

Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program Grant

Request for proposals (RFP)

FY22-24

The RFP assists applicants in applying for and managing state grants. This document describes the Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) Grant, including information on who may apply, experience and qualifications needed, the application process and criteria for selection, activities eligible for reimbursement, and other information that will help applicants plan and submit a competitive application. Applications will be accepted until **4:00 pm Central Time on June 28, 2024**.

Applicants should check the Minnesota Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program webpage (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/join-retap>) for the most recent updates on this competitive grant, the positions that are currently accepting applications, addendums to this RFP, and answers to common questions.

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1. Program overview

RETAP members conduct facility assessments, provide community sustainability assistance, or serve as a coordinator.

Facility assessments: RETAP members conducting facility assessments provide small businesses and public and private institutions with ways to reduce pollution, waste, energy use, and operating costs. Members analyze utility bills, conduct a site visit, and prepare a written report with findings and recommendations. The assessments are non-regulatory and are offered at no cost to clients.

Community sustainability assistance: RETAP members conducting community sustainability assistance work directly with local governments and communities to identify greenhouse gas reduction, energy use reduction, and other sustainability opportunities at the community level. Members working in this area are likely to work with the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program (for information on GreenStep Cities see <http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us>).

Coordinator: RETAP coordinators guide the work of members doing facility assessments, find facility assessment clients, ensure that program goals are met, organize necessary RETAP trainings and meetings, and assist Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff in selecting RETAP members.

Statutory authority: MPCA has authority to administer RETAP grants in Minnesota pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 116.03, subd. 2 and 115D.04.

2. Funding

Funding typically ranges from \$1,000 to \$4,000 per year for each RETAP member, and \$4,000 to \$10,000 for coordinators.

Initial RETAP grants are for two years and can be renewed, dependent on the member's performance and program funding. RETAP grants issued under this RFP will expire no later than June 30, 2025.

Payment schedule

RETAP members are paid an hourly rate of \$20.00 and coordinators an hourly rate of \$25.50.

3. Eligible and ineligible applicants; Qualifications

Eligible applicants: Includes retired engineers, scientists, managers, and other professionals from technical and non-technical fields. Applicants may apply as individuals or through a limited liability corporation (LLC), partnership, or other corporation established in their own name.

Ineligible applicants: Current State of Minnesota employees and anyone not fitting the criteria listed above.

Qualifications: Successful applicants must have the skills and abilities listed below as "required" and at least one of the backgrounds or knowledge listed below as "desired."

Facility assessment applicants

Required:

- Skill explaining technical concepts to non-technical audiences
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Self-starter and independent worker
- Familiarity and experience using Microsoft Office software such as Word, Excel, and Access
- Access to the internet

Desired:

- Have ability to travel locally and/or throughout the state
- Knowledge or experience with
 - Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and components, including evaluating efficiency and maintenance
 - Efficient lighting principles, such as lighting controls, day-lighting, etc.
 - Energy and building system controls
 - Waste minimization, recycling collection systems, and solid waste management in commercial or office settings
 - Organic or low impact turf management, and alternatives to turf such as native plantings
 - Stormwater management, including rain gardens
 - Less-toxic cleaning products and regimens
 - Applying green building principles to existing buildings
 - Assessing fleets and fleet maintenance for efficiency and pollution prevention

Community sustainability assistance applicants

Required:

- Good knowledge of topics related to sustainability, energy, and climate change
- Experience working in or with local government
- Good oral and written communications skills
- Self-starter and independent worker
- Familiarity and experience using Microsoft Office software such as Word and Excel
- Access to the internet

Desired:

- Experience with community-based planning
- Have ability to travel locally and/or throughout the state

Coordinator applicants

Required:

- Skill managing multiple projects
- Excellent attention to detail
- Excellent interpersonal communication skills (both oral and written)
- Self-starter and independent worker
- Familiarity and experience using Microsoft Office software such as Word, Excel, and Access
- Access to the internet
- Comfortable working with people from a variety of backgrounds
- Have own transportation and ability to drive

Desired:

- Sales and marketing skills
- Familiarity with a broad range of green building and sustainability concepts
- Experience working with government, private businesses, and public and private institutions
- Experience managing volunteers or working with employees

4. Position descriptions

RETAP members conducting facility assessments:

- Work an expected 10-30 hours per month and are compensated at a rate of \$20 per hour
- Work collaboratively to complete at least six assessments annually
- Perform energy, water, and waste assessments using established RETAP methods, databases, and analysis tools
- Use a structured process for each assessment to review client facility operations and activities, and analyze opportunities to minimize waste and water use, improve energy efficiency, increase reuse and recycling, and improve stormwater quality
- Compile specific recommendations and calculate expected environmental and cost savings for each assessment
- Complete a written report and provide feedback to clients within six weeks of each on-site assessment visit
- Translate technical engineering concepts into language that clients understand
- Follow-up with clients to track which recommendations were implemented
- Participate in Minnesota RETAP trainings and meetings
- Conduct other related technical projects as assigned
- Assist with marketing and general promotion of the RETAP program
- Track hours to ensure they will not exceed RETAP funding limits, and submit invoices monthly

RETAP members conducting community sustainability assistance:

- Work an expected 10-30 hours per month and are compensated at the rate of \$20 per hour
- Work with local governments and communities in Minnesota to reduce their carbon footprints and help them become more sustainable
- Assist Minnesota GreenStep Cities community participants (<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us>)
- Research needed information independently
- Compile written reports summarizing recommendations for reducing carbon emissions and increasing sustainability, as well as related cost and environmental savings
- Make presentations to local government committees and boards
- Follow-up with clients to track their implementation of recommendations
- Participate in Minnesota RETAP trainings and meetings
- Conduct related technical projects as assigned
- Assist with marketing and general promotion of the RETAP program
- Track hours to ensure they will not exceed RETAP funding limits, and submit invoices monthly

RETAP coordinators:

- Work an estimated 40-70 hours per month and are compensated at the rate of \$25.50 per hour
- Manage the workload of the RETAP members who conduct facility assessments (MPCA staff coordinate the members who provide community sustainability assistance)
- Market the RETAP program and find new clients through informal and formal networking and promotion
- Act as the primary point of contact with clients and partners such as the MPCA and CERTs (Clean Energy Resource Teams)
- Work under the direction of and closely with the MPCA RETAP administrator

- Work closely with the MPCA coordinator of RETAP members who are working on community sustainability
- Confirm availability of adequate funding before approving work of RETAP members
- Track progress of assessments and implementation of recommendations at client facilities
- Ensure that follow-up with clients happens on a regular basis
- Organize necessary Minnesota RETAP trainings and meetings
- Ensure that Minnesota RETAP program goals are met and members meet expectations
- Ensure quality and thoroughness of RETAP members' work
- Conduct, as necessary, environmental assessments as a part of a Minnesota RETAP team
- Assist MPCA staff in selecting RETAP members

5. Eligible and ineligible costs

Eligible costs

RETAP members are reimbursed for mileage, miscellaneous expenses, certain meals, and lodging if receipts are provided. Miscellaneous expenses include report copies, postage for mailing reports, and parking at site visits.

Travel involving an overnight stay and lodging must be pre-approved by the RETAP coordinator and the MPCA's RETAP administrator.

Ineligible costs

Ineligible costs include costs that are not directly related to the project. In addition, the following costs, even if they are directly related to the project, are ineligible.

- Any expenses incurred before the grant agreement is fully executed
- Attorney fees
- Engineering/consultant fees
- Administrative expenses not directly related to or necessary to complete the work
- Mark-up on purchases and/or subcontracts
- Taxes, except sales tax on eligible expenses
- Memberships (including subscriptions and dues)
- Food (other than per diem)
- Alcoholic refreshments
- Entertainment, gifts, prizes, and decorations
- Merit awards and bonuses
- Donations and fundraising
- Computers, tablets, and software
- Purchase or rental of mobile communication devices such as cell phones
- Vehicles, including rental

6. Application review process

Application instructions are in Section 8, below. All applications must be submitted by email by the deadline. Faxed or printed applications are not accepted.

Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis as they are received. The RETAP coordinators and MPCA's RETAP administrator will evaluate applications using the evaluation criteria detailed in Exhibit A at the end of this document. A 5-point scale will be used. Applicants with a total score of 4 or higher will be contacted for an interview.

The review team will consider an applicant's past performance (pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 16B.97 – Grants Management, Policy Number 08-13), and may disqualify an applicant if it finds documented evidence of poor performance under a grant in the past five years.

Notification

The MPCA anticipates notifying applicants of award status within 90 days of receiving their application.

7. Grantee responsibilities

Grant Agreement

RETAP members must enter into a grant agreement. The agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation of the project. Once the agreement is signed, the recipient is required to comply with all conditions of the agreement.

A sample State of Minnesota RETAP Grant Agreement can be found here (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/join-retap>) for your reference. Much of the language in the agreement is required by statute.

Reporting requirements

RETAP members are expected to:

- Provide a written report to clients summarizing findings
- Follow-up with clients to track their implementation of recommendations and add the results to RETAP's database
- Track hours and submit invoices monthly

Public data

Applications are private or nonpublic until opened. Once the applications are opened, the name and address of the applicant is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. After MPCA has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A statement by a grantee that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application (Minn. Stat. § 13.599, subd. 3).

Conflict of interest

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the department due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

8. Application instructions

All responses to this RFP must be electronically submitted to grants.pca@state.mn.us. Applications will be accepted until **4:00 pm Central Time on June 28, 2024**. This solicitation does not obligate the State to award a grant, and the State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

All responses should include the following documents:

1. Completed application
2. Resume, including two professional references (name, organization, phone, and email)

9. Application questions

We are obligated to be transparent in all aspects of our work. To do this, all questions about RETAP applications must be submitted in the same manner: emailing the question to grants.pca@state.mn.us. The answers will be posted in a timely manner on the MPCA website at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/retap> (click on “Join RETAP”). It is the applicant’s responsibility to check the website for the most recent updates.

MPCA personnel are not authorized to discuss this RFP with applicants. Contact regarding this RFP with any MPCA personnel may result in disqualification.

Exhibit A: Application Evaluation Score Sheet

Applicants will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Applicants with a total score of 4 or higher will be contacted for an interview.

Criteria	Score (0–5)	Weight	Total points
Relevance of applicant’s skills, experience, and background to the listed desired skills of Minnesota RETAP and its clients		60%	
Computer access and abilities		20%	
Willingness and ability to make the necessary time commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For members conducting facility assessments: 10-30 hours per month. • For members conducting community sustainability assistance: 10-30 hours per month • For coordinator: at least 40 hours per month 		20%	
Total Score			

	Score (0–5)
Missing / Can't Tell	0
Poor / Low	1
Fair	2
Satisfactory	3
Good	4
Excellent / High	5