**State Fiscal Year 24-25**

**Robotics Teams and STEM Internships**

**Competitive Grant**

# Overview of Program and Funding

As authorized in [Chapter 53 -S.F.No. 3035](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session+Law/Chapter/53/), up to $3,000,000\* is available for competitive grants under the Robotics Teams and STEM Internships RFP to support high school robotics teams and prepare youth for careers in STEM fields. Of this amount, $2,000,000 is for creating internships for high school students to work at private companies in STEM fields, including the payment of student stipends. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2028.

\*(Ten percent is reserved for DEED’s administration of the appropriation.)

Eligible organizations included nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, and local education institutions. Organizations selected had demonstrated effectiveness and capacity with supporting Minnesota high school robotics teams. Organizations selected, or identified project partners, had experience and capacity creating internships for Minnesota high school students to work at private companies in STEM fields. Each project proposals identified how it will serve diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities, and economically disadvantaged youth.

All selected projects will provide the following services:

* Support Minnesota high school robotics teams,
* Prepare youth for careers in STEM fields, and
* Create internships for Minnesota high school students to work at private companies in STEM fields.

# Overview of the Request for Proposals Process

* DEED developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Robotics Teams and STEM Internships Competitive Grant funds. This RFP was posted on DEED’s website on September 6, 2023 under [Competitive Grant and Contract Opportunities](https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/open-rfp.jsp). Proposals were due by 5:00 p.m. on October 11, 2023.

* DEED’s Office of Youth Development recorded an informational presentation about the Robotics Teams and STEM Internships funding opportunity. The RFP directed potential applicants to submit all questions on the RFP in writing via e-mail to a specified DEED contact. A Question and Answer document, responding to submitted questions, was updated during the duration of the open RFP. A link to this document and recorded presentation was available on demand on DEED’s [Competitive Grant and Contract Opportunities](https://mn.gov/deed/about/contracts/open-rfp.jsp) webpage.

# Selection of Grantees

* 9 proposals were submitted in response to the Robotics Teams and STEM Internships RFP, requesting $8,994,846 million dollars in funding for SFY 2024-25 (over three times the amount available to award).
* All proposals were read and scored by a group of community and state-level reviewers. The reviewers were 71% community reviewers.
* Based on reviewer scores, the following 8 organizations were recommended for Robotics Teams and STEM Internships funding.
* Approximately 13% of the Robotics Teams and STEM Internships funds are allocated to projects serving students in the Twin Cities metro area, about 52% allocated to project serving students in Greater Minnesota, and 36% are allocated to projects serving students in both the Twin Cities metro and Greater Minnesota.

# Awarded Grantees

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Area Served** | **SFY 2024-25 Grant Award** |
| St. Cloud State University | Greater Minnesota | $ 980,000 |
| High Tech Kids | Minnesota statewide | $ 730,000 |
| Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. | 18 Counties of Southwest Minnesota | $ 220,000 |
| Minnesota STEM Partnership | Twin Cities metro area | $ 240,000 |
| St. Cloud Technical & Community College | Minnesota with a large emphasis on the central region | $ 230,000 |
| Pequot Lakes Public Schools | North Central Minnesota - Crow Wing County | $ 120,000 |
| Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) | East Side, St. Paul | $ 100,000 |
| Owatonna Robotics Booster Club | Owatonna, MN area | $ 80,000 |
|  | Total: | $2,700,000 |

# Program Descriptions

**St. Cloud State University - $980,000**

This project will support high school robotics teams in greater Minnesota through direct team funding support including access to equipment and practice fields. The project also includes career awareness workshops and events for teams and students. The student internships component of the project includes providing mentorship training and support to both the students and their company mentors.

Contact: Kurt Helgeson, [krhelgeson@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:krhelgeson@stcloudstate.edu)

**High Tech Kids - $730,000**

Serving students throughout the state, this project will support existing and new high school robotics programs. This includes offering team scholarships to low-income student teams and teams of color as well as providing training to new teams. The project also includes a STEM internship program consisting of both micro-internships, immersive summer internships, and project-based learning opportunities done in partnership with private sector technology companies.

Contact: Cheryl Moeller, [cheryl@hightechkids.org](mailto:cheryl@hightechkids.org)

**Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Inc. - $220,000**

Focused on serving students in the 18 counties of Southwest Minnesota, this project will support high school robotics teams to participate in competitions and prepare students for STEM careers through hands-on career exploration, mentorship, career guidance, and work-based learning opportunities. High school students will receive career assessments, career guidance, labor market information, interview preparation, work-readiness training, and up to a 150-hour paid STEM-related internship with a private company.

Contact: Carrie Bendix, [cbendix@swmnpic.org](mailto:cbendix@swmnpic.org)

**Minnesota STEM Partnership - $240,000**

This project plans to leverage its existing partnerships with schools serving Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC) to serve students in the Twin Cities metro area and Rochester. The project will provide training and support for up to 15 high school robotics teams. In addition, the project will establish an internship program, including identifying STEM companies to host interns, and provide interns professional development, training, and stipends.

Contact: Michael Wulf, [execdir@mnstempartners.org](mailto:execdir@mnstempartners.org)

**St. Cloud Technical & Community College - $230,000**

This project will provide financial support to new and existing robotics teams, with an emphasis on serving teams in the central Minnesota region. It will also provide opportunities for students to complete STEM career exploration. Internship opportunities for high school youth will be created at established employer partners in the manufacturing sector.

Contact: Jeff Wagner, [jeffrey.wagner@sctcc.edu](mailto:jeffrey.wagner@sctcc.edu)

**Pequot Lakes Public Schools - $ 120,000**

Serving students in North Central Minnesota, specifically Crow Wing County, these funds will help to support the high school robotics team at Pequot Lakes High School by purchasing equipment and supplies that are required for competition and covering team travel expenses for the robotics competitions. Pequot Lakes Public Schools will also expand internships for high school students to work in STEM fields, including the payment of student stipends.

Contact: Kurt Stumpf, [kstumpf@isd186.org](mailto:kstumpf@isd186.org)

**Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) - $ 100,000**

This project will establish a robotics team at Johnson High School, a school that serves primarily Latinx, and BIPOC students, with a high percentage of first-generation students. Student will design, build, and learn about robotics as well as compete in robotics competitions. In addition, the program will equip students with employment readiness and financial literacy skills and support them in obtaining summer internships in the STEM field.

Contact: Ruby Lee, [Rlee@clues.org](mailto:Rlee@clues.org)

**Owatonna Robotics Booster Club – $ 80,000**

This project will support opportunities for students in the Owatonna area to participate in robotics teams and competitions. Students will also be offered computer programing and Computer Aided Desing (CAD) classes, and one on one mentoring from mentors in the STEM field. The project will also partner with local STEM businesses to create student internships.

Contact: Eric Krueger, [owatonnaroboticsbooster@gmail.com](mailto:owatonnaroboticsbooster@gmail.com)

**Please contact Kay Tracy, Director of Youth Services at 651-259-7555 or** [**kay.tracy@state.mn.us**](mailto:kay.tracy@state.mn.us) **if you have any questions.**