

# 2024 NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



**May 8, 2024**  
**Minneapolis**





EMPLOYMENT AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF)

Ray McCoy | ERAF Program Coordinator



- Two-year pilot program that reimburses eligible employers for reasonable accommodation purchases made for job applicants and/or employees with disabilities
  - Reimburses purchases made from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025
- Promotes hiring of people with disabilities by reducing any real or perceived financial hardships of providing accommodations
- Available to Minnesota small to medium sized employers
- Appropriated \$2m per year, \$400,000 of which is budgeted for administrative costs
- Organizationally housed within State Services for the Blind but marketed as a DEED program
- Official Launch Date: September 1, 2023

# Employer Eligibility

- The employer is domiciled within the legal boundaries of Minnesota and has its principal place of business as identified in its certificate of incorporation in the state of Minnesota;
- The business employs not more than 500 employees on any business day during the preceding calendar year; and
- The business generates \$5,000,000 or less in gross annual revenue.

# Qualifying Reasonable Accommodations (Examples)

- Assistive technology
- Captioning services
- Ergonomic workstations or seating
- Job coaching
- Lifting aids
- Lighting and alarms
- Low vision aids and devices
- Noise-cancelling devices
- Readers
- Sign language interpreters
- Signage
- Specialized software
- Subscriptions for assistive technology
- Transcription of materials into Braille or audio formats
- Wheelchair ramp

# Reimbursement Limits

- The maximum total reimbursement per eligible employer in a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) is \$30,000. This amount encapsulates both onetime and ongoing reasonable accommodations expenses.
- Submissions for onetime reasonable accommodation expenses must be no less than \$250 and no more than \$15,000 per individual with a disability. If an employer submits a reimbursement for more than the maximum amount, ERAF will only reimburse up to the \$15,000 limit.
- Submissions for ongoing reasonable accommodation expenses have no minimum or maximum requirements. Ongoing expenses are those expenses for ongoing services, such as sign language interpreting or captioning services.

# ERAF Application Steps

**1** Employee completes their internal process confirming their disability and need for accommodations

**2** Contact us to schedule a FREE consultation to discuss what reasonable accommodations you need

**3** Purchase the reasonable accommodation(s) for a job applicant or employee with a disability

**4** Complete the ERAF Application on our website

# Reimbursement Process

- When completing the application, the employer MUST attach proofs of purchase.
- ERAF Program Coordinator reviews application within 5 business days of receipt.
- If application is approved, ERAF technician contacts employer to complete a substitute W-9 form; employer may be asked to register in SWIFT if they anticipate future reimbursements.
  - Our ERAF Technician will help them through the entire process
- Reimbursement is processed in SWIFT, and the reimbursement check is sent to the employer within 30 days. If employer is set up as a supplier in SWIFT, funds can be instead direct deposited.



# Reimbursement Denials

- Potential reasons for denials:
  - Not an eligible employer
  - Not a qualifying reasonable accommodation under the definition of state law
  - Not for a job applicant or employee with a disability
  - Eligible employer has met \$30,000 fiscal year limit
  - Missing or insufficient documentation for proof of purchase or cost
- Employers are provided an appeal process.

# Important Notes

- The reimbursement employers receive is not taxable. However, they are still advised to consult with a tax accountant.
- Employers do not need to submit proof of eligibility at time of application. The application process was intentionally made to be as easy to complete as possible.
- We will be conducting quarterly financial audits of the reimbursements.
- Employers may be required to return a portion or all of the funds they received if we find through our audits, they did not meet the requirements of the program.

# Technical Assistance and Consultation

- ERAF Program Coordinator is available for technical assistance (TA) and consultation at **no cost to employers**. TA is available for the following activities:
  - Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act as it pertains to hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities and implementing reasonable accommodations;
  - Consulting on how to locate, purchase, and implement reasonable accommodations that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities;
  - Connecting employers to disability-related trainings and resources, including DEED-specific programs and initiatives; and
  - Answering any questions about the ERAF.

## **PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THIS PROGRAM!**

- The ERAF team is available to present to your staff, partners, employers, or anyone else who could benefit from knowing this information.
- We will have a flyer available on the website that you can send out and share.
- As it makes sense, please consider including ERAF information in presentations, newsletters, GovDelivery announcements, trainings, etc.

# Important Contact Information

- Website:
  - Short URL [www.mn.gov/deed/eraf](http://www.mn.gov/deed/eraf)
  - Long URL [www.mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/eraf/index.jsp](http://www.mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/eraf/index.jsp)
- Email: [eraf.deed@state.mn.us](mailto:eraf.deed@state.mn.us)
- Phone: 651-539-2390 (1-833-391-8050)
- Program Coordinator: [Ray.McCoy@state.mn.us](mailto:Ray.McCoy@state.mn.us)
- Technician: [Darcie.Koecher@state.mn.us](mailto:Darcie.Koecher@state.mn.us)
- Supervisor: [Lindsey.Hanson@state.mn.us](mailto:Lindsey.Hanson@state.mn.us)

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