

January 31, 2025

Senator Tou Xiong, Co-chair  
Senator Andrew Lang, Co-chair  
State and Local Government Committee

Representative Jim Nash, Co-chair  
Representative Ginny Klevorn, Co-chair  
State Government Finance and Policy  
Committee

SENT VIA EMAIL

**Subject: 2024 Accommodation Reimbursement Fund Report**

Dear Legislators,

The attached report is submitted by the Department of Administration in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §16B.4805, Subdivision 6. The report details the reimbursement of state agencies for the cost of expenses incurred in making reasonable disability accommodations for employees that occurred in fiscal year 2024.

Please contact Julie Bayerl, [julie.bayerl@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.bayerl@state.mn.us), if you have any questions or need assistance.

Sincerely,

Tamar Gronvall  
Commissioner

Attachment

cc: Legislative Reference Library



---

## **Accommodation Reimbursement Fund**

Fiscal Year 2024

---

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Contact.....	2
Introduction .....	3
Background.....	3
Accommodation Fund .....	3
Implementation.....	4
Eligibility .....	4
2024 Summary.....	4
Reimbursement Requests .....	4

Upon request, this document will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, braille, or audio recording.

## Contact

STAR Program  
358 Centennial Office Building  
658 Cedar Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-201-2640 or toll-free at 1-888-234-1267  
MN Relay: 7-1-1 or 800-627-3529  
Fax: 651-282-6671  
Email: [star.program@state.mn.us](mailto:star.program@state.mn.us)

# Introduction

---

This annual report on the State's Accommodation Reimbursement Fund is mandated under [Minnesota Statutes, Section 16B.4805, Subd. 6](#).

## Background

The State of Minnesota recognizes the significant contribution workers with disabilities make to keep the state competitive in a global economy. To remain competitive, the State must aggressively pursue new and inclusive recruitment strategies to both prepare for the rapidly approaching workforce shortage, and ensure a state government that reflects the people it serves. However, workers with disabilities remain an underutilized resource. According to the American Community Survey data for 2017-2021 (5-year estimates) the unemployment rate for Civilian noninstitutionalized Minnesotan's with disabilities between the ages of 18-64 is 33.65%, versus the unemployment rate of 3.7% for Minnesotan's ages 18-64 with no disability.<sup>1</sup>

Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), in collaboration with the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (MNCDHH) submitted a report to the Legislature in 2015, noting that:

Several studies have cited a centralized reasonable accommodation fund as a best practice for hiring individuals with disabilities. Specifically, it can reduce the unconscious or conscious bias a hiring manager may experience when considering an applicant with a disability and the associated costs of workplace accommodations. This bias has been shown to potentially deter a manager from hiring an individual with a disability.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequent to this report, legislation was enacted to establish a fund to reimburse state agencies for qualifying reasonable accommodation expenses to better support the hiring and retention of workers with disabilities.

## Accommodation Fund

In 2015 the legislature established the accommodation fund at the Department of Administration for the purpose of reimbursing state agencies (as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.011, subd. 12) for reasonable accommodation expenses in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 16B.4805, subd. 6.

In 2017, the statute was amended to allow the Commissioner of Administration to reimburse state agencies up to 50 percent of the cost of expenses incurred in making reasonable accommodations. In 2023, the legislature reduced the minimum amount that could be reimbursed from \$1,000 to \$500 to allow more one-time accommodations to be eligible.

The goal of the accommodation fund is twofold:

---

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey table S1811, Minnesota and U.S., 2017-2021 5 year estimates

<sup>2</sup> (2015, February 26). *Centralized Reasonable Accommodation Fund Study - Minnesota...* Retrieved January 12, 2017, from <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2015/mandated/150351.pdf>

1. To provide an equal footing for job applicants with disabilities during the hiring process, in support of Executive Order 19-14; and,
2. To provide for a more inclusive workplace environment for current state employees with disabilities.

The three types of accommodation expenses eligible for reimbursement are:

1. For **applicants for employment** in any amount;
2. For **current employees** for services that are needed on a periodic or ongoing basis; and
3. For **current employees** for one-time expenses that total more than \$500 for a single employee in a fiscal year

Since its establishment in 2015, Admin has distributed approximately \$1.5 million in reimbursement to agencies for accommodations.

## Implementation

The Accommodation Fund is administered by the Department of Administration’s STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Result) program. STAR is federally-funded and provides assistive technology services to help Minnesotans with disabilities of all ages increase their independence at home, school, work, and in their communities.

## Eligibility

Eighty-one executive branch agencies, boards, councils, and commissions are eligible to submit requests for reimbursement of reasonable accommodations subject to established eligibility requirements.

Reimbursement requests may only be submitted for state employees and job applicants. Reasonable accommodations provided on behalf of board members, unpaid student workers, interns, and volunteers do not qualify for reimbursement.

## 2024 Summary

---

### Reimbursement Requests

#### Agency Requests – Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24)

During FY24, sixteen agencies **requested** reasonable accommodation expense reimbursements totaling \$521,075.39. The following breakdown is provided by agency.

**Table 1: FY24 Agency Accommodation Reimbursement Requests**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
Employment and Economic Development	\$127,837.76
Human Services	\$92,980.06
Information Technology Services	\$86,287.85
Housing and Finance	\$9,698.75
Revenue	\$22,765.75
Council Deafblind Hard of Hearing	\$118,510.86
Natural Resources	\$11,310.57
Board on Social Work	\$1,960.50
State Colleges and Universities	\$1,300.00
Department of Health	\$10,599.85
Board of Executives for Long Term Services and Support	\$604.38
Public Safety	\$11,811.04
Board on Nursing	\$557.80
Department of Human Rights	\$5,449.38
Minnesota Management and Budget	\$3,098.98
Veteran Affairs	\$16,301.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$521,075.39</b>

### **Approved Requests – FY24**

The Accommodation Fund approved and reimbursed 220 requests submitted by state agencies.

#### **Number of Approved Reimbursement by Functional Need in FY24**

- Vision (13)
- Learning/Cognition (4)
- Hearing (196)
- Physical/Mobility (6)
- Other (1)

#### **Number of Reimbursements Approved by Accommodation Type in FY24**

- One-time expenses for a state employee that total more than \$500 in a fiscal year (44)
- Periodic or ongoing services for a state employee (194)

- Combination periodic services/one-time expense in fiscal year for a state employee (5)

### Recipients (Applicants/Employees)

Of the 220 requests made during FY24:

- 213 requests were for state employees
- 7 requests were for a job applicant. 5 were hired and 2 were not.

### Agency Reimbursements Received – FY24

Each fiscal year, \$170,000 is allotted for accommodation reimbursements. Any funds that are not spent, carryover for use in future fiscal years. The agencies listed below *received* a total of \$248,987.03 during FY24, which depleted the current year appropriation and required Admin to use carryover funds for the first time:

**Table 2: FY24 Agency Accommodation Reimbursements**

Agency	Amount Reimbursed
Employment and Economic Development	\$63,918.88
Human Services	\$46,490.03
Information Technology Services	\$31,593.28
Housing and Finance	\$4,849.38
Revenue	\$11,382.88
Council Deafblind Hard of Hearing	\$59,255.43
Natural Resources	\$5,655.29
Board on Social Work	\$980.25
State Colleges and Universities	\$650.0
Department of Health	\$5,299.93
Board of Executives for Long Term Services and Support	\$302.19
Public Safety	\$5,905.52
Board on Nursing	\$278.90
Department of Human Rights	\$2,724.69
Management and Budget	\$1,549.49
Veteran Affairs	\$8,150.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$248,987.03</b>