

Grain Storage Facility Shut-off Digital Application Request for Proposals

Contents

- Grant Details3**
 - Project Description 3
 - Funding..... 3
 - Contact Information and Questions..... 3
 - Timeline 3
 - Application Process 4
 - Review Process..... 4
 - Eligible Applicants 4
 - Eligible Expenses 4
 - Ineligible Expenses 5
 - Conflicts of Interest 5
 - Privacy Notice and Data Classification 6
 - Site Visits, Financial Reconciliations, and Follow-ups 6
 - Bidding Requirements 7
 - Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Policy 7
 - Audits of Project..... 7
 - Voter Registration Requirement 7

- Project Evaluation Profile8**
 - Evaluation Criteria 8
 - Maximum Score 8

- Application Questions9**
 - Contact Information 9
 - Qualifications..... 9
 - Approach to Project 9
 - Budget 9
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 10

Grant Details

Project Description

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) requests proposals to design a digital application (app) that allows a user to remotely power off a grain storage facility using a mobile phone or electronic device in the case of an emergency. Any digital applications created as a result of this grant must be made available to the public at no cost.

Funding

The MDA anticipates awarding approximately \$25,000 total for one project. The final number of awarded grants depends on the size of awards. Applicants may request up to \$25,000.

Contact Information and Questions

Direct questions about the grant program, completing the application, or additional accommodations to:

Susan VonBank
Susan.VonBank@state.mn.us
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert St N
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538

All questions should be submitted through writing by mail or email by **4:00 p.m. Central Time on May 10, 2021**. MDA employees are not authorized to provide advice on any applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

Timeline

Questions Due:	Monday, May 10, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Central Time
Proposals Due:	Monday, May 17, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Central Time
Award Notification:	May 2021
Contract Signing:	June 2021
Project End:	December 31, 2021
Report Due:	January 15, 2022

Application Process

Submit your proposal to Susan VonBank, Susan.VonBank@state.mn.us, by **4:00 p.m. Central Time on Monday, May 17, 2021**.

Late applications will not be considered. The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems resulting in the MDA not receiving the application on time. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that submission is received by the MDA before the deadline.

- Write for reviewers who are generally knowledgeable but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your proposed area of technical assistance or region. Use plain, easily understood language.
- Answer all questions completely within the character or page limits specified in this grant application. Use 12-point font, single spacing.

Review Process

A review committee, composed of MDA staff and external reviewers, evaluates all eligible applications using the Project Evaluation Profile included in this document. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The commissioner of agriculture reviews the committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The commissioner may also use geographic distribution, service to special populations, and the applicant's history as a state grantee and capacity to perform the work in the decision process. We will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. Applicants may request a summary of reviewer comments.

Eligible Applicants

Grants may only be awarded to the:

- Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, or
- Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including the individual schools.

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed, but not required.

Note: Personnel funded by this grant project may not be employees of the MDA.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- Wages and associated fringe for time spent directly on the grant project (provide justification for the hourly rate)
- Consultant fees (provide justification for the hourly rate)
- Durable equipment or other items necessary for the project valued at less than \$1,000 each
- Training and workshop fees for technical assistance recipients
- Project-related travel
- Postage, printing, and telephone expenses related to the project

Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses may not be paid with grant funds:

- Costs incurred prior to notification of award
- Equipment other than those items specifically included in Eligible Expenses
- Advertising and public relations
- Bad debts – including uncollectible accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs
- Entertainment, amusement, diversion, and social activities, or any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, alcohol, and gratuities)
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expense resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the applicant to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations
- Fundraising – including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions – regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used
- Indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified within the project, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the implementation of proposal related activities)
- Investment management costs, including costs of investment counsel and staff, and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments
- Land and building purchases
- Lobbying – including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying
- Political activities

Conflicts of Interest

The State will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

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

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, 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.

Privacy Notice and Data Classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant through this program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the Minnesota Data Practices Act as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited by law to MDA staff and contractors with a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per [MINN. STAT. 13.599](#):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All remaining data in application responses (except trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

Procedure for Claiming Protection of Trade Secrets

Trade secret information (as defined in [MINN. STAT. 13.37](#)) is classified as nonpublic data. In order for an applicant to protect data submitted as part of this application as trade secret information, the applicant must clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be a valid trade secret (as defined by Minnesota law), and provide an explanation of the economic value of keeping the data from being generally known to other persons. Determining what constitutes trade secret information is ultimately the responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data marked by an applicant as trade secret information, or otherwise marked "confidential," will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, that data will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

Site Visits, Financial Reconciliations, and Follow-ups

The grant agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The MDA will perform a monitoring visit for all grantees with awards of \$25,000 or more before a final payment is approved. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA.

The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one invoice financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee provides expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents requested by the state.

Bidding Requirements

All funded applicants will be required to abide by the state's bidding requirements for larger purchases. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Policy

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

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](#)).

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](#).

Audits of Project

Per [MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subdivision 8](#), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant 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.

Voter Registration Requirement

The grantee will comply with [MINN. STAT. 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees.

Project Evaluation Profile

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Score
Organization has the capacity and experience to successfully design a digital application	15
Work plan is detailed and realistic	15
Testing plan is thorough and inclusive	20
Plans for maintenance, deployment, and security are viable and complete	20
Budget table and narrative are consistent and clearly detail all project costs	15
Budget is cost-effective	10
Proposal explains how beginning and emerging farmers and farm workers will benefit from the app	5
Total	100

Application Questions

Your proposal must include the following:

Contact Information

- Organization's Full Legal Name
- Business Address
- Contact Person's Name
- Telephone
- Email

Qualifications

Provide the qualifications of all individuals who will participate in the project. Do not include extensive resumes or biographies, but rather a short description of their relevant abilities and qualifications.

(Limit: 2,500 characters, including spaces)

- Participant Name
- Organization Affiliation
- Occupation
- Email Address
- Brief Summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications

Approach to Project

Describe your overall approach to the work and the type of digital solution you are creating. *(Limit: 5,000 characters, including spaces)*

Include information such as the following:

- How will you go about developing the mobile app?
- Who will do the work?
- What is the timeline for completing each stage of the project?
- How will you design and test the app?
- What is your maintenance and deployment plan?
- What is your security plan and how will you implement adequate security measures?

Budget

Using an itemized table, outline the expected costs of your proposal. This could include the number of hours estimated to complete each deliverable, the hourly rates utilized, and the total of each deliverable, as well as any other costs you expect to incur.

You may also provide a narrative describing your cost proposal. This could explain how the budget items connect to the project's results and how you arrived at these estimates. *(Limit: 3,000 characters, including spaces)*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Describe how the grant-funded activities will benefit beginning and emerging farmers and farm workers. We use the term “emerging farmers” to refer to groups that have historically been disenfranchised and underserved, including women, veterans, persons with disabilities, urban, queer/LGBTQ+, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Read the [2021 Emerging Farmers' Working Group Legislative Report](#) for additional information. *(Limit: 1,500 characters, including spaces)*