

Minnesota Innovation Voucher Pilot Program

Authorizing Statute: 2014 Minnesota Laws Chapter 312, Article 3, section 19

Program Description

The Minnesota Innovation Voucher Program provides funds to businesses to purchase technical assistance and services from Minnesota-based public higher education institutions and non-profit entities to assist in the development or commercialization of innovative new products and services in Minnesota. Eligible providers are Minnesota based public higher education institutions and non-profit entities.

Voucher awards will not exceed \$25,000 per business and require a 50% match by Voucher recipients. To be eligible a business must have fewer than 40 employees and have at least 50% of its employees in Minnesota. The match must be in cash.

Voucher awards can be used for services that include but are not limited to: research, technical development, product development, commercialization, market development, technology exploration, and improved business practices including strategies to grow business and create operational efficiencies.

Ordinary and necessary expenses that are not directly related to the development and commercialization of new and innovative products or services are ineligible. In the application the business must demonstrate in detail the relationship between services to be obtained and the development and commercialization of an innovative new product or service.

Application Instructions

- Complete the preformatted application.
- Obtain a signed letter from the selected provider demonstrating they are capable and willing to provide the services that will be supported by the voucher. Any conflict of interest (COI) between the applicant and the provider must be disclosed and the application must include documentation of a COI management plan between the provider and home institution.
- All questions must be addressed. If not applicable write NA and why it is not applicable to your proposed project.
- Applicants providing trade secret information should clearly mark the beginning of each relevant section with the legend "Trade secret information begins here;" and the close of the relevant section with "Trade secret information ends here." and submit a statement addressing the trade secret justification requirements in Minn. Statute §13.37 subd. 1(b)
- Attachments may be submitted electronically as separate Word, Excel, or PDF files.

Application Submission

Applications may be mailed, emailed or personally delivered to the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

An electronic version of the complete application and signed provider letter saved in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF must be emailed to Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us. Please insert "Innovation Voucher Application – (applicant's name)" in the subject line.

If you are not capable of submitting an electronic version, a hard copy of the complete application and attachments can be accepted.

Address and mail it to:

Brandon Toner
Department of Employment and Economic Development
332 Minnesota St. – E200
St. Paul, MN 55101

ZIPPED files and faxed submittals will not be accepted.

Please contact Brandon Toner at 651-259-7218 or Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us, with submission questions

Terms and Conditions

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reserves the right to amend or cancel this application solicitation at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.

DEED reserves the right to reject any or all applications and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received and to accept any portion of an application if deemed in the best interest of the State.

DEED assumes no liability in any fashion with respect to this solicitation or any matters related thereto. All prospective service providers and their assigns or successors, by their participation in this program, shall indemnify, save and hold the Department and its employees and agents free and harmless from all suits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, accounts, damages, cost, losses and expenses of whatsoever kind in law or equity known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or out this solicitation and or any subsequent acts related thereto, including but not limited the recommendation of a service provider and any action by an unsuccessful prospective service provider.

Timeline

- To be considered for a Voucher award, applications must be received by the Department of Employment and Economic Development no later than 4:00 p.m. (Central Daylight Time) on Friday, May 26th, 2017.
- Applications will be accepted, reviewed, and awarded on a rolling basis.
- Voucher award notifications will be made within 45 days of submitting an application.
- Successful applicant must sign an Award Agreement Letter within 15 days of receiving an award.
- Vouchers must be redeemed in full within 18 months of being awarded.

Voucher Match Requirement

- Recipients must provide a cash match equal to 50% of the Voucher amount.
- Matching funds must be documented in writing as committed funding.

Review Process

An agency review team will review applications on a rolling basis. If an application is deemed ineligible, applicants will be notified within 15 days of submitting an application.

Applications that are deemed eligible will be evaluated based solely on the information they provide in the application. Recommendations for awards will be based on whether the information provided in the application demonstrates that the services supported by a voucher award will aid in the development or commercialization of new innovative products or services.

The review team will make recommendations for awards to the Commissioner of DEED who will make all final award decisions. Eligible applicants will be notified whether or not they will receive an award within 45 days of submitting an application. Successful applicant must sign a Voucher Award Agreement Letter within 15 days of being notified of an award.

To assure award recommendation are based on a clear understanding of an applicant's intent and capability, the review team or designated member may communicate with an applicant in person, by phone or in writing as needed to obtain clarification.

Awards are contingent on the availability of funding and the applicant's execution of an Award Agreement within the specific timeframe.

Redeeming Vouchers

Vouchers will be redeemed on completion of the project with the selected provider. On completion of the project, the Voucher recipient must submit a brief Project Completion Form detailing the goods and/or services delivered by the Provider and the outcomes achieved for the business. The Project Completion Form, supplied by DEED, must be signed and submitted by the Voucher recipient within 15 days of the completion of the project. On submission of the Completion Project Form, the business will be reimbursed for eligible expenses up to the value of the Voucher award.

All questions concerning this solicitation should be submitted in writing to or email to:

Brandon Toner
Department of Employment and Economic Development
332 Minnesota St. E-200
St. Paul, Minnesota

Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us

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Innovation Voucher Application

PRIVACY NOTICE

The Department of Employment and Economic Development believes that any information submitted as part of this application constitutes either “business data” under Minn. Stat. 13.591 Subd. 1 and Subd. 2 or “trade secret information” under Minn. Stat. 13.37 Subd. 1(b) and, therefore, the Information will be classified as either private data or non-public data under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Applicants providing trade secret information should clearly mark the beginning of each relevant section with the legend “Trade secret information begins here;” and the close of the relevant section with “Trade secret information ends here.”

1. Your information

Tell us a about yourself and your business. This section helps us check if you are eligible for funding.

Contact details

This should be someone within the company authorized to submit this application.

First name	
Last name	
Job title	
Email	
Phone number	
Business Address 1	
Business Address 2	
Business Address 3	
City, State, ZIP	

Business Information

Business name	
Business Type	
Date Established	
Place of Business Organization	
Is this business an affiliate or subsidiary of an existing business?	NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of affiliate or parent company (if applicable)	
Is this business a joint venture with another business?	NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of business(es) in the joint venture (if applicable)	
Number of employees	

Website	
Federal Tax ID#	
State Tax ID#	

Business details

Please describe the industry area(s) in which your business generally operates
(250 words or less)

Empty text area for describing the industry area(s) in which the business generally operates.

Please describe the market area(s) in which your business generally operates
(250 words or less)

Empty text area for describing the market area(s) in which the business generally operates.

Please describe the technology area(s) in which your business generally operates
(250 words or less)

Please describe the businesses or current employees previous experience in the development or
commercialization of innovative new products or services
(250 words or less)

2. Your Project

The answers in this section will be used to check that your project fits within the scope of the Innovation Voucher Program.

Voucher Request

Amount Requested (\$25,000 max)	
Cash Match (minimum 50% match)	
Project Start Date	
Project End Date	
Selected Provider*	
Provider Status**	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Higher-Education Provider <input type="checkbox"/> 501c3 Non-Profit
Provider Contact	
Provider Email	
Provider Number	

*Please include a signed letter from the selected provided demonstrating they are willing and capable of providing the services outlined in this application. If there is a Conflict of Interest (COI) please include documentation of a COI management plan between the provider and home institution.

**Providers much be Minnesota-based public higher-education institutions or a 501(c)3 Non-Profit providers.

Project Summary

<p>Please briefly summarize the project you wish to complete with the support from an Innovation Voucher.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a brief background of the industry and market• the development or commercialization opportunity to be explored• the approach that will be undertaken <p style="text-align: center;">(150 words or less)</p>

Project Methodology

Provide a description of the proposed project, including:

- the significance and outcomes upon the successful completion of the project
- clear project activities that contribute to development or commercialization of innovative new products or services
- which relevant technical assistance, training and/or know-how are required for the project
- a clear rationale for why the proposed provider is the most appropriate for the project

(500 words or less)

Integrating Project Outcomes into Business Operations

Describe the capability of the business to successfully integrate the development and commercialization outputs into its operations. The answer should include:

- how the business will incorporate the outcomes into new innovative goods and service of the business
- the capability of the company to do this, or how it will build this capability if it doesn't already have it
- the next steps of the project beyond that supported by the voucher, and what the significant risks are that will need to be managed
- how the business would fund the next steps of the project

(250 words or less)

Level of Innovation in the Project

Characterize the level of innovation in the proposed project. Ensure your answer includes:

- the stage of development
- whether the project is focused on new to market or new to firm activities
- the predicted time for the project to progress to market

(250 words or less)

Impact of the Project on Business Productivity

Describe how the project will impact the business' competitive advantage and the time required for the productivity gains from new product/service to be realized
(250 words or less)

Needs Statement

Please describe why the business needs the voucher to undertake the project. In particular, describe the likelihood of the project proceeding without the voucher. The answer should include:

- if the proposed project would proceed without the voucher project
- why the requested voucher amount is required, rather than a lesser amount
- what other funding options have been pursued
- how the voucher would impact the timing or scale of the project.

(250 words or less)

Proposed Provider

Please provide additional Information about the proposed providers(s), including whether the proposed provider has indicated that they are capable of carrying out the work.

(150 words or less)

3. Declaration and Agreement

Please read and sign the following declaration and agreement before submitting your complete application.

- I declare that I am authorized to complete, sign and submit this application on behalf of the Applicant.
- I declare that I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions of the Innovation Voucher Pilot Program and that the information provided in this application is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- Further, I understand that that the provision of false or misleading information or the making of a false or misleading statement in this application is a serious matter and that the provision of such information or making of such a statement will be deemed to be a material breach of the terms and conditions of the Innovation Voucher Program and will entitle the Department of Employment and Economic Development to immediately void this application and withdraw any offer of a voucher; and/or seek repayment from the Applicant organization of any voucher redeemed for payment.
- On behalf of the Applicant I agree to the following:
- The Applicant will provide additional or updated information to ensure the information provided in this application remains true, accurate and up to date.
- Subject to approval of this application, the number, value and specific details of the vouchers to be issued will be determined by the Department and the Applicant at a later date and any additional conditions imposed will be read and construed in conjunction with these terms and conditions.
- The Department will not be liable to reimburse for eligible expenses until it has received a Project Completion Report of the project's completion signed by the Applicant and evidence of expenditure by the Applicant to the value of the required 50% cash co-contribution and any additional reports, documents, photos, or other evidence as the Department may reasonably require.
- The Applicant has made all due enquiries and has satisfied itself that the nominated Provider(s) is capable of carrying out the task(s) required.
- Selection of the Provider(s) is the Applicant's responsibility and neither the State nor its Department will be held liable for any outcomes (or lack of outcomes), costs, damages or losses as a consequence of the Applicant's nomination and selection of the Provider(s).
- Any contract for the performance of services between the Applicant and the Provider will constitute a private arrangement between the Applicant and the Provider and neither the Department of Employment and Economic Development nor the State will be deemed to be a party to such a contract or in any way responsible for the consequences or outcomes under that contract. The Applicant will provide a copy of that contract to the Department of Employment and Economic Development within fourteen days of its execution by the Applicant and Provider.
- The Applicant will maintain such records as is necessary to substantiate the Applicant's and Provider's undertaking of the services and will, on request, submit to the Department of Employment and Economic Development copies of any reports, photographs or other material requested by the Department.
- Any proposed variation to the activities as described in the voucher application will be discussed and agreed with the Department prior to any expenditure on varied activities.
- The Applicant will receive reimbursement for eligible expenses from the Department, up to the face value of the Voucher.
- A Project Completion Form, as supplied by the Department, will be submitted by the Applicant within 15 days of the completion of the Project detailing the goods and/or services delivered, any variations to the activities as described in the voucher application and voucher and reasons for the variation and results achieved by the Provider as required for the Project.

I confirm that I have read and understood all the statements above

I am authorized to complete and submit the application for and on behalf of the company.

Full Name of person completing this application:

Date

	(Signature of Authorized Representative)
	(Signature of Authorized Representative)

For help with this form or general questions on the Innovation Voucher Program contact: Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us

END OF APPLICATION