



## 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP) Addendum

Addendum Number 1, June 7, 2024

Application due date and time: 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on June 28, 2024. If applications are mailed, they must be postmarked by June 28, 2024.

### Grant Overview

The Department of Public Safety, Emergency Communication Networks division (DPS-ECN) requests proposals to the 2024-2026 Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) Equipment Grant Program. Through this grant program DPS-ECN provides grant funding to support the purchase and upgrade of radio equipment for local, Tribal, and state agencies participating in the ARMER radio system.

### Scope of Addendum / Questions and Answers

The following are questions received by 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on May 31, 2024, and their corresponding answers. Questions have been quoted in their original format. Where appropriate, specific locations, entity names, or grant request amounts have been redacted.

**Question 1: In reference to the below line, does this include adding a site? We have a FirstNet tower in our area that we have thought about adding a site on. Would be part of a simulcast, but would be a new site, and not an upgrade of an existing one. Or am I reading that differently? “• Systematic ARMER capability upgrades or tower site upgrades.”**

Answer 1: Tower sites and tower site upgrades, including equipment installed on tower sites, are not an eligible expense for this grant program.

**Question 2: Is there a cap on the requested amount? If \$40,000 is about all I can expect the allows for the purchase of 8 portable radios for the fire departments, that is one radio per department. What would happen if a make the request for 16 radios, \$80,000 would that knock me out.**

Answer 2: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP.

**Question 3: Wondering if this grant allows for the purchase of equipment to go on an existing tower. We have been trying for years to get funding to improve coverage on [LOCATION]. At&T gave [LOCATION] a tower a few years ago, we just need funds to purchase the microwave equipment for the tower. This would improve coverage for multiple fire departments that service this area (as well as LE.)**

Answer 3: Tower sites and tower site upgrades, including equipment installed on tower sites, are not an eligible expense for this grant program.



**Question 4: We have a few schools within the county that have asked about potential grants for BDA's to improve ARMER coverage inside the building. Is that an eligible item to submit with this grant?**

Answer 4: BDAs are not an eligible expense for this grant program.

**Question 5: Just checking to know if the rural FD's should be the agencies filling out the grant?**

Answer 5: Any eligible entity can apply, which includes local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the ARMER system. If an applicant is made up of a number of divisions or departments, it is up to the applicant to determine which of these divisions will be applying for and managing the grant as the 'grantee' and will be registered in SWIFT if awarded. Other than the requirement that grantees must be local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the ARMER system, there is no preferred agency or department within the eligible applicant list to apply to this grant.

Applicants must be registered in SWIFT in order to receive funds from the State of Minnesota. Applicants should plan on registering as a vendor in SWIFT prior to receiving a grant award. Resources for registering as a vendor on SWIFT are on the Minnesota Management and Budget website: <https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/>. The turnaround for receiving a SWIFT vendor number is usually within a few business days.

**Question 6: Can we apply for grant funding for radios already purchased utilizing a lease purchase program? We needed to replace our portable radios recently and are currently making annual payments for a lease purchase for new Motorola radios. The timing was unfortunate for us, as no grant programs were available and we had an urgent need to replace failing radio units.**

Answer 6: This grant may only be used to reimburse for the cost of equipment purchased after the grant is awarded to the grantee and for the purpose of the grant program. Purchases based on agreements made prior to the execution of the grant contract are not eligible for this grant.

**Question 7: Are there any entities and/or agencies that are considered priorities for this grant?**

Answer 7: Any eligible entity can apply, which includes local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the ARMER system. No specific type of applicant is considered a priority for this grant. Applications will be scored based on the scoring rubric outlined in the RFP, which does not award points based on entity type.

**Question 8: Would the purchase of a BDA for a regional medical center be considered an eligible item of equipment?**

Answer 8: BDAs are not an eligible expense for this grant program.



**Question 9: Is there a capped dollar amount for the request of radio equipment under the grant?**

Answer 9: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP.

**Question 10: I am starting to fill out the ARMER Equipment grant, and I noticed under the 'Eligible Applicants' that it says, 'Local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and State agencies participating in the ARMER system. Our fire department is a separate entity from the township. Does this make us ineligible to apply for the grant, since we are not a part of the township?**

Answer 10: Eligible entities are determined by the legislative appropriation and include local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the ARMER system. Other entities are not eligible to receive a grant under this program.

**Question 11: Our department was in desperate need of radios. Long story short, our new chief had to move funds from one area to another to provide our squad cars with radios, which we previously weren't equipped with. If we apply for the grant, would we be able to use the funds for the radios we purchased 2 months ago? We had to give up a new squad purchase and other "non-essential" equipment purchases in order to buy them. We have two squads without breathalyzers and all of our tasers are outdated. If we could qualify for the grant, it would free up money to purchase other needed equipment.**

Answer 11: This grant may only be used to reimburse for the cost of equipment purchased after the grant is awarded to the grantee and for the purpose of the grant program. Purchases based on agreements made prior to the execution of the grant contract are not eligible for this grant.

**Question 12: I am writing to verify that the University of Minnesota is eligible to apply for an ARMER Equipment grant. I reviewed the notice and didn't find anything excluding us, but figured I would reach out to double check before putting together an application. I appreciate any information you can provide.**

Answer 12: Eligible entities are determined by the legislative appropriation and include local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the ARMER system. Entities not listed in the legislative appropriation are not eligible to receive a grant under this program.

**Question 13: The quote we received to purchase 20 radios/radio equipment totals about \$135,000. We saw in the grant information that you are looking to fund approximately 100 awards at \$40,000 each; would it be in our best interest to apply for the full amount to purchase all of the radios we are looking for, or to apply for fewer radios and have the total be closer to the \$40,000?**

Answer 13: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN



reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP.

**Question 14: Are school buses and school bus equipment included as an allowable expense for this grant program?**

Answer 14: The ARMER Equipment Grant is limited to eligible purchases of ARMER equipment to enhance or expand an organization's ARMER capabilities such as radios. Proposals for school bus equipment that utilizes the ARMER network will be considered.

**Question 15: Is \$40,000 the max grant award or will requests for larger amounts be considered or a disqualifier?**

Answer 15: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP.

**Question 16: It says that each local government unit is eligible to receive only one grant. Is that regarding this specific grant only or for future ARMER grants as well?**

Answer 16: The statement "each local unit of government is eligible to receive only one grant" applies only to this grant RFP and grantee awards made under this program. In the event there are additional legislative appropriations for the purpose of ARMER grants which do not modify this specific appropriation, separate grant RFPs will be published with eligibility based on any new legislative language.

**Question 17: Request for clarification on interop planning and coordination local system admin in section 4.2.**

Answer 17: In section 4.2, applicants are encouraged to describe any collaboration they have with other entities to ensure that their proposed project meets current system standards and that it is interoperable with other systems within their jurisdiction as well as, potentially, with those in neighboring jurisdictions. Project-level collaboration (i.e. sharing of radio equipment or cooperative equipment caches) is not required for this grant, but applicants should be able to detail the ways in which they are assuring their purchase will work within the existing ARMER system. Applicants should respond to this question to describe the way that their proposed grant project will work within the system that is currently operating and that they will have interoperability with other entities/systems that they need to coordinate with.

**Question 18: We are looking to replace at least XX radios, but we can have up to XX members with a need for one. The form indicates they are offering an average of \$40,000 per grant. A new radio (with everything included) costs about \$7,000. The math online adds up to \$XXX,XXX in table 3. In Table 2, I asked for the \$40,000 average, which equals our 5% match of \$2000 and the grant's \$38000. Is it okay that that does not match the \$XXX,XXX in Table 3? To be honest, I am unsure if there is a cap on what we can ask for.**

Answer 18: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the



RFP. The full request should be included in Table 2 of Attachment B. If the applicant would accept a lower amount, the minimum award should be describe din in Section 3.3 Minimum Award of Attachment A, although this is not required. This information will only be used in the event ECN elects to give partial awards to recipients.

**Question 19: Section 2. We can fund the 2% match, but it looks like you are looking for budgeting documentation as well. Would you like a report from our treasure?**

Answer 19: A 5% match of nonstate funds is required for this grant. Budgeting documentation is relatively broad, but the requirement is to provide some kind of backup indicating that budget will be available at the time of the grant. At a minimum, applicants should describe the source of funding that will be applied as match and their general budgeting procedure to ensure funds will be available. If an attachment is included for support, the most common format is a letter of support or a motion from a board or council. Other options may be including a link to a published Capital Improvement Plan, strategic plan with budget, or any other formal documentation, if available.

**Question 20: Section 3. We are located in [COUNTY], and I know they are going to new radios that are a decoded system which I think is called the armor system. I believe we will have to meet these standards in the next few years. Is this the documentation you are looking for in 3.2 and 3.4?**

Answer 20: In section 3.2, applicants should describe the gaps in operation that will be filled with the grant proposal. For some, this may mean comparing the actual number of radios deployed to what would be an ideal deployment based on staffing, storage, capability, etc. For others there may be geographic service gaps or aged/aging equipment that is available does not meet current requirements of the radio system. These examples are not the only ways in which an applicant may describe the gaps they are looking to meet in their connection to the ARMER network - applicants should describe what their radio needs are and how their proposed project will allow them to meet their needs in terms that apply best to them. The applicant should supply data in order to illustrate what gaps they are intending to fill with their grant-funded purchase. If these gaps are driven by local, state, or federal requirements that the applicant intends to meet, then additional detail about those requirements and how the proposed project will meet those requirements should be provided in section 3.4.

**Question 21: My last question concerns section 4.2. Is that collaboration also with the [COUNTY] Communications Center?**

Answer 21: In section 4.2, applicants are encouraged to describe any collaboration they have with other entities to ensure that their proposed project meets current system standards and that it is interoperable with other systems within their jurisdiction as well as, potentially, with those in neighboring jurisdictions. Project-level collaboration (i.e. sharing of radio equipment or cooperative equipment caches) is not required for this grant, but applicants should be able to detail the ways in which they are assuring their purchase will both work within and be maintained within the ARMER system.





**Question 22: I have a client hoping to apply for a Remote Dispatch Console – MCC7100. My question is, can one apply for more than \$40K, and would the MCC7100 remote dispatch console qualify within this grant opportunity.**

Answer 22: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP. However, remote dispatch consoles are not an eligible expense for this grant program.

**Question 23: I am looking at the RFP for the 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Program and was wondering about the collaboration aspect of it. If multiple emergency response departments in a county were to collaborate together - is the entire collaboration limited to \$40,000 or can it be higher than that because of the multi department collaboration? Say the lead applicant needed \$25,000, one of the sub applicants needs \$15,000, and another sub applicant needs \$15,000 - would the \$55,000 be considered or would it be capped at \$40,000?**

Answer 23: There is no cap on the amount that agencies can request which applies to both collaborative and individual entities. The estimate included in the RFP is only to show the anticipated scope of the grant program. ECN reserves the right to award differently than what is stated based on the responses to the RFP.

**Question 24: If Fire and Ambulance are applying together within the same City, is the City just the applicant or is one of the departments the applicant and the other a sub?**

Answer 24: The applicant entity will need to determine which sub-entity should be applying on behalf of the entity. The structure of the relationship between an applicant and a sub-award will depend on the financial relationship between these two entities and whether transfer of funds for the purpose of the grant requires additional contracts between the applicant and any sub-awardees. Unfortunately there is no one-size-fits-all recommendation to applicants as each may have a different structure or administrative capacity under which they receive and manage awards. Note that the applicant entity must be registered in SWIFT and must be prepared to execute and manage the grant contract if the entity is selected for award. Resources for registering as a vendor on SWIFT are on the Minnesota Management and Budget website: <https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/>.

**Question 25: Is the cost-match only a cash match or, if we were able to find an in-kind match, would an in-kind match fulfil the requirement?**

Answer 25: This grant is contingent upon a match of at least five percent from nonstate funds. The intent of the grant match is demonstrate a local funding contribution to cover the cost of eligible grant activities. Funding is defined as money.

**Question 26: For 2.3 Other Funding Sources, [ENTITY] applied for ARMER Mobile Radios under the 2024 CTAS application, do we address this in 2.3 since they are ARMER products but they haven't announced awards yet (we plan on submitting this application for different ARMER equipment)?**



Answer 26: Applicants should only supply information related to actual funding that is currently available to the applicant for the same purpose. Information on another grant program that has not yet been awarded does not need to be reported on for the purpose of applying to this grant program.

**Question 27: Are pagers for fire an allowable use for this grant?**

Answer 27: The ARMER Equipment Grant is limited to eligible purchases of ARMER Equipment to enhance or expand an organization’s ARMER capabilities such as radios. A pager that alerts first responders to a call for service using the ARMER network will be considered. A pager using another network such as LTE or VHF resources will not qualify.

**Question 28: What to use in the “SWIFT ID” box for a number. To our best knowledge the [CITY] does not have a SWIFT number. I advised him to put “None” for now. My question is will this impact them as a recipient in the process since they do not have. If so what does it take to get one for them if it is needed?**

Answer 28: Applicants do not need to supply a SWIFT number at the time of application but must be registered in SWIFT in order to receive funds if awarded. Applicants should plan on registering as a vendor in SWIFT prior to receiving a grant award. Resources for registering as a vendor on SWIFT are on the Minnesota Management and Budget vendor resources website: <https://mn.gov/mmb/accounting/swift/vendor-resources/>. The turnaround for receiving a SWIFT vendor number is usually within a few business days.