MNsure Request for Proposals
Navigator Outreach and Enrollment Grants

Fiscal Year 2021

Updated May 4, 2020

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Overview

MNsure is seeking applicants who can achieve the goals of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Navigator Outreach and Enrollment grant program:

- Support a statewide infrastructure of expert navigator organizations that can find, connect with and educate the uninsured and those facing barriers to obtaining or maintaining health insurance coverage.

- Sustain a network of skilled navigator staff offering year-round comprehensive support to consumers in all aspects of the process of applying for and maintaining coverage, including submitting applications, responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

- Ensure all eligible Minnesotans are utilizing the available financial help, including tax credits, to enroll in health insurance coverage.

Proposals must be submitted by 1 p.m. Central time on May 21, 2020. This request for proposals does not obligate MNsure to award a contract or complete a project, and MNsure reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. All costs incurred in responding to this request for proposals will be borne by the responder.

In order to be eligible to respond to this request for proposals (RFP), applicants must have submitted a letter of intent in response to MNsure's Request for Letters of Intent by the February 13, 2020, deadline.

Funding Availability

MNsure is authorized by Minnesota law to issue grants to support the navigator program. This request for proposals is part of MNsure's sixth RFP process for the Navigator Outreach and Enrollment grant program.

MNsure is targeting approximately $3.4 million in funds for Navigator Outreach and Enrollment grants from September 1, 2020, until June 30, 2021. At MNsure's sole discretion grant contracts may be extended for an additional year, not to exceed a total contract term of two years.

Grant funding is in addition to per-enrollment payments that navigator organizations receive for successful applications and enrollments. Per-enrollment payments are not the subject of this RFP.

Funding Areas

This solicitation has three funding areas:

1. Geographic: focus on building statewide access to application and enrollment assistance and sustaining a network of navigator organizations working closely with MNsure on strategies to reach, enroll and renew consumers.

2. Population: support navigator organizations that have identified populations that face barriers to enrolling in coverage and/or high levels of uninsurance and can demonstrate an ability to effectively reach, enroll and help renew coverage for the population.

3. Capacity building: invest in developing the capacity of new or existing navigator organizations with the potential to serve geographic areas or populations where there is a demonstrated need for more navigator assistance.

An individual entity may apply for more than one funding area but may only receive grant funds under one area.

All funding area grants are one-year grants with an option to extend an additional year at MNsure's sole discretion, and subject to the grantee's willingness to continue.

Funding Area 1: Geographic Focus (individual awards not anticipated to exceed $425,000)

Grants to ensure access to navigator assistance throughout the state. Grants will support experienced and highly skilled navigator organizations working collaboratively with MNsure to reach the uninsured and support Minnesotans in obtaining and maintaining health insurance coverage. This funding area focuses on building statewide access to assistance and sustaining a network of navigator organizations working closely with MNsure on strategies to reach, enroll and renew consumers. These grants will:

- Sustain a statewide network of skilled navigator staff able to provide comprehensive support to consumers in all aspects of the process of applying for and maintaining coverage, including submitting applications, responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

- Ensure year-round navigator assistance is available in the geographic area served by the grant.

- Support effective outreach targeted at uninsured, underinsured and those at risk of losing health insurance coverage.

- Require a commitment to collaborate with MNsure on education, outreach, enrollment and referral strategies.

- Support improving and expanding navigator capacity in the state through training and mentorship opportunities.

Funding Area 2: Population Focus (individual awards not anticipated to exceed $210,000)

Grants to focus on providing navigator assistance to populations that face barriers to enrolling in and maintaining health insurance coverage. Grants will support organizations that have identified populations that face barriers to enrolling in coverage and/or high levels of uninsurance and can demonstrate the ability to effectively reach, enroll and help renew coverage for the population. These grants will:

- Leverage existing community connections and outreach capacity within experienced navigator organizations.

- Fund skilled navigator staff able to provide comprehensive support to consumers in all aspects of the process of applying for and maintaining coverage, including submitting applications, responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

- Ensure year-round navigator assistance is available to the population(s) served by the grant.

- Support effective outreach targeted at uninsured, underinsured and those at risk of losing health insurance coverage.

Funding Area 3 – Capacity Building Grants (individual awards not anticipated to exceed $50,000)

Grants to the build the capacity of new or developing navigator organizations who will assist populations that face barriers to enrolling in and maintaining health insurance coverage. Grants will support building additional navigator capacity to serve geographic areas or populations where there is a demonstrated need for more navigator assistance. These grants will:

- Focus on geographic areas or populations that may currently lack appropriate navigator capacity to meet community needs for assistance.

- Fund organizations with an established connection to that geographic area or population and a commitment to developing navigator capacity to serve that community.

- Fund specific resources to build the capacity of the grantee to provide comprehensive support to consumers in all aspects of the application, enrollment and renewal process. Resources may include financial/management tools or training, equipment, space rental, personnel, etc.

- Support the grantee's development through education and mentorship opportunities.

Background

MNsure Consumer Assistance Program

The goal of MNsure's navigator program is to ensure all Minnesotans are connected to affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage. Since MNsure's launch in 2013, we have established partnerships with hundreds of organizations that are rooted in their community and well-positioned to use their existing relationships to act as navigators and reach Minnesotans who are in need of health insurance coverage.

With their diverse background, MNsure's navigator organizations are especially effective in supporting consumers who face barriers to enrolling in or maintaining coverage, such as limited English proficiency, accessibility challenges related to living in rural areas, unfamiliarity with technology, inability to access technology, or low health insurance literacy. Some consumers also need assistance due to other life circumstances, such as complex immigration status, unstable living situations or mental health concerns.

MNsure currently contracts with more than 180 navigator organizations that receive per enrollee payments for assisting consumers with the application, enrollment and renewal process. As of July 1, 2019, the one-time per enrollee rate for assisting Medical Assistance consumers increased from $25 to $70 per successful applicant to match the rate for MinnesotaCare and qualified health plans

(QHPs), increasing the resources available to navigator organizations assisting this vulnerable population. In calendar year 2019, MNsure and the Minnesota Department of Human Services issued more than $3 million in per enrollee payments to Minnesota's navigator community for helping nearly 60,000 Minnesotans access health insurance coverage through Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare or a QHP.

MNsure's navigator community has contributed to the increase in health care coverage in Minnesota by completing nearly 385,000 applications for health insurance coverage since the program's inception.

On April 15, 2020, Governor Tim Walz signed the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act to provide relief to Minnesotans struggling to afford their insulin. Per Minnesota Statutes, § 151.74, the new insulin safety net program adds a new role for MNsure-certified navigators to assist individuals with applying for long-term access to insulin when the program launches to the public July 1, 2020. Navigator organization participation in the insulin safety net program is **voluntary** and the details of how navigators can help connect Minnesotans to this critical medication will be released later in May. Funding for navigator work under the new insulin safety net program is governed by Minn. Stat., § 151.74, and is separate from the funding available to navigators from grants contemplated under this RFP.

For the last seven years, MNsure has administered a grant program to build and sustain a network of navigator organizations available to provide Minnesotans with a comprehensive level of service. These grantees must demonstrate the following qualities:

- Established relationships with populations that face barriers to enrollment or renewal and the linguistic and cultural competency to effectively serve diverse communities.

- Experienced navigator staff with specialized skills able to help populations who require additional assistance.

- Commitment to assisting consumers who need support to maintain their health insurance coverage through renewal periods or changes in life circumstances.

- Staffing to offer assistance year-round.

- Proven outreach techniques and strategies.

- Willingness to partner with MNsure on education, outreach, enrollment and referral strategies.

Supporting established and effective navigator organizations continues to be a central goal of the grant program. However, for fiscal year 2021, MNsure is adding a funding area focused on building additional navigator capacity to serve geographic areas or populations where there is a demonstrated need for more navigator assistance.

MNsure

MNsure is a marketplace where individuals and families can compare, choose and enroll in affordable, high quality health insurance. The mission of MNsure is to ensure all Minnesotans have access to quality, affordable health insurance.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) provided for creation of Minnesota's navigator program to help individuals, families and small businesses obtain health care coverage through MNsure. Navigators are trained to help consumers learn about their health plan options and to assist with enrollment in public and private health care coverage through MNsure. Navigator organizations are obligated to assist any consumer and receive payment for each successful application or enrollment with which a navigator assists. Beginning July 1, 2020, under Minnesota Statutes, § 151.74, participating navigator organizations may also be eligible for payments for assisting eligible consumers with applying for long-term access to insulin.

Other consumer assistance partners that can assist with enrollment include brokers and certified application counselors (CACs). CACs are similar to navigators, but CACs only assist their own consumer base with enrollment through MNsure. Brokers and CAC organizations do not receive compensation from MNsure for successful enrollments.

For information about partnering with MNsure as a broker, navigator or CAC organization, please see the MNsure website (https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/index.jsp). Organizations may apply for a navigator or CAC contract at any time throughout the year and do not need to be a MNsure grantee to be eligible. Per-enrollment payments and payments for assisting consumers with accessing insulin under the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act are not the subject of this RFP.

Minnesota's Health Insurance Landscape

A key goal of MNsure's navigator grant program is to build a strong navigator infrastructure to reach uninsured Minnesotans and those facing barriers to obtaining or maintaining health insurance coverage.

The most recent data from the 2017 Minnesota Health Access Survey found that Minnesota's uninsured rate increased significantly from 4.3% in 2015, to 6.3% in 2017, but is still lower than the uninsured rate prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act reforms (8.2% in 2013). This survey is conducted by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the University of Minnesota every two years and provides an in-depth look into the state of health insurance coverage in Minnesota.

Despite some improvements in overall levels of uninsurance in Minnesota, disparities in health insurance coverage persist among certain populations. Those with the highest rates of uninsurance in Minnesota are:

- Young adults, ages 18 to 34

- Persons with income below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines

- People with a high school education or less

- People of color and American Indians

- Non-citizens and those not born in the US

- Minnesotans living in areas of Greater Minnesota:

- Northwest (Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau)

- Headwaters (Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen)

- Upper Minnesota Valley (Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Swift, Yellow Medicine)

The on-going dynamics in Minnesota's insurance market demonstrate the continued need for focused outreach and enrollment efforts for other critical at-risk populations, including:

- Pregnant women

- Individuals experiencing homelessness

- Those struggling with substance use disorder

- Individuals who are leaving incarceration

MNsure's priority is to fund proposals that reach and enroll communities with the highest rates of uninsurance and other populations that face barriers to obtaining, using and maintaining coverage.

Additional Resources

- [Minnesota's Changing Health Insurance Landscape: Results from the 2017 Minnesota Health Access Survey](#) (PDF)

- [Minnesota's Uninsured in 2017: Rates and Characteristics](#) (PDF)

- [2017 Health Insurance Coverage Appendix Tables](#) (PDF)

- [Minnesota Health Access Survey Interactive Data Tool](#)

- [Minnesota's Uninsured Profile and Interactive Map from SHADAC](#)

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

In order to be eligible to respond to this request for proposals (RFP), applicants must have submitted a letter of intent in response to MNsure's Request for Letters of Intent by the February 13, 2020, deadline.

Public, tribal, private for-profit and nonprofit entities are eligible to respond to this RFP if they submitted a letter of intent. Individuals were not eligible to submit a letter of intent and cannot respond to this RFP.

An individual entity may apply for a grant in more than one funding area but can only receive grant funds from one grant under one funding area.

Potential Grant Structures

The following is a list of potential grant structures:

- Single organization: A lead agency with no partners.

- Paid partnership: A lead agency with partners that receive grant funds.

- Unpaid partnership: A lead agency with partners that do not receive grant funds.

- Mixed partnership: A lead agency with some partners that receive grant funds and some that do not receive funds.

Lead Agency Requirements and Responsibilities

The lead agency on the proposal must agree to:

- Have or obtain a [Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number](). The federal government uses DUNS numbers to identify related organizations that are receiving federal funding.

- Have or obtain a [State of Minnesota vendor number](). The vendor number is needed to make payments to the organization.

- Be registered or obtain registration with the [Minnesota Secretary of State]().

- Participate in grant contract negotiations with MNsure.

- Have a navigator/in-person assister contract in place with MNsure during the period of the grant. Instructions and requirements for contracting with MNsure can be found at [https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/navigators/index.jsp]().

- Submit monthly progress reports and financial reports to MNsure.

- Collaborate with MNsure on collecting data related to navigator activities, including activities completed by any grant partners.

- Have certified staff utilize the [assister portal]() to facilitate tracking application and enrollment activity.

- Ensure the objectives of any grant award are met.

- Designate a project contact to coordinate with MNsure on grant management and monitoring activities and, if applicable, for MNsure initiated outreach and referrals.

- Collaborate with MNsure on promotional and community education activities (possible examples include collecting consumer stories, utilizing MNsure's events calendar, participating in press conferences, and posting on social media).

- Partner with MNsure and other MNsure assisters, as appropriate, to support consumer referrals.

- If applicable, provide grant management and coordination of paid partner activities.

- If applicable, a lead agency will need to submit copies of contracts/written agreements with paid partners to MNsure prior to payment of the first grant invoice.

Paid Partner Requirements and Responsibilities

A paid partner on the proposal must agree to:

- Submit a letter of support with the proposal. A letter of support must provide a brief summary of the partner's support and role in achieving the objectives of the proposal. It must be submitted on the paid partner's letterhead and signed.

- Achieve individual objectives of the proposed grant.

- Have a signed contract/written agreement with the lead agency before the first grant invoice is issued.

- Submit monthly progress reports and financial reports to the lead agency. Designate a project contact to coordinate with the lead agency and MNsure.

- Collaborate with MNsure on collecting data related to navigator activities.

- Utilize the [assister portal](#) to facilitate tracking application and enrollment activity.

- Collaborate with MNsure on promotional and educational activities (possible examples include collecting consumer stories, utilizing MNsure's events calendar, participating in press conferences, and posting on social media).

- Partner with MNsure and other MNsure assisters, as appropriate, to support consumer referrals.

Application Requirements for Geographic and Population Funding Areas

Summary of Application Requirements

Applicants must follow the instructions within this MNsure request for proposals, complete and submit all required forms and narrative requirements through the online application on time.

For some sections of the application, applicants will be required to respond to a series of brief questions and open text boxes in Foundant, the online application system, to provide a narrative response. The online application will contain character limits for each question. Please review the character limits within the application before drafting responses.

For other sections of the application, applicants will be required to fill in an Excel file and upload the file to Foundant.

Please see the "How to Apply" section of this RFP for instructions on applying through the online site. Templates of the online application are available in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this RFP.

Application sections:

- Applicant Information

- Statement of Focus

- Connection to Community of Focus

- Navigator Experience

- Current Navigator Activities

- Grant Objectives and Strategies

- Budget and Financial Management

- Training/Mentorship

- Letters of Support, if applicable

- Required Statements

Statement of Focus (Not scored)

Applicants must clearly describe the specific geographic area(s) or specific population(s) that will be reached and explain the barriers to health insurance coverage that justify the need for grant funds to support navigator outreach and enrollment. Instructions by funding area are provided below. This section is not scored but provides information relevant to evaluating the objectives and strategies in the applicant's work plan.

Geographic Focus (Funding Area 1)

Applicants for this funding area must:

Identify the specific geographic service area for this grant. This should be a list of cities (for smaller geographic areas) or counties (for larger geographic areas).

Explain the barriers to enrolling in health insurance coverage or maintaining health insurance coverage experienced by consumers in the geographic area. Use any available data, including resources available on the Assister Funding Opportunities webpage, as part of the explanation.

If the lead agency (and any paid partners) have specialized skills to help specific populations who require additional assistance, please identify any specific populations that will also be served by the grant.

Population Focus (Funding Area 2)

MNsure's priority is to fund proposals that reach and enroll populations with the highest rates of uninsurance, or those facing barriers to obtaining and maintaining coverage, such as those identified in the "Minnesota's Health Insurance Landscape" on pages 8 and 9 of this RFP. Consider that the applicant will need to demonstrate sufficient experience, capacity and appropriate strategies for serving each of the populations listed.

Applicants for this funding area must:

List the specific population(s) that will be the focus of this grant. Enter information in the following list format:

- Population 1

- Population 2

- Population 3

- Population 4

Explain the barriers to enrolling in health insurance coverage or maintaining health insurance coverage experienced by the population or populations identified. Use any available data, including resources available on the Assister Funding Opportunities webpage, as part of the explanation.

List the geographic area that will be served by this grant. This should be a list of cities (for smaller geographic areas) or counties (for larger geographic areas).

Connection to Community of Focus (Scored)

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

How long has the lead agency (and each paid partner) served the geographic area/specific population(s)?

Describe existing connections the lead agency (and each paid partner) have with the geographic area/specific population(s) to be served by the grant. If there are no existing connections, describe plans to develop those connections.

Describe the current demographics of the board members, leadership and staff of the lead agency (and each paid partner). If the board, leadership and staff are not reflective of those the grant seeks to serve, describe plans for changing recruiting, hiring, promotion and retention practices.

Navigator Experience (Scored)

Applicants for the Geographic and Population funding areas are expected to have experienced navigator staff available year-round to fulfill the goals of the grant program. Note that MNsure believes it is important to have certified staff whose primary job responsibility is providing application and enrollment assistance in order to develop and maintain the expertise the grant program supports.

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

How long has the lead agency (and each paid partner) had a contract with MNsure as a consumer assistance partner?

Provide an estimate of the number of consumers the lead agency (and each paid partner assisted) during these two periods: December 9-15, 2019 and February 10-16, 2020. This number should include consumers helped with MNsure-related services (including Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare) over the phone or in person. If available, include any relevant demographic information regarding those assisted.

Provide a list of all currently certified staff (for lead agency and each paid partner). The list should include the certified individual's first and last name, the percentage of their time currently spent providing assistance to MNsure consumers and any language skills. All certified staff should be listed, including any that will not be funded by the grant proposal. For example:

- Jane Doe, Lead agency, 90%, English

- Roberto Perez, Paid Partner 1, 75%, English, Spanish

If the grant includes paid partners, describe any prior experience the lead agency has had coordinating work activities with multiple partners. Also describe any prior experience the lead agency and paid partners have had working together on a project.

Current Navigator Activities (Scored)

Applicants for the Geographic and Population funding areas are expected to have established application and case management processes and proven outreach strategies to fulfill the goals of the grant program.

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

Describe how the lead agency (and each paid partner) currently supports consumers in all aspects of the application and enrollment process, including case management work such as responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

New: Also describe how the COVID-19 situation has impacted navigator activities, including how the lead agency (and each paid partner) have modified business practices to continue assisting consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Describe any current outreach work being done by the lead agency (and each paid partner) to connect the community of focus to health insurance coverage application and enrollment support.

Describe specific experience with application, enrollment and outreach strategies included in the applicant's work plan. If any of the proposed strategies will be new for the agency, please explain why the applicant believes the strategies will be effective.

Describe any current practices collecting demographic or other information on consumers.

Grant Objectives and Strategies (Scored)

Applicants for the Geographic and Population funding areas are required to submit a work plan using the "Work Plan Template: Geographic Funding Area – Updated 5/4/2020" or "Work Plan Template: Population Funding Area – Updated 5/4/2020" available on the [Assister Funding Opportunities](https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/funding-opportunities/index.jsp) webpage (https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/funding-opportunities/index.jsp). Applicants must upload their work plan as a single Excel file through the online application.

There is no narrative for this section of the proposal. The Excel work plan must contain clear objectives and detailed strategies to convey how the proposal meets the goals of the funding area.

Overall, the applicant's work plan will be scored on the following:

- Whether the work plan covers the entire period of September 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and reflects an understanding of an increase in consumer assistance activity during open enrollment, but also the requirement for year-round consumer assistance.

- Whether the objectives are clear and sufficient to achieve the goals of MNsure's Navigator Outreach and Enrollment Grant program.

- Whether the strategies are sufficient to achieve the objectives of the grant proposal and identify a clear timeline and deadline for achieving objectives.

- Whether the target locations and populations reflect the focus of the funding area.

- Whether the roles of the lead grantee and paid partners (if applicable) are clearly defined.

- Whether the applicant has appropriate methods for tracking progress towards objectives.

Project Objectives

The work plan must include overall objectives for the project. Objectives should be measurable and specific. Activities by any paid partners during the grant year count towards meeting these objectives, while activities of unpaid partners do not.

The work plan must include, at a minimum, specific objectives for the following activities:

- Projected number of individuals screened and/or assisted with questions related to application and enrollment (includes helping consumers maintain their health insurance coverage through changes in life events).

- Projected number of navigator-assisted applications and renewals completed (counting each individual applying for or renewing coverage).

- Projected number of navigator-assisted successful enrollments and renewals ("need to renew") in Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare and qualified health plans.

- Projected number of outreach and education activities (not including social media).

- Projected number of individuals reached through outreach and education activities (not including social media or media activities).

- New: When applicable, provide in-person assistance that meets any current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines related to worker and customer exposure to COVID-19. Please refer to resources available through MDH's [Safely Returning to Work](https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/) webpage ((https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/).

- New: Provide over-the-phone assistance when consumers are unable to meet in person.

- New: During the grant period, be prepared to transition to providing over-the-phone/remote and online assistance only when required to be in compliance with federal and/or state executive orders and/or public health directives.

- Grant project management, including reporting and coordination with MNsure

- Grant financial management

- If applicable, project coordination and financial management of paid partners.

Applicants should add objectives to the Excel worksheet that are appropriate for the grant and funding area.

Project Strategies

The work plan must list the strategies that will be used to achieve the objectives of the grant proposal. Strategies should be specific and relevant to carrying out the objectives of the grant. Note that grantees will need to report progress on strategies and objectives on a monthly basis during the grant year.

Applicants will be scored on whether the strategies clarify how the grant will achieve the following:

Geographic funding area only: Reach the uninsured in the entire geographic service area and support Minnesotans with obtaining and maintaining health insurance coverage year-round.

Population funding area only: Reach the uninsured in the specific population(s) served by the grant and support those populations in obtaining or maintaining health insurance coverage year-round.

Both funding areas:

- Maximize efforts to provide enrollment and renewal support to consumers eligible for qualified health plans during what is anticipated to be a six-week open enrollment period (November 1 through December 15, 2020).

- Provide year-round application and enrollment assistance.

- Provide year-round case management services (including responding to notices, reporting life events, assisting with renewals, etc.).

- Support effective outreach that connects community of focus to application and enrollment assistance.

- Develop and maintain navigator staff expertise in providing comprehensive support to consumers in all aspects of the process, including submitting applications, responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

- New: Be prepared to provide both in-person and over-the-phone/remote assistance when required to be in compliance with federal and state executive orders and/or public health and safety standards.

- Support consumer referrals from MNsure and other MNsure assisters.

- If there are paid partners, identify the different roles the lead agency and paid partners will perform in implementing the grant's strategies.

Selected applicants' work plans will be further negotiated and incorporated into a grant contract.

Budget and Financial Management (Scored)

MNsure grant funds must be used to cover expenses that are clearly service-related (reaching and enrolling Minnesotans). In accordance with Minnesota Statute 16B.98, Subd. 1, grant recipients of state fund appropriations are required to minimize administrative costs. MNsure will negotiate appropriate limits so the state receives optimum benefit for grant funds.

Budget Narrative

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

How does the applicant (and each paid partner) currently use navigator per-enrollment payments to support navigator activities?

Provide an estimate of per enrollee payments that will be received during the grant year. Explain how those funds will be used to fund the applicant's navigator work.

Explain the lead agency's current financial management practices for grant funding. If relevant, include examples of past experience managing grant funding.

If there are paid partners, explain how the lead agency will oversee the financial management of paid partners. Include examples of past experience managing any paid partners.

Budget Templates

Note: Budget templates have been updated to reflect a 10-month time period for the grant.

Applicants are required to submit a summary budget for the grant and a detailed budget for the lead agency, as well as a detailed budget for each paid partner identified in the proposal. Applicant must use the budget templates available under "Request for Proposals and Required Documents" on the [MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage and upload them as attachments through the online application in Foundant.

- "Budget Form B1: Summary Budget – Updated 5/4/2020" – Required for all applicants.

- "Budget Form B2: Detailed Budget – Updated 5/4/2020" – Required for the lead agency and for each paid partner identified in the summary budget. For applicants with paid partners, a detailed budget for each paid partner must be submitted as a separate worksheet (tab) for each paid partner in a single Excel file.

Applicants will be scored on whether expenses align with the proposed strategies; clarity of how per enrollee funds are used to support navigator functions; and whether expenses are reasonable and appropriate.

Allowable Expenses

The proposed budget must reflect a balance between anticipated number of enrollments, proposed geographic area covered or population served, and comprehensiveness of services provided.

Direct Personnel Costs:

- Navigator staff time for enrollment and follow-up services (budget must clarify per-enrollee payments and grant funds contribute towards certified staff).

- Personnel costs directly related to achieving any outreach and education goals of the grant.

- Personnel costs directly related to project coordination, grant management and/or network coordination.

- The budget justification field must clarify the specific role of all funded staff and whether that position is currently filled or yet to be hired.

Direct Consultant & Contractor Costs: the budget justification field should explain why any consultant and/or contractor costs are needed to achieve the goals for the grant.

Direct Equipment Costs and Direct Supply Costs:

- Costs to support outreach, education and enrollment activities, including laptops, privacy dividers, locked cabinets, etc.

- Grantees are required to clearly track and be able to document all direct expenditures.

- The budget justification field should provide any details and explain why the equipment and supply costs are needed to achieve the goals of the grant.

Direct Travel Costs: directly related to outreach, education and enrollment, including staffing enrollment events, participating in network meetings with other grant members, participating in regional networking, attending training opportunities, and participating in any required MNsure grantee orientation and training (note that MNsure does not plan to hold an in-person grantee orientation for the FY 2021 grant period).

Other Direct and Indirect Costs:

- Other direct costs include other costs directly related to grant activities. Grantees are required to clearly track and be able to document all direct costs.

- Indirect costs will be capped at 10% unless an organization documents exemption from indirect-cost rules. In accordance with Minnesota Statute 16B.98, Subd. 1, grant recipients of state fund appropriations are required to minimize administrative costs. MNsure will negotiate appropriate limits so the state receives optimum benefit for grant funds.

Paid Partner Costs: include a line item for each partner that will receive grant funds. A separate detailed budget must be submitted for each paid partner.

Unallowable Expenses

- General MNsure-paid advertisements that are not directly related to the outreach/education activity being performed by grantee.

- Booth or conference fees are not allowable expenses if the organization is already planning to attend the event, unless the sole purpose of attendance is MNsure outreach, education or enrollment.

- Costs to provide direct health care services to individuals.

- Meeting matching requirements of any other federal program.

- Non-project related executive compensation.

- Selling a specific or limited set of insurance or insurance-like products, including discount plans.

- Promotion of federal or state legislative and regulatory modifications, or improvements in systems or processes solely related to Medicaid/CHIP, or any other state or federal program's eligibility (lobbying).

- Activities such as retreats.

- Services, equipment or support that are the legal responsibility of another party under federal or state law (e.g., vocational rehabilitation or education services) or under any civil rights laws.

- Supplanting other grant funds, or otherwise misusing or misappropriating grant funds.

- Interpreter services for enrollment. MNsure provides this service.

- Navigator staff time that will be compensated through per-enrollment payments.

Training/Mentorship (Not scored)

MNsure may seek to partner capacity building grantees with geographic or populations grantees to provide training and/or mentorship support. Applicants must indicate whether they would be interested providing training and/or acting as a mentor for a capacity building grantee. Applicants should not include any specific objectives, strategies or funding in their grant proposal related to this work. If a potential match is identified in Stage 3 of the RFP process, MNsure will negotiate this element of the work plan and budget with the selected grantees.

Letters of Support (Not scored)

Letters of support from paid partners must be submitted with the proposal. A paid partner is an organization that will receive grant funds. An unpaid partner is an organization that will not receive grant funds. A letter of support or agreement must provide a brief summary of the paid partner's support and role in achieving the objectives of the proposal. It must be submitted on the paid partner's letterhead and signed. The applicant will upload letters of support from multiple paid partners as single document through the online grant application system. There is only one attachment upload for letters of support. Letters of support from unpaid partners are not required.

Required Statements (Not scored)

The following are required documents that must be included with your proposal. All of the documents are available under "Request for Proposals and Required Documents" on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage. Complete the attachments and upload them as attachment in the "Required Statements" section of the online application in Foundant.

- Attachment A – Responder Information/Declarations

- Attachment B – Affidavit of Noncollusion

- Attachment C – Workforce Certification

- Attachment D – Certification Regarding Lobbying

- Attachment E – Exceptions to Terms and Conditions

- Attachment F – Trade Secret/Confidential Data Notification

Application Requirements for Capacity Building Funding Area

Summary of Application Requirements

Applicants must follow the instructions within this MNsure request for proposals and complete and submit all required forms and narrative requirements through the online application on time.

For some sections of the application, applicants will be required to respond to a series of brief questions and open text boxes in Foundant, the online application system, to provide a narrative response. The online application will contain character limits for each question. Please review the character limits within the application before drafting responses.

For other sections of the application, applicants will be required to fill in an Excel file and upload the file to Foundant.

Please see the "How to Apply" section of this RFP for instructions on applying through the online site. A template of the online application is available in Appendix 3 of this RFP.

Application sections:

- Applicant Information

- Justification of Community Need

- Connection to Community of Focus

- Relevant Experience and Activities

- Grant Objectives and Strategies

- Budget and Financial Management

- Training/Mentorship

- Letters of Support, if applicable

- Required Statements

Justification of Community Need (Scored)

Applicants must clearly describe the specific geographic area or population(s) ("community of focus") that will be served by the grant and explain the barriers to health insurance coverage. The proposal must also explain why there is a need for additional navigator capacity to serve the community of focus.

The application will be scored on their response to the following:

Clearly define of the specific geographic area or population(s) that the applicant will serve ("community of focus"). If it is a geographic area, this should be a list of cities (for smaller geographic areas) or counties (for larger geographic areas). If it is a population or multiple populations, they should be specifically identified in the following list format:

- Population 1

- Population 2

- Population 3

Explain the barriers to health insurance coverage for the community of focus that justifies the need for grant funds to support navigator outreach and enrollment. Use any available data, including resources available on the [Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage, as part of the explanation.

Explain the current level of application and enrollment assistance available to the community of focus and why there is a need for additional navigator capacity to assist the community of focus

Connection to Community of Focus (Scored)

Applicants must describe any experience serving the geographic area/specific population(s) that are the focus of the grant proposal.

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

How long have the lead agency (and each paid partner) served the community of focus?

Describe existing connections the lead agency (and each paid partner) have with the community of focus to be served by the grant. If there are no existing connections, describe plans to develop those connections.

Describe current demographics of the board members, leadership and staff of the lead agency (and each paid partner). If the board, leadership and staff are not reflective of the community of focus, describe plans for changing recruiting, hiring, promotion and retention practices.

Relevant Experience and Activities (Scored)

For capacity building grants, applicants are not required to have prior experience providing MNsure application and enrollment assistance. Other community experience, such as providing health care services or assisting individuals with applications for other social services, will be considered as relevant when evaluating capacity building proposals.

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

Describe any experience the lead agency (and each paid partner) and current staff may have in enrolling consumers in health insurance coverage through MNsure as a navigator or certified application counselor.

Describe other relevant experience the lead agency (and each paid partner) has in providing services to the community of focus. Please describe any current processes, such as intake practices, data privacy and security procedures and case management services.

New: Also describe whether the COVID-19 situation has impacted agency activities and how the lead agency (and each paid partner) have modified business practices to continue providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Describe any current outreach work being done by the lead agency (and each paid partner) with the community of focus.

Describe any current practices collecting demographic or other information on consumers.

If the grant includes paid partners, describe any prior experience the lead agency has had coordinating work activities with multiple partners. Also describe any prior experience the lead agency and paid partners have had working together on a project.

Grant Objectives and Strategies (Scored)

Capacity building grants support agencies with the potential to serve geographic areas or populations in need of more navigator assistance. These grants provide resources to develop the agency's capacity in the following areas:

- Staffing: Hiring and certifying staff appropriate to serve the community of focus.

- Training: Development of application and enrollment expertise and knowledge relevant to assisting the community of focus.

- Process: Establishing procedures for comprehensive support of consumers, including screening, in-take, submitting applications, responding to notices, reporting changes and completing renewals.

- Outreach and promotion: Raise awareness of MNsure and availability of navigator assistance with the community of focus.

- (Updated) Appointments: Ability to provide secure in-person assistance that meets the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines related to worker and customer exposure to COVID-19, as well as provide secure over-the-phone assistance for consumers unable to meet in person. Please refer to resources available through MDH's Safely Returning to Work webpage (https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/).

- Project and financial management: Ability to coordinate grant activities and ensure strong financial management of grant funds.

Applicants are required to submit a work plan using the "Work Plan Template: Capacity Building Funding Area – Updated 5/4/2020" available on the Assister Funding Opportunities webpage (https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/funding-opportunities/index.jsp). Applicants must upload their work plan as a single Excel file through the online application in Foundant.

There is no narrative for this section of the proposal. The Excel work plan must contain clear objectives and detailed strategies to convey how the proposal meets the overall goals of capacity building funding area.

Overall, the applicant's work plan will be scored on the following:

- Whether the work plan covers the entire period of September 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

- Whether the objectives are clear and sufficient to enable to applicant to develop the capacity to reach and enroll the population(s) of focus.

- Whether the strategies are sufficient to achieve the objectives of the grant proposal and identify a clear timeline and deadline for achieving objectives.

- Whether target locations and populations reflect the focus of the funding area.

- New: Whether the strategies demonstrate the agency is prepared to provide both in-person and over-the-phone/remote assistance when required to be in compliance with federal and state executive orders and/or public health and safety standards.

- Whether the roles of the lead grantee and paid partners (if applicable) are clearly defined.

- Whether the applicant has appropriate methods for tracking progress towards objectives.

Project Objectives

The work plan must include overall objectives for the project. Objectives should be measurable and specific. Activities by any paid partners during the grant year count towards meeting these objectives, while activities of unpaid partners do not.

The work plan must include, at a minimum, specific objectives for the following activities:

- Hiring/certifying staff appropriate to serve the community of focus.

- Developing expertise and knowledge relevant to assisting the community of focus.

- (Updated) Arranging appropriate meeting space(s) and technology to assist the community of focus, as well as offering secure over-the-phone assistance options for consumers unable to meet in person.

- Implementing procedures to provide comprehensive support for the community of focus.

- Outreach and promotion to community of focus.

- Grant oversight, coordination and financial management.

- Projected number of navigator-assisted successful enrollments and renewals ("Need to renew") in Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare and qualified health plans (counting each individual on an application or renewal).

MNsure recognizes that applicants may be at different stages in their development and not all applicants will have the same capacity building needs. The applicant must include objectives related to all the activities listed above. However, grant resources may only be needed for achieving some of the objectives.

Applicants should add objectives to the Excel worksheet that are appropriate for the grant and funding area.

Project Strategies

The work plan must list the strategies that will be used to achieve the objectives of the grant proposal. Strategies should be specific and relevant to carrying out the objectives of the grant.

Applicants will be scored on whether the strategies clarify the steps that will be taken to achieve each objective, including timeline and how progress will be measured. Note that grantees will need to report progress on strategies and objectives on a monthly basis during the grant year.

Selected applicants' work plans will be further negotiated and incorporated into a grant contract.

Note: MNsure may match capacity building grantees with geographic or populations grantees to provide training and/or mentorship services. Applicants should not include any specific objectives, strategies or funding in their grant proposal related to these training and mentorship possibilities. If a potential match is identified in Stage 3 of the RFP process, MNsure will negotiate this element of the work plan and budget with the selected grantees.

Budget and Financial Management (Scored)

MNsure grant funds must be used to cover expenses that are clearly service-related (reaching and enrolling Minnesotans). In accordance with Minnesota Statute 16B.98, Subd. 1, grant recipients of state fund appropriations are required to minimize administrative costs. MNsure will negotiate appropriate limits so the state receives optimum benefit for grant funds.

Budget Narrative

Applicants will be scored on their response to the following:

If already contracted as a navigator agency with MNsure, explain how the applicant (and each paid partner) currently use navigator per-enrollment payments to support navigator activities?

Provide an estimate of per enrollee payments that will be received during the grant year. Explain how those funds will be used to fund the applicant's navigator work.

Explain the lead agency's current financial management practices for grant funding. If relevant, include examples of past experience managing grant funding.

If there are paid partners, explain how the lead agency will oversee the financial management of paid partners. Include examples of any past experience managing paid partners.

Budget Templates

Note: Budget templates have been updated to reflect a 10-month time period for the grant.

Applicants are required to submit a summary budget for the grant and a detailed budget for the lead agency, as well as a detailed budget for each paid partner identified in the proposal. Applicant must use the budget templates available under "Request for Proposals and Required Documents" on the

[MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage and upload them as attachments through the online application in Foundant.

- "Budget Form B1: Summary Budget – Updated 5/4/2020" – Required for all applicants.

- "Budget Form B2: Detailed Budget – Updated 5/4/2020" – Required for the lead agency and for each paid partner identified in the summary budget. For applicants with paid partners, a detailed budget for each paid partner must be submitted as a separate worksheet (tab) for each paid partner in a single Excel file.

Applicants will be scored on whether expenses align with the proposed strategies; clarity of how per enrollee funds are used to support navigator functions; and whether expenses are reasonable and appropriate.

Allowable Expenses

The proposed budget must reflect a balance between anticipated number of enrollments, proposed geographic area covered or population served, and comprehensiveness of services provided.

Direct Personnel Costs:

- Navigator staff time for enrollment and follow-up services (budget must clarify per-enrollee payments and grant funds contribute towards certified staff).

- Personnel costs directly related to achieving any outreach and education goals of the grant.

- Personnel costs directly related to project coordination, grant management and/or network coordination.

- The budget justification field must clarify the specific role of all funded staff and whether that position is currently filled or yet to be hired.

Direct Consultant & Contractor Costs: the budget justification field should explain why any consultant and/or contractor costs are needed to achieve the goals for the grant.

Direct Equipment Costs and Direct Supply Costs:

- Costs to support outreach, education and enrollment activities, including laptops, privacy dividers, locked cabinets, etc.

- Grantees are required to clearly track and be able to document all direct expenditures.

- The budget justification field should provide any details and explain why the equipment and supply costs are needed to achieve the goals of the grant.

Direct Travel Costs: directly related to outreach, education and enrollment, including staffing enrollment events, participating in network meetings with other grant members, participating in regional networking, attending training opportunities, and participating in any required MNsure grantee orientation and training (note that MNsure does not plan to hold an in-person grantee orientation for the FY 2021 grant period).

Other Direct and Indirect Costs:

- Other direct costs include other costs directly related to grant activities. Grantees are required to clearly track and be able to document all direct costs.

- Indirect costs will be capped at 10% unless an organization documents exemption from indirect-cost rules. In accordance with Minnesota Statute 16B.98, Subd. 1, grant recipients of state fund appropriations are required to minimize administrative costs. MNsure will negotiate appropriate limits so the state receives optimum benefit for grant funds.

Paid Partner Costs: include a line item for each partner that will receive grant funds. A separate detailed budget must be submitted for each paid partner.

Unallowable Expenses

- General MNsure-paid advertisements that are not directly related to the outreach/education activity being performed by grantee.

- Booth or conference fees are not allowable expenses if the organization is already planning to attend the event, unless the sole purpose of attendance is MNsure outreach, education or enrollment.

- Costs to provide direct health care services to individuals.

- Meeting matching requirements of any other federal program.

- Non-project related executive compensation.

- Promotion of federal or state legislative and regulatory modifications, or improvements in systems or processes solely related to Medicaid/CHIP, or any other state or federal program's eligibility (lobbying).

- Improvements in systems or processes solely related to Medicaid/CHIP, or any other state or federal program's eligibility (lobbying).

- Activities such as retreats.

- Services, equipment or support that are the legal responsibility of another party under federal or state law (e.g., vocational rehabilitation or education services) or under any civil rights laws.

- Supplanting other grant funds, or otherwise misusing or misappropriating grant funds.

- Interpreter services for enrollment. MNsure provides this service.

- Navigator staff time that will be compensated through per-enrollment payments.

Training/Mentorship (Not scored)

MNsure may seek to partner capacity building grantees with geographic or populations grantees to provide training and/or mentorship support. Capacity building applicants are asked to indicate their

interest in training and/or mentoring. Applicants should not include any specific objectives, strategies or funding in their grant proposal related to this work. If a potential match is identified in Stage 3 of the RFP process, MNsure will negotiate this element of the work plan and budget with the selected grantees.

Letters of Support (Not scored)

Letters of support from paid partners must be submitted with the proposal. A paid partner is an organization that will receive grant funds. An unpaid partner is an organization that will not receive grant funds. A letter of support or agreement must provide a brief summary of the paid partner's support and role in achieving the objectives of the proposal. It must be submitted on the paid partner's letterhead and signed. The applicant will upload letters of support from multiple paid partners as single document through the online grant application system. There is only one attachment upload for letters of support. Letters of support from unpaid partners are not required.

Required Statements (Not scored)

The following are required documents that must be included with your proposal. All of the documents are available under "Request for Proposals and Required Documents" on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage. Complete the attachments and upload them as attachment in the "Required Statements" section of the online application in Foundant.

- Attachment A – Responder Information/Declarations

- Attachment B – Affidavit of Noncollusion

- Attachment C – Workforce Certification

- Attachment D – Certification Regarding Lobbying

- Attachment E – Exceptions to Terms and Conditions

- Attachment F – Trade Secret/Confidential Data Notification

How to Apply

Applicants must submit their proposal using the online application site hosted by Foundant Technologies. Once logged in, applicants who responded to MNsure's Request for Letters of Intent will find the appropriate funding area application(s) available.

A link to the application site is posted on the [MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage (https://www.mnsure.org/about-us/assister-program/funding-opportunities/index.jsp). The online application includes the character limits for each section specified in this RFP. Character limits include spaces. Applicants will not be allowed to exceed the character limit for each section. Applicants are encouraged to create their work in a Word document that counts characters and then copy and paste their work into the online application. Templates of the online applications are available in the appendices of this RFP.

Applicants may also save their work and come back later to finish after they start an application and print out the application they submitted.

Basic Steps for Submitting a Proposal Online

An overview of the process for submitting a proposal online was provided during the first applicant webinar on March 5, 2020, and has been posted on the [Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage.

1. Log into [MNsure's grant application system](#), Foundant Technologies (https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=MNsure). The appropriate funding area application will be available for applicants who responded to MNsure's Request for Letters of Intent.

2. Complete each proposal section, including uploading the most current version of the Excel files with work plan and budgets.

3. Upload a letter of support for each paid partner (if applicable).

4. Upload all required statements – Attachments A through F.

5. Click "Preview" button to review to make sure all required information is included.

6. Submit proposal prior to 1 p.m. Central Time on May 21 by selecting the Submit button.

Tips for Applying Online

- Review application requirements in this request for proposals.

- Use the Foundant account used to submit a letter of intent.

- Type the information required for each section in a Word document to be copied and pasted into the online system.

- Pay attention to character limits including spaces. Applicants preparing their application in Word can check where they are at with character limits in a word document by highlighting the text and selecting "word count" on the Review panel near the top. The online application system tracks the number of characters in a section as the applicant fills that section in and

will stop capturing the information you type if you exceed the character limits. The character limits for each field and open text box are posted next to each question in the online application. Templates of the online applications are available in the appendices of this RFP.

- Pay attention to file size limits for the required files to upload. The file size limits are included in the online application next to each upload box.

- Do not wait until the last minute to begin the online submission process. There will be limited ability to provide technical support on May 21.

Training Videos

MNsure provided an overview of how to apply through Foundant during the first applicant webinar on March 5, 2020. The presentation is available on the Assister Funding Opportunities webpage. Applicants may also view the following Foundant training videos:

- [Foundant Registration Flow](#)

- [Foundant Application Flow](#)

Technical Support

Applicants encountering error messages on the Foundant site can follow the instructions in the pop-up window that comes up when the site is having an issue. All other questions must be emailed to navigatorgrants@mnsure.org. Questions sent to other email boxes such as the navigator email box or individual staff member email boxes will not be responded to.

RFP Process

RFP Schedule

- **March 2**: Original RFP released

- **March 5**: First applicant's webinar held at 11 a.m. Central Time

- **May 4**: Updated RFP released

- **May 7**: Second applicant's webinar at 1 p.m. Central Time

- **May 13**: Questions due to navigatorgrants@mnsure.org by 3 p.m. Central Time

- **May 18**: Answers to questions posted to the [MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities](#) webpage on or before this date

- **May 21**: RFP responses due by 1 p.m. Central Time

Second Applicant's Webinar

MNsure will hold a second applicant's webinar at 1 p.m. Central Time on May 7, 2020 to explain updates to the RFP requirements and process. To participate in the webinar, go to this WebEx link (https://tinyurl.com/2ndRFPgrantwebinar).

More information regarding the webinar will be made available on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage. Oral answers given during the webinar will be non-binding. Written responses to questions asked during the webinar will be posted on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage by May 18, 2020.

Applicant Questions

It is the policy of MNsure to assist applicants with their inquiries during the application process.

Applicants' questions regarding this RFP should be emailed by 3 p.m. Central Time on May 13, 2020. All questions must be emailed to navigatorgrants@mnsure.org. Questions sent to other email boxes such as Assister Resource Center email box or individual staff member email boxes will not be responded to. Other personnel are NOT authorized to discuss this RFP with responders before the proposal submission deadline. Contact regarding this RFP with any MNsure personnel not following the process described here could result in disqualification. MNsure will not be held responsible for oral responses to responders.

Questions will be addressed in writing and posted on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage no later than May 18, 2020. MNsure will post generalized answers while maintaining the confidentiality of the potential applicant and any specifics about their proposal.

Proposal Submission

Applicants must submit proposals using the online submission process described on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage. All applications **must be received on or before 1 p.m. Central Time on May 21, 2020**. **Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.**

Applicants should email navigatorgrants@mnsure.org if they experience a technical issue while submitting their proposal. MNsure encourages responders to allow for the time necessary to ensure successful submission of the proposal. Technical questions submitted on May 21 may not be responded to prior to the deadline.

Contract Negotiation

The contents of this RFP and the proposal(s) of the successful applicants may become part of the final contract if a contract is awarded. Each applicant's proposal must include a statement of acceptance of all terms and conditions stated within this RFP or provide a detailed statement of exception for each item excepted by the applicant. Applicants who object to any condition of this RFP must note the objection within Attachment E, "Exceptions to Terms and Conditions," referenced above in the "Required Documents" section. If an applicant has no objections to any terms or conditions, the applicant should write "None" on the form.

Each applicant should be aware of MNsure's standard contract terms and conditions in preparing its response. A template of a grant contract is available on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities

webpage for your reference. Much of the language reflected in the contract is required by law or policy. If you take exception to any of the terms, conditions or language in the contract, you must indicate those exceptions in your response to the RFP in Attachment E also. Only those exceptions indicated in your response to the RFP will be available for discussion or negotiation. Further, although this RFP establishes the basis for proposals, the detailed obligations and additional measures of performance will be defined in the final negotiated contract.

At MNsure's sole discretion grant contracts may be extended for an additional year, not to exceed a total contract term of two years. Should MNsure choose to exercise this option, MNsure will ask grantees to submit a new work plan and budget to be considered for an additional year of funding.

Evaluation and Selection

Review Process, Criteria and Selection

All responsive proposals received by the deadline of on or before 1:00 p.m. Central Time on May 21, 2020, will be evaluated by MNsure. The MNsure review and selection process will occur in three stages.

During the review and selection process, all information concerning the proposal submitted, except identity, address and the amount requested by responder, will remain non-public and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge.

Non-selection of any proposals will mean that either another proposal(s) was determined to be more advantageous to MNsure or that MNsure exercised the right to reject any or all proposals.

At its discretion, MNsure may perform an appropriate cost and pricing analysis of a responder's proposal, including an audit of the reasonableness of any proposal.

Stage 1: Evaluation Based upon Completeness, Compliance and Eligibility

This evaluation will occur immediately following submission of a proposal to ensure an application meets MNsure requirements. Applications that are deemed non-responsive will not be forwarded for Stage 2 review.

Stage 2: Merit Review (Evaluation of Proposal Requirements/Relevance)

MNsure will utilize a review committee made up of a diverse group of internal (MNsure staff) and external members to review the merits of each proposal. The review committee will use a 100-point scale to evaluate the merit of each proposal. After scores are added up for each proposal, proposals are compared to each other by funding area.

Reviewers will consider the following selection criteria in determining overall merit scores. In each funding area, proposals will be rated on responsiveness to the RFP's required elements and ability of the proposal to help MNsure meet the goals of the grant program. During the review, the committee may consider data provided by MNsure on an agency's past performance, including, but not limited to, certified staff, application and enrollment statistics, and per enrollee payment history.

Applicants for the geographic and population funding areas will be scored on the following:

- Connection to Community of Focus (15 points)

- Navigator Experience (15 points)

- Current Navigator Activities (20 points)

- Grant Objectives and Strategies (35 points)

- Budget and Financial Management (15 points)

Applicants for the capacity building funding area will be scored on the following:

- Justification of Community Need (15 points)

- Connection to Community of Focus (15 points)

- Relevant Experience and Activities (15 points)

- Grant Objectives and Strategies (35 points)

- Budget and Financial Management (20 points)

Stage 3: Financial Review

MNsure staff will review applications for fiscal compliance with MNsure grant policies and procedures. These include budget reasonableness, budget justification and use of funds in addition to the organization's financial management capabilities.

Applicants selected to move on to Stage 3 will be asked to submit evidence of the organization's financial management capabilities. Specifically, applicants must submit an Accounting System and Financial Capacity Questionnaire and one of the following documents depending on the size of the applicant's annual revenue:

- Nonprofit applicants with a total annual revenue of less than $50,000 or that have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit must submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.

- Nonprofit applicants with a total annual revenue of $50,000 or more and less than $750,000 must submit their most recent IRS Form 990.

- Nonprofit applicants with a total annual revenue of more than $750,000 must submit their most recent certified financial audit.

- For-profit applicants need to provide comparable evidence, such as their most recent certified financial audit or, if no audit is available, financial statements showing available cash and revenues.

During this stage, MNsure reserves the right to negotiate on specific areas of the application, to request additional information needed to clarify questions or to establish financial management capability and to conduct background checks. Final recommendation decisions will be based on the successful outcome of the financial review and negotiations. Final award decisions will be made following this step.

Grant Administration Requirements

The following is an overview of the requirements that grantees must meet. Full post-award administration requirements will be included in the terms and conditions of the award and contract. MNsure's goal is to manage funded projects through a streamlined process that limits administrative burdens on the grantees while ensuring proper oversight.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Requirements for All Grantees:

A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. Minn. Stat. §363A.02. The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500.

C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Attestation and Disclosure

All grantee entities will be required to sign a conflict of interest disclosure statement (Attachment A – Declarations and Signature, available on the MNsure Assister Funding Opportunities webpage) as referenced in the Minnesota State Rules relating to Consumer Assistance Services.

Audits

Per Minn. Stat. §16B.98 Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Minnesota Secretary of State

MNsure will verify that the entity is currently registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State and maintains an "Active / In Good Standing" status.

Evaluation Requirements

Financial Reports

Grantees will be required to submit financial reports throughout the contract time period. Further information will be provided in the terms and conditions of award.

Financial Accounting of Funds

Grantees will be required to keep a detailed accounting of how MNsure grant award funds are spent. Financial records of grantees associated with grant-funded activities are subject to potential random monitoring visits and financial or programmatic audits.

Interim Progress Report(s)

Grantees will be required to submit a monthly progress report. The format and due dates for progress reports will be included within the terms and conditions of award.

Final Reports

Final reports are due 30 calendar days following the expiration date. The content and format of this report will be included within the terms and conditions of award.

Monitoring

MNsure will conduct 1-2 site visits with each grantee during the grant period. On all grants of $250,000 and higher, MNsure will conduct annual monitoring visits during the grant period. To ensure appropriate oversight, grantees may also be subject to random monitoring and audits of grant-funded activities. Navigators at grantee organizations may be required to utilize the assister portal when assisting consumers in order to streamline and improve MNsure's monitoring of grant performance.

MNsure will conduct a financial reconciliation of grantees' expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of $50,000 and higher, and MNsure may conduct reconciliation of grantees' expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of below $50,000. For this purpose, the grantees must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

Program Requirements

Work Plan

Selected applicants will work in coordination with MNsure's community specialists to finalize a work plan that may include revised objectives and strategies.

Performance Metrics

In an effort to measure the impact of MNsure's grant program and make continuous improvements, MNsure will be establishing performance metrics with selected applicants. Requirements for performance metrics will be included within the terms and conditions of award.

Publishing

It is MNsure policy that the results and accomplishments of the activities funded through this solicitation are made available to the public. Organizations are expected to make the results and accomplishments of their activities available to the public. Grantees may be asked to prepare a summary of their project and allow its use on the MNsure website and in MNsure materials.

Access to Funds

At the beginning of the grant period, grantees may request an advance payment covering 30 days of work. Any advance payments must be reconciled within 12 months of issuance or within 60 days of the end of the grant period. This is a one-time-only advance and grantees will be asked to justify with specificity the need for an advance. Generally, grantees will be reimbursed for work completed on a monthly basis. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless MNsure has given the grantee a written extension. Following notification of award, MNsure will work with grantees to complete the information needed to facilitate payment. No direct payments will be made to an individual. All compensation will be paid to the affiliated entity.

Contact Information

For more information about this RFP, contact navigatorgrants@mnsure.org.