Fiscal Year 2020 Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Employee Scholarship Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (updated 9/24/19)

1. How do I submit my application?
   Answer: Please refer to pages 12-13 of the FY2020 HCBS Employee Scholarship Grant RFP.

2. I want to submit my application via email, but it’s too big to send as one attachment. May I submit in multiple emails?
   Answer: Yes, it’s fine to submit in multiple emails. Please label each email to indicate that it is part of a series (e.g., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc.).

3. I can’t find the Due Diligence Review and Financial Questionnaire, referred to as Form 9 on the application checklist (Form 2).
   Answer: This form has its own link, under the link for the other forms, and can be found here: https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019diligence.pdf

4. Section 4 of the Due Diligence Review Form indicates that it is to be completed by nonprofits requesting more than $25,000. If my organization does not have to complete section 4, do we still need to include a financial statement with our application?
   Answer: All applicants need to submit a financial statement, as indicated under item B on Form 2:
   Applicants must include a current financial statement of the organization to demonstrate solvency. This can be a recent 990 form, a professionally-prepared audit, balance sheet, or income statement that shows the most recently available annual revenue and expenses. Attached documentation must be specific to the HCBS provider where the scholarship program will be administered, not documentation from a larger organization.
   Applicants that are nonprofit organizations and request more than $25,000 need to complete section 4 of the Due Diligence Review form and attach the financial documentation specified in item 15 of the form (based on the applicant’s annual revenue).

5. What’s the difference between the 100-point scale that the review committee uses to score applications and the scores on the Due Diligence Review Form?
   Answer: They are two separate scoring systems and serve different functions. The 100-point scale is used by reviewers to rate how well each applicant meets the selection criteria described on page 10 of the RFP (the higher the score, the better). The scoring of the Due Diligence Form does not have an impact on the scoring by reviewers, but is used by MDH to better understand the capacity of applicants and identify opportunities for technical assistance for those that receive grant funds.
6. I’m having trouble fitting my narrative on just five pages...what should I do?  
Answer: The five-page limit is to make the reviewers’ reading load manageable. You may use margins less than 1” (within reason) and/or 1.5 spacing, as long as the narrative is easy to read for reviewers. Please reach out to Sonya.Borgeson-Bethke@state.mn.us for concerns about formatting.

7. Does the grant application need to specify which educational institutions/training programs scholarships recipients will attend?  
Answer: Although the application does not need to commit to specific educational institutions or training programs, it’s recommended that at least one is referenced for each scholarship as an example and used as the basis for your budgeting. A sample budget Form 7A can be found on slide 23 of the HCBS Employee Scholarship Grant Program presentation. The following resource list provides examples of eligible programs and trainings: https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf (please note that this list does not include all options but rather provides a sampling of eligible programs and trainings).

8. I missed the webinar on September 5th; was it recorded?  
Answer: Yes, the link to the recording is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNHOi6Fgn-g&feature=youtu.be

9. Where can I find the PowerPoint slides from the September 5th webinar?  
Answer: The PowerPoint presentation can be found here: https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbswebinar.pdf

10. What should I do if I’m having trouble entering information into some of the forms?  
Answer: If you experience issues with any of the forms, please contact Sonya.Borgeson-Bethke@state.mn.us; forms are available as Word documents upon request.

11. Is it acceptable to submit a single grant application for scholarships that will be offered to staff from multiple sites?  
Answer: Yes, if your organization has multiple sites that will be providing scholarships, then you may submit one application, however, only one entity may serve as the applicant organization. If a grant is awarded, then that entity will be named as the grantee and will enter into a grant agreement with the State. Grant payments (made via reimbursement, please see response to question #19 regarding grant payments) will be made to that entity. If your application encompasses multiple sites, please remember to include copies of licenses/registrations for all facilities included in the application.

12. If my facility is part of a larger organization, and the proposed scholarships will be for just my site, what do you want for financial statements? I have audited financial statements that consolidate all sites and unaudited internal financial statements for my site specifically.
**Answer:** Please submit financial statements that are specific to your facility, including any relevant excerpts from the organization’s audit. Additional financial information may be requested to complete the financial review.

13. To meet the requirement that an eligible applicant “primarily provides services to individuals who are 65 years of age and older,” what percentage of individuals served need to be 65 or older?  
**Answer:** There is no strict threshold, however, above 50 percent is a good guideline (i.e., individuals who are 65 years of age and older represent more than one-half of the applicant’s client/patient population).

14. Can grant funds be used to support coursework provided by educational institutions outside of Minnesota?  
**Answer:** Yes, grant funds may be used to support HCBS Employee Scholarship-eligible degrees or trainings provided online and/or by institutions outside of Minnesota. However, as indicated on page 6 of the RFP, grant funds may not be used for out-of-state travel or lodging. For examples of eligible programs and trainings, including online options, please refer to:  
https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf

15. Is an Intermediate Care Facility for persons with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD) eligible to apply?  
**Answer:** No, as stipulated in the RFP (page 4), an eligible applicant organization or facility needs to be licensed/registered as one of the following:  
- Housing with services establishment as defined in MN Statute 144D.01, subdivision 4  
- Adult day care facility as defined in MN Statute 245A.02, subdivision 2a  
- Home care services provider as defined in MN Statute 144A.43, subdivision 3.

16. Can grant funds be used to support a staff member to become a Trained Medication Aide (TMA)?  
**Answer:** Yes, grant funds may be used to support TMA coursework for an eligible scholarship recipient (within the other parameters of the grant, i.e., as long as the scholarship recipient and expenses meet the other eligibility criteria and the scholarship funds are utilized during the grant period). For examples of eligible programs and trainings, please refer to:  
https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf

17. Can grant funds be used for scholarships awarded to Community Health Workers (CHWs)?  
**Answer:** CHWs who work in caregiving roles, meet the other eligibility criteria and pursue education/training directly related to the delivery of patient or client care in HCBS settings would be eligible for grant-funded scholarships. Because CHW roles and responsibilities vary among different organizations, applicants that propose CHW scholarships should clearly identify how such scholarships will contribute to a well-trained HCBS workforce in Minnesota.

18. Can grant funds be used for scholarships awarded to Peer Support Specialists working with elderly patients in recovery from opioid addiction?  
**Answer:** An eligible HCBS provider (as described on page 4 of RFP) that provides services involving Peer Support Specialists working directly with elderly patients in recovery from opioid addiction may propose grant-funded scholarships for the Peer Support Specialists, providing all other
eligibility criteria are met. Applicants will need to clearly identify how such scholarships will contribute to a well-trained HCBS workforce in Minnesota.

19. Can grant funds be used to cover the cost of in-house training provided by an employee?  
   Answer: Typically, grant-funded in-house trainings are provided by outside trainers with specific expertise above and beyond what is required for licensure of the organization/facility. If an employee of an applicant organization is the most qualified/appropriate trainer, then the applicant organization may propose in-house training that meets the eligibility criteria (see page 5 of RFP) with an explanation as to why the specific employee will be providing the training.

20. If an organization partners with a college or university to develop an on-site training curriculum, would those expenses qualify?  
   Answer: The grant is intended to cover the employee costs related to eligible course of study or training; curriculum development is not an eligible expense per se. Tuition or training fees charged for implementing the curriculum could be reimbursable by the grant if all other eligibility criteria were met. (See response to question #19 for more information about grant reimbursement.)

21. Would a laptop be considered a school supply?  
   Answer: In certain circumstances, a laptop would be considered an eligible expense for a specific scholarship recipient. If an applicant organization includes the expense of a laptop as part of a scholarship, the budget narrative must clearly explain why a laptop is needed for the scholarship recipient’s course of study or training. If grant funds are awarded for the reimbursement of a laptop, then the scholarship recipient maintains ownership of the laptop (like a textbook); it would not become property of the grantee organization.

22. Can grant funds be used to support a staff member getting her LPN degree?  
   Answer: Yes, grant funds may be used to support a scholarship for an eligible recipient pursuing an LPN degree (within the other parameters of the grant, i.e., as long as the scholarship recipient and expenses meet the other eligibility criteria and the scholarship funds are utilized during the grant period). For examples of eligible programs and trainings, please refer to: [https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf)

23. Is my organization eligible to apply if the client population is primarily 55 years and up, but less than 50 percent of individuals served are 65 years of age and older?  
   Answer: No, as stipulated in the authorizing statute: “Eligible providers must primarily provide services to individuals who are 65 years of age and older....” The entire statute can found here: [https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/144.1503](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/144.1503).

24. Can grant funds be used to pay off existing student loans?  
   Answer: No, the funds must be used for education or training that occurs during the grant period, and no grant-funded activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place (see page 6 of RFP).
25. How much funding should my organization request?
   Answer: The minimum amount to request (for the two-year grant period) is $15,000; $100,000 is the maximum request amount allowed. Don’t ask for more than what you need, and keep in mind that “reasonableness of the budget” accounts for 20 percent of your proposal’s score (see page 10 of RFP).

26. If my organization is awarded a grant, how will it be paid out?
   Answer: As indicated on page 7 of RFP, reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. Reimbursement is made to the grantee organization (not to employees, schools or training programs). A progress report is required with each reimbursement request, and proof of payment must be provided for each expense to be reimbursed.

27. What happens if my organization is awarded a grant, but it’s not for the entire amount requested?
   Answer: Partial funding results in the negotiation of a revised budget that reflects any recommendations made by the review committee.

28. Are managers eligible to receive scholarships or training funded by the grant?
   Answer: As stated on page 5 of the RFP: To be eligible, a scholarship recipient must be employed in a caregiving role and must work an average of at least 16 hours per week for the grantee organization while receiving a scholarship funded by the HCBS Employee Scholarship Grant Program. Therefore, a manager who spends at least 16 hours a week providing direct patient care may pursue an eligible course of study (as outlined on page 5 of RFP) with grant funds. Classes or trainings in management, human resources, accounting, coding or healthcare administration are not eligible. For examples of eligible programs and trainings, please refer to: https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2019hcbsresource.pdf.

29. Are culinary staff eligible to receive scholarships or training funded by the grant?
   Answer: Yes, culinary staff are considered to be employed as caregivers and are eligible when they meet the other eligibility criteria. Proposed scholarships and trainings must be related to client-care, lead to career advancement, and provide education over and beyond what is required to maintain an individual’s certification or an organization’s licensure.

30. Can general education classes required by a nursing program be covered by a grant-funded scholarship?
   Answer: Yes, classes required for an eligible course of study are allowable. Documentation of program requirements may be requested to justify reimbursement for such coursework.

31. What needs to be included in the narrative description of the application?
   Answer: Please refer to Form 5 within the set of required forms: https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/funding/grants/docs/2020hcbsforms.pdf. Follow the formatting instructions and provide responses to the information requested, which will be scored according to the criteria and weighting described on page 10 of RFP.
32. If my organization currently has a HCBS Employee Scholarship Grant, can we apply before the current grant ends?
   Answer: Yes, current grantees may apply for new funding. As indicated on page 11 of the RFP: It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them. Note that the guidance for the narrative (Form 5) requests specific information from organizations that have received previous funding from the HCBS Employee Scholarship Program. Current grantees are encouraged to contact Sonya.Borgeson-Bethke@state.mn.us to discuss their plans to apply for additional funding.

33. My facility operates under an assumed name. Do I use the legal name or the assumed name on the application?
   Answer: On Form 3, there are separate fields for legal name and assumed name. On the other forms, if space permits, please list legal name followed by dba; otherwise, use just the legal name on the application forms. For the narrative, please introduce your organization with legal and assumed names and then refer to the organization as you do in typical conversation.

34. The RFP indicates that questions need to be submitted by September 23, 2019. What if I have questions after that date?
   Answer: You may submit questions up to the application deadline of September 27, however, they will be answered in the order in which they are received and a response is not guaranteed before the application deadline for questions submitted after September 23, 2019.

Minnesota Department of Health
Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Employee Scholarship Grant Program
85 E. 7th Place, Suite 220
St. Paul, MN 55101
651-201-3895
sonya.borgeson-bethke@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3838. Printed on recycled paper.