

## Requirements for DNR grantees

**Effective date: January 31, 2026**

The following policies apply to all DNR grants, except where specifically noted. These requirements are in addition to requirements in program-specific manuals. In case of any conflicts with an existing grant program manual, the stricter document will control.

Questions about these requirements should be directed to the grant specialist for your grant program. Questions may also be directed to [grantsteam.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:grantsteam.dnr@state.mn.us). When sending an email to this address, please include information on your grant funding source, program, and question.

### Admin's Office of Grants Management policies

Under [Minn. Statutes, section 16b.97 subd. 2](#), the Minnesota Department of Administration is required to create general grants management policies and procedures applicable to all state agencies. Admin's OGM implemented grant policies for the State of Minnesota. Please review [OGM grant policies](#) (select the Current Policies tab). Information especially relevant to grantees is summarized below. Unless otherwise noted, these policies do not apply to bonding grants and grants under [Minn. Statutes section 16A.86](#) or [section 16A.642](#).

#### Grants conflict of interest (OGM Policy 08-01)

All grantees must sign a conflict-of-interest disclosure form or certify they will disclose conflicts of interest when signing their grant agreements/grant award notifications. Grantees must also maintain a written standard of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of their employees or board members engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. State staff may request this written standard when conducting grant monitoring activities or if otherwise relevant. These requirements apply to all grants, including bonding grants and grants under Minn. Statutes section 16A.86 and section 16A.642.

OGM Policy 08-01 states that a conflict of interest occurs "when a person has actual or apparent duty or loyalty to more than one organization and the competing duties or loyalties may result in actions which are adverse to one or both parties. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical, improper, or illegal act results from it." Per the OGM policy, there are several types of conflicts of interest:

#### Actual conflict of interest

An actual conflict of interest occurs when a person's decision or action would compromise a duty to a party without taking immediate appropriate action to eliminate the conflict.

## Potential conflict of interest

A potential conflict of interest may exist if a person has a relationship, affiliation, or other interest that could create an inappropriate influence if the person is called on to make a decision or recommendation that would affect one or more of those relationships, affiliations, or interest.

## Individual conflict of interest

A conflict of interest that may benefit an individual employee or a grant reviewer is any situation in which their judgement, actions, or non-action could be interpreted to be influenced by something that would benefit them directly or through indirect gain to an immediate family member, business, or organization with which they are involved.

## Organizational conflict of interest

A conflict of interest can also occur with an organization that is a grant applicant in a competitive grant process or grantee of a state agency. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is impaired or compromised due to competing duties or loyalties
- A grantee, potential grantee, or grant applicant has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors

## Use of grant contract agreements and grant award notifications (OGM Policy 08-04)

All grants need a written grant contract agreement or grant award notification. State agencies cannot award a grant to a grantee that is on either the [suspension or debarment lists for the state of Minnesota](#) or the federal government. If a grantee becomes suspended or debarred, that may be cause for the State to cancel their grant.

Grant agreements/GANs must contain a provision for the grantee to clearly post on the grantee's website the names and contact information for the grantee organization's leadership and the person(s) who directly manages and oversees the grant.

A fully executed copy of the grant agreement or GAN and all relevant records must be kept on file for a minimum of six years from the end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, OR the period of time required to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Grantees must complete work in accordance with the terms and conditions of their grant agreement/GAN. Work not covered under the grant agreement/GAN will not be reimbursed without a prior amendment request.

## **Public questions and comments concerning fraud and waste in state grants (OGM Policy 08-05)**

OGM will serve as the central point of contact for questions and comments about fraud and waste in state grants and about the violation of statewide grants policies. OGM will also respond to other public questions and concerns about state grants.

## **Grant payments (OGM Policy 08-08)**

State agencies may not issue grant payments until the funds are encumbered, and the grant agreement is fully executed, or the GAN is completed.

Reimbursement is the State's preferred method for making grant payments. DNR grants operate on a reimbursement basis, unless the grant agreement/GAN contains explicit language specifying otherwise.

Grantee reimbursement requests must correspond to the line items in the approved grant budget. Grant managers must review each reimbursement request against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to date, and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. If grant managers see a discrepancy or have any questions about reimbursement requests and/or related documentation, they will follow up with the grantee.

Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the agency wide grants manager prior to signing a grant agreement/GAN and must be in accordance with state laws and OGM policies.

Grants in which the payment terms are defined in statute are not covered by this policy.

## **DNR reimbursement procedures**

- Grantees must pay for project expenses before seeking reimbursement from the grant and should only request reimbursement for paid expenses. Expenses are reviewed and those deemed eligible are then reimbursed under the terms of the agreement/GAN with the State of Minnesota.
- Grantees are not allowed to request reimbursement for invoices from a vendor that have not yet been paid by the grantee. Please also see the Proof of Payment section below.
- Grantees can expect to be reimbursed within 30 days of the DNR receiving a complete and accurate reimbursement request. If documentation to process the request is missing, or the request has discrepancies or incorrect information, the 30-day clock does not start until all necessary information has been submitted to the DNR and the request has been deemed complete and whole.
- The DNR will pay final reimbursement when the state determines that the grantee has satisfactorily fulfilled all the terms of their grant agreement/GAN, unless a grant term is altered or excluded by the DNR in writing.

Grantees should keep the following documentation on file for monitoring and audit purposes:

- Proof of payment of grant expenses (e.g. copies of cancelled checks, electronic bank statements, etc.)
- Contracting/purchasing bidding documentation
- Organization's conflict of interest policy

- Prevailing wage documentation (if applicable): project assessment form, certified payroll reports, etc.

## **Grant progress reports (OGM Policy 08-09)**

Grantees are required to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all the terms in the grant agreement/GAN have been met. Information requested in a grant progress report may include (but is not limited to): goals and objectives, activities, outcomes, challenges, lessons learned, and financial information. State agencies cannot make grant payments on grants with past due progress reports (unless the agency has given the grantee a written extension).

## **Grant monitoring (OGM Policy 08-10)**

All state grants over \$50,000 are required to have at least one monitoring visit before final payment is made. All state grants over \$250,000 are required to have annual monitoring visits. In-person visits are preferred where possible, but telephone or virtual visits are also used where reasonable.

The purpose of a monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress towards the grant's goals, address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period, and build a relationship between the agency and grantee.

For state grants over \$50,000, state agencies must conduct a financial reconciliation of grantees' expenditures at least once before final payment is made. A financial reconciliation involves reconciling a grantee's request for payment for a given period with supporting documentation (e.g. purchase orders, receipts, payroll records, etc.) for that request.

If previously reimbursed costs are found to be ineligible upon further review during monitoring (or at any other point during the grant period), repayment of those costs or other corrective action may be required.

## **Proof of payment**

The State requires proof of payment documentation to ensure that funds are being provided on a reimbursement basis. The grantee must maintain proof of payment documentation and make it available when requested by the State. Proof of payment documentation may include:

- A copy of a bank statement with photocopies of cleared checks
- An electronic bank statement
- A copy of cancelled checks or other certified financial records
- Employee original time records and payroll documentation

## **Cost share/required match**

For grants which require cost share or match, the requirements for documenting work completed or expenses incurred as match are the same as for expenses for which grantees are requesting reimbursement. The State may disallow otherwise-eligible costs for reimbursement if the grantee cannot provide proof of the expenses being used as match.

For grants with in-kind match (i.e. non-cash donations of a good or service), grantees should provide documentation similar to a payment request.

If the in-kind match is volunteer time, grantees will need volunteer logs and to show the calculation used to convert volunteer hours to time. If the in-kind match is something other than volunteer time (e.g. use of equipment, or donated materials), grantees must perform due diligence to determine how much the in-kind match would cost. For example, if the in-kind match is a land donation, the documentation should include an appraisal. If the in-kind match is use of equipment, the documentation should demonstrate a realistic cost for the type of equipment and amount of time.

## **Legislatively mandated grants (OGM Policy 08-11)**

State agencies must manage legislatively mandated grants with the same level of oversight (including monitoring) applied to other state grants, while respecting and maintaining the legislative intent.

Grantees for legislatively mandated grants must submit a work plan and budget. The grant agreement/GAN must be based on the legislation, the grantee's work plan and budget, and negotiations between the state agency and the grantee.

## **Grant amendments (OGM Policy 08-12)**

During the grant period, it may be necessary to make changes to the grant contract agreement/GAN. Generally, these modifications could include changes to the grant timeframe, to the scope of work, or to the budget categories.

A formal grant contract amendment is required for any changes. Should a situation arise that requires any changes to the project, it is the grantee's responsibility to communicate immediately with the DNR grants specialist.

The purpose of grant amendments must be similar to the original purpose of the grant and the grantee duties should be within the scope of the original RFP/notice of grant opportunity/application.

If an amendment is allowed, it must be fully executed before additional costs can be incurred.

## **Contracting and bidding**

Competitive bidding needs to follow a fair and transparent public process.

Grantees must not contract with vendors or subcontractors who are on the suspension or debarment lists for either the State of Minnesota or the federal government.

Grantees must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through the entities below are used when possible:

- [Minnesota Department of Administration's Certified Target 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 the City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)

Grantees must maintain support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable. Grantees must retain the following documentation in the project file:

- Copies of executed subcontract agreements
- A copy of the request for proposal/request for quote, all submitted bids, and the bid tabulation (if applicable)
- Written documentation that describes the rationale for selection of each subcontractor
- Documentation of the contract/bid approval, if required by grantee internal controls (such as meeting minutes)

This documentation may be reviewed during monitoring visits or when requested by the state.

## **Contracting and bidding for political subdivisions of the state**

In addition to the general contracting and bidding requirements above, municipalities (defined in Minn. Statutes, chapter 471.345 subd. 1 as a county, town, city, school district, or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state authorized by law to enter into contracts) must also follow the [Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#).

## **Contracting and bidding for non-governmental organizations**

In addition to the general contracting and bidding requirements at the beginning of this section, non-government organizations must follow the contracting policies/procedures below.

## **Contracting and bidding for Tribal governments**

Tribal governments are subject to neither the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law nor the DNR contracting policies/procedures below. Tribal governments are subject to the contracting and bidding procedures of their own governance.

## **Contracting and bidding thresholds and process**

- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost 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.
- 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.
- Any services or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Grantees must use an RFP/RFQ process to competitively select professional and technical services.

- The advertisement for bid processes must allow for fair competition among potential qualified bidders.

## Prevailing wage

Prevailing wage ([Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41-177.45](#)) is the minimum hourly wage employers must pay certain workers who work on construction and public works projects funded by state dollars. Prevailing wage includes the employer's cost of benefits. Other prevailing wage information can be found at the [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](#). Prevailing wage rules apply to any grant award of \$25,000 or more that qualifies as a "project" per the following definition:

Project: demolition, erection, construction, alteration, improvement, restoration, remodeling, or repairing of a public building, structure, facility, land, or other public work, which includes any work suitable for and intended for use by the public, or for the public benefit, financed in whole or part by state funds. "Project" also includes demolition, erection, construction, alteration, improvement, restoration, remodeling, or repairing of a building, structure, facility, land, or public work when the acquisition of property, predesign, design, or demolition is financed in whole or part by state funds (Minn. Statutes, section 177.42).

If the award is \$25,000 or more and contains activities in the work/accomplishment plan that qualify as a "project" per the definition above, prevailing wage rules in Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41-177.44 apply. If you are unsure if a project is subject to prevailing wage, ask the grant specialist for a copy of DLI's Project Assessment Form. Grantees must complete the form and return it to the grant specialist. Once ready, the DNR grant specialist will submit it to DLI and copy the grantee on the e-mail.

When prevailing wage applies, all bid requests and RFPs must state that the project is subject to prevailing wage to ensure that incoming bids have factored prevailing wage rates into their submittal. A prevailing wage form should accompany these bid submittals.

Grantees must retain documentation in the project file either the prevailing wage forms, or a notice from DLI that the project is not subject to prevailing wage.

## Fraud reporting

In addition to OGM policy, various state statutes govern reporting of suspected fraud or misuse of state dollars.

State workers with information indicating that public resources (including public money) may have been used for an unlawful purpose must report that information. Any other person with such information is strongly urged to report that information. The DNR takes a "no wrong door" approach for reporting suspected fraud; essentially, the DNR encourages its workforce to report suspected fraud to any DNR supervisor or member of agency leadership, who will connect the person reporting to the correct contact or procedure, as needed.

All state agencies are required to report suspected fraud cases to the [Department of Revenue](#) for tax fraud investigation, in addition to referring all allegations of suspected fraud to the [Office of the Legislative Auditor](#) and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's [Financial Crimes and Fraud section](#)

([mnfraud.bureau@state.mn.us](mailto:mnfraud.bureau@state.mn.us) or 651-739-3750). Grantees may report suspected fraud directly to these agencies, as well, or to their DNR grant manager or any DNR employee.

## Requirements for working on state land

When working on state land, grantees must follow all applicable policies and requirements of that land. Grantees should work with the appropriate management staff for the state land to determine these requirements. Insurance is required to do work on state land, following the [requirements of Admin.](#)

## Audits

Under [Minn. Statutes, chapter 16B.98 subd. 8](#), the state (the grantmaking agency, state auditor, attorney general, legislative auditor, Admin, etc.) has the right to perform programmatic or financial audits of the grantee. The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices relevant to the grant are subject to state examination for a minimum of six years from the expiration or termination of the grant agreement/GAN, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy state and program retention requirements, whichever is later. This provision is also included in grant agreements/GANs.

## Records retention

Grantees must maintain a file for each project with all project agreements, correspondence, and the records pertaining to project expenses requested for reimbursement. Project records are required for monitoring/audit purposes and must be readily available for review. As with all provisions of the grant agreement/GAN, if the state finds a failure to comply, the State may take action, including immediate termination of the grant agreement/GAN with cause, refusal to disburse additional funds, and/or requiring the return of all or part of the funds already disbursed.

All records related to the project must be retained for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement/GAN end date, or the receipt and approval of all final reports, whichever is later. Some grant funds require permanent retention of the grant records, and in those cases, that requirement supersedes the six-year standard.

## Data practices

- Grantees must comply with the [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#) as it applies to all data created, collected, received, stored, used, maintained, or disseminated by the grantee under their grant agreement/GAN. If a grantee receives a request to release this data, the grantee must immediately notify the State. Following this notification, the State will provide instructions to the grantee concerning the release of data.
- Grantees should instruct and train their staff regarding the governing privacy and data practices provisions; maintaining data in a secure manner; and limiting access to work duties and assignments.

- Grantees must mitigate risks associated with the unauthorized access or data breach and report to the DNR any real or perceived security or privacy incident regarding any private data in accordance with MGDPA.
- Grantees are not permitted to use private data with artificial intelligence services unless it is approved through the DNR/Minnesota IT vendor security risk and compliance process. AI services are reviewed and verified through a process that includes understanding the AI's training, ownership of data and level of security.