
Department of Employment and Economic Development Grants Management

Project Description

July 2024

BACKGROUND

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) manages dozens of state and federal grant programs focused on business growth, workforce development, international trade, and community development. In Fiscal Year 2023, DEED spent approximately \$286 million on state-funded grants to a wide variety of organizations, including local units of government, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

This evaluation will focus on DEED's management of select state-funded grants administered by two offices within DEED: (1) the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) and (2) the Office of Adult Career Pathways (ACP). OBD awards grants to entities to help provide broadband access to areas of Minnesota that may not otherwise receive access, such as areas with low population density. ACP awards grants for employment and training services for Minnesota adults who face barriers to employment.

In their management of state-funded grants, state agencies must follow the Department of Administration's Office of Grants Management (OGM) policies and any applicable requirements in Minnesota law. For example, agencies must comply with requirements for reviewing grant applications, issuing grant payments, and monitoring grant implementation.

EVALUATION ISSUES

1. How well has DEED managed state-funded grants?
2. To what extent have select DEED grants achieved their goals?

DISCUSSION

This evaluation will focus on DEED's grants management activities after the grant has been awarded. As such, we will not evaluate DEED's management of the pre-award stage of the grant cycle, including the request for proposals, conflict of interest disclosures, and grant application review and scoring.

To evaluate how well DEED has managed state-funded grants, we will review OGM policies, DEED policies and procedures, and state laws applicable to select grant programs. We will review a sample of grant files to evaluate DEED's compliance with applicable requirements, focusing on post-award monitoring requirements. We will also interview agency staff and review grant management procedures. In addition, we will survey grantees to determine whether they believe that DEED has provided adequate, timely, and appropriate support during grant implementation.

To evaluate the extent to which select grants achieved their goals, we will review the performance metrics DEED establishes for grantees and analyze data on program outcomes. We also plan to administer a survey to participants in select Adult Career Pathways grant-funded programs to learn about their experiences with those programs.

This evaluation is scheduled to be completed in early 2025. For additional information, contact Mariyam Naadha, evaluation manager, at Mariyam.Naadha@state.mn.us or 651-296-6973.