



County Agricultural Inspector Grant

Grant Request for Proposal (RFP) Fiscal Year 27

Applications due by 3:00 p.m. Central Time (CT) on September 10, 2026

07/30/2026 (RFP release date)

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the County Agricultural Inspectors Grant.

The program is authorized under Minnesota Noxious Weed Law (Minn. Stat. 18.76-18.91) and funded through the State Legislature at 2025 Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 34, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 2 (g).

The program was established by the Minnesota Legislature to support County Agricultural Inspector's (CAIs) and County Designated Employees (CDEs) to complete their duties under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law.

Grant funds are available to counties employing a CAI or CDE that meet the following criteria:

1. Has attended training for new county agricultural inspectors offered by the commissioner.
2. Coordinates with the commissioner to review applicable laws and enforcement procedures.
3. Compiles and submits to the commissioner local weed inspector annual report data.
4. Conducts an annual meeting and training for local weed inspectors, and
5. Assists the commissioner with control programs and other agricultural programs when requested under Minnesota Statutes, section 18.81, subdivision 1b, as directed by the county board.

All information about the program is available on the [CAI Grant webpage](#).

Applications will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on September 10, 2026.

Funding Availability

The Minnesota Legislature has appropriated \$500,000 for these grants in fiscal year 2027. The MDA will determine which counties are eligible for funding based on criteria outlined in statute. Once the total number of eligible counties is determined, the MDA will divide the available grant funds equally among the eligible CAI/CDEs across the state. Eligible counties are required to report to the MDA with each request for reimbursement to demonstrate that they have met all the necessary criteria to receive funds. A report on progress will be required of all grantees prior to the end of the performance period. If a county fails to successfully meet the requirements, it will not receive funds, and its allocated amount will be redistributed equally among the remaining eligible counties who successfully meet the requirements.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, the grant has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the state's authorized representative that they may begin work.

Priorities

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

Office of Grants Management (OGM) Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review (PDF) sets up the expectation that grant programs intentionally show how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

The CAI Grant is awarded non-competitively to eligible counties as specified in 2025 Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 34, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 2 (g) and this Request for Proposals. The funding is designated for county agricultural inspectors (or county designated employees) to complete their duties under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law. The policy and outcomes are detailed by statute (Minn.Stat. 18.75 and 18.90.). County agricultural inspectors and county-designated employees are identified in Minn.Stat. 18.80. The policy and outcomes of the Noxious Weed Law are detailed at (Minn.Stat. 18.75 and 18.90.)

How to Apply

- Apply for the County Agricultural Grant using the MDA's online application system.
 - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first. Use this how-to guide (PDF) to help set up your account.
 - Once logged in, select "County Agricultural Inspector (CAI) Grant FY27."
 - If you can't use the online application system, contact Emilie Justen at emilie.justen@state.mn.us to request other arrangements.
- Applications are due by **3:00 p.m.** Central Time (CT) on **September 10, 2026**.
 - Apply early to allow enough time to get help with the online application system if needed. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.
 - The MDA will not accept late applications.
 - The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.
- Once the application is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email. Contact Emilie Justen at emilie.justen@state.mn.us if you do not receive this email.
- We will accept only one application per county.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, these materials will not be considered nor evaluated.

The MDA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the requirements of this RFP.

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for a potential grant award. Submitting 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 to the State by law.

The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with submitting a response to this RFP.

How to Submit Questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **3:00 p.m.** Central Time on **September 3, 2026**.
- Email Emilie.justen@state.mn.us with "CAI Grant" in the subject line.

The MDA will post responses to program questions on the **Questions and Answers (Q&A)** section of the CAI Grant webpage as we receive them. See the [CAI grant webpage](#) for answers to past questions.

Note: MDA employees are not authorized to give advice on any applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6360 or
- Email Emilie.justen@state.mn.us with “CAI Grant” in the subject line.

Application Guidelines

- Use plain, easily understood language. Write for reviewers who have general knowledge but may not have a thorough understanding of your project or your organization.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Although some questions are labeled as optional, the MDA strongly recommends responding to those questions or uploading the appropriate documents.
- Ensure your application is your own, a unique proposal designed to respond to the RFP.
- Make sure your budget is realistic and includes only eligible items. Write a detailed budget narrative that clearly explains how the money will be spent.
- Applicants must provide an estimated rate per hour and hours to be completed for CAI/CDE duties in 2026/2027. Estimates for other expenses must also be provided with the application. The MDA will determine the amount of money available per county for expenses after the application closes.
- Review the Project Evaluation Profile included in this RFP, as it is used to score and compare grant applications.

Timeline and Deadlines

July 30, 2026	RFP posted on the MDA website.
September 3, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. Central Time	Deadline to ask grant program questions.
September 10, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. Central Time	Application period closes.
October 2026	Applicants notified of funding decisions.
October 2026	Anticipated project start date (for projects with executed grant contracts)

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity.

To be eligible for this grant, a county must employ a county agricultural inspector or county-designated employee (CAI/CDE)* who meets the following criteria:

1. Has attended training for new county agricultural inspectors offered by the commissioner.
2. Coordinates with the commissioner to review applicable laws and enforcement procedures.
3. Compiles and submits to the commissioner local weed inspector annual report data.
4. Conducts an annual meeting and training for local weed inspectors, and
5. Assists the commissioner with control programs and other agricultural programs when requested under Minnesota Statutes section 18.81, subdivision 1b, as directed by the county board.

MDA employees and their spouses, farms, or businesses principally owned or operated by them are not eligible applicants and are not eligible to receive funds from this grant program.

Eligible Projects and Expenses

Funds awarded to grantees must be used to pay for eligible expenses that support the required duties under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law (Minn.Stat. 18.76-18.91).

Eligible projects will:

- Be completed within one year.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.
- Benefit Minnesota's noxious weed law enforcement.
- Not start until the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and has reached its start date. No purchasing or contracting of goods and services may occur prior to the full execution of the grant contract agreement or effective date, whichever is later.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are costs directly related to the project. Funds are appropriated to support county agricultural inspectors and county-designated employees to perform their required duties under the noxious weed law (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 18.81; Subdivision. 1a, 1b, and 3).

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties. Grant contracts may not extend beyond two years from the effective date of the contract.

Eligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Inspection and reinspection of noxious weeds on public and private lands
- Enforcement of the noxious weed law when violations occur
- Management performed of noxious weeds
- Assisting MDA with seed, screenings, invasive plant, feed, fertilizer, and pesticide programs, and other agricultural programs when requested by the commissioner
- Training and assisting local weed inspectors
- Assisting townships and municipalities with weed law enforcement and weed management, including cost sharing with municipalities
- Attending required meetings and hosting meetings for local weed inspectors
- Development of outreach materials for noxious weed identification, management, prevention, and the noxious weed law and lists

- Development of a Noxious Weed Management Plan
- Issuing Transport Permits and inspection of noxious weed infested materials
- Posting a General Notice and serving individual notices
- Serving on an appeal committee
- Attending hearings or appeal reviews
- Travel expenses associated with attendance at the Minnesota Association of County Ag Inspectors summer short course

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures not related to duties outlined in Minnesota Statute 18.81.
- Expenditures incurred before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached is effective (start) date, whichever occurs later; and expenditures incurred after the grant contract agreement expires.
- General operating costs or indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project, including software, computers, tablets, and GPS units).
- Expenses paid for with cash.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient).
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment, alcohol, and amusement costs.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to follow federal, state, local, or Tribal nation laws and regulations including parking and traffic violations.
- Fundraising.
- Payments to lobbyists and political contributions incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of purpose for which funds will be used.
- Late payment fees, finance charges, legal costs, bad debts, or contingency funds.
- Fees for legal services and compensation for accountants, consultants and grant writers
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants.
- Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities and expenses. Projects receiving funding from another source, grant, appropriation, or other contribution, may not receive funding for the same activities and expenses.
- Capital expenses greater than \$5,000.

You must be invoiced and pay for all project materials and services between the effective (start) date and end date listed in your grant contract agreement. Any expenses incurred outside of this timeframe are not eligible for reimbursement.

Application Review Policies and Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a non-competitive process. MDA staff and leadership will review applications for accuracy and meeting of the eligibility criteria. MDA staff will inform the applicant of any ineligible components. The Commissioner of Agriculture reviews the recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. Funding decisions may consider the applicant's history as a state grantee, including progress made on previous grants, compliance with state rules and regulations, and capacity to perform the work.

The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. The timeline for the review process is listed in the [Timeline and Deadlines](#) section.

Pre-award Risk Assessment

The MDA is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants. ([MINN. STAT. 16B.981, Subd.2-5](#), [OGM Policy 08-02: Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#), and [OGM Policy 08-06: Pre-award Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#).)

Applicants may be contacted by MDA staff to submit additional documents before being approved by the MDA for an award including information about the applicant's performance on current or previous state grants.

All applicants recommended for funding must provide the MDA with:

Certification that neither you nor your entity has been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. See the [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

Certification that neither you, your entities, nor any key personnel, board members, officers, executives, employees, or agents, or any individual with authority to access, manage or use grant funds have been convicted of a criminal offense relating to a state grant agreement.

If the MDA determines that the applicant has substantial risks that inhibit its ability to perform the required duties under the grant contract agreement, then the MDA may either request more information for the purpose of satisfying the concerns, develop a risk mitigation plan to protect the interests of the state, or not award the grant.

Award Notice

The MDA will notify applicants in writing of the status of their application.

Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01: Grants Conflict of Interest \(PDF\)](#)).

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, or
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

An example of a conflict of interest would be an external party (such as a distributor or vendor) writing an application for the applicant when the vendor stands to profit from the grant award. In cases where a conflict of interest is in question or disclosed, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to, revising the grant work plan or grantee duties to mitigate the risk, requesting the grant applicant to submit a conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Grantees may generally not purchase items and services from staff, board members, owned or operated by staff or board members, or other individuals with whom they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. If grantees want to consider any of these individuals/organizations when making purchases, they must submit a conflict-of-interest disclosure and mitigation plan to the MDA for pre-approval. The plan must address how any conflicts of interest will be mitigated, including a plan for selecting vendors that includes meaningful involvement from non-board/staff members.

Grantees may not purchase items or services from MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners.

Privacy Notice and Data Classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under 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 to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited 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 Minnesota's statute on grants ([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 for data otherwise classified by law, including 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 generally be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

Procedure for claiming protection of trade secrets:

Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e. the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition found in statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application the applicant must:

1. Clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information;
2. Describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and
3. Adequately explain how the data derives independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons.

Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meets the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data does not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff ([MINN. STAT. 270C.65, subd. 3](#)), a grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State of Minnesota, to federal and state tax agencies, and to state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

Requirements for Grant Recipients

Grant Contract Agreement

Before beginning work on the grant project(s), the applicant offered an award must formally enter into a grant contract agreement with the MDA. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [OGM Forms and FAQs webpage](#). The MDA reserves the right to adjust these templates.

Upon approval of an application, completion of the pre-award risk assessment, and before beginning work on the grant project(s) and incurring any grant expenses, the applicant must:

- Register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is still correct.
- Submit other required documentation within 15 days of award notification.

- Read and sign a grant contract agreement within 30 calendar days of being sent to the grantee. Failure to sign the contract within 30 calendar days may result in the award being rescinded.

You cannot begin work on grant activities — including pre-ordering or contracting or incurring any other obligation to pay grant expenses — until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and you have been notified by the State’s Authorized Representative that work may start.

A fully executed grant contract agreement is one that has been signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later. You must comply with the conditions and the grant contract agreement, and you will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the grantee duties and compliance with all applicable state and federal requirements including data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Some changes may be necessary during your project. Many of these changes require pre-approval from the MDA. Some may require an amendment to the grant contract agreement. Changes requiring pre-approval from the MDA include switching vendors that are named in the grant contract and purchasing equipment or supplies that is not include in the approved budget.

Accountability and Reporting

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

Grantees will be required to submit progress reports during the grant period and a final report at the completion of the project. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports.

The final report and final reimbursement request are due 45 calendar days after the expiration date listed in the grant contract agreement and must be approved by the Authorized Representative before the final request for reimbursement is paid.

Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension. The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements throughout the grant period.

Failure to regularly report, respond to surveys, and promptly respond to information requests may impact the grantee’s ability to secure future funding from the MDA.

Information submitted in any report or survey will be classified as public data. If the grantee considers any information in the report to be trade secret, the grantee may request that the trade secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label that information. The MDA will notify the grantee if a public records request is made for the information claimed as protected by the grantee.

Monitoring

The grant contract agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The MDA will perform at least one monitoring visit for all grantees with awards greater than \$25,000 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 on grants over \$25,000. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide supporting documentation including, expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents requested by the State.

Grantee Evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the performance of all grantees. The evaluation will include the purpose of the grant; the amount provided to the grantee; an appraisal of the grantee's timeliness, quality, and overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant; if the grant was terminated; and any concerns with grantee's use of state funds. Evaluations of grantees' performance for grant contract agreements greater than \$25,000 must be provided by the MDA to the Minnesota Department of Administration in accordance with MINN.STAT. 16B.98, subd. 12. Evaluations are considered public data under MINN.STAT. 13.599.

Payments

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the grant contract agreement has been signed by all parties and it has reached its start date, whichever is later.

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and be tied to documented progress working on the project. The MDA shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment.

Requests for reimbursement must include two types of proof for each expense: 1. proof of purchase (e.g., invoices, itemized receipts, payroll reports, etc.) and 2. proof of payment (e.g., cleared checks, credit card statements, bank statements, proof of payroll payment, etc.). A financial reconciliation will be performed, and any additional requests must be submitted by the grantee before the MDA provides reimbursement. Grant payments will not be made on grants with past due progress reports or if required documentation related to the invoice or financial reconciliation is missing.

Details regarding documentation needed for reimbursement can be found in the CAI's Reimbursement Guide, available on the program webpage.

Grant payments will not be made on grants with past-due progress reports or if required documentation related to the invoice or financial reconciliation is missing, unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Reimbursement requests may be submitted with progress reports throughout the grant period. Final requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the MDA no later than 45 calendar days after the grant expiration (end) date.

Grant payments may be used to fulfill federal and state tax liabilities or may be withheld until the grantee has paid any tax liabilities, in accordance with [MINN. STAT. 270C.65, Subd. 3](#), and other applicable laws.

Contract and Bidding

All grantees must abide by the state's bidding requirements, based on their entity type.

Political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with MINN. STAT. 471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules in MINN. STAT. 177.41 through MINN. STAT. 177.50, as applicable.
- Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. See the Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement and the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).
- 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.

Grantee Website and Publicity

All grant projects must publicly credit the MDA funding in all public communications, presentations, and printed materials and include that information on the grantee's website. Additionally, grantees with a website must clearly post on their website the names and contact information for the grantee's leadership and the employee(s) or other person(s) who directly manages and oversees the grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee (the authorized representative) (MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 5 (d)).

Grantee Obligation to Inform

Throughout the term of the grant agreement, the grantee has an ongoing responsibility to:

- Immediately notify the state if the grantee, its Authorized Representative, or any key personnel—including board members, officers, executives, employees, agents, or any individual with authority to access, manage, or use grant funds—is suspended or debarred from doing business with the State of Minnesota or the federal government or is convicted of a criminal offense related to a state grant agreement.
- Obtain prior written approval from the State's Authorized Representative before making any changes to the approved budget or work plan incorporated into the Grant Contract Agreement.

Grantee Evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the performance of all grantees. The evaluation will include the purpose of the grant; the amount provided to the grantee; an appraisal of the grantee's timeliness, quality, and overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant; if the grant was terminated; and any concerns with grantee's use of state funds. Evaluations of grantees' performance for grant contract agreements greater than \$25,000 must be provided by the MDA to the Minnesota Department of Administration in accordance with MINN.STAT. 16B.98, subd. 12. Evaluations are considered public data under MINN.STAT. 13.599.

Audit and Record Retention

Per [MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or any other party relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency, the state auditor, the attorney general, and the legislative 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.

Grantees are responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to their grants. Grantees should maintain a project file containing copies of all invoices, receipts, proofs of payment, reimbursement requests, important correspondence with the MDA, progress reports, and any other documents associated with the project. Upon request by the State, the grantee must produce a legible copy of the records saved in their project file.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, 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 ([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, including 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](#).

Voter Registration Requirement

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

Right of Cancellation

This Request for Proposal does not oblige the MDA to award a grant. The MDA reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposal if in the best interest of the program, agency, or the State of Minnesota. The State also reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposal. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Program Background

The County Agricultural Inspector Grant was established to support CAIs and County Designated Employees (CDEs) to complete their duties under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law. The grant was established in 2025 and was appropriated funds for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

Application Questions

- Name of Contact Person
- Organization Name
- Organization Mailing Address
- County
- Office Phone Number
- Cell Phone Number
- Email

Eligibility

Please confirm your eligibility by checking the box [choose one].

- ☐ I am a county agricultural inspector or county designated employee OR
- ☐ My CAI/CDE has approved the application.

Proposal Summary

Review the Request for Proposals (RFP) before submitting your application. Details on the requirements can be found in the RFP.

Project Summary

(Limit: 6,000 characters)

Provide a project summary suitable for public release. A project summary provides a brief, two- or three-sentence description of your project and includes:

- The name of the municipality and CAI that will lead and execute the project.
- The project's purpose, methods, and/or expected outcomes.
- A description of the activities to be completed during the grant term.

Current and Previous Grants

Have you been awarded a grant from the state of Minnesota in the past 5 years? (Yes/No)

If you answered yes to the previous question, please provide the details of the current and prior grant(s), including the award amount, duties, and outcomes of your grant. If you answered no, please type "NA."

Work Plan

Describe how you will use the grant funds, including how and when you will carry out each item or activity. Describe the specific activities, objectives, deadlines for accomplishing each activity, and responsible parties.

You must include a minimum of 3 objectives and a maximum of 10 objectives.

Complete the fillable table in the online application.

Work plan example:

Objective	Activity	Timeline	Responsible Person
Inspect roadsides	Drive county roads	May-Sept 2027	CAI
Map noxious weeds	Map new infestations in GIS	April-Sept 2027	CAI
Host local weed inspector (LWI) training	Set date and invite municipalities	April 2027	CAI
Respond to weed complaints	Document complaints and address concerns	Growing season	CAI
Submit grant closeout	Submit documentation and final report	September 2027	CAI

Budget

Budget Narrative

(Limit: 6,000 characters)

The budget narrative provides a detailed description of each cost included in the grant project per line item.

- A cost estimate is required for all categories: Personnel; Equipment, Tools, Supplies, Herbicides; Education and Outreach Materials; Contracted Services; In-state Travel; and Other.
- Please include the wage rate in the Budget Narrative.
- Explain how you developed the budget estimates. Please indicate if specific vendors or contractors have been identified. You do not need actual bids at the time of application.
- **A justification for herbicide purchases is required.**
- For any expenses in the Other category, please justify the expenses in the Budget Narrative.

Budget Table

The budget table is an overview of how grant funds will be spent by category and budget year. This is an example of the categories and amounts requested for each category. In the online application, each category must be filled in. If you do not have expenses for a category, please put \$0.

Category	Grant Request
Personnel – number of hours @ wage rate	
Equipment, tools, supplies, herbicides (maximum \$5,000 for equipment purchases, justification for herbicide purchases is required in the Budget Narrative)	
Education and outreach materials	
Contracted services	
In-state travel (mileage rate, per diem)	
Other (specify what the expense is for)	
Total	

Certification

I certify that:

- The county board of commissioners is aware of this grant program and supports this application and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure that the CAI/CDE completes their required duties under the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law.
- To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application is true and correct and supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for its review.
- I understand that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me and my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law.
- I further understand that receiving public funds as a consequence of false representations constitutes an act of fraud.
- I understand that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture may conduct audits, check references, and conduct site inspections and monitoring after grants are awarded and prior to dollars being disbursed.
- I understand that the data provided in this application is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and have read and understand the Data Privacy Notice contained herein. I verify all information supplied in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand that the State of Minnesota requires that its agencies not award a grant to a vendor or grantee that has been suspended or debarred from doing business with the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.

- I warrant that neither the county applicant nor its principals (including designated CAI or CDE employees) are suspended or debarred from doing business with the State of Minnesota or with the federal government. Office of Grants Management (OGM) Policy 08-04: Grant Contract Agreements and Grant Award Notifications.
- I understand that the State of Minnesota requires that its agencies not award a grant to a vendor or grantee that has been convicted of a criminal offense relating to a State grant agreement.
- I warrant that neither the county applicant nor its principals (including the designated CAI or CDE employees and board members with authority to access, manage or use grant funds) have been convicted of a criminal offense relating to a State grant agreement. (Minn. Stat. 16B.991 Subd. 1).
- I understand prior to issuing a grant award contract, I must provide an authorized signature for this certification through DocuSign, which will be incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the contract.