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# Gender-Neutral Single-User Restroom Grant

Report to the Legislature

As required by 2023 Minnesota Laws, chapter 55, article 8, section 19, subdivision 5

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## **For more information:**

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$399.63 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.*

## Table of Contents

For more information:.....	2
Legislative Charge.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Analysis.....	5
Conclusion .....	6

## Legislative Charge

Laws of Minnesota 2023, 1st Spec. Sess., article 8, section 19, subdivision 5, designated \$1,000,000 annually for grants to school districts for remodeling, constructing, or repurposing space for gender-neutral single-user restrooms. The statute reads:

“(b) A school district or a cooperative unit under Minnesota Statutes, section 123A.24, subdivision 2, may apply for a grant of not more than \$75,000 per site under this subdivision in the form and manner specified by the commissioner. The commissioner must award at least one grant under this subdivision to Independent School District No. 709, Duluth, for a demonstration grant for a project awaiting construction.

(c) The commissioner must ensure that grants are awarded to schools to reflect the geographic diversity of the state.

(d) Up to \$75,000 each year is available for grant administration and monitoring.

(e) By February 1 of each year, the commissioner must annually report to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over education on the number of grants that were awarded each year and the number of grant applications that were unfunded during that year.”

## Introduction

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) assigned this grant to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Center. The request for proposal (RFP) was posted December 22, 2023. The total amount available for the grant was \$925,000 annually.

At least 80% of funds in this program must be used for remodeling, constructing, and repurposing space for single-user, gender-neutral restrooms. Recognizing that not just construction but proper planning, communication, and implementation is important to ensure that these facilities are culturally responsive spaces that are safe and accessible for all students. Up to 20% of funds in this program may go toward engagement and implementation.

The [MDE competitive grants webpage](#) provides a detailed overview of the grant. This page includes a detailed instruction document, an application coversheet, assurances, and narrative as well as a budget template. To support grantees in developing a high-quality application, MDE hosted, and later published a webinar as well as a Question-and-Answer document. Additionally, a detailed rubric was posted for applicants to reference when preparing the application.

To determine a framework by which charter schools could be eligible for this funding, the request for proposal for this grant was delayed. To account for charter school inclusion and access, the original RFP for school districts and cooperative units (co-ops) that own the building(s) was modified to appropriate only \$775,000 to these specific applicants. A separate competition will be run for charter schools for the remaining \$150,000.

Due to the delay, MDE has not yet selected recipients. MDE anticipates that the grant recipients may begin executing their projects by May 15, 2024, for public districts and cooperative districts who own their buildings. Meanwhile the grant period will begin by June 3, 2024, for charter schools. The table below details the original schedule for launching the grant program and captures the new timelines for the two different competitions.

**Gender-Neutral Single-User Restroom Grant Timeline**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Original schedule</b>	<b>Modified schedule for district schools and co-ops who own their building</b>	<b>Modified schedule for charter schools</b>
RFP Published	12/22/2023	n/a	3/1/2024
Info session	1/17/2024	n/a	3/12/2024
Question and Answers Period Closes	1/19/2024	n/a	3/13/2024
Question and Answers Published	1/24/2024	2/28/2024	3/18/2024
RFP Closes	2/2/2024	3/13/2024	3/29/2024
Minimum Qualification check	2/5/2024	3/14/2024	4/1/2024
Reviewer meeting	2/7/2024	3/18/2024	4/3/2024
Review Period	2/9-2/25	3/18-3/29	4/5-4/19
Discussion Period	2/28-3/6	4/3-4/8	4/24-4/26
Decision period	3/7-3/14	4/10/2024	4/29/2024
Award Letters Sent	3/18/2024	4/12/2024	5/6/2024
Beginning of Grant	4/18/2024	5/15/2024	6/3/2024

Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 13.599, subdivision 3, states at the time of opening, the name, address, and amount requested is public information. All other data is private or non-public until completion of the evaluation process. Given this provision, MDE will report back to the Legislature by the end of June 2024 with an update that fulfills the intended reporting request.

**Analysis**

So far, no analysis has been conducted. MDE will utilize a team of grant reviewers to read through and score each application using the prescribed [rubric](#). Both grant programs will be scored using the same rubric. MDE will award five priority points to applicants that have passed a gender equity policy and/or recently entered into a settlement or consent decree regarding harassment based on sex or gender identity. Additionally, MDE is invested in funding projects that are feasible within the timeline and scope of the grant and will award five priority points for programs that demonstrate feasibility. Feasibility is demonstrated by having a board-approved facilities plan that includes provisions for providing a gender-neutral, single-user restroom at the site(s) identified in the application.

As required in statute, MDE will award one grant to Duluth Public Schools as a pilot program. To ensure grants are awarded to schools to reflect the geographic diversity of the state, additional recipients will be selected based on which application scored the highest within each congressional district.

## **Conclusion**

At this point, no grants have been awarded for this program. MDE plans to have launched the grant by the end of the school year and will report back to the Legislature to share the number of grants that were awarded each year and the number of grant applications that were unfunded during that year.