

Clean Economy Occupations Grant – Round 1

Request for proposal (RFP)

Available funding:	\$950,000 total funding available. Maximum award amount of \$200,000.
Purpose:	Support registered apprenticeship programs to increase their capacity to train registered apprentices and upskill incumbent workers in clean economy fields.
Period of performance:	July 1, 2024, or the date the contract is fully executed, whichever occurs later, until June 30, 2025.
Application due date:	Applications are due no later than noon, CST, March 15, 2024. To submit applications by email send 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:	Information webinars will be Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. and Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, at 1 p.m.
Questions:	Questions may be submitted by phone or email. Deadline to submit questions is 4 p.m. CST, March 7, 2024. Questions will be answered via FAQ which can be found at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/clean-economy-occupations-grant Submit questions to: Lyla Brown via email: lyla.brown@state.mn.us . A free language translation service for limited-English speakers is available at 651-284-5005 or 800-342-5354.
Notification date:	Awards will be announced no later than May 10, 2024.
RFP and application documents:	dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/clean-economy-occupations-grant

1. Name of grant program

Clean Economy Occupations Grant

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

Background

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

The Apprenticeship Division at DLI supports Minnesota's economy by promoting, facilitating and developing quality registered apprenticeship programs that recruit, train and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce. Apprenticeship is an earn-as-you-learn workforce training model that allows people to earn a good living while mastering in-demand skills.

Total available funds for the award will not exceed \$3 million. This funding is planned to be disbursed through three rounds between 2024 and 2026.

The policies listed in this RFP can be found on the website of the Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of Grants Management ([Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms / Minnesota.gov \(mn.gov\)](#)), and are applicable to all state agencies.

Objective

The Clean Economy Occupations Grant seeks to support the 2022 Minnesota Climate Action Framework which sets a vision for how Minnesota will address and prepare for climate change. This grant seeks to support registered apprenticeship programs to upgrade their capacity to train registered apprentices and upskill incumbent workers in clean economy occupations.

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.

State of Minnesota [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 funding seeks to increase the number and skills and qualifications of registered apprentices and incumbent workers employed in clean economy occupations, prioritizing individuals from these populations:

- People of color

- Indigenous people
- Women
- Individuals with disabilities
- Residents of greater Minnesota

Clean economy occupations

Clean economy occupations must be identified as apprenticeable occupations by DLI and must support an economy that is low-carbon and that produces goods and services with an environmental benefit.

Grant outcomes

DLI expects grantees to have the following outcome:

Demonstrate a quantifiable increase in the number of registered apprentices and/or incumbent workers who have the skills and qualifications needed to succeed in clean economy occupations.

3. Grant activities

Applicants can achieve the desired outcome through a variety of activities. Applicants may apply for funding to cover one or more of the following, including but not limited to:

- Train apprentices and upskill incumbent workers in clean economy occupations
 - instructor costs related to training current apprentices in clean economy occupations
 - instructor costs related to advanced journeyworker and incumbent worker training in clean economy occupations
 - fees for training and certification programs relevant to clean economy occupations
- Purchase equipment or training materials for clean economy occupations
 - equipment needed to train apprentices
 - tools and materials to update a training lab
 - curriculum, books and other instructional materials
- Fund instructor professional development in clean economy occupations
 - fees for training courses
 - travel expenses to attend training
 - supplies and materials needed for training
- Design and refine curriculum in clean economy occupations
 - personnel time relate to course planning and curriculum development
 - contracting a vendor to develop curriculum
 - developing a new certificate program in clean economy occupations
 - translation or tailoring of curriculum to be linguistically and culturally relevant

Note: When grant activities include purchasing equipment, tools and materials, instructor training and/or curriculum development, grantees will need to provide metrics on how many registered apprentices will be trained and/or incumbent workers will be upskilled.

4. Eligible applicants and minimum eligibility requirements

Eligible applicants

The grant program seeks proposals from registered apprenticeship programs in Minnesota who aim to increase their capacity to train registered apprentices and incumbent workers within clean economy occupations.

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. Be a registered apprenticeship program in Minnesota
2. Meet the application deadline

5. Funding availability

Total funds available for Round 1: \$950,000, with a maximum award amount of \$200,000. DLI anticipates awarding funds to approximately eight to 12 applicants.

6. Eligible and ineligible expenses

1. Eligible expenses include but may not be limited to:

Budget categories	Examples of allowable expenses
Salaries and wages	Employee salaries and wages directly related to grant funded personnel. This includes employees who are delivering program activities and responsible for reporting.
Fringe costs	Fringe relating to grant-funded personnel.
Equipment	Equipment related to developing and upgrading training and instruction for clean economy occupations.

Supplies	Tools, supplies, materials and curricula expenses related to developing and upgrading training and instruction for clean economy occupations.
Travel	Travel costs pertaining to grant-funded personnel. This can include travel related to instructor professional development (lodging, per diem, parking, tolls and transportation).
Training expenses	Course fees or tuition for apprentice and/or incumbent worker certifications and instructor professional development (whether online, hybrid or in-person).
Contractual	Vendor services necessary to provide grant program activities and services.
Administrative costs (Cannot exceed 5% of the total of the above budget categories)	Administrative costs may include, but are not limited to administrative oversight, accounting support and facility overhead. Staff listed in salaries and wages above cannot also be funded through administrative costs.

All costs submitted for reimbursement must be allowable by the terms of the grant, reasonable and necessary, rationally allocated and adequately documented. Matching funds are **not** required for this grant.

2. Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Real estate acquisition
- New construction
- Renovation of classrooms or instructional facilities
- Wages, stipends and completion incentives to program participants
- Pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship readiness programs
- 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 or traffic violations
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses that is not directly related to clean economy train-the trainer expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- Food, beverages, party supplies

7. Reviewing and scoring applications

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

Scoring factor	Scoring Criteria Maximum points will be awarded to applicants who:	Total points possible
Program alignment	Proposal demonstrates evidence of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. training and upskilling registered apprentices and/or incumbent workers in clean economy occupations 2. addressing gaps and challenges in the ability to provide training and upskilling for clean economy occupations 	30
Work plan	Proposal demonstrates evidence of: A realistic month-by-month timeline for major program activities, resources, and grant outcomes.	25
Outcomes	Proposal demonstrates evidence of: Adequate reach or potential impact to meaningfully contribute to the overall goal of increasing the number and preparedness of registered apprentices and/or incumbent workers employed in clean economy occupations.	30
Equity	Proposal demonstrates evidence of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus populations prioritized as part of the project’s goals. 2. Specific actions organization is taking to ensure equity within its work. 	15
Budget and budget narrative	Proposed a budget that is appropriate for anticipated uses. Provided a budget narrative with a detailed account for proposed expenditures.	unscored
	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 quarterly reports, using templates provided by DLI. Example templates are at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/clean-economy-occupations-grant

and include the following:

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

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

Activity quarter	Report due date
Jan. 1 to March 31	May 1
April 1 to June 30	August 1
July 1 to Sept. 30	Nov. 1
Oct. 1 to Dec. 31	Feb. 1

Note: given that grantees may complete their work plans and fully expend their funds early during the period of performance, they will only be required to submit participant logs for subsequent quarters.

Grantees must also provide a final grant report which summarizes all grant activity. The final grant report must be provided within 45 business days of the end of the grant period of performance and final invoices must be submitted within 45 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.
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher.
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee’s expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the state.

10. Payments to grantee

Per [Policy 08-08](#) reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The state will 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 will 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

- 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: For-profit and 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

V. For-profit Certification Disclosure and required documents: Exhibit E

- Most recent federal and state tax returns:

- If not in business long enough to have a tax return, description of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds, if awarded
- Current financial statements
- Certification that business is not under bankruptcy proceedings
- Disclosure of any liens on assets

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. 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 and for-profit businesses:

- A. Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:
 - \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
 - Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three verbal quotes or bids.
 - Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

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

2. For municipalities:

- A. Grantees that are municipalities must follow:
 - The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in [Minn. Stat. §471.345](#).
 - The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.
- B. The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in Minnesota: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)

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 use of 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, that will take place when all 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, that will take place when all 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 no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years
4. Exhibit C: Evidence of Good Standing
5. Exhibit D: Nonprofit grantee – most recent 990 and / or audit plus IRS determination letter
6. Exhibit E: For-Profit Certification Disclosure and Required Documents as applicable
7. If partnering with educational institutions to provide related training instruction, a Letter of Commitment and pre-approved training curriculum from each partner must be submitted as part of the application.

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: lyla.brown@state.mn.us

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

All applications must be received no later than noon, Central Standard Time, on March 15, 2024. If applications are mailed, they must be postmarked by March 15, 2024. Late applications will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs associated with applying to this RFP.

20. 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.

Applications due no later than noon, Central Standard Time:	March 15, 2024
Applicants notified of award:	May 10, 2024
Work plans approved and grant begins:	July 1, 2024

21. Questions

- Questions may be submitted email to Lyla Brown at lyla.brown@state.mn.us
- Submit questions no later than 4 p.m., CST, on March 7, 2024.
- All answers will be posted by March 11, 2024.

22. RFP attachments

The following documents and additional support materials are at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/clean-economy-occupations-grant

- Application Form
- Exhibit A: Capacity responses
- Exhibit B: Certification
- Exhibit C: Evidence of Good Standing
- Exhibit D: Nonprofit grantee documents (as applicable)
- Exhibit E: For-Profit Certification (as applicable)