

# CanNavigate Grant Program

Department of Employment and Economic Development

As required by 2023 Minn. Laws, Chap. 63, Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 5

1/15/2024

---

## Contact Information

MN Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Small Business and Innovation  
Great Northern Building  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor 180 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(Phone) 651-259-7040  
[Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us](mailto:Brandon.Toner@state.mn.us)

As requested by Minnesota Statute 3.197: This report cost approximately \$158.59 to prepare, including staff time, printing, and mailing expenses.  
*Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.*

## Program Description and Background

In order to support the opportunity for entrepreneurship within Minnesota's legal cannabis industry, with a particular focus on serving those who have experienced barriers to education or employment, public sector investment for technical assistance is necessary.

This program will award grants to organizations to develop technical assistance resources to inform interested members of the public about the regulatory requirements of starting and operating a business in the legal cannabis industry. Additionally grants to organizations should support technical assistance and navigation services to individuals. An emphasis is made that those who have faced barriers to employment or education should have access to these services. As a result, a critical criteria for grant awards is the applicant's history of successfully providing services to areas where long-term residents are eligible to be Social Equity Applicants and that the technical assistance being proposed would serve those communities. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §§116J.6595, the State of Minnesota, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has the authority to award grants to provide technical assistance and navigation services for Minnesota's legal cannabis industry.

The relevant legislation states:

§§116J.6595 Cannabis Industry Navigation Grants

*Subd. 1. Establishment: The commissioner of employment and economic development shall establish CanNavigate, a program to award grants to eligible organizations to help individuals navigate the regulatory structure of the legal cannabis industry.*

*Subd. 3. Grants to organizations. (a) Grant money awarded to eligible organizations may be used for both developing technical assistance resources relevant to the regulatory structure of the legal cannabis industry and for providing technical assistance or navigation services to individuals.*

*Subd. 5. Reports to the legislature: By January 15, 2024, and each January 15 thereafter, the commissioner must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees of the house of representatives and the senate having jurisdiction over economic development that details awards given through the CanNavigate program and the use of grant money, including any measures of success toward helping individuals navigate the regulatory structure of the legal cannabis industry.*

## Funding

In 2023, the Minnesota legislature legalized the legal cannabis industry and appropriated \$1,000,000 each year in 2024 and 2025 to the CanNavigate grant program.

## Development Process

DEED has formed an intra-agency working group for each program team to develop the CanNavigate, CanStartup, and CanTrain grant programs. This working group is designed so each of the three program teams are able to share insights and learnings as each grant program is created. Research has included targeted conversations with experts and a request for information is currently in development.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

The request for information will be released by early in Q2. The responses will be integrated into the development of the grant programs. The request for proposals (RFPs) are on track to be released in 2024 in coordination with the Office of Cannabis Management.