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AGE-FRIENDLY MINNESOTA COMMUNITY GRANTS SFY23-24

TO: Grant Applicants

FROM: Department of Human Services (DHS)

ACTION: Signed and submitted applications must be received via email to Brenda Mesaros at MN.DHS.AgeFriendlyMN@state.mn.us by **February 6, 2023, no later than 10:00 a.m. Central Time.**

The “application” includes the entire Grant Application and Assurances. Supporting documents are requested as applicable.

SECTION 1: GRANT OVERVIEW

A. Purpose and Outcome of the Grant Opportunity

This grant opportunity is funded through the Minnesota Legislature Laws of [Minnesota 2021, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 7, article 17, sections 2 and 8.](#)

The Age-Friendly Minnesota (AFMN) Council, in cooperation with the MN Department of Human Services, is offering Community Grants to help communities work on age-friendly projects and become better places for all Minnesotans to grow older. (**Note:** AFMN Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Grants were recently funded through a separate grants process and are designed to assist Community Grantees.) The Council is committed to making Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) the foundation of AFMN, including in this grants program.

B. Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must reside or conduct business within the state of Minnesota.
- Applicants embrace the community values that demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Grant applicants may be one of the following: 501(c)(3) organization, a unit of government, a university, a public entity, a business, or a sole proprietor.
- Projects will promote age-friendly communities and initiatives. (Details in next paragraph.)

AFMN Grant awards **will fund** efforts to create, improve, or expand innovative systems, programs, built environments, and other initiatives that contribute to age-friendly communities.

Examples of eligible efforts include but are not limited to: conducting needs assessments; developing plans; implementing an age-friendly framework; community engagement; improvements to the built

environment (such as sidewalks, public buildings, etc.); and research. (See Section 2.A for more details.)

Note: Because the AFMN Grant Program focuses on systems and environment changes, it **will not fund** direct services to older adults, including those provided through the Elderly Waiver or Alternative Care programs; Older Americans Act; and Medicaid Services. Examples of such services include case management, chore services, caregiver services, transportation services, and health promotion programs. [Click here](#) for a comprehensive list.

(URL: https://public.mnagingproviders.org/-/media/public/policy-questions-docs/older_americans_act_and_medicaid_services.docx?la=en)

C. Funding Available

The Department of Human Services (DHS) estimates that **two million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$2,900,000)** is available for a one-time grant program to advance age-friendly communities' efforts through March 31, 2024. The grants include two closely linked categories: Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Grants and Community Grants. (**Note:** TAP Grants were funded previously through a separate grants process.)

The maximum Community Grant award may not exceed ninety-nine thousand dollars (\$99,000).

The State reserves the right to offer grant amounts that differ from the Grant Applicant's request, or the maximum identified above. Any grantee awarded more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) will be subject to additional monitoring.

D. Grant Period

The term of the initial **Community Grant period** is anticipated to be from **April 3, 2023** through **March 31, 2024**.

Options for extensions/continuation awards will be considered at the State's discretion.

E. State's Right to Cancel

This grant opportunity does not obligate the State to award a grant and the State reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest due to lack of funding, agency priorities or other considerations.

F. General Information

1. Project Information and Background

A. Age-Friendly Minnesota (AFMN) Grant Program

The Age-Friendly Minnesota (AFMN) Grant Program was funded by the Minnesota Legislature in recognition of Minnesota’s demographic shifts to an older population, and the need for new approaches to, and greater investment in, community-level work related to aging.

The Council has made **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)** the foundation of Age-Friendly Minnesota and wants to ensure that underserved groups will benefit from the AFMN Grants Program. These groups include, but are not limited to, older adults who:

1. are low-income
2. identify as indigenous American Indian
3. identify as Black, African American, Asian, Latinx
4. identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+)
5. are new immigrants and/or refugees
6. have limited English proficiency
7. live in rural areas
8. are veterans
9. have disabilities.

B. AFMN Grant Program: Community Grants

Individuals, organizations, and communities (defined below) can apply for AFMN Community Grants to develop plans, policies, programs, and environments that promote the dignity, autonomy, and inclusion of older Minnesotans. This includes, but is not limited to, efforts to adopt and implement frameworks such as Age-Friendly Communities, Health Systems, Universities, or Public Health. (**Note:** AFMN Community Grants **will not** fund direct services to older adults. See Eligibility Criteria in Section 1B for more detail.)

The AFMN Council defines communities broadly and includes neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, tribes, affinity groups, faith communities, and others.

Community Grant Applicants may apply for grants between one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and ninety nine thousand dollars (\$99,000) for a 12-month grant cycle (April 3, 2023-March 31, 2024).

C. Support available through AFMN Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Grants

Community Grant applicants/grantees who need support in applying for and/or implementing their grant projects may receive no-cost technical assistance from AFMN Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Grantees. (**Note:** TAP Grantees were funded through a separate grant process.)

TAP Grantees will use their experience and expertise to help Community Grant applicants/grantees who have limited experience or capacity related to applying for or implementing a grant project.

Note: Community Grant applicants who would like TAP assistance with their application and/or grant project must notify AFMN by emailing Brenda Mesaros at

MN.DHS.AgeFriendlyMN@state.mn.us between January 13 – 19, 2023 to be considered and potentially matched with a consultant. In your email, please include the following:

- Contact person
- Email address
- Projected service area (list counties)
- Type(s) of technical assistance requested (note all that apply):
 - o Grant writing, including budget development
 - o Conceptualizing a project idea
 - o Convening partners
 - o Other, please specify:

While every effort will be made to provide Community Grant applicants with needed support, requesting assistance does not guarantee that an applicant will receive assistance.

D. AFMN Grants Funding Areas

<p>Funding Areas</p> <p>The Funding Areas were noted by the Minnesota Legislature. The Funding Areas are interconnected; a single grant project may create benefits in more than one area.</p>	<p>Approaches</p> <p>The following approaches are examples of the types of activities that may be supported through the AFMN Grants. The approaches may be applied to any and all Funding Areas. (This list is not exhaustive).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Health and social services b. Transportation access c. Safe and affordable housing d. Social connection and inclusion e. Ageism and racism f. Outdoor spaces and buildings g. Communications and access to technology h. Opportunities to stay engaged and financially secure i. Emergency preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing equity • Access • Advocacy • Awareness/Communication • Coordination • Engagement • Policy • Programs/Activities • Research • Training/Education

Communities may also use funds to adopt and implement frameworks such as Age-Friendly Communities, Health Systems, Universities, or Public Health. Communities could also adopt other frameworks or processes to begin or expand age-friendly work.

Additional information on each Funding Area is listed below:

a. Health and Social Services

Increase older adults' access to healthcare and supportive services. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- Strengthen coordination between key partners—such as healthcare providers, social service providers, and other community partners—to improve and streamline care for older adults
- Identify and develop strategies to remove barriers to healthcare access
- Gather data or analyze existing data related to health disparities and use it to create a community data dashboard

b. Transportation Access

Increase transportation independence for older adults. Project examples *include, but are not limited to:*

- Assess transportation options for older adults to identify gaps and opportunities
- Efforts that improve pedestrian and/or cyclist safety and encourage walking and biking
- Innovative approaches that create transportation solutions and choices for older adults

c. Safe, Affordable Places to Live

Improve access to safe and affordable housing options. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- New cross-sector collaborative efforts to develop age-friendly housing strategies or policies
- Research efforts to study older adults at risk of homelessness
- Innovative housing models that create more choices for people with different preferences, circumstances, and income levels.
- Efforts that focus on universal design and creating homes for all ages and abilities

d. Social Connection and Inclusion

Increase and strengthen social connection and inclusion of older adults. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- Social activities that are affordable and include all ages
- Creation of public spaces or public art that encourage social interaction and multi-generational use
- Intergenerational activities that build connection between youth and older adults

e. Ageism and Racism

Advance work that dismantles ageism and breaks down barriers of systemic racism. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- Increase community awareness of ageism and racism through a public information campaign or similar
- Hold community events that enable education, information and/or shared experiences related to ageism and racism
- Provide trainings for organization staff, community members, and/or other groups related to ageism and racism

f. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Create or promote physical spaces, indoors and out, that are safe, inviting and designed for use by people of all ages and abilities, especially older adults. Projects *include but are not limited to:*

- Improving parks, outdoor gathering spaces, and pedestrian infrastructure to make them more appealing and usable by all
- Providing outdoor equipment, indoor walking tracks, or other interactive gathering spaces that allow for socializing and physical activity
- Develop a policy that outlines inclusive, age-friendly design requirements for outdoor spaces and/or buildings to make them safe and convenient for all users

g. Communication and Information Technology Access

Connect older adults to information, resources, and other people in new or expanded ways. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- Develop accessible communications strategies for resources such as printed materials, website, digital media, translation efforts, etc.
- Training and technical support related to using the internet
- Innovative approaches to reaching older adults with important information

h. Opportunities to Stay Engaged and Financially Secure

Support or create opportunities for older adults to work for pay, volunteer, and/or otherwise contribute to the community and local economy, while also gaining a sense of purpose and/or additional income. Project examples *include but are not limited to:*

- Engaging with local businesses and others to raise awareness of the value of older workers and encourage age-friendly recruiting and hiring
- Pilot projects related to older adult engagement in the community, public awareness or education related to long-term financial planning, etc.

- Innovative volunteering models, such as volunteers “banking” hours that can be traded for desired services, or additional volunteer training that builds volunteer capacity to serve the community

i. Emergency Preparedness

Using lessons learned through the COVID-19 pandemic, help communities, long-term care communities, and individuals prepare for various types of future emergencies—such as natural disasters, public safety, pandemics, etc. Project examples *include but are not limited to*:

- Create emergency plans, including broadband access, for community service providers or other key organizations to minimize disruption of critical services during an emergency,
- Coordinate emergency planning efforts between community organizations, local governments, age-friendly community initiatives and health systems, etc.
- Assessment of needs for individual emergency planning, including broadband access; social isolation among solo agers; and individuals with hearing and/or vision impairment

The following table provides examples of the types of expenses that are eligible and ineligible for grant funding.

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Funding Area	Eligible Expense:	Ineligible Expense:
Emergency preparedness	Developing a community emergency response plan—costs could include consultant fees, community engagement, or developing public awareness campaign.	Purchase of tablet devices
Transportation	Develop a plan or strategy for how to utilize an accessible vehicle in the community during off hours Plan the creation and publicity of a volunteer driver program	A service that provides rides to older adults
Social Connection and Inclusion	Design and implement a community mural that showcases aging or caregiving	Offering an art class for older adults

2. Specific Program Expectations

- a. The Age-Friendly Minnesota Council has made Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) the foundation of Age-Friendly Minnesota and is committed to ensuring that the work of the Council, including the Grants Program, promotes equity and reduces disparities.

- b. Grantees are expected to participate in a DHS-funded collaborative forum, peer-learning event, meetings related to grant progress, or similar event(s) focused on sharing and learning related to age-friendly grant projects.
- c. AFMN Grantees are expected to engage local, regional, and state officials related to their grant funding and project. Specific guidelines will be provided at an appropriate time.

3. General Expectations of Grantees

- a. The expected length of the grants is **April 3, 2023-March 31, 2024**. Workplans and budgets should be developed accordingly. Grant funds must be expended during the grant period.
- b. Submit financial reporting forms and progress reports by the dates indicated in the Official Grant Award Notification.
- c. Grantees will be expected to retain documentation to support the expenditures related to the grant initiative described. Reimbursement must be based on necessary and applicable expenditures related to the program.
- d. Maintain a ledger to track the grant budget expenditures and payment reimbursements plus documentation that supports your budget line-item expenses.
- e. Applicants are required to include in their budget planning costs related to administrative and staff time, travel expenses, etc. related to participating in required events.
- f. Prior to issuing the grant award notice, DHS will need to review financial statements for Grant Applicants that are nongovernmental organizations when a grant award is over twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per [Policy on the Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations](#).
- g. For a grant over fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), monitoring is required during the grant period.

4. Resources for Grant Applicants

Age-Friendly Minnesota

(<https://mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn/>)

Recommendations from the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota

(https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/AF-council-recommendations-081720_tcm1053-444028.pdf)

State Grant Management Policies

The Minnesota Office of Grant Management Policies
(<http://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms>).

State Travel Plan
Commissioner's Travel Reimbursement Plan

G. Grant Application Components

1. Coversheet

- a. All Grant Applicants must include a completed Cover Sheet that includes all requested information.
- b. Identification Numbers, if applicable, are requested as part of the Cover Sheet.

Your organization may already have these number(s), check with your business office.

- **Minnesota Statewide Integrated Financial Tool System (SWIFT) Vendor Number:** Please reference this information on SWIFT: <https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/>

2. Application Narrative Components and Budget

In the application section, develop your responses to each component, both the narrative portions and the table. Each criteria within the application narrative sections should be addressed in the narrative response. Space is provided to answer each narrative section.

3. Assurances – Standard and Program-Specific

When you sign the application, you certify that you have read the entire Grant Application and Assurances and that you will comply with the approved application, the assurances here and in the Official Grant Award Notification (OGAN) and all other applicable federal regulations, state statutes, and local policies.

4. Applicant Questions

Applicants will have opportunities to ask questions related to the applications.

- a. A **Virtual Grant Applicant Conference** will serve as an opportunity for Applicants to ask specific questions of State staff concerning the project. Attendance at the Grant Applicant Conference is not mandatory but is recommended.
 - Oral answers given at the Grant Applicant Conference will be non-binding. Written responses to questions asked at the conference will be sent to all identified prospective applicants after the conference.