



Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program

Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)

03/02/2026

Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE)

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Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 1: Overview

Grant Overview

- Grant Name: Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program
- Website: <https://ohe.mn.gov/competitive-grants/spinal-cord-injury-and-traumatic-brain-injury-research-grant-program>
- Open for Proposals: March 2, 2026
- Proposal Due Date: April 15, 2026

The Office of Higher Education administers the Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program through Minnesota Statute 136A.901 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.901>) which provides funding for research into new and innovative treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. The State of Minnesota established the Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury (SCI-TBI) Grant Program July 1, 2015.

Funding Availability

\$2,500,000 is appropriated each year of the 2026/2027 biennium to support the Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Grant Program, with ten percent of this appropriation for program administration. (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/5/>)

The Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, in consultation with the program's advisory council, shall award 50 percent of the available grant funds for research focused on spinal cord injuries and 50 percent to research focused on traumatic brain injuries. Therefore, \$1,125,000 is available for SCI grants and \$1,125,000 is available for TBI grants.

Should there be additional funding available for this grant cycle, it will be included in the total funds awarded and divided 50/50 by content area.

In fiscal year 2026, three funding options are available through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Each tier, with maximum allowable request and base project time are listed below:

Tier 1: Pilot Project Grant

- Max Request: \$125,000
- Project Time: 2 years + 1 year no-cost extension*

Tier 2: Standard Research Grant

- Max Request: \$250,000
- Project Time: 2 years + 1 year no-cost extension*

Tier 3: Clinical/Translational Research Grant

- Max request: \$500,000
- Project Time: 3 years + 2 year no-cost extension*

Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury research proposals will be funded up to the maximum request per funding tier for the Fiscal Year 2026 grant period, which includes indirect costs at a maximum of 8% of personnel costs, including salaries/fringe costs. Proposals may be partially funded depending on the availability of funds and/or budget efficiency.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

*For more information on no-cost extensions, please refer to the “Extensions” section below.

Project Dates

Project start and end dates are estimated to be September 2026-June 2028 for Tier 1 and 2 projects, and September 2026-June 2029 for Tier 3 projects.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be considered for this grant opportunity. Eligible grant applicants are institutions/organizations located within Minnesota and fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Public/state-controlled institution of higher education
- Private institution of higher education
- Nonprofit with 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institution of higher education)
- Nonprofit without 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institution of higher education)
- Small business
- For-profit organization (other than small business).

The principal investigator(s) listed on the proposal must be affiliated with the grant applicant.

Eligible Principal Investigators

Eligible principal investigators must have the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research. This program is not for postdoctoral fellowships or residents (non-board eligible/board certified physicians); postdoctoral fellows and residents will not be considered as principal investigators. Post-doctorates, residents, or other individuals are eligible to be listed as key personnel or consultants.

Eligible Projects

Successful proposals will be relative to the topic of spinal cord and brain injury and have high scientific merit.

Project subjects should align with the following according to Tiers:

- **Tier One Project Details:** Reflects early investment as the researcher prepares to seek a larger grant award from a federal program or nonprofit organization. Preliminary data is not required but encouraged.
- **Tier Two Project Details:** Primarily for research with strong supporting/preliminary data. If the budget is justifiable, the Standard Research Grant may also fund pilot projects. Applicants are encouraged to attach papers; in-press, pre-published drafts, and accepted papers may be cited or submitted separately as an appendix.
- **Tier Three Project Details:** Projects must have concurrent proposal for, or funding from, federal or industry sources. Preliminary data must be published or in press in a scientific journal and cited or submitted separately as an appendix. Projects including human subjects are preferred.

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 (<https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

This grant will serve individuals with spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries. This commitment is demonstrated through criteria in the proposal evaluation process and outcomes for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. Preference will be given to projects that seek to change the nature and the course of these injuries.

Collaboration

Applicants, principal investigators, and researchers may collaborate with others on the content of the proposal, regardless of their location. Applicants must reside in Minnesota, write the proposal, and submit the proposal.

Selection Criteria and Weight

A review committee of community experts convenes to review and utilize a rubric to evaluate proposals based upon the following 45-point scale:

1. Significance (1-9 points)
 - The proposed project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field.
 - If the aims of the project are achieved, scientific knowledge, technical capacity, and/or clinical practice will be improved.
 - Successful completion of proposed project aims will change the concepts, methods,

technologies, treatment, or rehabilitative services that drive this field.

2. Innovation (1-9 points)

- The proposal challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- A refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions is proposed.

3. Approach (1-9 points)

- The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses are well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed project.
- Potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for successes are presented.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, the proposed strategy will establish feasibility and manage particularly risky aspects of the proposed project.
- If the project involves human subjects and/or NIH-defined clinical research, plans are in place for Protection of Human Subjects and inclusion (or exclusion) of individuals on the basis of sex/gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as the inclusion (or exclusion) of children, justified in terms of the proposed scientific goals and research strategy.

4. Investigator(s) (1-9 points)

- The PI, collaborators, and other researchers are well suited for the project.
- Early-Stage Investigators or New Investigators have appropriate experience and training.
- Established Investigators have demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s).
- If the project is collaborative or multi-PI, the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise and their leadership approach, governance, and organizational structure are appropriate for the project.

5. Appropriateness of Facilities/Environment (1-9 points)

- The scientific environment in which the work will be done will contribute to the probability of success.
- Institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators are adequate for the proposed project.
- The project will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements.

6. Budget (narrative evaluation comments only)

- The budget is clear, concise, and justified by the narrative describing proposed costs.
- The budget is cost effective and reflective of the RFP and program objectives.

The assignment of points during the proposal review process will be reflective of National Institutes of Health guidelines.

Questions, Technical Assistance and Information Sessions

Technical assistance is available for interpreting instructions or preparing proposals by emailing GWI.OHE@state.mn.us. Please review all available materials before emailing your inquiry.

Each week, OHE will post responses to technical questions online at <https://ohe.mn.gov/competitive-grants/spinal-cord-injury-and-traumatic-brain-injury-research-grant-program>. Technical questions must be submitted no later than **March 25, 2026**.

To ensure fair and equitable processing of proposals, OHE will not review and/or comment on draft proposals.

All prospective applicants are encouraged to attend the following information session:

2026 SCI-TBI Research Grant Proposal Workshop

[Join Here](#)

Meeting ID: 290 102 715 102 42

Passcode: Ti2ek3wE

Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 2: Submission

Proposals must be received within the online grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/> no later than **4:30 p.m. central time, on Wednesday, April 15, 2026**. Applicants must submit the following in order for the proposal to be considered complete:

1. Proposal Abstract
2. Research Plan
3. Financial and Applicant Capacity Review Responses, if applicable
4. Budget
5. Budget Justification
6. References Attachment
7. Senior/Key Personnel Attachment
8. Biographical Sketch of Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel Attachment
9. Other Grant Support for Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel Attachment

Incomplete proposals will be rejected and not evaluated. Proposals must include all required proposal materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated.

OHE reserves the right to reject any proposal that does not meet these requirements.

By submitting a proposal, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of 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 by law.

All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by the applicant.

Proposal Content

The Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program Request for Proposal is available online at <https://ohe.mn.gov/competitive-grants/spinal-cord-injury-and-traumatic-brain-injury-research-grant-program>.

All proposal content is submitted through a secure online grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>. The grants management system requires user registration. OHE reviews and approves each user registration within three business days. User registrations submitted after **March 25, 2026, may not** be reviewed and approved prior to the proposal deadline.

Applicants must submit all proposal content by **4:30 p.m. central time, on April 15, 2026**, for OHE to consider the proposal as complete.

Proposal Information

Applicants must complete the six forms within the Proposal section: Assign Principal Investigator, Proposal Cover Sheet, Program Abstract, Research Plan, Financial and Applicant Capacity Review, and Attachments.

Assign Principal Investigator

To complete the Assign Principal Investigator form, applicants must select Principal Investigator(s) from your organization to add them to the SCI-TBI proposal. They must be active organization members to be displayed in the dropdown list.

The Assign Principal Investigator form includes the following fields of which some may pre-populate based upon previous forms in the proposal process:

- Principal Investigator Selection

Proposal Cover Sheet

To complete the Proposal Cover Sheet form, applicants must provide general information about their organization and Spinal Cord Injury or Traumatic Brain Injury program.

The Proposal Cover Sheet form includes the following fields of which some may pre-populate based upon previous forms in the proposal process:

- Principal Investigator(s)
- Rank
- Department
- School
- Institutional Affiliation
- E-Mail Address of PI
- Phone Number of PI
- Street Address
 - City, Zip Code, State
- Title of Proposal
- Funding Tier
 - Tier 1: Pilot Project Grant
 - Tier 2: Standard Research Grant
 - Tier 3: Clinical/Translational Research Grant
- Research Area
 - Spinal Cord Injury
 - Traumatic Brain Injury
- Amount Requested
- Recombinant DNA?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Protocol #
- Human Subjects?

- Yes
- No
- Protocol #
- Vertebrate Animas?
- Does this project involve clinical research?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Protocol #
- Authorized Representative Information: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this proposal are true and correct. The document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant. Institution's Authorized Representative for Approving Proposal Submission:
 - Authorized Representative Name
 - Title, Phone Number, E-mail, Date

Program Abstract

The Program Abstract MUST be written in lay-persons terms and be accessible to a reviewer with little-to- no existing science knowledge.

1. Background to the Research Topic
2. The Question(s) or Central Hypothesis of the Research
3. The General Methodology to Be Used
4. Innovative Elements of the Project
5. Impact on Treatments and Rehabilitative Efforts for Functional Improvement of People with Spinal Cord or Traumatic Brain Injuries

Research Plan

Note: If directly uploaded into the grants portal, Research Plan should not exceed ten (10) numbered, double-spaced pages.

1. Introduction: Provide an explicit description of how the proposed research will meet the goals of the research grant program. Review the most significant previous work, and describe the current status of research in the field. Document with references. Describe any preliminary work the principal investigator/collaborator has done which lead to this proposal.
2. Specific Aims: List the specific aims of the project.
3. Procedural Methods: Give details of the research plan, including a description of the proposed work; the hypothesis being tested, methods, animal model and species/genetic background, and techniques to be used; the kinds of data expected to be obtained; statistical analysis plan including the interpretations and discussion of alternative explanations, and benchmarks for success. If clinical studies are involved, give details of responsibility for patient selection, patient care, and process of informed consent and protection of vulnerable populations. Include a discussion of pitfalls that might be encountered and limitations of the procedures proposed. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be

hazardous to study personnel and the precautions to be exercised (list any SOPs regarding appropriate personal protective equipment, biological waste management and spill containment as a separate appendix if applicable). Illustrate the tentative timeline in which experiments will be conducted in order to meet the study goals within the funding period.

4. **Significance:** Describe how the proposed project addresses a critical need or barrier to progress in the field. Discuss any new and innovative ideas and contributions that the project offers, and its translational impact should aims be met. Discuss any new and innovative ideas and contributions that the project offers. Make clear the potential importance of the proposed project for stimulating further research or attracting federal grant support and described the planned efforts to secured such future funding.
5. **Facilities Available:** Describe the facilities available for this project including laboratories, clinical resources, office space, animal quarters, etc. List major items of equipment available for the proposed work.
6. **Collaborative Arrangements:** If the proposed project requires collaboration with other investigators, describe the collaboration and provide evidence to assure the reviewers that the other collaborators agree (letters of support in the appendix).

Financial and Applicant Capacity Review

In accordance with [Minnesota Statute §16B.981](#) and [OGM Policy 08-06: Preaward Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees](#) and agency policies, OHE is required to considers a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants.

Only applicable to business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

To complete the Financial and Applicant Capacity Review form, applicants must describe and acknowledge components of their organization and/or provide financial documentation.

The Financial and Applicant Capacity Review form includes the following fields of which some may pre-populate based upon previous forms in the proposal process:

Applicant Capacity Review

Capacity Response

- Describe the applicant's history of performing the work that will be funded by this grant. This includes describing the applicant's current staffing, organization structure, budget, and administering grants from State Government and other sources.

Certification of No Felony Financial Crime

- Certify that no current principals have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last ten years. 16B.981 Subd. 2 (6) requires that no current principals of a grantee have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity or to

determine how those funds are used. By signing below, I warrant that no current principal of my organization has been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. I certify that this information is true, correct, and reliable. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me/my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. *The response must be completed by business entities, nonprofit organizations, and political subdivisions.

- Signature, Title, Date
- Please upload an organizational chart or list of principals that you certify with the above statement.

Certification of Good Standing with Secretary of State

- Certify that applicant has filed and is up-to-date with the Secretary of State. OHE will verify applicant's status with the Secretary of State Office. Potential grantee must certify that the organization has a status of "In Good Standing" with the Secretary of State as required by 16B.981 Subd. 2 (3) and as part of the response to this Grant Request for Proposal. Is your organization (for-profit or nonprofit) registered with the Secretary of State and has a status of "In Good Standing"?
 - Yes
 - No

Financial Review

OHE requires applicants to submit financial information as part of the grant proposal process. OHE audit staff will review the applicant's financial documents and perform a risk assessment to ensure the organization is financially stable. The types of financial documents and certifications required by applicants vary by type and size of organizations, as described in the sections below.

Nonprofit Organization Financial Documents

Requesting **\$50,000 or less** in total grant amount: Must submit financial documents representing most recently completed year (**1 year total**).

Requesting **over \$50,000** in total grant amount: Must submit financial documents representing most recently completed three years (**3 years total**).

Financial Documents to Upload:

- Most recently completed IRS Form(s) 990 or Form(s) 990-EZ
- Most recently completed Certified Financial Audit(s), if potential nonprofit grantee is required to complete an audit under Section 309.5 Subd. 3
- Board-reviewed financial statements, proof of tax-exempt status, and documentation of internal controls, if potential nonprofit grantee is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ or has not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or audit

Business Entity Financial Documents

Requesting **\$50,000 or less** in total grant amount: Must submit financial documents representing most recently completed year (**1 year total**).

Requesting **over \$50,000** in total grant amount: Must submit financial documents representing most recently completed three years (**3 years total**).

Financial Documents to Upload:

- Most recently completed Federal Tax Return
- Most recently completed State Tax Return
- Current Financial statements
- Documentation of internal controls and current financial statements, if potential business entity has not been in business long enough to have filed a tax return

A business entity will also certify that the business is not under bankruptcy proceedings and disclosure any liens on assets.

Attachments

1. **References Page:** Reference page citing research-based references that support proposed activities and lists the PubMed central reference number (PMCID) at the end of the full journal citation, if available.
2. **Senior Key Personnel Report:** Include for each: Name, Degree(s), Role on Project, Institutional Affiliation, Person Months Devoted to Project (Cal/Acad/Sum)
3. **Biographical Sketch of Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel:** Include for each: Name, Position Title, Education/Training (Institution, Location, Degree MM/YY, Field of Study), Personal Statement, Positions and Honors, and Selected Peer-reviewed Publications.
4. **Other Grant Support for Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel:** Provide active support for the Principal Investigator and any key personnel. Other Support includes all financial resources, whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial or institutional, available in direct support of an individual's research endeavors, including but not limited to research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and/or institutional awards. Training awards, prizes, or gifts do not need to be included.

It is critical that the Other Support page be clear and detailed, and include funding through program projects, centers, joint grants, and other programs as well as the role of the person in each grant and any potential overlap. Both Active and Pending support should be listed.

Include the following for each: Name of Individual, if Active/Pending, Project Number, Source, Title, Dates of Project, Annual Direct Cost, Person Months (Cal/Acad/Sum), Major Goals of Project, and Overlap with OHE Project.

Budget

Include a written budget justification for each category.

- *Personnel*: Include for each Personnel listed/funded by the project: Name, Role on Project, Type Appointment (Months), Percent (%) Effort on Project, Base Salary, Fringe Benefits.
- *Consultant Costs/Sub Awards*
- *Supplies*
- *Patient Care Costs*
- *Travel (In State)*
- *Travel (Out of State)*
- *Other Expenses*
- *Budget Summary*

Proposal Signatures

Signature of Authorized Representative

Signature of Principal Investigator

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 3: Proposal Review Process

Review Process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process. First OHE will ensure applicants meet all eligibility requirements and the proposal deadline. If requirements are not met, the proposal will not be submitted to the review committee. Next, a committee of community experts with subject knowledge will use the point scale provided above to evaluate proposals. Applicants will be provided the opportunity to present before the committee for five minutes, and then respond to questions for up to 10 minutes. The review committee will put forth their recommendations. Then, members of the Spinal Cord and Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council will review committee recommendations and make final award decisions. Lastly, OHE will award available funds and notify applicants. OHE retains the right to offer partial awards based upon competitive priorities and available funds.

Applicants will be notified via email when their award notifications are available within the online grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

Timeline

March 2, 2026: Request for Proposal posted on the OHE website at <https://ohe.mn.gov/competitive-grants/spinal-cord-injury-and-traumatic-brain-injury-research-grant-program> and available in grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

March 18, 2026: Applicant Proposal Workshop, 12-1 p.m. Central Time

March 25, 2026: Grants management system user registration due.

March 25, 2026: Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time

April 15, 2026: Proposals due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time

April 15, 2026: Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment

June 8, 2026: Committee begins review of proposals

Week of July 20, 2026: Applicant presentations before committee

Week of July 20, 2026: Committee recommendations submitted to advisory council.

July 29-August 5: Advisory council decisions submitted to OHE.

No Later Than August 7, 2026: Applicants notified.

August -September 2026: Prepare grant documents, negotiate grant contract agreement, execute grant contract agreement and begin grant program.

September 1, 2026: Mandatory Grantee Orientation, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Central Time

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 per [Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

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 an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Public Data

Per [Minnesota Statutes § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants and amount requested will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in §13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by Office of Higher Education as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in §13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, Data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.

Request For Proposals (RFP) Part 4: Award Requirements and Grant Management Responsibilities

Preaward Risk Assessment and Financial Review

In accordance with [Minnesota Statute §16B.981](#) and [OGM Policy 08-06: Preaward Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees](#) and agency policies, OHE is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants. Granting agencies will request, review, and analyze information, including Financial & Applicant Capacity Review documents, as referenced in this RFP, as applicable.

Grant Contract Agreements

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grantees should read the grant contract agreement, sign, and once signed, comply with all conditions of the grant contract agreement. No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and the State's Authorized Representative has notified the Grantee that work may start. The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Grant Contract Agreement Extensions

Additional No – Cost Extensions may be available on a case-by-case basis depending on circumstances and as limited by Minnesota State Statute, not to exceed five years. Grant extensions/no-cost extensions must be requested at least 45 days prior to the grant contract expiration date.

Grant Provisions

The 2025 Minnesota Statutes 136A.901 is available online at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/136A.901>

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at: <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>.

Orientation

Following award notification, OHE will host a virtual mandatory orientation for the grantees, September 1, 2026, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Central Time.

Principal Investigators and Grantee Authorized Officials must attend. Other entities involved in the success of the project are encouraged but not required to attend orientation. The purpose of orientation is to prepare grantees for grant administration.

Work Plan and Budget

Work Plan and Budget submission is through the grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

A grantee must complete and submit Work Plan and Budget documents following award notification and prior to executing a grant contract with OHE.

Requests to change project activities, project personnel, or to move funds between approved budget lines must be submitted in advance with appropriate justification. Unexpended funds must be returned to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Fiscal Procedures

All Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program funds should be assigned to individual accounts which can be readily identified and verified. If an institution receives more than one grant, separate accounts should be established for each grant. Once a grant contract has been fully executed, the grant period will begin.

If a Principal Investigator moves to a different institution, the grant will remain with the Grantee Institution.

Expenditures

Grantees can only incur eligible expenditures upon the grant contract effective or execution date, whichever is later. Expenditures incurred prior are not eligible for reimbursement through the grant.

Allowable expenditures are limited to the project as described in the proposal content and must align with the following budget categories:

- Personnel Costs
 - Salaries for grantee personnel
 - Fringe benefits based on salaries paid
- Consultant Costs/Sub Awards
- Supplies
- Patient Care Costs
- Travel (In-State)
- Travel (Out of State)
- Other (Direct) Expenses
- Indirect costs (no more than 8% of total Personnel Costs)

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds

- Parking violations and traffic violations
- Capital expenditures

Business with the State

A grantee must register and complete setup as a vendor with the State of Minnesota's SWIFT System (<https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/>) prior to executing a grant contract with OHE. The grantee's federal tax identification number is required to complete registration. Contracts and grant reimbursement will be finalized within the SWIFT vendor portal. Grantees who are already established as vendors but do not remember information, should contact Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) vendor helpline at (651) 201-8106 or efthelpline.mmb@state.mn.us.

Attribution

Program material must bear the following acknowledgement:

"Funds for this research project were provided by the State of Minnesota Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Grant Program administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education."

Publications from Funded Research Projects

Copies of all publications from funded research projects must be provided to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Ownership of Copyrights and Patents

Ownership of any copyrights, patents, or other proprietary interests that may result from grant activities, shall be governed by applicable federal and state regulations and local institutional/organizational policies.

Accountability and Reporting Requirements

Grantees must adhere to all accountability and reporting requirements. Grant reimbursement and future grant eligibility is contingent upon fulfillment of requirements.

Grant Payments

Per [State Policy on Grant Payments](#), reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The Grantee must provide a General Ledger report or other similar documentation that reflect expenses included in the Reimbursement Request. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless OHE has given the grantee a written extension.

OHE will reimburse grantees only for eligible expenditures. The submission process will be through the online grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/> and include the following items:

- Invoice
- Supporting Documents, including a General Ledger

OHE reserves the right to request additional documentation for verification prior to approval for reimbursement. Grantees must respond and complete follow-up items within 15 days of receiving a request for additional documentation from OHE. OHE will issue payment to a grantee within 30 days of a completed and approved reimbursement request.

Grant Reporting

Grant report submission is through the grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

Each grantee must submit an annual progress report no later than **July 31st for each year** of their grant period. At a minimum, the progress report must document Execute grant contract agreement and begin grant program. progress made on the objectives of the research project. Each grantee must also submit one final report at the conclusion of the grant, due no later than **August 31st**.

Copies of materials which resulted from the grant should be submitted along with the annual narrative report, or as materials are subsequently published.

Grant Monitoring

Grant Monitoring Report is finalized within the grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

Minnesota Statutes 16B.97 Grants Management (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.97>) and Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10 Grant Monitoring require the following before final payment is made:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants over \$50,000
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants over \$250,000

OHE reserves the right to select additional grantees for monitoring who may not be addressed in the above scenarios. OHE will notify such grantees within a reasonable amount of time to allow preparation for the monitoring process. OHE will also consider requests from grantees to conduct monitoring services.

OHE will base monitoring schedules upon the availability of all parties who are required to be in attendance. To the extent possible, monitoring will be conducted at the location of the grantee and will occur within six months of the contract effective date.

Grant Financial Reconciliation

All grantees are required to undergo Financial Reconciliation for expenditures at least once during the grant period before final payment is made. Financial Reconciliation may be conducted on a more frequent basis. The process involves reconciling a grantee's reimbursement request for a given period with supporting documentation for that request, such as purchase orders, receipts and payroll records.

Grantee Performance Evaluation

Grantee Performance Evaluation is published within the grants management system at <https://gwi-ohe.intelligrants.com/>.

Prior to the closeout of the grant, OHE will evaluate the performance of all grantees. OHE includes the following information in the evaluation process:

- Grantee name, grant amount, start and end dates of the grant period award, and amount of grant paid to grantee
- Grant description, purpose, and proposed grant outcomes
- Description of actual grant outcome
- Compliance with reporting requirements
- Grant monitoring visits and financial reconciliation results, if applicable
- If applicable:
 - Additional conditions placed on the grant as part of the pre-award risk assessment process
 - If there were any fraud, waste, or abuse concerns
 - If the grant was terminated for cause
- Significant changes that arose during the grant award period
- Status of any financial/audit concerns involving the grantee

Evaluations of grantee performance for grant contract agreements over \$25,000 must be provided by OHE to the Minnesota Department of Administration. In addition, OHE will share grantee performance evaluations with other state agencies upon request. Evaluations are considered public per Minnesota Statute 13.599 Grants (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2023/cite/13.599?keyword_type=all&keyword=13.599).

OHE considers past grantee performance before awarding subsequent grants to grantees.

Authorized Representatives

Pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes §16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#), grantees must clearly post on the grantee's website the names of, and contact information for, the grantee's leadership and the employee or other person who directly manages and oversees a grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee.

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

Municipalities: Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with [Minnesota Statutes §471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#).
- The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§ 177.41](#) through [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: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#)¹
- 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.

Nongovernmental entities: Grantees that are nongovernmental entities must use these guidelines:

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- 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 (3) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- 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 (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
 - [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)²
 - [Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business Program](#)³
 - Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Directory](#)⁴
- 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.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- Notwithstanding the above, the State may waive bidding process requirements when:
 - Vendors included in response to competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
 - It is determined there is only one reasonably able and available source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- The Grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minnesota Statutes §§177.41](#) through [177.50](#), as applicable.

¹ <https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/suspended-debarred/>

² <http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/process/search/>

³ <https://mcub.metc.state.mn.us/>

⁴ <https://cert.smwbe.com/>

- The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#)

Audits

- Per [Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98 Subdivision 8](#), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are 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.

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, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified per [Minnesota Statutes § 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 such as the following: 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

The grantee will comply with [Minnesota Statutes §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Part 5: Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the proposal or to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposals. 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.