PARTNERSHIP FOR A

ConnectedMN

BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE, RESILIENT STATE WHERE EACH AND EVERY STUDENT CAN LEARN, THRIVE, AND PROSPER.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Partnership for ConnectedMN is now accepting applications for grants to bring tech devices and internet access to students across the state, especially communities most in need, including students who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color, students from low-income families, and students residing in rural Minnesota.

The following grant opportunity was designed based on recommendations from key partners across the state, including leaders in education, nonprofits serving K-12 students, education technology experts, and representatives from Minnesota's Children's Cabinet and the Minnesota Department of Education.

KEY DATES
Applications will be due Tuesday, September 1, 2020 by 3 p.m.
Decisions will be made by Monday, September 14, 2020.
Funds will be distributed by the end of September.

PROGRAM GOALS
The Partnership for a ConnectedMN grant program will provide funds to eligible applicants in Minnesota to support projects designed to ensure K-12 students in high-need and/or underserved communities have computing devices, access to the internet, and educational support. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even clearer that these resources are essential to facilitate distance learning, access critical support services, such as mental health and food and shelter, and maintain social connections.

The goal of the Partnership for Connected MN's grant program is to support efforts by Minnesota communities to ensure that schools and teachers are prepared to offer equitable access to quality distance learning this fall and for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the partners seek to ensure that Minnesota students have the tools they need to connect and engage around school, physical and mental health and future career pathways.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Examples of projects qualified for funding could include, but are not limited to:

- Subsidized broadband Internet services for those currently unable to afford it;
- Partnerships with local broadband providers to offer discounted services to eligible families;
- "Digital navigation" and other services for students and families who need help accessing and using Internet for distance learning;
- Safe spaces for students to access the Internet, use equipment and receive technical, educational, food and other support;
- Programs that address other basic needs, such as transportation, to allow participation in online learning and access to other support services.
- Distribution of free or low-cost computing devices to students without them;
- Purchase and distribution of technology which assists students with no broadband service in their home;
- Teacher training and support in online teaching and learning;

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Partnership for a ConnectedMN will use the following criteria to determine project selection:

1. Impact on students in high-need and/or underserved communities, including Black, Indigenous and People of Color, students from low-income families, and students residing in rural Minnesota.
2. Capacity of grantee to deliver on outcomes of the Partnership for a ConnectedMN:
   a. Students in high-need communities have tech devices, ensuring more equitable access to educational resources – now and in the future;
   b. Young people in both rural and urban communities have reliable, affordable broadband access;
   c. Students and providers have the tools to connect and engage around school, physical and mental health and future career pathways.
3. Partnership: How does the proposal reflect the interests and input, talents and contributions of key local partners, including families, educators, school administrators and tribal entities?
4. Innovation: In what ways does the project reflect innovative approaches or collaboration?

Geographic diversity will be taken into account to ensure that both rural and urban students benefit.

Final selections will be made by a review committee of foundation and community representatives working with the Partnership.

FUNDING

The maximum grant size is $150,000.
Funds must be spent within twelve months.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This grant opportunity is available to:

- 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and programs focused on supporting the school learning experience of high-need and/or underserved K-12 students
- Minnesota's tribal governments and four Bureau of Indian Education contract schools,
- Organizations who are members of eligible telecommunications clusters (METN) under the Telecommunications/Internet Access Equity Aid statute MS 125B.26. These organizations are included in the current "Minnesota Telecommunications/Internet Access Equity Aid Program Cluster Address List FY 2020" found on the MDE communications/Internet Access Equity Aid Program Cluster Address List FY 2020" found [here.](#)

These grants are designed to complement resources provided to schools in the State of Minnesota. ***Grants will not be made directly to schools or school districts. Organizations working in partnership with particular schools or districts are encouraged to apply.***

HOW TO APPLY

Application materials should be prepared simply and economically, trying not to exceed five pages, excluding attachments.

Materials should be submitted electronically as Word or PDF documents via email. Materials must be emailed to connectedmn@spmcf.org **by Tuesday, September 1, 2020.**

QUESTIONS

Rural applicants should contact Bernadine Joselyn, [brjoselyn@blandinfoundation.org,](mailto:brjoselyn@blandinfoundation.org) 218.259.2962

Urban applicants (both Twin Cities Metro and non-Twin Cities Metro) should contact Tiffany Kong, tiffany.kong@spmcf.org, 651.325.4268

APPLICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Please use the following outline as a guide to your proposal narrative, trying not to exceed five pages, excluding attachments. Word or PDF documents will be accepted. Materials should be submitted by email to connectedmn@spmcf.org by **Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 3 p.m.**

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

- Name of organization:
  - o   Legal name, if different:
  - o   Address:
  - o   City, State, Zip:
  - o   Employer Identification Number (EIN):
  - o   Phone:
  - o   Website:
- Name of CEO/Exec Dir.:
  - o   Title:
  - o   Phone:
  - o   Email:
- Name of contact person regarding this application:
  - o   Title:
  - o   Phone:
  - o   Email:
- Do Black, Indigenous and People of Color represent a majority of the population directly served by your organization?
- What percentage of your board of directors, executive leadership and senior level management and staff members leading the proposal are Black, Indigenous and People of Color?

- What percentage of the students served directly by your organization qualify for free or reduced lunch?
- Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit?   Yes / No
- If no, is your organization a tribal government or BIE school?   Yes / No

BUDGET SUMMARY
- Fiscal Year of Organization (month – month):
- Total project budget: $
- Total dollar amount requested: $
- Total annual organization budget: $

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW
- Describe your organization, including programs, projects, initiatives and population served.
- Please provide a summary of your proposal including intended goals and outcomes.
- What is the project's start and end date?
- Who or what will your project impact and how?
- How many students will be impacted by your project?
- Please describe the students your project will serve. Grants will be made to projects serving students in high-need and/or underserved communities (For example: students who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color, students from low-income families, or families who reside in rural Minnesota).
- What percentage of students this project would serve are in high-need and/or underserved communities?
- Who will fill the key roles in the project, and what experience and connections do they bring?
- What's innovative about your proposal?
- How does your proposal reflect the interests, input and contributions of key local partners, including students, families, educators, school administrators and tribal entities?
- Will this proposed effort provide value over the long-term? If so, please describe how.
- Explain how you will document and determine whether progress is being made toward your project's goals.

ATTACHMENTS
- A copy of your organizational budget;

- Project budget;

- Most recent financial statement, from a formal audit if available, showing actual expenses. This information should include a balance sheet, a statement of activities (or statement of income and expenses) and functional expenses. If a formal audit is available, please include the management letter. This audit may be submitted electronically by providing a link or attachment.