



2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Program Request for Proposals

May 14, 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. DPS-ECN consults with the Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) to administer this grant.

Available Funding and Grant Period

\$4,000,000 is available to fund approximately 100 awards, estimated to average \$40,000 each to eligible applicants.

The term of the grant period is anticipated to be from October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2026.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge. Award announcements will be made in August 2024. No grant expenses may be incurred until a grant contract agreement is fully executed.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Local units of government
- Federally recognized Tribal entities
- State agencies participating in the ARMER system

Each local government unit is eligible to receive only one grant. Counties, cities, or other eligible entities with multiple departments or subdivisions participating in the ARMER system are encouraged to collaborate and submit only one grant application. Eligible applicants must maintain a vendor number in the Minnesota Statewide Integrated Financial Tool System (SWIFT).

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed but not required for this grant. Collaborative proposals must identify the lead grantee organization and the names of the organizations that will be receiving sub awards.

Eligible Expenses

Authority for this grant program is provided to DPS-ECN in the [2023 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 52, Article 2, Section 3, Subdivision 9\(e\)](#):

(e)Statewide Public Safety Radio Communication System Equipment Grants

\$2,000,000 each year from the general fund is for grants to local units of government, federally recognized Tribal entities, and state agencies participating in the statewide Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) public safety radio communication system established under [Minnesota Statutes, section 403.36](#), subdivision



1e. The grants must be used to purchase or upgrade portable radios, mobile radios, and related equipment that is interoperable with the ARMER system. Each local government unit may receive only one grant. The grant is contingent upon a match of at least five percent from nonstate funds. The director of the Department of Public Safety Emergency Communication Networks division, in consultation with the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, must administer the grant program. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2026. This is a onetime appropriation.

The priority of this grant is to provide funding for the purpose of purchasing ARMER system radios and radio accessories. High-priority applications are those that apply for this grant with the intent to purchase radios and/or radio accessories. Applicants may also apply for the purchase of radios and/or radio accessories that expand the capabilities of the applicant including but not limited to adding or expanding access to encryption-capable radios or UL-approved radios. Projects considered should propose at least one of the following:

- Purchase of new radios or radio accessories adding capabilities that are not currently available to the applicant.
- Replace existing radios or radio accessories, to maintain current operations of the applicant.
- Replace radios or radio accessories that is failing or has failed, to meet requirements of the existing ARMER system that are no longer being met by the applicant.
- Procure redundant radios or radio accessories, in the case that existing equipment fails.
- Other related purchases, as described by the applicant and considered by DPS-ECN on a case-by-case basis.

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Lobbyists, political contributions.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.
- Parking or traffic violations.
- Transportation and travel expenses.
- Systematic ARMER capability upgrades or tower site upgrades.

A comprehensive list of generally eligible and ineligible expenditures for all state grants are available in the ECN Grant Manual posted on the [ECN Grants website](#).

State's Right to Cancel

This grant opportunity does not obligate DPS-ECN to award a grant. DPS-ECN reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in the entity's best interest due to a lack of funding, agency priorities, or other considerations.

Questions

Questions may be submitted by phone or email to Rebecca Roberts, ECN Grant Coordinator at 612-280-2456 or Rebecca.M.Roberts@state.mn.us. Please submit questions no later than 4:30



p.m. Central Time, on May 31, 2024. Answers will be posted on ECN’s grant website within five business days.

Application Components

Applicants must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete:

- Attachment A: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Application Form
- Attachment B: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Budget Workbook
- Supporting documentation as outlined in the above application.

Application Submission

All applications must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on June 28, 2024. If applications are mailed, they must be postmarked by June 28, 2024. Late applications will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

Applications may be submitted electronically via email or by postal mail to:

Rebeccah Roberts, ECN Grant Coordinator
DPS-ECN
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1725
St. Paul, MN 55101

Email: Rebeccah.M.Roberts@state.mn.us

Public Data

Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

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

Application Screening and Review

DPS-ECN will establish a grant review panel for the purpose of reviewing and scoring grant applications. Panel members will consist of non-applicant organizations, ARMER subject-matter experts, Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) members, state agencies, and other interested parties who do not have a conflict of interest with the grant or its applicants. DPS-ECN has conducted stakeholder engagement in order to establish this grant review panel consistent with State of Minnesota requirements. All panel members must complete a conflict of interest disclosure form as required by [Minn. Stat. §16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [OGM Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making](#) to be approved for participation in the review process.



Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

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

In cases where a conflict of interest is in question or disclosed, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to: revising the grant work plan or grantee duties to mitigate the risk, requesting the grant applicant submit an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualifying the grant applicant from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Competitive 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. [OGM Policy 08-02](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. This grant aims to serve eligible entities participating in the ARMER system which demonstrate:

- Limited budgetary resources available to achieve the same purpose.
- Need to replace failing or failed ARMER radios or radio accessories in order to meet existing system requirements or baseline operational requirements.
- Large deployment or capability gaps, where the ratio between existing ARMER radio operations and need of the applicant shows a high disparity.
 - The applicant should demonstrate that these gaps impact the response time, response capability, or quality of emergency service for residents or visitors within the impacted area.

This grant will measure performance in serving entities identified above by reviewing information provided by the applicant such as:

- Funding and budgetary information.
- ARMER equipment inventories and operational needs assessments.
- Emergency services mapping.
- Evidence of coordination with other entities and interoperability assessments.
- Data-based comparison between the existing operating environment and ideal operating environment.

Phase 1: Screening

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be fully considered for this grant opportunity. Applications that do not meet this minimum criteria will not be eligible for award:



- Received by or postmarked by the due date and time: 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on June 28, 2024.
- Meet minimum eligibility including eligible applicant type, allowable expenditures, and evidence of match.
- Application is complete and includes
 - Exhibit A: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Application.
 - Exhibit B: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Budget Workbook.
 - Supplemental documentation as outlined in the above application.

Phase 2: Selection Criteria and Weight

Each application will be reviewed and scored by the grant review panel. Panel members will apply a score to each component listed below.

Maximum number of points for each application: 100

- Budget and Funding Information (25 pts possible)
 - Budget information to support the applicant's funding request (10 pts)
 - Evidence of applicant's budgeting process (5 pts)
 - Commitment to match (5 pts)
 - Description of other funding sources to meet the same need (5 pts)
- ARMER Equipment Inventories and Operational Needs Assessments (50 pts possible)
 - Current equipment inventory; ratio between current and proposed operations (20 pts)
 - Description of operational gaps to be met with the grant proposal (10 pts)
 - Project type indicates applicant is replacing equipment that is failing or has failed (10 points)
 - Commitment to maintenance and deployment plan for procured equipment (5 pts)
 - Meeting or exceeding local, state, or federal requirements (5 pts)
- Coordination Plan (15 pts possible)
 - Collaboration has taken place with other entities (10 pts)
 - Interoperability is considered in the grant proposal (5 pts)
- Supporting documentation (10 pts possible)
 - Supports request made in the grant proposal (10 pts)

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DPS-ECN will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions.

Phase 3: Award Announcement

Awards will be announced once scoring is complete, anticipated in August/September 2024. Funding will be awarded to the highest overall scoring applications. The DPS Commissioner or their designee will review and approve the recommendations prepared by the grant review panel prior to award. All applicants will receive either a letter of award notice or letter of denial. A summary of awards will be posted to the DPS-ECN website.

Records of all applicants will be retained in the event funds are returned or reallocated through the life of the grant. DPS-ECN reserves the right to offer grant amounts that differ from the applicant's request. The award decisions of DPS-ECN are final and not subject to appeal.



Phase 4: E-Grants Application, Pre-Award Risk Assessment, Financial Review and Grantee Capacity Review

The awarded grantee will be responsible for completing the application process in the [E-Grants Online Grant Management System](#). Participation in E-Grants is required in order to prepare and execute a contract with the State of Minnesota in order to utilize grant funds. ECN will provide directions to the grantees to complete registration and application using E-Grants alongside the notice of award. Grantees will upload their application and set up their grant budget to fulfill the requirements of the grant contract. As a final step in this process, ECN will conduct a risk assessment of the grantee for financial capacity as well as in regard to prior performance. These procedures will determine risk and monitoring outcomes for the active period of this grant.

Once these steps are complete, the contract will be made available for execution in E-Grants. Please note: **Applicants recommended for an award must wait until they receive the fully-executed grant contract before providing any services and before incurring expenditures.** Any expenses incurred prior to the full execution of the grant contract are not reimbursable and become the responsibility of the applicant/grantee.

Timeline

RFP posted on the DPS-ECN web site	5/14/2024
Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time	5/31/2024
Responses to questions posted to DPS-ECN website	6/7/2024
Applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time	6/28/2024
Committee begins review of applications	7/12/2024
Committee recommendations submitted to DPS Commissioner for review	8/1/2024
Selected grantees announced; grant agreement negotiations begin	8/15/2024
Contract agreement process initiated in E-Grants	8/15/2024
Grantees undergo pre-award risk assessment	9/15/2024
Grantees and DPS execute grant agreement; grant period begins	10/1/2024

General Expectations of Grantees

All grantees are expected to comply with the following expectations in receipt of the award:

- Maintain a vendor number in the Minnesota Statewide Integrated Financial Tool System (SWIFT).
- Access grant documents and submit reports utilizing the DPS E-Grants System.
- Submit financial status reports (FSRs) and backup documentation on a quarterly basis at minimum and no more than monthly as directed in the ECN Grant Manual.
- Submit progress reports on a quarterly basis, as directed in the ECN Grant Manual.
- Complete sub-award certification and risk-assessment procedures as required by DPS.
- Retain documentation to support the expenditures related to the grant initiative described. Reimbursement must be based on necessary and applicable expenditures related to the program.



- Maintain a ledger to track the grant budget expenditures and payment reimbursements plus documentation that supports budget line-item expenses.

Grant Payments

Per [OGM Policy 08-08](#) reimbursement is the preferred 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 DPS-ECN has given the grantee a written extension.

Grant Monitoring

Agencies may choose to conduct grant monitoring per [OGM Policy 08-10](#). At a minimum, grantees are expected to submit progress reports and financial status reports quarterly.

Grantee Bidding Requirements

Grantees that are municipalities must follow:

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in [Minn. Stat. §471.345](#).
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN:

[Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#).

Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees

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. Minnesota Rules, part [5000.3500](#).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration Requirement:

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

Resources for Applicants

State of Minnesota General

[The Minnesota Office of Grant Management Policies](#): Policies created and maintained by the State of Minnesota Department of Administration’s Office of Grants Management which standardize, streamline, and improve state grant-making practices, as well as aim to increase public information about state grant opportunities.

[SWIFT Vendor Resources](#): Every individual or organization conducting business with the state is considered a vendor. Grantees must be registered vendors in SWIFT in order to receive payments.

DPS-ECN Documents

Additional information regarding grant programs administered by ECN can be found on the [ECN Grants website](#). Applicants are encouraged to review the ECN Grant Manual.

[E-Grants Grants Management System](#): The grants management system for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Contact Information

For more information about this grant RFP, contact:

Rebecca Roberts, ECN Grant Coordinator
DPS-ECN
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1725
St. Paul, MN 55101

Email: Rebecca.M.Roberts@state.mn.us

Attachments

- Attachment A: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Application Form
- Attachment B: 2024-2026 ARMER Equipment Grant Budget Workbook