



2025 Outreach & Inclusion Grant Reimbursement Program Information Packet

2025 Grant Submission Deadlines

Review Period 1.....	Sunday, March 2nd
Review Period 2.....	Sunday, June 8th
Review Period 3.....	Sunday, September 7th
Receipts Due.....	Monday, December 1st

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A note on the grant review period schedule

Those familiar with the program may note that this year's review period schedule includes three review periods instead of four. This is because it is often challenging to work in a fourth review period with enough time to complete the grant projects and submit the receipts for reimbursement before the deadline. It will be much easier to work with three deadlines that give recipients enough room to execute their projects well, especially in a Presidential election year!

The first review period in January was scheduled to accommodate projects before the caucus and convention season. The second review period in June was scheduled after convention season, so new leadership has a chance to get settled and submit projects. The third review period in September was scheduled to accommodate projects ahead (and for) GOTV.

What is the Outreach & Inclusion Grant Program?

The grant program sets aside a certain amount of money in the DFL State Party budget each year to help units who need help funding an Outreach & Inclusion project in their communities. This could be an event, or a program, or some other way to reach out to the community around them - **especially underserved and underrepresented communities**.

The grant is intended to be a springboard for new ideas and programs - an opportunity to launch something new. If the event or program is successful and the unit wants to repeat or continue it, the party unit can then raise funds or incorporate a fundraising element to make the program self-sustaining in the future.

The grant does not replace regular fundraising! Instead, it is intended to support new efforts to engage communities.

What do we mean when we say "Outreach & Inclusion"?

Outreach & Inclusion is, simply put, the future of the party. This is how our party units (and the DFL as a whole) grow and become stronger through diversity and representation.

Outreach

Outreach refers to how we connect with people outside our own party unit - how we reach out to the community around us and invite them to be an integral part of the Minnesota DFL. Note that Outreach is an active word. It requires reaching out. We can't expect anyone to come to our party if we don't invite them!

This is especially true and important for marginalized and underrepresented communities. It can be challenging for marginalized folks to break into spaces where they don't feel represented, and it can also be challenging to reach out to those communities in an honest and meaningful way. Certain communities can feel particularly used in the political sphere and it is important to approach them with the desire to build relationships year-round, every year - not just at election time.

This grant program is specifically designed to fund projects that reach out to these communities so we can expand our table and bring in critical, underrepresented perspectives and lived experiences. The Minnesota DFL stands with these communities, and it is our responsibility to communicate that! This is exactly what the grant program is intended to do.

Inclusion

If Outreach is doing the work of intentionally inviting people to the party, Inclusion is making sure those folks feel welcome when they get here. If someone feels ignored, doesn't feel like they are doing anything meaningful, or can't access the party in the first place, they will leave.

Making your events, materials, and party unit meetings more accessible to disabled persons, parents of small children, folks with a first language that is not English, etc. will help broaden the number of people who can participate, for example.

Your Outreach work and your Inclusion work should go hand-in-hand. If you are reaching out to bring new people into your unit, you should make sure your unit is prepared to meet their needs and make them feel welcome when they arrive. In some cases, that may largely just be creating a culture of hospitality so new people can be introduced to members, have someone to sit with, and get a general idea of what the party is and does.

Is there a cap on how much money a grant can give?

There is no official cap, but the grant program has a set yearly budget for all grant review periods. As such, we generally try to keep grant amounts in the range of \$250-\$600 in order to help as many units as possible with the funds. That range can vary, depending on the number and quality of the applications, as well as our ability to approve the requested line items.

What is the grant review committee looking for in an application?

The grant was created to promote specific, intentional Outreach & Inclusion work, and we stick to that mission. Grant applications can be in support of an event your unit is hosting, a program you're launching, some outreach-centric or inclusion-centric materials you'd like to provide, participation in a community event with an outreach component, and any other way you can think of to support your unit's mission of Outreach & Inclusion.

Because grant funding is limited and its purpose is specific, the committee is not able to approve every request. Please consider the following before you submit an application:

- **What are the specific line items you would like the grant to cover?** You must have a budget so the grant committee can understand how the funds will be used.
- **Do those items directly support a specific outreach action?** The grant expenses must be tied specifically to an Outreach & Inclusion event, program, or project.
- **How does the project reach marginalized communities?** This program is designed to conduct outreach to marginalized, disenfranchised, and underserved communities. Your application should include specifics about how your project intends to reach these communities.
- **How does your project directly engage with its intended audience?** Mailings and social media are nice for promoting your project, but they are not direct engagement. Your project should include an event or some way for members of your unit to build relationships with people directly, through conversation and/or a program.
- **What is the follow-through action?** Consider how your unit will continue to expand on the relationships you begin with your project. How will you continue to communicate and expand your party unit?
- **What will the party unit contribute?** We ask that party units make a contribution to the project's expenses to ensure that the project has the unit's support and everyone is invested in the outcome.
- **What is your plan to invite folks to participate?** Planning an event or program is only half the work! Make sure to have a plan to promote it and recruit the participants that will make your project a success!
- **"Nothing for us without us!"** This is an important phrase in progressive organizing. Bear in mind that if you are planning a project targeted toward a specific community, you need to include members of that community in the planning!

What kinds of things will the grant NOT fund?

Unfortunately, we are not able to fund every project or every line item for proposed projects. Here are some things that the grant program is NOT able to fund:

- **Food** The grant program will not fund food for events, whether it be per diem meals or food for an event. That is not to say that you can't have food at your events - but your unit/group will need to fund it, as grant funds can not be used for that purpose.
- **Branded tents, banners, etc.** While these things can be useful when tabling or having events, the program is intended to fund only the line items directly connected to outreach and inclusion. This can certainly be part of your unit's contribution to the project, but these sorts of long-term assets are not covered under the grant program.
- **Mileage under 50 miles** Gas mileage for travel under 50 miles is considered an incidental expense and is not covered. Please bear in mind that you will need to submit a mileage reimbursement form for mileage over 50 miles, per campaign finance rules.
- **Startup/revamp costs for a Caucus or Outreach Organization** The grant program can not fund basic costs for starting or restarting a Community Caucus or Community Outreach Organization. The program can cover events and projects related to growing membership, such as a launch event.
- **Standard operating costs** The grant program can not fund things that are deemed standard expenses for a party unit. Examples of this would be: websites, Zoom accounts, printer paper, storage units, etc.
- **Applications submitted from outside your organization** The person submitting your grant application needs to be a member of your organization.
- **Staff time or the hiring of contract workers** For campaign finance reasons, the grant program can not be used to pay for staff time or to hire/compensate organizers, canvassers, etc. This does not include vendors. Chargeable services from outside vendors related to the implementation of your project are acceptable.
- **Repeat projects:** The grant program operates on a yearly budget and is designed to help jump-start new ideas. We are not able to continue funding for the same projects, year over year, or there wouldn't be anything left for new applicants!

Where can I find examples of projects that have been approved previously?

We are working on a library of outreach grant projects that will live in the Training Hub at dfi.org/training. Once this library is complete, we will update this guide and include instructions for accessing it.

What is the application process?

Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Here is what the process looks like:

1. You must fill out the grant application at dfil.org/outreachgrant in its entirety. There you can also find all grant period deadlines for the coming year. Your application will be considered at the next grant review period, in the 2-3 weeks following the application deadline.
2. You will receive a confirmation email after your submission letting you know that your grant application was received.
3. The review committee will meet during the 2-3 weeks following the application deadline to review all applications submitted for that grant period. You are welcome to attend this meeting to present your plan. Please notify the Party Affairs team at partyaffairs@dfil.org if you would like to attend the review of your application so we can accommodate you.
4. Following the grant review meeting, you will receive an email with your decision letter, letting you know whether your application was approved. You will receive one of three results:
 - a. **Approved** This means that your application was approved for the amount you requested.
 - b. **Conditional Approval** This means that your application was approved, but with at least one caveat - usually either a condition that must be met in order to be reimbursed or a notice that at least one line item was not approved.
 - c. **Denial** This means that the committee was not able to approve your application, either due to the volume of applications received or because it did not meet the requirements of the program. An explanation will be provided.
5. If your proposal is approved, you will need to keep all receipts related to the approved line items and submit them prior to December 1st for reimbursement. Please see the section below for requirements related to reimbursements.
6. Following your project, you will schedule a meeting with the review committee to discuss how the project went, what you learned and accomplished, and the next steps to keep building on your work.

How does the reimbursement work?

The grant program is a reimbursement-based program. That means that your unit will need to cover the expenses and submit for reimbursement. It is important to keep the following in mind:

- **You must submit receipts!** We are not able to reimburse expenses without a receipt. The receipt must correspond to a line item approved by the committee.
- **Reimbursements must be made in the same calendar year!** All approved reimbursement receipts must be submitted by December 1st of the same calendar year so we have time to process your check before year's end. We are not able to pay out reimbursements after the calendar year has ended, so it is really important that you submit your receipts before the deadline!
- **Checks will be issued to your unit/organization!** The grant program reimburses your unit/caucus/outreach organization - not individuals! If a person incurs expenses related to your project, they should be reimbursed by your organization, and we will reimburse the organization. Receipts should still be submitted for the original expense. Similarly,

we do not pay invoices directly - rather, your organization should pay any related invoices and submit the payment receipt to us so we can reimburse your organization. This is so the flow of money related to the grant program is easily recognizable on campaign finance reports.

I have questions. How can I get them answered?

The Party Affairs team will be happy to answer any questions you have about the program, your ideas, or the application process. Reach out to us at partyaffairs@dfi.org and we will get back to you as soon as possible!