

14 - 1135



Innovation Voucher Pilot Program

Report to the Legislature
As required by Laws of Minnesota 2014, chapter 312, article 3, section 19

December 1, 2014
Author: Brandon C. Toner
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Total cost of salaries, printing, and supplies in
developing/preparing this report is \$155.79
(reported as required by Minn. Stat. 3.197)

Department of Employment and Economic Development

1st National Bank Building 332 Minnesota Street Suite E200 Saint Paul Minnesota 55101-1351
651-259-7114 PHONE 800-657-3858 TOLL FREE 651-296-4772 FAX 651-296-3900 TTY <http://mn.gov/deed>

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND SERVICE PROVIDER

Innovation Voucher Pilot Program Report to the Minnesota Legislature, 2014

Laws of Minnesota 2014, chapter 312, article 3, section 19 requires the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to submit a report to the Minnesota Legislature by December 1, 2014 on the vouchers awarded to date under this program.

As of December 1st, 2014 no vouchers have been awarded.

Innovation Voucher Pilot Program

The Innovation Voucher Pilot Program was created to provide financing to small businesses to purchase technical assistance and services from public higher education institutions and nonprofit entities to assist in the development or commercialization of innovative new products or services. Vouchers can be used by a small business to access technical assistance and other services including, but not limited to: research, technical development, product development, commercialization, market development, technology exploration, and improved business practices including strategies to grow business and create operational efficiencies.

The law went into effect on July 1, 2014. DEED spent three months reviewing the legislation and developing guidance for implementing the law. Guidance was developed around the following topics: eligible services, eligible providers, the application process, the voucher award process, and the voucher redemption process. DEED developed a program application and information portal for the program on the agency's website. DEED published this information and began soliciting applications for vouchers on October 9, 2014.

DEED engaged in a number of outreach activities to make eligible small businesses aware of the opportunity. Staff gave presentations to the Minnesota Inventor's Network, presented at the Midwest Innovation Summit, published newsletters and distributed press releases to potential voucher recipients and service providers, and worked with DEED's business development staff, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the University of Minnesota to distribute information about the program.

Interest in the program has been strong. DEED has received more than three dozen inquiries from businesses interested in the program. DEED expects to award 16-20 vouchers over next six months. These vouchers will assist Minnesota-based small businesses in accelerating the development or commercialization of innovative new products or services and expand their opportunities for growth.

DEED provides administrative support to the Innovation Voucher Pilot Program. If you have any comments regarding this report or would like additional information, contact Brandon Toner at 651/259-7218 or brandon.toner@state.mn.us.