



More About the Canadian Border Counties Economic Relief Program

This program provides grants of up to \$50,000 from the State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to businesses located within a county that borders Canada that were adversely affected by the closures of the Canadian border since 2020 and/or the 2021 closure of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Northland Foundation has until June 30, 2024, to deploy State of Minnesota funding to affected businesses. Funding and eligibility guidelines were established in law during the most recent legislative session.

This special grant opportunity **is open now and closes at 5:00 p.m. on January 12, 2024**. Applicants will be notified via e-mail of their application status in early March 2024. If funds aren't fully deployed in this round, an additional grant round may open in the spring. However, interested businesses are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Who Can Apply?

- Currently operating businesses located in **Cook, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Roseau, or St. Louis County** or the **Tribal nations of Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Red Lake, or Fond du Lac** located on Tribal lands within the geographic boundaries of counties that border Canada. Eligible businesses must show **at least a 10% reduction in gross receipts in 2021 compared to 2019** due to the closures of the BWCA and/or Canadian border.
- A portion of available funding is specifically earmarked for businesses that meet eligibility criteria and are **majority owned (at least 51%) by enrolled member(s) of a MN-based Tribe or Tribal government-owned businesses** located within the geographic boundaries of a Minnesota county that borders Canada.
- For-profit businesses are eligible. Nonprofit, public, and governmental agencies are not.
- Applicants must demonstrate at least a 10% reduction in gross receipts in 2021 compared to 2019 by providing copies of tax returns from those two years. **2020 tax returns are not required** and will not be considered in calculating the reduction in gross receipts to determine eligibility.

Grant Award Details and Uses

- Grant awards of up to \$50,000 are available on a first come, first served basis until funds are fully obligated.
- Grants do not require a match.
- Grants may be used for general operating expenses/working capital to support payroll expenses, rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, equipment, and other similar expenses that occur in the regular course of business or for special projects to enhance business operations.
- The State of Minnesota will be collecting data on the economic impact of grant funding. Proposals that predict an increase in staffing as a result of this grant, though not required to apply for or receive funding, may receive preference. Note that all grantees will be required to provide job and economic impact data for reporting purposes.

Application Process

Applications are electronic and can be found through the link below. A Microsoft Word version of the application can be found at <https://northlandfdn.org/grants/special-grants.php> to help you prepare your responses ahead of time. Elements required for the application include:

- Written narrative describing the impact of the closures of the BWCA and/or Canadian border.
- Uploading of 2019 and 2021 tax returns that demonstrate at least a 10% reduction in 2021 compared to 2019.
- Proof of good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State, found here: <https://mblsportal.sos.state.mn.us/Business/Search>. Tribal government- or Native-owned businesses not registered with the Secretary of State must provide proof of good standing from the appropriate Tribal government department verifying current business operations (i.e. statement on government letterhead).

Application Scoring Considerations

All applications will be date and time stamped upon submission. In the case of a high volume of applications, applications may be further evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Impact of BWCA and/or Border Closure. Applications may be evaluated in part based on the narrative explanation of how the closure of the border and/or BWCA impacted the business. At least a 10% reduction in gross receipts because of the closures(s) is required to apply, however those businesses with a more severe decrease may take precedence in the evaluation process.
- Previous COVID-19 related assistance. Businesses who have not previously received a grant or other funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic may receive preference.

Program Timeline

November 2023	Application period opens
January 12, 2024	Application period closes at 5:00 PM
Early March	All applicants notified via e-mail of their status. Projects notified they are moving forward will work with Northland to collect more documentation.
Spring 2024	A second round opened if necessary; dates TBD.
June 30, 2024	Northland funding allocation deadline with the State of MN

Questions? Please contact Michelle Ufford, Northland Foundation Director of Grantmaking, at michelle@northlandfdn.org

[CLICK HERE TO START THE ONLINE APPLICATION](#)