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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 35

01/07/2021 Authored by Elkins, Bahner and Masin
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on State Government Finance and Elections
02/10/2021 Adoption of Report: Amended and re-referred to the Committee on Human Services Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to human services; authorizing the Council on Disability to accept and
1.3 disburse grants and other aids; appropriating money for grants to cities and counties
1.4 to improve website accessibility; amending Minnesota Statutes 2020, section
1.5 256.482, subdivision 5; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes,
1.6 chapter 256.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 256.482, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

1.9 Subd. 5. **Duties and powers.** The council shall have the following duties and powers:

1.10 (1) to advise and otherwise aid the governor; appropriate state agencies, including but
1.11 not limited to the Departments of Education, Human Services, Employment and Economic
1.12 Development, and Human Rights and the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Services
1.13 for the Blind; the state legislature; and the public on matters pertaining to public policy and
1.14 the administration of programs, services, and facilities for persons who have a disability in
1.15 Minnesota;

1.16 (2) to encourage and assist in the development of coordinated, interdepartmental goals
1.17 and objectives and the coordination of programs, services and facilities among all state
1.18 departments and private providers of service as they relate to persons with a disability;

1.19 (3) to serve as a source of information to the public regarding all services, programs and
1.20 legislation pertaining to persons with a disability;

1.21 (4) to review and make comment to the governor, state agencies, the legislature, and the
1.22 public concerning adequacy of state programs, plans and budgets for services to persons
1.23 with a disability and for funding under the various federal grant programs;

2.1 (5) to research, formulate and advocate plans, programs and policies which will serve
2.2 the needs of persons who are disabled;

2.3 (6) to advise the Departments of Labor and Industry and Employment and Economic
2.4 Development on the administration and improvement of the workers' compensation law as
2.5 it relates to programs, facilities and personnel providing assistance to workers who are
2.6 injured and disabled;

2.7 (7) to advise the Workers' Compensation Division of the Department of Labor and
2.8 Industry and the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals as to the necessity and extent
2.9 of any alteration or remodeling of an existing residence or the building or purchase of a
2.10 new or different residence which is proposed by a licensed architect under section 176.137;

2.11 (8) to initiate or seek to intervene as a party in any administrative proceeding and judicial
2.12 review thereof to protect and advance the right of all persons who are disabled to an
2.13 accessible physical environment as provided in section 326B.139; ~~and~~

2.14 (9) to initiate or seek to intervene as a party in any administrative or judicial proceeding
2.15 which concerns programs or services provided by public or private agencies or organizations
2.16 and which directly affects the legal rights of persons with a disability; and

2.17 (10) to apply for, accept, and disburse grants and other aids from other public or private
2.18 sources.

2.19 Sec. 2. **[256.4831] WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY GRANTS.**

2.20 Subdivision 1. Grant program established. A website accessibility grant program is
2.21 established. Within available appropriations, grants must be awarded by the Minnesota
2.22 Council on Disability under section 256.482 to improve the accessibility of local government
2.23 websites and website content for persons with disabilities.

2.24 Subd. 2. Website Accessibility Grant Advisory Council. (a) A Website Accessibility
2.25 Grant Advisory Council is established. The purpose of the advisory council is to assist the
2.26 Minnesota Council on Disability in awarding grants under subdivision 1. The advisory
2.27 council consists of the following members:

2.28 (1) one representative of the League of Minnesota Cities, appointed by the league;

2.29 (2) one representative of the Association of Minnesota Counties, appointed by the
2.30 association;

2.31 (3) one representative of the Minnesota Council on Disability, appointed by the council;

2.32 (4) one member of the public who is a self-advocate, appointed by the governor; and

3.1 (5) the state chief information officer, or a designee.

3.2 (b) The terms, compensation, and removal of members is governed by section 15.059.

3.3 The advisory council must elect a chair from among its members.

3.4 (c) The advisory council is subject to chapter 13D. The advisory council must meet at
3.5 the request of the Minnesota Council on Disability or the chair, but no fewer than two times
3.6 per year to fulfill its duties. The Minnesota Council on Disability must provide meeting
3.7 space and other administrative assistance to support the work of the advisory council.

3.8 (d) The advisory council must review applications from local governments for grant
3.9 funding to support website accessibility projects and to make recommendations to the
3.10 Minnesota Council on Disability for the award of grants. The Minnesota Council on Disability
3.11 may not award a grant unless it has been reviewed by the advisory council. The advisory
3.12 council must establish uniform, objective criteria to be used in evaluating grant applications.
3.13 The criteria must include standards to ensure grant funding is distributed equitably across
3.14 the state, and that grant funds are available without regard to a local government's population
3.15 size.

3.16 Subd. 3. **Report to legislature.** No later than January 15, 2022, and annually thereafter,
3.17 the Minnesota Council on Disability must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority
3.18 members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over state government finance and
3.19 local government detailing the grants awarded under this section, including the number of
3.20 grant applications received, the number of grants awarded, the geographic distribution of
3.21 grant applications and awards, and the amount of each grant awarded and how it was used.

3.22 Sec. 3. **APPROPRIATION; CITIES AND COUNTIES.**

3.23 \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the Council on
3.24 Disability to be used for grants to cities and counties to improve website accessibility, to
3.25 be available until June 30, 2025. Up to 15 percent of this appropriation may be used for
3.26 administrative purposes.