

Labor Education Advancement Grant Program (LEAP) FY25 Request for Proposal

Available funding:	\$1,000,000; maximum award is \$100,000.
Purpose:	LEAP grant funding is to facilitate the participation or retention of people of color, Indigenous people, and women in registered apprenticeship programs.
Period of performance:	July 1, 2024, or the date the contract is fully executed, whichever occurs later, until December 31, 2025.
Application due date:	Applications are due no later than 12:00 p.m. CST, March 8, 2024. Submit applications by email to: Lyla.Brown@state.mn.us . If you would like to submit an application by mail, contact Lyla Brown at the above email.
Informational webinars:	Informational webinars will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 11 a.m. and Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 1 p.m.
Questions:	Questions may be submitted by email. Submit questions no later than 4 p.m., February 29, 2024, Central Standard Time. Questions and answers will be posted by 4:30 p.m. each Monday, February 12, 2024 to March 4, 2024, at https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant Contact: Lyla Brown Email: Lyla.Brown@state.mn.us If needed, our agency has access to Language Line, a free language translation service for limited-English speakers. Contact us and we will get in touch with an interpreter at 651-284-5005 or 800-342-5354.
Notification of award:	Applicant awards will be announced by late May 10, 2024.

All RFP and application documents can be found at:

<https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant>

1. Name of grant program:

Labor Education Advancement Grant Program (LEAP) 2025

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

Background

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

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

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

The Minnesota state legislature allocated \$1,000,000 for the Labor Education Advancement Grant Program (LEAP) to facilitate the participation or retention of people of color, Indigenous people, and women in registered apprenticeship programs ([Minn. Stat. 178.11](#), [Minn. Rules 5227](#))

Objective

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

Focus populations

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

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

This grant will serve Minnesotans who are 18 years of age and older and prioritize those who are:

- People of color
- Indigenous people
- Women

Grant program participants include both prospective and current registered apprentices.

Grant outcomes

DLI expects grantees to have outcomes which may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing programs and services to introduce people of color, Indigenous people, and/or women to registered apprenticeship.
- Providing supports, if needed, to individuals to enable them to participate in career exploration or career readiness or pre-apprenticeship pathways programs that lead to registered apprenticeship training opportunities.
- Providing supports, if needed, to individuals to enable them to participate and be retained in registered apprenticeship programs.
- Enrolling individuals into registered apprenticeship programs.
- Retaining apprentices in registered apprenticeship programs.

DLI expects through this grant program and partnership with grantees to:

- gain a better understanding of the challenges that apprentices and prospective apprentices face; and
- use findings to inform outreach and program operations.

3. Grant activities

Applicants can achieve desired outreach, education and technical assistance outcomes through a variety of activities. Allowable apprenticeship-related grant activities that lead to participation and/or retention in registered apprenticeship programs may include, but are not limited to:

Partnering – DLI encourages focused partnerships

- Partnering with organizations to facilitate participant recruitment
- Partnering with organizations to provide participants supports, training, entry into a registered apprenticeship
- Partnering with employers who can assist with mock interviews, answer questions, provide job exposure
- Partner with organizations to provide participant supports to retain registered apprentices

Outreach and recruitment

- Recruit program participants
- Develop and distribute recruitment materials
- Sponsor and/or employer outreach

One-on-one supports

- Mentoring
- Career counseling and assessments
- Career navigation
- Career placement

Participant support services

- Participant assessment services, mentoring, and training, English language training
- Participant bus/rail ticket fare, gas cards, daycare expenses, tools, boots, personal safety equipment and testing fees related to apprenticeship placement

Participant introductions

- Personal introductions to apprenticeship coordinators, trainers, employers
- Guest speakers
- Site tours

Soft skills development to support worker readiness

- Work site expectations
- Resume and interview skills
- Math refresher courses / English language training

Training

- Career exploration
- Career readiness
- Pre-apprenticeship training

Other activities

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

4. Eligible applicants and minimum eligibility requirements

Eligible applicants

- Community-based or nonprofit organizations, including 501(c)3 and 501(c)5 organizations
- Minnesota Tribal governments as defined in [Minn. Stat. §10.65](#)
- Programs that received LEAP grant funding in the 2024 grant round (period of performance October 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025) are ineligible to apply for additional funding to avoid overlapping grant contracts

This grant does not allow formal, multi-organizational collaborations. However, partnering with a registered apprenticeship program is required for applicants who are not registered apprenticeship programs. All applicants are encouraged to partner with organizations who can assist in expanding the program reach.

Minimum eligibility requirements

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

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

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

5. Available funding

- Total funds allocated for this grant: \$1,000,000.
- Applicants may apply for up to \$100,000.
- DLI plans to award funding to approximately 10 to 12 applicants.

6. Eligible and ineligible expenses

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

Budget categories	Examples of allowable expenditures
Personnel	Employee salaries, wages, insurance and benefits directly related to grant program and administrative activities.
Travel	Grant related staff travel expenses.
Supplies/materials	Office supplies, training materials and supplies directly supporting this grant.
Communications/ outreach	Expenses related to recruiting grant program participants.
Support services	Participant assessment services, mentoring, and training. Participant supports may also include, but are not limited to: transportation assistance, daycare expenses, tools, boots, personal safety equipment, math and English language classes and testing fees related to apprenticeship placement.

Contract Services	Vendor services necessary to provide grant program activities and services. Examples include but are not limited to: professional marketing to promote the program, contracting instructors, or outside mentors, equipment rental, etc.
Administrative costs (cannot exceed 8% of total budget)	Expenses incurred by grant recipients in support of the day-to-day operations of their organization. These overhead costs are the expenses that are not directly tied to a specific program purpose. Administrative costs may include, but are not limited to: administrative oversight, accounting support and facility overhead. Staff listed in Personnel cannot also be funded through Administrative costs.

All direct and administrative costs submitted for reimbursement must be allowable by the terms of the grant, reasonable and necessary, rationally allocated and adequately documented. No costs can be double funded using other sources.

2) Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- apprentice stipends or pay
- fundraising
- taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll
- lobbyists, political contributions
- bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- parking violations and traffic violations
- out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- food, beverages, party supplies

7. Reviewing and scoring applications

The Review Committee will score each application on a 100-point scale. The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on the following criteria:

Scoring factor	Scoring Criteria Maximum points will be awarded to applicants who:	Maximum points possible
Registered apprenticeship opportunities	Provided specific examples of registered apprenticeship opportunities that will be available to grant participants.	15
Partnerships	Letters from Registered Apprenticeship Program partners describing their RAP and confirming their specific role in providing services or experience to grant participants.	10

Statement of need	The organization’s need for LEAP funding is clearly stated. There is a detailed explanation of how LEAP grant funding will expand the applicant’s ability to serve the focus populations in participating and continuing in registered apprenticeship programs.	5
Equity	The applicant demonstrated experience working with one of more of the focus populations. The applicant provided examples of past success in working with those groups. If the applicant has no previous experience, they provided specific efforts that will be made to reach those groups.	15
Program activities and services	Described in detail work to be performed and what the experience would be for grant participants in the following areas, where applicable: 1. Recruitment and preparation of focus populations for registered apprenticeship, 2. Placement participants into registered apprenticeship programs, and/or 3. Support for retention of registered apprentices	20
Outcomes	Fully completed the outcomes table. Provided a reasonable explanation on how outcomes were determined and why the outcomes were appropriate for the applicant.	15
Workplan	Included a realistic timeline for major program activities, resources, partner roles and grant outcomes.	20
Budget and budget narrative	Provided a list of budgeted line-items that are within the allowable expense category. The proposed budget is appropriate for anticipated uses. The budget narrative provided a detailed account for proposed expenditures.	Pass/Fail
	Total score available	100

8. Grantee reporting requirements

The grantee must take part in quarterly progress update and technical assistance calls. Additionally, the grantee must submit the following, using templates provided by DLI:

- 1) Reimbursement Payment Request (RPR) for invoicing
- 2) Expense Summary
- 3) Quarterly Narrative Report
- 4) Participant log
- 5) Final report

All reports and required supporting documentation must be submitted on a quarterly basis no later than 20 business days after the last day of the reporting quarter. Quarters are as follows:

Jan. 1 – March 31; April 1 – June 30; July 1 – Sept. 30; Oct. 1 – Dec. 31.

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

9. DLI monitoring of grantee performance

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

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher.
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee’s expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

10. Payments to grantee

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

11. Required financial and grantee capacity review

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

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

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

- I. Capacity Responses: All potential grantees: Exhibit A**
 - a) Please describe your history of performing the work that will be funded by the grant:
 - This includes describing your organization’s current staffing, current budget and agency capacity to successfully conduct and administer grant programming.
- II. Certification: No current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years: All potential Grantees: Exhibit B**
- III. Evidence of good standing: Nonprofit potential grantees: Exhibit C**
 - For-profit and nonprofit grantees: Filed and up-to-date with the Secretary of State

IV. Nonprofit grantees as applicable: Exhibit D

- Most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ
- Most recent audited financial statement of a charitable organization which has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement per [Minn. Stat. §309.53](#)
- Most recent board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded, and evidence of exemption

The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject an organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.

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

- Provide or require enhanced grant oversight
- Request additional information from a potential grantee to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the potential grantee cannot or would not perform the required duties of the grant agreement.
 - The potential grantee has 30 business days to respond
- Develop a plan to address the risk or concerns identified
- Not award the grant.
 - The granting agency must provide notice of this determination to not award the grant to the grantee and the Commissioner of Administration.
 - The notice must include the following:
 - The reason for postponing/not awarding the grant
 - The timeline for the process for contesting the agency's decision

12. DLI audit of grantee's records

Per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

13. Grantee requirements when bidding grant related work

1. For nongovernmental organizations:

A. Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three verbal quotes or bids.

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

- B. The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
 - [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
 - Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#)
 - Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)
- C. The grantee must maintain:
 - Written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.
 - Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation of verbal quotes or bids and justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.
- D. The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)
- E. For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers, workers and mechanics should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

14. Conflicts of interest

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

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

15. Public access to applicant's data

[Per Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants and amount requested will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

- All data created or maintained by DLI as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

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

- A. As per [Minn. Stat. §363A.02](#) the grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, familial status or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part [5000.3500](#).
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

17. Grantee voter registration requirement

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

18. Required application materials

Required material to submit with application:

- 1) Application Form
- 2) Exhibit A: Capacity responses
- 3) Exhibit B: Certification
- 4) Exhibit C: Evidence of Good Standing
- 5) Exhibit D: Financial review
- 6) Exhibit E: Affidavit of non-collusion
- 7) Letters attesting to formal partnerships
- 8) Copy of your organization's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- 9) Copy of your organization's Workers Compensation Policy

If the grant applicant is a nongovernmental organization, submit the applicable financial statements as required in [Policy 08-06](#) (see: Section 11. *Financial review process* of this document).

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

19. How to submit applications

Email to: Lyla Brown at Lyla.Brown@state.mn.us

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

All applications must be received no later than 12:00 p.m. Central Standard Time, on March 8, 2024. If applications are mailed, they must be postmarked by March 8, 2024. Late applications will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

20. Questions

- Questions may be submitted by email or phone to:
 - Lyla Brown, Lyla.Brown@state.mn.us
- Submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Standard Time, on February 29, 2024.
- Questions and answers will be posted by 4:30 each Monday, February 12, 2024 to March 4, 2024, at <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant>.

21. Review process and timeline

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DLI will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions.

RFP posted on the DLI Grants website	2/5/24
Applications due no later than 12:00 p.m. Central Time	3/8/24
Committee begins review of applications	3/18/24
Selected applicants may undergo pre-award risk assessment	Mar-Apr 2024
Committee recommendations submitted to DLI commissioner for review	04/2024
Selected grantees announced; grant agreement negotiations begin	May 10, 2024
Work plans approved and grant begins	07/01/24

22. RFP attachments

The following documents and additional support materials can be found at:

<https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/labor-education-advancement-program-leap-grant>

- Application Form

- Exhibit A: Capacity responses
- Exhibit B: Certification no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years
- Exhibit C: Evidence of Good Standing
- Exhibit D: Most recent 990 and / or audit plus IRS letter of determination
- Exhibit E: Affidavit of non-collusion