

# Grant to Support Grieving Parents and Caregivers Experiencing the Death of an Infant or a Stillbirth and Pregnancy Loss Prevention in Minnesota.

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

## IMPORTANT DATES

September 19, 2024	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
September 26, 2024	Last day to submit RFP Questions
October 21, 2024	Proposals due (until 11:59 p.m. CT)
January 2, 2025	Estimated Start Date

For more information and application documents, visit:

[www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/cyshn/griefloss.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childrenyouth/cyshn/griefloss.html)

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9/17/2024

*To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-3650.*

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

## Table of Contents

RFP Part 1: Overview .....	4
1.1 General Information .....	4
1.2 Program Description.....	4
1.3 Funding and Project Dates .....	5
1.4 Eligible Applicants.....	5
1.5 Questions and Answers .....	6
RFP Part 2: Program Details .....	7
2.1 Priorities.....	7
2.2 Grant Management Responsibilities .....	9
2.3 Grant Provisions .....	10
2.4 Review and Selection Process .....	14
RFP Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions .....	17
3.1 Application Deadline and Submission Instructions .....	17
3.2 Application Instructions.....	17
3.3 Grant Applicant Face Sheet .....	17
3.4 Project Narrative .....	18
Section I – Organizational capacity ( <i>3 pages maximum</i> ) .....	18
Section II – Linkages and collaborations ( <i>2 pages maximum</i> ) .....	19
Section III – Data collection and reporting ( <i>Two pages maximum</i> ) .....	19
3.5 Work Plan Template .....	19
3.6 Budget Details and Justification.....	20
RFP Part 4: Appendices .....	26
Appendix A: Application Checklist .....	27
Appendix B: Application Scoresheet.....	28
Appendix C: Conflict of Interest Form .....	31
Appendix D: Due Diligence Form .....	31
Appendix E: Indirect Cost Questionnaire.....	31
Appendix F: Quarterly Process Measures for Reporting .....	32

## Land Acknowledgement

The state of Minnesota is home to 11 federally recognized Indian tribes with elected tribal government officials. The State of Minnesota acknowledges and supports the unique status of Minnesota tribal nations and their absolute right to existence, self-governance, and self-determination. The United States and the State of Minnesota have a unique relationship with the federally recognized Indian tribes, formed by the Constitution of the United State, treaties, statutes, case law, and agreements. The State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Tribal governments significantly benefit from working together, learning from one another, and partnering where possible.

This partnership, through a government-to-government relationship, with the eleven tribal nations of Minnesota has the potential to effectively address inequities and build trust that will lead to better outcomes for all Minnesota.



## RFP Part 1: Overview

### 1.1 General Information

- **Announcement Title:** Grant to Support Grieving Parents and Caregivers Experiencing the Death of an Infant or a Stillbirth and Pregnancy Loss Prevention in Minnesota
- **Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Program Webpage:** [www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/cyshn/griefloss.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/cyshn/griefloss.html)
- **Application Deadline:** October 21, 2024, 11:59 p.m.

### 1.2 Program Description

#### Background

Under Minnesota Statute §144.05, the Commissioner of Health, as the State’s official health agency, is responsible for developing and maintaining an organized system of programs and services, created to protect, maintain, and improve the health of all Minnesotans. The State is currently seeking a grantee to provide pregnancy loss prevention and grief and loss support services to parents experiencing a stillbirth or the death of an infant under one year of age. Under Minnesota Statute §144.0742, the State is empowered to enter into contractual agreement with a qualified public or private entity to offer the provision of statutorily prescribed health services to fill this need.

#### Infant mortality and stillbirths in Minnesota

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a live-born infant during the first year of life. Fetal deaths, by contrast, are deaths that happen in utero at any stage of pregnancy or during delivery. Fetal deaths occurring at 20 weeks of gestation or later are called stillbirths. In Minnesota, approximately 67,300 infants are born alive each year on average, and between 290 and 360 infants die before their first birthday. In 2022, the last year for which data are available, 64,038 infants were born in the state and 290 of them died, resulting in an infant mortality rate of 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Similarly, between 320 and 380 stillbirths occur in the state every year. In 2022, there were 338 stillbirths, and the stillbirth rate was 5.3 per 1,000 live births plus fetal deaths.

The sudden and unexpected loss of a pregnancy or an infant is a tragic event that can have life-altering and devastating consequences for individuals and families, including prolonged grief, anger, fear, pain, guilt, depression, social isolation, and disconnectedness. Thus, parents or caregivers experiencing the loss of a baby are often in need of bereavement support services to help them cope. If a future pregnancy is desired, families may seek out support for pregnancy after loss, including interconception care to improve overall wellness and support a healthy future pregnancy.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

## Purpose

MDH seeks to fund one organization with the capacity and expertise to promote healthy pregnancies through pregnancy loss prevention strategies, such as successfully connecting families to referrals for supports including but not limited to mental and physical health support and directly providing bereavement support statewide to grieving parents or caregivers. The organization awarded this grant must be ready to serve families statewide immediately upon signing the contract by coordinating resources, services, and related activities as appropriate.

## 1.3 Funding and Project Dates

### Funding

The selected applicant is responsible for compliance with all state regulations and requirements imposed on grant funds.

Funding will be a competitive process. Spending may only begin when the grant agreement is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated Amount to Grant	\$130,000.00 per year
Estimated Number of Awards	1

### Match requirement

There is no match requirement.

### Project dates

The estimated grant start date is **January 2, 2025, and the projected end date is December 31, 2027**. The grant is for three years; however, it may be extended based on the availability of funds and the awarded applicant’s performance during the initial project period.

## 1.4 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must have three or more years of experience providing grief and loss support services and pregnancy loss prevention services to families and may include community health boards, Tribal governments, and non-profit organizations. Applicants must have state or federal recognition as a formal entity. Organizations or groups may apply as a fiscal agent. Applicants must be located in the state of Minnesota and conduct grant activities in the state, but fiscal agents may be located outside of Minnesota. Eligible applicants who wish to work together but have not formed a legal partnership must designate one organization to be the lead organization with which MDH will write the grant agreement.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

## Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed and encouraged. MDH recognizes that achieving health equity will happen only as we work together. Organizations that collaborate on proposals are encouraged to compensate partners appropriately for their contributions and to consider equity in deciding how resources are distributed among partner organizations.

## 1.5 Questions and Answers

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email or phone to [health.cyshn@state.mn.us](mailto:health.cyshn@state.mn.us) or by phone at 651-201-3650.

Please submit questions no later than **11:59 p.m.** Central Standard Time (CST), on **September 26, 2024**. Questions submitted after this date will not be answered. The final questions and answers will be posted to the website on **October 1, 2024**. Applicants with technical questions about using Foundant must submit their questions at least two business days before the application period closes.

To obtain the questions and answers in a different format, call 651-201-3650.

To ensure the proper and fair evaluation of all applications, other communications regarding this RFP including verbal, telephone, written or internet initiated by or on behalf of any applicant to any employee of the Department, other than questions submitted to as outlined above, are prohibited. **Any violation of this prohibition may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

## RFP Part 2: Program Details

### 2.1 Priorities

#### Health equity 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. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-02%20Grants%20Policy%20Revision%20September%202017%20final\\_tcm36-312046.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-02%20Grants%20Policy%20Revision%20September%202017%20final_tcm36-312046.pdf) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

The primary goal of this RFP is to offer timely, high quality, culturally appropriate, grief and loss support services statewide to those who have experienced an infant loss or stillbirth in Minnesota and to promote healthy pregnancies through pregnancy loss prevention strategies. This RFP outlines two priority components: (1) grief and pregnancy loss prevention support activities targeting parents or caregivers, and (2) data collection and reporting requirements.

#### This grant will serve:

- Racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians.
- LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Immigrant and refugee communities.
- Persons with disability status.
- All geographic areas across Minnesota, including Greater Minnesota and the urban/metropolitan areas.

#### Grant outcomes will include:

- Provide timely, high quality, culturally appropriate bereavement consultation services to grieving parents or caregivers who have experienced an infant loss or a stillbirth in Minnesota.
- Address disparities related to families accessing and receiving timely, high quality, culturally appropriate grief and loss support services.
- Strategies to promote healthy pregnancies focusing on pregnancy loss prevention.
- Strategies will be evidence-informed or promising practices with published literature in field specific peer-reviewed journals.

#### Program goals and components

The goal of this funding is to provide grief and loss support to families experiencing a stillbirth or infant death in Minnesota and to promote strategies for pregnancy loss prevention. The applicant should propose appropriate grief and loss support services and outreach strategies to

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

promote pregnancy loss prevention strategies. MDH may provide reporting of fetal and infant deaths based on the activities in the grantee's approved workplan and the availability of data.

Such support services and outreach strategies may include, but are not limited to, consultations, referrals to local public health nursing agencies, helping families to navigate bereavement-related resources or activities and health care provider education. Other eligible expenses may include development and maintenance of a website that provides information and resources, or evaluation of effectiveness of services provided, including participant feedback. The focus population is parents, legal guardians, foster parents, and extended family members who provided immediate care to the deceased infant, or parents who experienced a stillbirth.

### Data collection and reporting

To ensure that the goals specified in this RFP are achieved, the awarded applicant will collect and submit data and written narrative reports to MDH quarterly. MDH will provide a template throughout the grant cycle. The awarded applicant must submit the data and the written report **no later than 30 days after each quarter** has ended.

Quarterly reporting will allow MDH to monitor the awarded applicant's progress towards achieving the goals specified in the RFP and help to identify any challenges and successes experienced by the awarded applicant during the grant cycle.

**At a minimum, the quarterly reports will include the following information:**

- Data/information on process measures.
- Progress of activities outlined in the work plan, including completed activities, progress made, successes, challenges and barriers encountered.
- An updated work plan may be submitted if there are any changes in activities, timeline, etc., from the work plan submitted initially.

Annually, the grantee will report individual-level follow-up status (for example, type of outreach attempted, status of outreach, referrals provided) and success of clients in connecting to referrals for supports including but not limited to mental and physical health supports) to MDH so that MDH can link follow-up results with confirmed birth defect and newborn screening cases.

### Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenses not directly related to the approved work plan and not in the approved budget.
- Expenses incurred prior to the grant agreement being fully executed.
- Any expenses that do not directly contribute to the activities in the grantee's work plan.
- Any individual piece of equipment that costs more than \$5,000.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.



GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

- Capital improvements or alterations.
- Cash assistance paid directly to individuals to meet their personal family needs.
- Fundraising.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services.
- Lobbyists, political contributions.
- Ongoing medical care or treatment of disease(s) or disability.
- Land acquisition.
- Corporate formation (startup costs).

## 2.2 Grant Management Responsibilities

### Grant agreement

Each State grantee must formally enter into a grant agreement. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. The grantee is expected to read the grant agreement, sign, and comply with all conditions of the grant agreement. The grantee should provide a copy of the grant agreement to all grantee staff working on the grant.

No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant 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.

### Accountability and progress reporting requirements

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring the grantee to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

For this grant program, the grantee will:

- Submit to the grant manager four written progress reports per year (one per quarter) (details given in Data collection and reporting section on page 9); and
- Participate in at least four check-in calls per year with the grant manager to ensure grant deliverables are on track.

The reporting schedule will be provided to the grantee upon execution of the grant agreement.

### Grant monitoring with finance

Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 and Policy on Grant Monitoring ([https://mn.gov/admin/assets/grants\\_policy\\_08-10\\_tcm36-207117.pdf](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/grants_policy_08-10_tcm36-207117.pdf)) require the following

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

in addition to monitoring the grant deliverables:

- At a minimum, 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
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants over \$50,000.

The monitoring schedule for this grant will be based upon the applicant's risk assessment, which considers prior performance and previous experience with state grants. The schedule decided will be specified in the grant agreement.

At minimum, there will be:

- One in-person monitoring visit, and
- Financial reconciliation of one invoice during the grant period.

A financial reconciliation is an in-depth review of all the expenses submitted on a selected invoice. The grantee will need to submit all supporting documentation that shows how those expenses were calculated. Documentation will include, but is not limited to, proof of payment on all expenses such as invoices, receipts, bank statements, payroll reports, and purchase orders. Other items may be requested, as well.

### Technical assistance

MDH will provide technical assistance to the grantee to support them fulfilling their grant objectives. Staff will be available to provide guidance and assistance on topics including budgeting, invoicing, data collection, evaluation, and other effective practices.

### Grant payments

Per [State Policy on Grant Payments \(https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-08%20Policy%20on%20Grant%20Payments%20FY21%20\\_tcm36-438962.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08-08%20Policy%20on%20Grant%20Payments%20FY21%20_tcm36-438962.pdf), reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. 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 MDH has given the grantee a written extension.

The invoicing and payment schedule will be quarterly.

## 2.3 Grant Provisions

### Contracting and bidding requirements

**(a) Municipalities:** A grantee that is a municipality, defined as a county, town, city, school district or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

authorized by law to enter into contracts is subject to the contracting requirements set forth under [Minn. Stat. § 471.345](#). Projects that involve construction work are subject to the applicable prevailing wage laws, including those under [Minn. Stat. § 177.41](#), et. seq.

**(b) Non-municipalities:** Grantees that are not municipalities must adhere to the following standards in the event that duties assigned to the grantee are to be subcontracted out to a third party:

- i. Any services or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process consistent with the standards set forth under Minnesota Statutes 16B.
- ii. Services 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.
- iii. Services 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.
- iv. 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:
  - Minnesota Department of Administration’s Certified [Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#) (<https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/procuregoodsandgeneralser vices/tgedvo-directory/>)
  - Metropolitan Council’s Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#) (<https://mnuccp.metc.state.mn.us/>) or
  - Small Business Certification Program through [Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Program](#) (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/human-rights-equal-economic-opportunity/contract-compliance-business-development-9>).
- v. 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.
- vi. The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.
- vii. Notwithstanding (i) - (iv) above, 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
  - There is only one legitimate or practical source for such materials or

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

- services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- viii. Projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, are subject to applicable prevailing wage laws, including those under Minnesota Statutes 177.41 through 177.44.
  - ix. Grantee must not contract with vendors who are [suspended or debarred in Minnesota \(https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/suspended-debarred/\)](https://mn.gov/admin/osp/government/suspended-debarred/).

## Conflicts of interest

MDH will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and the Office of Grants Management’s Policy 08-01, “Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making.”

**Applicants must complete the Applicant Conflict of Disclosure form (Appendix G) and submit it as part of the completed application.** Failure to complete and submit this form will result in disqualification from the review process.

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice.
- A grantee’s or applicant’s objectivity in performing the grant work is or might be otherwise impaired.
- A grantee or applicant has an unfair competitive advantage.

Individual conflicts of interest occur when:

- An applicant, or any of its employees, uses their position to obtain special advantage, benefit, or access to MDH’s time, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, prestige, or influence.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, receives or accepts money, or anything else of value, from another state grantee or grant applicant with respect to the specific project covered by this RFP/project.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, has equity or a financial interest in, or partial or whole ownership of, a competing grant applicant organization.
- An applicant, or any of its employees, is an employee of MDH or is a relative of an employee of MDH.

In cases where a conflict of interest is perceived, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

## Public data and trade secret materials

All applications submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the State. In accordance with [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), all applications and their contents are private or nonpublic until the applications are opened.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

Once the applications are opened, the name and address of each applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process, which is defined by statute as when MDH has completed negotiating the grant agreement with the selected applicant.

After MDH has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), subd. 1(b). A statement by an applicant that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application or its contents. ([Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#), subd. 3(a)).

If an applicant submits any information in an application that it believes to be trade secret information, as defined by [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#), the applicant must:

- Clearly mark all trade secret materials in its application at the time it is submitted,
- Include a statement attached to its application justifying the trade secret designation for each item, and
- Defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret and indemnify and hold harmless MDH and the State of Minnesota, its agents and employees, from any judgments or damages awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense.
- This indemnification survives MDH's award of a grant agreement. In submitting an application in response to this RFP, the applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the trade secret materials are in possession of MDH. The State will not consider the prices submitted by the responder to be proprietary or trade secret materials.

MDH reserves the right to reject a claim that any particular information in an application is trade secret information if it determines the applicant has not met the burden of establishing that the information constitutes a trade secret. MDH will not consider the budgets submitted by applicants to be proprietary or trade secret materials. Use of generic trade secret language encompassing substantial portions of the application or simple assertions of trade secret without substantial explanation of the basis for that designation will be insufficient to warrant a trade secret designation.

If a grant is awarded to an applicant, MDH may use or disclose the trade secret data to the extent provided by law. Any decision by the State to disclose information determined to be trade secret information will be made consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act ([Ch. 13 MN Statutes](#)) and other relevant laws and regulations.

If certain information is found to constitute trade secret information, the remainder of the application will become public; in the event a data request is received for application information, only the trade secret data will be removed and remain nonpublic.

## Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#), subd. 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

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant 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 non-discrimination requirements for the grantee**

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. [Minn. Stat. § 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. [Minn. Rules, part 5000.3550](#).

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.

## **2.4 Review and Selection Process**

### **Review process**

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee of representatives from MDH, local public health agencies, community-based organizations/non-profits with relevant content expertise, and community members with lived experiences relevant to the subject matter. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline.

MDH will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions.

**The award decisions of MDH are final and not subject to appeal.** Additionally:

- MDH reserves the right to withhold the distribution of funds in cases where proposals submitted do not meet the necessary criteria.
- This RFP does not obligate MDH to award a grant agreement or complete the project, and MDH reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest.
- MDH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or request additional information to further clarify or validate information submitted in the application, provided the

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

application, as submitted, substantially complies with the requirements of this RFP. There is, however, no guarantee MDH will look for information or clarification outside of the submitted written application.

- It is important that all applicants ensure that all sections of their application are complete to avoid the possibility of failing an evaluation phase or having their score reduced due to lack of information.

### Selection criteria and weight

If more than one application is received, review committee members will be divided into teams so that multiple individuals will score each application. Each reviewer will review and score the applications assigned to their team individually using the score sheet provided (Appendix F). Reviewers will score each applicant on a 100-point scale. A standardized scoring system will be used to determine the extent to which to which the applicant meets the selection criteria, detailed in Appendix F.

The review team(s) will then participate in a review meeting where all applications are discussed. Reviewers will be able to modify their individual scores based on the discussion at the review meeting. At the end of the meeting, team members will make recommendations to MDH based on the scoring criteria and discussion.

MDH will make final decisions on all applications and will balance the recommendations by the review teams with other factors including, but not are not limited to:

- Review team scores.
- Representativeness of the populations served by the applicants.
- Geographic distribution of services.
- Total funding available.

### Grantee past performance and due diligence review process

- It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them.
- State policy requires a pre-award risk assessment to be conducted prior to a grant award. Additional information may be required for proposed budgets of \$50,000 and higher in order to comply with [Policy on Pre-Award Risk Assessment for Potential Grantees \(https://mn.gov/admin/assets/Policy%2008-06%20Pre-Award%20Risk%20Assessment%20Effective%20Date%20January%2015%202024\\_tcm36-604382.pdf\)](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/Policy%2008-06%20Pre-Award%20Risk%20Assessment%20Effective%20Date%20January%2015%202024_tcm36-604382.pdf).

### Notification

MDH anticipates notifying all applicants of funding by email award letters by **November 12, 2024**. All notices of award and non-award will be sent via email. The awarded applicant, if not a current vendor in the State's SWIFT system, will need to register as a vendor before a grant agreement can be made final. Instructions on how to become a vendor in the SWIFT system will

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

be sent to the awarded applicant when they are notified of the award. There may be negotiations to finalize a grantee's work plan and/or budget before a grant agreement can be made final. Once a work plan and/or budget have been agreed upon, a grant agreement can then be executed with the awarded agency. The effective date of the agreement will be **January 2, 2025**, or the date on which all signatures for the agreement are obtained, whichever is later. The grant agreement will be in effect until **December 31, 2027** contingent on satisfactory grantee performance and funding availability.



## RFP Part 3: Application and Submission Instructions

### 3.1 Application Deadline and Submission Instructions

**All applications must be submitted to MDH no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time, on October 21, 2024,** to the grant interface portal, [Foundant \(https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=mdcfh\)](https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=mdcfh). Technical questions about Foundant must be submitted to the [health.cyshn@state.mn.us](mailto:health.cyshn@state.mn.us) inbox at least 2 business days before applications close.

**Late applications will not be accepted.** It is the applicant's sole responsibility to allow sufficient time to address all potential delays caused by any reason whatsoever. MDH will not be responsible for delays caused by mail, delivery, computer, or technology problems.

#### **Acknowledgement of application receipt**

Applicants will receive an emailed receipt acknowledging your application within one business day of the due date/time. If you do not receive this acknowledgement email within one business day of the due date/time, please contact the CYSHN section at [health.cyshn@state.mn.us](mailto:health.cyshn@state.mn.us) or at 651-201-3650 after the one business day for instructions.

### 3.2 Application Instructions

You must submit all materials listed on the Application Checklist (Appendix A) for the application to be considered complete. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.

Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated. **MDH reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.**

By submitting an application, 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.**

### 3.3 Grant Applicant Face Sheet

The following information must be entered into Foundant. By submitting the following information, respondent acknowledges the following:

*I certify that the information contained above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge; that I have informed this agency's governing board of the agency's intent to apply for this grant;*

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

*and, that I have received approval from the governing board to submit this application on behalf of the agency.*

### General applicant information

- Applicant’s Legal Name (do not use a “doing business as” name):
  - *This should be the same name used when a federal tax identification number was obtained.*
- Applicant’s Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Applicant’s Minnesota Tax Identification Number:
- Applicant’s Federal Tax Identification Number:
- SWIFT Vendor ID number (if you have one):

### Director of applicant agency

- Name:
- Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Phone Number:
- Email:

### Financial contact or fiscal agent for this grant

- Name of Financial Contact for this grant:
- Name of Fiscal Agent for this grant, if applicable:
- Phone Number:
- Email:

### Contact person for the grant

- Name:
- Business Address (street, city, state, zip):
- Phone Number:
- Email

### Requested funding

- Total Amount on Proposed Budget (two-year budget): \$

## 3.4 Project Narrative

### Section I – Organizational capacity (3 pages maximum)

1. Describe the organization’s relevant experience promoting healthy pregnancies through pregnancy loss prevention strategies, providing evidence-based, culturally appropriate bereavement services, including grief and pregnancy after loss counseling,

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

to individuals and families who have experienced infant deaths and stillbirths. Include previous experience working with the State of Minnesota, including agencies, activities completed, length of time, and amount of money awarded.

2. Describe the community need that the applicant hopes to address with the application and why they are suited to provide services to that target population?
3. Describe the professional expertise, education, certification, licenses held, and other applicable trainings received by key staff who will be providing or managing services under this contract.
4. Explain how your organization's staff reflect the communities to be served by the grant.
5. Describe the population(s) served by your organization (e.g., ages, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location), and include information about the number of clients served on average each year.
6. Describe your organization's experience, capacity, and expertise in providing bereavement services to populations experiencing health inequities such as those who communicate in a language other than English, racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians, those in poverty, LGBTQIA+ clients, individuals with disabilities, and those in rural areas.
7. Describe strategies currently used by your organization to recruit, retain, and engage hard-to-reach populations, such as families experiencing homelessness and immigrant communities, in using grief support services?

### Section II – Linkages and collaborations *(2 pages maximum)*

1. Describe whether your organization has any experience working with community groups, public health agencies, Tribal health departments, health care providers, or organizations providing bereavement services to families.
2. Provide the names of organizations that you have collaborated with and discuss the scope of your partnership or collaboration and the outcomes (s) of the partnership.

### Section III – Data collection and reporting *(Two pages maximum)*

1. Describe your organization's experience with collecting and reporting confidential data.
2. Describe current steps taken by your organization to protect confidential client data/information and privacy. Explain if your staff have had any trainings in data privacy, and their experience in collecting, analyzing, and reporting de-identified data to funding agencies.

## 3.5 Work Plan Template

The work plan must be entered into Foundant. It must include project objectives, strategies, and activities.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

## Project Objectives and Strategies

Objectives are major steps the program will take to reach its goal of reducing disparities and improving health outcomes in the chosen category. Ensure that each objective is SMART:

**Specific:** concrete and well-defined

**Measurable:** can determine what changed and how much it changed

**Achievable:** feasible to put into action

**Realistic:** considers constraints such as resources, personnel, cost, and time frame

**Time-Bound:** time frame for the objective

One way to create an objective is, “By (date), (amount of change) of (what population) will (action of change).”

For example: "By June 30, 2023, 20% of people living in Duluth who smoke will attempt to quit."

Aim for 3-5 objectives, though more or fewer will still be considered.

## Project Strategies

For each objective, specify one or more strategies. Strategies are general approaches to meet an objective. Think of strategies as the “how” of the project while activities are the “what.”

For example, following the example objective above: "Contribute to provider education on smoking cessation programs and treatment. "

The workplan must include the following information:

- Description of each activity.
- Timeline for each activity.
- Key staff and partners involved for each activity.
- Estimated number of people reached through each activity.

## 3.6 Budget Details and Justification

### Introduction

You will need to account for all your grant program costs **for the first two years** under six different line items. The following paragraphs provide detailed information on what costs can go into those six lines. You will be required to show detailed calculations to support your costs. Failure to include the required detail could result in delayed agreement if your application is selected for funding.

All costs under this grant must be prorated to reflect fair share of the expense to his program. For example, if a computer is purchased for one staff person who works .5FTE on this grant and

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

.5 FTE on another program, the cost for that computer should be split 50-50 by the grant and the other program.

If the grant agreement(s) are not fully executed in a timely manner, the award funded may be pro-rated to reflect the actual time frame the grant is in effect. It is strongly suggested that applicants incorporate into their budgets the costs of appropriate financial staff to provide financial oversight to the grant. This could be through contracting with an individual or organization or a direct hire. For both category applicants, the budget narratives should provide a brief but sufficient explanation of how funds are proposed over grant period.

The budget template and justification is a scored section for a total of 20 out of 100 points.

## Salary and fringe

Grant funds can be used for salary and fringe benefits for staff members directly involved in applicant's proposed activities. For each proposed funded position, please list:

- Title.
- Full time equivalent (FTE) on this grant (see example below).
- Expected rate of pay.
- Total amount applicant expects to pay the position for the year.

Any salaries from the administrative support, accounting, human resources, or IT support, MUST be supported by some type of time tracking in order to be included in the Salary and Fringe line. Salary and fringe expenses not supported by time reporting documentation may be included in the indirect line if these unsupported salaries and fringe were included on the Indirect Cost Questionnaire form and approved by MDH. Any salary and fringe expenses not supported, not included on the Indirect Cost Questionnaire, and not approved by MDH are unallowable and may not be charged to this grant.

Full time equivalent (FTE): The percentage of time a person will work on this grant project. Each position that will work on this grant should show the following information:

### EXAMPLE:

Public Health Nurse: \$30.40/hourly rate

x 2,080/annual hours (or whatever your agency annual standard is)

\$63,232 annual salary

Multiply annual salary by your agency's fringe rate:

\$63,232 annual salary

x 23% fringe rate (use your agency fringe rate, 23% is just an example)

\$14,543 fringe amount

Provide the breakdown of what your fringe rate includes: 6.20% FICA

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

1.45% Medicare

3.00% Retirement

12.35% Insurance

23.00% Total Fringe Rate

Now add the annual salary and the fringe amount together:

\$63,232 annual salary

+ \$14,543 fringe

\$77,775/annual salary and fringe total

Multiply the annual salary and fringe total by the FTE being charged to this grant:

\$77,775 annual salary and fringe total

x .50 FTE assigned to grant

\$38,888 total to be charged to grant for this position.

### **Contractual services**

Applicants must identify any subcontracts that will occur as part of carrying out the duties of this grant program as part of the Contractual Services budget line item in the proposed budget. The use of contractual services is subject to State review and may change based on final work plan and budget negotiations with the selected grantee. Applicants will be responsible for monitoring any subcontractors to ensure they are following all State, Federal, and programmatic regulations including proper accounting methods.

Applicant responses must include:

- Description of services to be contracted.
- Anticipated contractor/consultant's name (if known) or selection process to be used.
- Length of time the services will be provided.
- Total amount to be paid to the contractor.

### **Travel**

List the expected travel costs for staff working on the grant, including mileage, parking, hotel, and meals. List any minimum travel requirements of the grant such as attending a statewide trainings/conference, etc. If none, delete these instructions. If project staff will travel during the course of their jobs or for attendance at educational events, itemize the costs, frequency, and the nature of the travel. Grant funds cannot be used for out-of-state travel without prior written approval from MDH. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

**Non-tribal applicants:**

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

- Budget for travel costs (mileage, lodging, and meals) using the rates listed in the [State of Minnesota's Commissioner's Plan \(https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp)
- Hotel and motel expenses should be reasonable and consistent with the facilities available. Grantees are expected to exercise good judgement when incurring lodging expenses.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate at the time of travel.

**Tribal nation applicants:**

- Budget for travel costs (mileage, lodging, and meals) using the rates provided by the [General Services Administration \(GSA\) \(www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120\)](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120). Current lodging amounts and meal reimbursement rates vary depending on where the travel occurs in Minnesota.
- Consult the breakdown of the GSA [Meals and Incidental Expense Rates \(www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdown\)](http://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/mie-breakdown) for current rates for Tribal nations.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate at the time of travel.

## Supplies and expenses

Briefly explain the expected costs for items and services the applicant will purchase to run the program. These might include additional telephone equipment; postage; printing; photocopying; office supplies; training materials; and equipment. Include the costs expected to be incurred to ensure that community representatives, partners, or clients who are included in the applicant's process or program can participate fully. Examples of these costs are fees paid to translators or interpreters. Grant funds may not be used to purchase any individual piece of equipment that costs more than \$5,000, or for major capital improvements to property.

## Other

Include in this section any expenses the applicant expects to have for other items that do not fit in any other category. Some examples include but are not limited to: staff training and incentives. Grant funds cannot be used for capital purchases, permanent improvements; cash assistance paid directly to individuals; or any cost not directly related to the grant. Expenses in the "Other" line should represent the appropriate fair share to the grant.

## Indirect costs

Indirect costs are expenses of doing business that cannot be directly attributed to a specific grant program or budget line item. These costs are often allocated across an entire agency and may include administrative, executive and/or supervisory salaries and fringe, rent, facilities maintenance, insurance premiums, etc.

The following are examples that could be included in indirect costs:

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

- Your department pays a general percentage to the city/county attorney's office or the sheriff's department and these costs cannot be specifically attributed to an individual grant.
- Your CHB or department pays a fee or percentage to the county/city human resources department and these costs are not tied to a specific grant.
- The CHBs accounting system does not allow community health services (CHS) administrator's time to be directly attributed to specific grant activities.

In contrast, administrative costs are expenses not directly related to delivering grant objectives, but necessary to support a particular grant program. These are items that while general expenses, can be attributed and appropriately tracked to specific awards. These items should be included in the grantee budget as direct expenses in the appropriate lines of Salaries and Fringe, Supplies, Contractual Services, or Other. They should not be included in the Indirect line.

The following are examples of administrative costs that should be included in direct lines of the budget and/or invoice:

- The CHS administrator's time that can be tracked through time studies to a specific grant (include in the Salary/Fringe line).
- A portion of secretarial/administrative support, accounting, human resources or IT support staff expenses that can be tracked through time studies to a specific grant (include in the Salary/Fringe line).
- Printing and supplies that your accounting system is able to track (for example through copy codes) to a specific grant (include in the Supply line).

Any salary costs included in the Salary and Fringe line of the budget and/or invoice must be if supported by proper time documentation. The total allowed for indirect costs can be charges up to your federally approved indirect rate, or up to a maximum of 10%.

If the applicant will be using a Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate, you will need to submit with your application your most current federally approved indirect rate. Organizations that do not have a federally negotiated rate must list the expenses that are covered in your organization's indirect cost pool in the budget narrative. For example: "Annual audits, depreciation, operation and maintenance costs for facilities and building security system."

How to calculate 10% indirect:

Total direct costs x 10% (0.1)= Maximum indirect costs

Example:

162,000 direct costs x 0.1= \$16,200 maximum indirect costs

162,000 + \$16,200= \$178,200 total award/request

Or

Total award/ 1.1= Maximum direct costs

Total award-maximum direct costs=maximum indirect costs



GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

Example:

\$178,200 grant award/ 1.1= \$162,000 maximum direct costs

\$178,200-162,000=Maximum indirect costs

## Budget instructions

Please complete all white cells with anticipated expenses **over the first two years of the grant period**. Each budget category should include all anticipated expenses over the first two years of the grant period.

This budget should represent your best anticipation of needed expenses at this time. However, budgets may be revised (with approval from your grant manager) later if anticipated expenses change.

Per MDH policy, the grantee may modify any line item in the most recently agreed-upon budget by up to 10 percent without prior written approval from MDH. The grantee must notify MDH of any modifications up to 10 percent in writing no later than the next invoice. The grantee must obtain prior written approval from MDH for line-item modifications greater than 10 percent. A grantee's failure to obtain MDH's prior approval may result in denial of modification request, loss of funds or both.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE  
DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN  
MINNESOTA

## **RFP Part 4: Appendices**

- Appendix A: Application Checklist
- Appendix B: Application Score Sheet
- Appendix C: Conflict of Interest Form
- Appendix D: Due Diligence Form
- Appendix E: Indirect Cost Questionnaire
- Appendix F: Quarterly Process Measures for Reporting

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

## Appendix A: Application Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure that you have included all the required items for your application. Any application that does not contain all required items will be considered incomplete and may not be reviewed.

- SWIFT vendor account.
  - All applicants must have a SWIFT vendor account. Please [go to SWIFT \(http://mn.gov/supplier\)](http://mn.gov/supplier), login and confirm that your organization's name, address, banking information, phone numbers, and other contact information is correct. MDH strongly encourages applicants to initiate direct deposit.
- Grant Applicant Face Sheet.
  - Current grantees: the information you put on the Face Sheet must match what is in SWIFT.
- Project Narrative.
- Work Plan.
- Budget Justification and Summary
- [Conflict of Interest Form \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/resources.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/resources.html).
- [Due Diligence Form \(not-for-profit applicants only\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf).
- Indirect Cost Questionnaire.

Applicants are encouraged to score their own application using the evaluation scoresheet before submitting their application. This step is not required but may help ensure applications address the criteria evaluators will use to score applications.

## Appendix B: Application Scoresheet

A numerical scoring system will be used to evaluate eligible applications. Scores will be used to develop final recommendations.

Applicants are encouraged to score their own application using the evaluation scoresheet before submitting their application. This step is not required but may help ensure applications address the criteria evaluators will use to score applications.

### Rating levels

- **Excellent or 5:** Outstanding level of response; high probability of success; no significant weaknesses
- **Very good or 4:** Substantial level response; good probability of success; no significant weaknesses.
- **Good or 3:** Adequate level of response; average probability of success; some weaknesses.
- **Marginal or 2:** Minimal level of response; low probability for success; significant weaknesses.
- **Unsatisfactory or 1:** Unsatisfactory level of response; little likelihood of success; many significant weaknesses.

### Rating levels – scored up to 100 points

Applicants will be scored up to 5 points based on strengths and weaknesses for each question of each section. A total of 100 points are possible.

#### Proposal component

Appendix C: Section I - Organizational Capacity, 30 points possible

Appendix C: Section II - Linkages and Collaborations, 10 points possible

Appendix C: Section III - Data Collection and Reporting, 10 points possible

Appendix D: Work Plan, 30 points possible

Appendix E: Budget, 20 points possible

### Scoring section

#### SECTION I. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (30 POINTS)

- (5 points) The applicant describes the community need that the applicant hopes to address with the application and why they are suited to provide services to that target population. They describe the organization's relevant experience promoting healthy pregnancies through pregnancy loss prevention strategies, providing evidence-based, culturally appropriate bereavement services, including grief and pregnancy after loss, counseling to individuals and families who have experienced infant death and stillbirths. Includes previous experience working with the State of Minnesota, including agencies, activities completed, length of time and amount awarded.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

- (5 points) The applicant describes the professional expertise, education, certification, licenses held, and other applicable trainings received by key staff who will be providing or managing services under this contract.
- (5 points) The applicant explains how the organization's staff reflect the communities to be served by the grant.
- (5 points) The applicant describes the population(s) served by the organization (e.g. ages, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location), and includes information about the number of clients served on average each year.
- (5 points) The applicant describes the organization's experience, capacity, and expertise in providing bereavement services to populations experiencing health inequities such as those who communicate in a language other than English, racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians, those in poverty, LGBTQIA+ individuals, individuals with disabilities, and populations in rural areas.
- (5 points) The applicant describes strategies currently used by the organization to recruit, retain, and engage hard-to-reach populations, such as families experiencing homelessness and immigrant communities, in using grief support services.

SECTION II. LINKAGES AND COLLABORATION (10 POINTS)

- (5 POINTS) The applicant describes whether the organization has any experience working with community groups, public health agencies, Tribal health departments, health care providers, or organizations providing bereavement services to families.
- (5 POINTS) The applicant provides the names of organizations that they have collaborated with and discuss the scope of your partnership or collaboration and the outcomes (s) of the partnership.

SECTION III. DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING (10 POINTS)

- (5 points) The applicant organization has the experience or a history of collecting and reporting confidential data, including taking precautions to protect client information and privacy, and staff have received training in data privacy.
- (5 points) The applicant explains trainings received by staff on data privacy, as well as their experience with collecting, summarizing, and reporting data to funding agencies.

WORK PLAN (30 POINTS)

- (5 POINTS) The work plan provides overall provides a clear picture of the scope and timeline of the proposed project.
- (5 points) The activities are clear and comprehensive and will achieve the identified objectives and strategies.
- (5 points) The work plan outlines each activity that includes the staff involved; external partners involved; expected timeline; and an estimate of the number of people reached by the activity.
- (5 points) The work plan's project goals and objectives are tangible, measurable, and achievable, must connect to the project narrative. Objectives should address the key activities and strategies of the category, in a feasible timeframe.

GRANT TO SUPPORT GRIEVING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCING THE DEATH OF AN INFANT OR A STILLBIRTH AND PREGNANCY LOSS PREVENTION IN MINNESOTA

- (5 points) The work plan describes process and outcome measures to measure the success of the proposed activities.
- (5 points) The work plan describes strategies that the organization will use to reach populations experiencing health inequity related to infant death and stillbirth.

**BUDGET (20 POINTS)**

- (5 POINTS) The requested level of funding is reasonable and justified for the proposed scope of activities, level(s) of change and depth of partnerships.
- (5 points) The budget narrative includes a clear and reasonable description of how funds will be used. The expenditures in the budget narrative support activities outlined in the work plan, including meeting grant requirements, supporting community partners, and evaluating the project activities and outcomes.

## Appendix C: Conflict of Interest Form

Refer to [Conflict of Interest Disclosure](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiexternal.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/coiexternal.pdf>)

## Appendix D: Due Diligence Form

Refer to [Due Diligence Review Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/grants/duediligence.pdf>).

## Appendix E: Indirect Cost Questionnaire

Fill out the following information in Foundant.

### Indirect Cost Questionnaire

For Non-CHB applicants only

#### Background

Applicants applying may request an indirect rate to cover costs that cannot be directly attributed to a specific grant program or budget line item. This allowance for indirect costs are a portion of any grant awarded, not in addition to the grant award. Please refer to page 29 for more detailed information on indirect costs.

#### Instructions

Please complete the information below and return this form as part of the application.

1. Name of applicant agency:
2. Are you requesting an indirect rate?  Yes  No
3. Do you have an approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal agency?
  - Yes and that is the rate being requested. Please submit a copy of your current rate with this completed form.
  - Yes but requesting a rate different from our Federally approved rate.
  - No – Please continue completing the rest of this form.
4. Non-federal indirect rate being requested:

Up to 10% of the direct expenses in the budget for the grant program listed above can be used for indirect costs per CFR Part 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and per MDH policy for State funds.
5. Please list the expenses included in your indirect cost pool below, or attach a copy of your current indirect cost allocation plan to this form

## Appendix F: Quarterly Process Measures for Reporting

### Examples of process measures

- Referrals received by type of death:
  - Stillbirth, infant death.
- Follow-up activities based on proposed workplan as appropriate:
  - Number of mailings sent with resource sheet.
  - Number of contacts attempted (text, email, phone).
  - Number of families successfully reached.
  - Number of clients referred to online support groups, individual therapy or counseling, local public health or other sources.
  - Number of newly referred clients that declined further services at initial consultation.
  - Number of times language translation services were used.
- Website and technology related measures:
  - Number of updates.
  - Number of unique visitors.
  - Progress on technology enhancements (e.g. Zoom consults).
- Family satisfaction survey responses:
  - # and % of families who report that the services provided met their family's need.
  - Feedback on other referrals that were not made but families would have found helpful
  - Feedback on the referral process and satisfaction, and reporting on changes made in response to feedback
- List of evidence-based strategies used to promote healthy pregnancies focusing on pregnancy loss prevention.