award and non-award will be sent by email to the contact person listed on the application.

Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions

3.1 Notice of intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a non-binding Notice of Intent via the online form on the RFP webpage by 4:00 p.m. Central Time on Monday, Dec. 29, 2025. While prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent, it is not a mandatory requirement of this RFP. This means that an application may still be considered even if the applicant did not submit a Notice of Intent; likewise, an applicant is not obligated to submit an application just because they submitted a Notice of Intent.

3.2 Application deadline

Applications must be received by the department no later than 4:00 p.m. Central Time, on Friday, Jan. 30, 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. The department will not be responsible for delays caused by computer, or technology problems.

Acknowledgement of application receipt

A confirmation email will be sent to the contact included in your application. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of submitting your application, it may mean your submission did not process. Email cessation@state.mn.us to verify your submission has been received.

3.3 Application submission instructions

The application submission form and all attachments can be found on the RFP webpage. Applicants must complete and submit the online application form that includes a response to application questions, work plan, budget, and Due Diligence Review Form.

Please email the required attachments listed on the Due Diligence Review Form to cessation@state.mn.us.

Applications submitted by any other means will not be accepted.

3.4 Application instructions

You must submit the following for the application to be considered complete:

- Online grant application
- Attachment A: Work Plan Template
- Attachment B: Budget Template
- Attachment C: Due Diligence Review Form
- Attachment D: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

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Applications must include all required application materials. Do not email nor 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.**

All applications will be reviewed after the RFP deadline. The department will reach out for any missing or incorrectly uploaded documents, and applicant will have two business days to resubmit the missing documents. *This does not apply to incomplete responses to application questions, work plans, or budget documents.*

By applying, 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.

Part 4: Attachments

To complete and submit with your online grant application:

- Attachment A: [Work Plan Template](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/docs/attachmenta.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/docs/attachmenta.docx>)
- Attachment B: [Budget Template](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/docs/attachmentb.xlsx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/docs/attachmentb.xlsx>)
- Attachment C: [Due Diligence Review Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf>)
- Attachment D: [Conflict of Interest Disclosure](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiapplicant.pdf>)

For reference:

- Attachment E: [Grant Application Questions](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/attachmente.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/attachmente.pdf>)
- Attachment F: [Scoring Criteria](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/attachmentf.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/initiatives/attachmentf.pdf>)
- Attachment G: [Sample Grant Agreement](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/resources.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/resources.html>)

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- ¹⁰ Human Rights Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 363A.01–363A.50 (2024). <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A>
- ¹¹ Disabled persons affirmative action clause, Minn. R. 5000.3550 (2008). Retrieved from <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/5000.3550/>
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- ¹³ Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of Grants Management. (2022). *Conflict of interest policy for state grant-making (Policy Number 08-01)*. https://mn.gov/admin/assets/OGM%20Policy%2008-01%20Conflict%20of%20Interest%20Policy%20for%20State%20Grant-Making_tcm36-707167.pdf
- ¹⁴ Grants, Minn. Stat. § 13.599 (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.599>
- ¹⁵ General nonpublic data, Minn. Stat. § 13.37 (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.37>
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- ¹⁷ Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of Grants Management. (n.d.). *Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms*. Retrieved November 25, 2025, from <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>