



Digital Geographic Information System Mapping for School Facilities Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions

September 4, 2024

Overview

In the 2024 Minnesota Session law ([Ch. 123, Art. 1, Sec. 4, Subd. 5 and Sec. 18](#)) passed in May 2024, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) received a new, one-time appropriation of \$7 million for a new grant program to digitally map school facilities. Eligible grant recipients under this program, titled “Digital Geographic Information System Mapping for School Facilities,” are the state’s [regional emergency communications boards](#). Additional requirements for this program are identified in [Chapter 123, Art 1, Sec 18.](#)

The DPS division of Emergency Communication Networks (ECN) will administer the grant. Additional requirements related to this grant program may be created by the Statewide Emergency Communication Board (SECB), who has been granted the authority to “implement further requirements at the board’s direction”. At the June 27, 2024, meeting of the SECB, action was taken by the board to direct the NG911 Committee to develop recommendations for additional requirements. Recommendations must be approved by the SECB.

As an early step in the grant process, ECN is publishing the following frequently asked questions (FAQ) document to assist stakeholders and potential applicants in preparing for applying to this grant program. It is ECN’s responsibility to adhere to the requirements specified in the appropriation language and all applicable state statutes and policies/procedures pertaining to state grants. As the program develops, this document will be updated to reflect refined policy and procedure that will guide the grant program.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the timeline for the grant?

The schedule will be developed alongside the requirements of this grant program. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2026.

What type of grant process will be followed?

This grant program will be a competitively awarded grant.

ECN is required to follow all applicable state statutes and policies/procedures for state grants, including Office of Grants Management (OGM) policies 08-01 through 08-13, DPS Grants Management Policy 3103, and the ECN Grant Manual. These resources are linked at the end of this document.



Per OGM policies 08-03 and 08-07, State of Minnesota grants “are to be competitively awarded as much as possible” for amounts over \$5,000. Applicants will be required to submit an application and/or work plan, which will be reviewed and scored by a grant review panel. The final awards will be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety or their designee prior to contracting for award.

How should the state’s regional emergency communications boards/emergency services boards be prepared to receive funds through this grant program?

It is a requirement of this grant ([Chapter 123, Art. 1, Sec. 4, Subd. 5](#)) that awards be made specifically to the regional emergency services boards ([Minn. Stat. 403.29](#) and [403.392](#)). Regional emergency communication boards can begin to prepare for this grant program by:

1. Review the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) held by the regions to ensure that it will allow the pass-through of funds related to this grant program.
 - a. Per 2023 Minn. Stat. [403.39](#), all regional radio boards must adopt a JPA in order to “(4) enter into contracts necessary to carry out its responsibilities; (5) to acquire by purchase, lease, gift, or grant, property, both real and personal, and interests in property necessary for the accomplishment of its purposes and to sell or otherwise dispose of property it no longer requires; and (6) to contract with the state of Minnesota, through the commissioner of transportation, for construction, ownership, operation, and maintenance of regional or local improvements to the statewide, shared, trunked radio and communication system.”
2. Determine whether funds related to this grant are to be directly spent by the emergency services board as an entity or if it will be sub-awarded to individual entities that are members to the JPA mentioned above.
3. Consider whether the region is interested in including some administrative costs in the grant budget. Administrative costs may be considered as an eligible expense for this grant program.
4. All ECN grants are paid on a reimbursement-only basis, only for costs occurring during the grant effective period. Entering into a contract or procuring services with a vendor for any potential grant-funded work prior to a grant contract is executed will cause those costs to be ineligible for reimbursement by the grant.

ECN encourages entities to consult with their legal counsel. ECN cannot provide legal guidance.

What is the SECB’s role in this grant program and how will ECN coordinate with the regions to prepare for this program?

The SECB has been granted the authority to “implement further requirements at the board’s direction”. At the June 27, 2024 meeting of the SECB, action was taken by the board to direct the NG911 Committee to develop recommendations for additional requirements. The types of requirements and the format which they will take will be developed in consultation with this committee and any others identified by the SECB. Recommendations must be approved by the SECB.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

ECN recognizes that members of the SECB, and its committees, are often active participants in the public safety community and their agencies may be the beneficiary of a grant award through a state grant program such as this. It is important that individual members avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.



Additionally, the state is required to ensure the integrity of the RFP solicitation process as required by applicable state statutes and policies/procedures. This includes product/service procurement.

What happens to the data created by the grant, and whose responsibility are the related costs?

Requirements for the data created by the grant and any associated costs beyond the timeline of the grant program are unknown. This is, however, a one-time appropriation and there is no guarantee of future funding to support this specific initiative beyond the grants awarded as part of this program.

ECN acknowledges the potential burden that may be put on regions beyond the scope of this grant program to maintain, own, secure, share or otherwise manage the data created by this grant in the future. Further information, guidance, or best practices may be prepared by ECN as the grant program progresses to assist regions with the management of data funded by this grant program.

Resources

[Office of Grants Management Website](#) - Statewide policies and procedures for grants.

[ECN Grants website](#) - ECN Grant Manual, general grant resources, and information related to this and other ECN grant programs.

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