

SEAL Minnesota Grant Application Summary

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Background

Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases among children according to [CDC: Children's Oral Health](#). [MDH oral health data](#) shows that 5 out of 10 suffer from tooth decay. Tooth decay can lead to cavities (dental caries), which are holes in the teeth. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who don't.

Tooth decay and cavities are largely preventable. In fact, [dental sealants](#), which are thin coatings applied on the chewing surfaces of back teeth (molars) can protect against 80% of cavities ([CDC Vital Signs: Dental Sealant Use And Untreated Tooth Decay Among U.S. School Aged Children](#)). Stopping cavities before they start can improve health and readiness to learn, ensure that kids stay in school, cut health care costs, and reduce emergency room visits.

Unfortunately, many children in Minnesota struggle to access dental care and do not receive dental sealants. Around 6 in 10 Minnesota counties are designated as dental health professional shortage areas (MDH: Dental HPSAs). These counties have a shortage of dental providers on the basis of availability of dentists and dental auxiliaries. Many rural communities, families with low-income and inadequate resources lack a routine access to oral health providers.

School Sealant Programs ([SSPs](#)) are a highly effective way to deliver sealants to children who are less likely to receive routine dental care. They are designed to increase access to dental sealants by bringing the service into schools.

[SEAL Minnesota](#) is a statewide and coordinated school sealant program (SSP) for protecting, maintaining, and improving the oral health of all Minnesota children. The MDH vision is for health equity in Minnesota, where all children thrive and have what they need to be healthy.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is currently accepting applications to put into action local SSPs that reduce oral disease and improve oral health. The purpose of this Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) is to increase sealant prevalence and reduce marked disparities in caries rates among children. Traditional dental partners as well as public health programs are eligible to apply.

Goal

The funding will increase the number of Minnesota's schools and children receiving the benefits of preventive dental sealants and related oral health education.

Innovative Approach

Health Equity Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, and consistency in competitive grant awards. State competitive grant review processes shall be conducted using review criteria that are identified in the RFP and a standardized scoring system to rate each application against the chosen criteria. Learn more: [Minnesota Department of Administration Office of Grants Management Operating Policy and Procedure \(PDF\)](#).

Funding Components

Component A: Dental Providers' Grant for SSPs

Project Overview

The purpose of Component A is to help dental providers such as clinics, dentists, [collaborative practice dental hygienists](#), and Advanced Dental Therapists ([ADTs](#)) develop, implement, and evaluate SSPs to increase sealant prevalence in Dental HPSAs in a manner appropriate to each program's capacity and reach.

The aim is to encourage and support innovation that will increase preventive services and referrals for children in elementary and middle schools with a higher percentage (50% or more) of children eligible for federal free or reduced-cost meal programs ([MDH Data Map: FRPL](#)).

The overarching vision is to sustain SSPs that increase the accessibility and quality of oral health services within Dental HPSAs.

MDH Oral Health Program will provide sealant standardization or **calibration training**. This technical assistance is designed to train and/or assist dental providers with standardizing the process of selecting teeth for sealant placement. The training includes a didactic presentation to assist with tooth selection criteria using clinical photographs for dental providers. Both the PowerPoint and pretest/post-test presentations are meant to be used for information dissemination and to show clinical examples of sound, cavitated, and non-cavitated lesions on tooth surfaces. Therefore, grantees of this component are mandated to attend the training. Applicants with a **"retention check plan"** will receive priority for funding.

Proposals would need to be submitted using the link provided in the Submission section.

Project Requirements

- Prioritize schools with a high percentage of students who are eligible for the [FRPL](#) (50% or more)
- Select underserved communities, ethnic cohorts, refugees, immigrants, or children from families with limited English proficiency immigrants

- Serve new eligible schools within the Dental HPSAs (Appendix A: Dental Professional Shortage Areas)
- Participate in the MDH technical assistance webinar for calibration and data management training
- Place sealants and provide a referral for follow-up services
- Collaborate with community agencies to enroll children in public assistance
- Connect children with medical providers and social service agencies as needed
- Maintain clinical standards for sealant placement and infection control
- Ensure schools and families receive related oral health education
- Perform retention check
- Communicate and follow up with schools and children
- Provide related qualitative and quantitative data to MDH (Appendix D: Data deliverables)
Participate in MDH’s evaluation activities

Component B (New): Public Health Partners’ Grant for SSPs

Project Overview

The purpose of Component B is to help public health entities build infrastructure and capacity to coordinate SSPs in Dental HPSAs.

The aim is to identify and cultivate relationships with public health partners and referral sources in the community. Many children in schools do not have a primary or regular source of oral health care (dental home). Public health partners can serve as a bridge to the establishment of a dental home by integrating SSP into their existing community health initiatives and linking students with oral health needs to the broader oral health care community.

The process of establishing a SSP involves several important steps, including forming a planning committee, conducting a needs assessment, and determining the geographic area, target population, and the number of students eligible for the program. To accomplish this, public health programs would devote the time and effort needed to develop relationships with the oral health providers in the community. This will serve as a steppingstone coordinating SSPs in Dental HPSAs and the establishment of a dental home for children if they don’t already have one. The funds will also support grantees in preparation for launching which would include a variety of activities such as SSPs assessing the organization’s readiness, key partner convening, goals setting, and an action plan to launch SSPs.

The overarching vision is to integrate SSP into a broader public health system. School-based health centers, local public health agencies (LPHAs), community clinics, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), migrant health services, and health organizations can play an important role in connecting with dental providers to offer dental sealants and other preventive services in community settings, address potential barriers that interfere with parents pursuing dental care,

find dentists who will provide care to their children and assure that children receive the recommended care.

Proposals need to be submitted using the link provided in the Submission section.

Project Requirements

- Collaborate with MDH Oral Health Program to conduct a needs assessment.
- Complete a “Readiness Assessment” survey.
- Identify your organization’s leadership and connections with key partners in implementing a successful SSP such as dental providers, community clinics, school administrators, school nurses, parent groups, local public health/community health board, children’s health advocates, community organizations, etc. If you do not have any current connections, brainstorm potential contacts. MDH Oral Health Program will support to identify potential partners as needed.
- Contact your key partners and invite them to participate in focus groups. The MDH Oral Health Program will help you develop questions and provide technical assistance to facilitate the discussion.
- Explore the landscape, feasibility, resources, facilitators, barriers, and partnerships for developing a framework for SSP.
- Convene a SSP workgroup to develop an action plan.

Funding Amount

- Any Minnesota organization, dental professionals, schools, community health boards, local public health agencies, public health clinics and programs willing to develop, implement, and evaluate a SSP is eligible to apply.
- Organization must incur expenses during the grant project period: March 1, 2024 – Aug. 15, 2024, and upon execution of the grant agreement. Selected projects can receive up to \$5,000 and work must be completed before Aug. 15, 2024. Invoices and data for this grant project must be submitted by Aug. 31, 2024.
- To be considered for the SEAL Minnesota mini grant, please fill out the forms using the link in the submission section by **Jan. 31, 2024, 11:59 pm CST**.

Submission

Component A

- **Reference Guide: Component A Application (Word)**. Read this document to review the questionnaire and prepare responses for submission.
- **Submission:** Please click on the link below, fill out the application and submit electronically.
 - **2024 SEAL Minnesota Grant Component A Application Form**
(<https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=XJEPFFXJLRHWR9Y>)

- **Evaluation Criteria-Component A (PDF)**: This document provides criteria to evaluate submitted proposals.

Component B

- **Reference Guide: Component B Application (Word)**. Read this document to review the questionnaire and prepare responses for submission.
- **Submission**: Please click on the link below, fill out the application and submit electronically.
 - **2024 SEAL Minnesota Grant Component B Application Form**
(<https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=WERCC4EL8NK8C9MA>)
- **Evaluation Criteria: Component B (PDF)**. This document provides criteria to evaluate submitted proposals.

Appendix Information

- **Appendix A: Dental Professional Shortage Areas (PDF)**
- **Appendix B: State vendor identification number manual**
- **Appendix C: SSP best practices report (PDF)**
- **Appendix D: Data deliverables (PDF)**
- **Appendix E: Work plan template (PDF)**
- **Appendix F: Budget template (PDF)**

Technical Assistance

For questions and support related to the grant application and obtaining a state vendor identification number, please contact Ndekela Sakala at ndekela.sakala@state.mn.us or 651-201-4248.

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5400. Printed on recycled paper.