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GOVERNOR'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL 4360.0100

CHAPTER 4360

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNOR'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

4360.0100 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** As used in parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100, the terms defined in this part and in Minnesota Statutes, section 116J.951 have the meanings given them.

Subp. 2. **Agricultural.** "Agricultural" means relating to activities of establishments primarily engaged in food production, processing, sale and transport of goods and commodities classified under the industry code numbers used in the standard industrial classification code as published in the standard industrial classification manual adopted by incorporation by reference in part 4360.1200, for the following coded activities:

- A. Major Group 01-Crops;
- B. Major Group 02-Livestock;
- C. Major Group 07-Agricultural Services;
- D. Major Group 09-Fishing, Hunting and Trapping;
- E. Major Group 20-Food and Kindred Products;
- F. Group 514-Groceries and Related Products;
- G. Group 515-Farm Products Raw Materials; and
- H. Major Group 54-Food Stores.

Subp. 3. **Demonstration grant.** "Demonstration grant" means a grant for an innovative project that has potential statewide applications and meets the needs of farmers or low-income rural residents.

Subp. 4. **Enterprise development.** "Enterprise development" means the gradual emergence or expansion of new rural small businesses.

Subp. 5. **Farmer.** "Farmer" means one engaged in the production of agricultural commodities (including persons engaged in the production of fish under controlled conditions), ranchers, farm tenants, and farm laborers.

Subp. 6. **Fiscal agent.** "Fiscal agent" means any Minnesota unit of state or local government, special district nonprofit organization or public institution, employing a certified public accountant for the purpose of the agent's activities, that acts on behalf of a project sponsor.

Subp. 7. **Grant funds.** "Grant funds" means money provided by the council in the form of a demonstration grant, seed grant, or pilot marketing grant.

Subp. 8. **Grant year.** "Grant year" means the year during which the council makes grant funds available.

Subp. 9. **In-kind support.** "In-kind support" means contributions made by a project sponsor other than money, usually services, facilities, goods, or equipment, meant to supplement the grant funds awarded by the council.

Subp. 10. **Letter of commitment.** "Letter of commitment" means a written statement from an organization or individual providing matching funds in conjunction with a project application submitted to the council.

Subp. 11. **Low-income.** "Low-income" means low income as defined in Code of Federal Regulations, title 24, section 813.102.

Subp. 12. **Management assistance.** "Management assistance" means assistance provided to rural small businesses in managing the day-to-day operations of the enterprise, and as opposed to financial assistance.

Subp. 13. **Matching funds.** "Matching funds" means the share, including in-kind support, of total project costs raised by the grantee used to supplement grant funds. Matching funds may not consist solely of in-kind support but may consist solely of money from any source.

Subp. 14. **Nonprofit organization.** "Nonprofit organization" means an organization that is a tax-exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended through December 31, 1985.

Subp. 15. **Operating capital.** "Operating capital" means money or credit used by the owner of a for-profit business to pay the day-to-day operating expenses of the enterprise, such as for the purchase of goods, inventory, machinery, equipment, or other overhead costs.

Subp. 16. **Priority rural development issues or priority issue areas.** "Priority rural development issues" or "priority issue areas" means family farm and agricultural land protection, value added processing and marketing, or rural small business assistance or any combination of those issues.

Subp. 17. **Program.** "Program" means the grant-making activities of the council.

Subp. 18. **Project or rural development project.** "Project" or "rural development project" means any activity funded or to be funded by the council that seeks to accomplish one or more of the goals specified in part 4360.0300 in one or more of the priority rural development issue areas.

Subp. 19. **Project evaluation.** "Project evaluation" means a comparison between the activities implementing the work program and anticipated project results, as identified in the project application, and the actual outcome of the project.

Subp. 20. **Project promotion.** "Project promotion" means a method of informing the general public and others about project activities, including the use of appropriate media, responding to individual inquiries, mailings to appropriate groups, and reporting to the council on project activities.

Subp. 21. **Project sponsor or sponsor.** "Project sponsor" or "sponsor" means the person or entity that implements or intends to implement a rural development project, whether or not acting through a fiscal agent.

Subp. 22. **Project sponsor or fiscal agent.** "Project sponsor or fiscal agent" means, unless a contrary meaning is clearly intended, that the project sponsor is ultimately responsible for the required action and that if a fiscal agent is used, the fiscal agent is responsible to the sponsor to take the required act and the project sponsor is responsible for the same act only in the event that the fiscal agent is unwilling or unable to take the required action.

Subp. 23. **Rural.** "Rural" means places within the state other than first class cities as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 410.01.

Subp. 24. **Rural small business.** "Rural small business" means a business entity, including its affiliates, that:

- A. is independently owned and operated for a profit;
- B. is not dominant in its field;
- C. employs fewer than 50 full-time employees or has gross annual sales less than \$4,000,000; and
- D. is located in rural Minnesota.

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Subp. 25. **Seed grant.** "Seed grant" means a small initial award of funds to a project sponsor awarded to attract other grants and contributions to the project from other sources.

Subp. 26. **Start-up capital.** "Start-up capital" means money or credit used by the owner of a for-profit business to begin operating that business for the first time.

Subp. 27. **Value added.** "Value added" means the increased worth of Minnesota agriculture and forest resources that is caused by the introduction of higher cost crops into the state, or the additional processing of existing crops, livestock, and forest products that occur within a locality or the state, rather than outside of the state.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0200 COUNCIL PURPOSE.

The council serves as a forum for identifying the priority rural development issues in Minnesota and developing goals and strategies for addressing those issues through the use of technical and financial resources available to the council.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0300 PRIORITY RURAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUE AREAS AND GOALS.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** The council, through the rural development grant programs, provides grants to qualified organizations to implement rural development projects. To most effectively meet the needs of rural Minnesota, the council has established the three priority issue areas in subparts 2 to 4 and goals for projects within each area. To the extent of legislative appropriations, the council makes funds available for projects that seek to accomplish one or more of the goals in one or more of the priority issue areas.

Subp. 2. **Family farm and agricultural land protection issue area; goals.** The council's goals in the family farm and agricultural land protection issue area are to:

A. protect the quality and quantity of the agricultural land in the state through the use of resource management practices or land use planning and zoning;

B. promote an agricultural land protection awareness and understanding by the farm and nonfarm populations of all ages;

C. preserve the family farm structure by enhancing the potential for increased farm income, especially for beginning farmers, through business management and other nonloan forms of assistance; and

D. provide information and education programs that will increase the appreciation and understanding of basic agricultural production, its role in the economy, and current farm issues, by consumers, nonfarm segments of the population, members of the state legislature and congress, and other residents of the state.

Subp. 3. **Value-added processing and marketing issue area; goals.** The council's goals in the value-added processing and marketing issue area are to:

A. research and identify new products, processes, and services to add value to Minnesota agricultural and forest resources;

B. inform Minnesotans about opportunities and the skills required to take advantage of processes, products, growing crops, and markets that add value to Minnesota resources;

C. provide resources to Minnesotans to act on growing, processing, and

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marketing opportunities through grants, matching funds, and help from state organizations and agencies; and

D. measure project results and inform the public about the results from experimental projects.

Subp. 4. Rural small business assistance issue area; goals. The council's goals in the rural small business assistance issue area are to:

A. provide technical and management assistance for rural small businesses;

B. establish formal networks to assist rural small businesses and technical resources in rural Minnesota with information sharing; and

C. encourage enterprise development to improve management, marketing, business skills, and availability of risk capital.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0400 PROJECT START AND END DATE.

The project start date for each project is 30 days after approval of the project by the council at its annual meeting. A project sponsor or fiscal agent shall not make a contract for services or supplies before receiving written notification of funding from the council. Grant program guidelines shall be published in the State Register 90 days before the deadline for submission of grant applications. No grant may be made to cover a period longer than one year from the project start date.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0500 FISCAL AGENT.

A project sponsor not meeting the requirements for an eligible applicant under part 4360.0800, subpart 2 or 4360.1000, subpart 2 shall use, and a project sponsor meeting those requirements may use, the services of a fiscal agent to accept council grant funds on the sponsor's behalf, pay project expenses, and prepare financial reports and the final audit. The sponsor and the fiscal agent must both sign the application and, if a grant is received, the sponsor and the fiscal agent must both sign the grant agreement. When a fiscal agent is used, the project sponsor remains ultimately responsible for the completion of the project, the proper management of the grant funds and other acts of the fiscal agent, notwithstanding any agreement between the sponsor and the fiscal agent requiring the agent to take any acts on behalf of the sponsor. The portion of fiscal agent fees directly attributable to the grant, up to a maximum of ten percent of the grant, may be included in the amount of grant funds requested from the council.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0600 RESTRICTIONS.

Subpart 1. Equipment. The use of council grant funds for the purchase of equipment is prohibited except as provided in this subpart. A project sponsor desiring to purchase equipment with grant funds must show that equipment is essential to the implementation of the project, and that the equipment is not available for lease or rent during the grant period or that the equipment will cost more to rent or lease than to buy.

Subp. 2. Application costs. Grant funds shall not be used to pay any cost incurred in the preparation or submission of any grant application to the council.

Subp. 3. Late applications. A project application that is incomplete or received after the deadline for application will not be considered for funding in the fiscal year in which it is received.

Subp. 4. Discussion of applications. Council staff, council members, employees of the Department of Energy and Economic Development, employees of the State Board of Investments, and other persons advising the council or the commissioner shall not discuss a project application with either a project sponsor or fiscal agent at any time between the time the project application is submitted to the council and the time the council makes its recommendation to the commissioner.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0700 APPLICATION PROCESS.

Subpart 1. In general. To apply for grant funds, the project sponsor and any fiscal agent shall submit a completed and signed application form to the commissioner on a form approved by the commissioner.

Subp. 2. Contents. A complete application consists of the following:

A. 20 copies of the completed and signed application form; and

B. 20 copies of all letters of commitment for all matching funds. Sources of matching funds and the type (for example, money or in-kind support) and amount of the funds must also be stated in the application form.

Subp. 3. Application submission deadlines. A completed application for grant funds shall be submitted to the council according to the following schedule:

A. Demonstration grants - the last business day of the third week in January.

B. Seed grants - the last business day of the second week in December.

Subp. 4. Submission to regional development commissions. A project sponsor or any fiscal agent that is a governmental unit or a public educational institution must submit one copy of the completed application form and letters of commitment for requested matching funds to the appropriate regional development commission for review and comment where a commission exists, or the Metropolitan Council, where it has jurisdiction, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 462.391, subdivision 3, or 473.171, respectively, no later than the appropriate application deadline date.

Subp. 5. Address. Application materials must be submitted to: Governor's Rural Development Council, Minnesota Department of Energy and Economic Development, 900 American Center Building, 150 East Kellogg Boulevard, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Subp. 6. Council review. Within 90 days after the application deadline, the council shall complete its review and select those projects to be recommended to the commissioner for grants.

Subp. 7. Notification. Immediately following approval or disapproval of a grant by the commissioner, the council staff shall notify the project sponsor or fiscal agent, as appropriate, of the action taken by the commissioner.

Subp. 8. Grant agreement. The sponsor and fiscal agent, if a fiscal agent is used, of a project that is recommended by the council to the commissioner must sign a grant agreement that states the conditions to which the grant is subject. Upon approval of the grant by the commissioner, the grant agreement must be processed by the commissioner and the Department of Finance. The council staff shall provide a copy of the fully executed grant agreement, forms for all required reporting, and other information to the project sponsor and any fiscal agent.

Subp. 9. Grant close-out. At the next council meeting following receipt of the reports required by part 4360.0900, or 4360.1100, the council shall review the reports received and determine whether the project sponsor or fiscal agent has complied with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement, and notify each project sponsor or fiscal agent whether it has complied.

Subp. 10. **Unexpended grant funds.** If, during the grant close-out required by subpart 9, the council determines that any grant funds have not yet been expended for project purposes, the council shall require the sponsor or fiscal agent to return the unexpended grant funds to the council. Upon request of the council, a project sponsor or fiscal agent shall return unexpended funds to the council.

Subp. 11. **Denial and revocation of grant funds.** If the council determines on the basis of a quarterly, final, or other report that a project sponsor or fiscal agent has violated or may violate a provision of parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 or a condition of the grant agreement, or both, the council may withhold grant funds not yet released or may require the return of grant funds already released. Upon request of the council, the project sponsor or fiscal agent shall return grant funds to the council.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

TYPES OF GRANTS AVAILABLE

4360.0800 DEMONSTRATION GRANTS.

Subpart 1. **Purpose.** The council, through the demonstration grant program, provides grant funds to nonprofit organizations, public institutions, units of state and local government, and special districts within the state for innovative projects with potential statewide applications that seek to accomplish one or more of the goals in one or more of the priority issue areas established in part 4360.0110. The intent of the demonstration grants program is to assist organizations unable to provide financing from their own resources or unable to obtain financing from conventional sources.

Subp. 2. **Eligible applicants.** Nonprofit organizations, units of state and local government, public institutions, and special districts within Minnesota are eligible to apply for demonstration grants.

Subp. 3. **Eligible use of funds.** The council shall consider applications for grant funds for proposed demonstration projects begun before or after the effective date of parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 that:

- A. will use grant funds for action-oriented, as opposed to studies or plans, components of the project;
- B. provide direct benefit to farmers, immediate farm family members, or low income rural residents of Minnesota;
- C. have objectively measurable short-term (less than 12 months) results;
- D. inform those regional development commissions or other entities referred to in part 4360.0700, subpart 4 of the existence of the project; and
- E. seek to accomplish any of the goals in one or more of the three priority issue areas related to the project.

Subp. 4. **Ineligible use of funds.** The council shall not consider an application for grant funds for a proposed project that:

- A. does not primarily serve the needs of farmers, immediate farm family members, or low income rural residents of Minnesota;
- B. will use council grant funds for physical construction or improvement of existing facilities;
- C. duplicates or is substantially similar to other programs or efforts already being made within the state;
- D. uses council grant funds to provide operating capital or start-up capital for for-profit private businesses or enterprises;
- E. has not been submitted by the project sponsor or fiscal agent to regional development commissions or other entities for review and comment as required by law; or

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F. does not seek to accomplish any of the goals in one or more of the three priority areas related to the project.

Subp. 5. **Grant limits.** A request for a demonstration grant may not exceed:

A. \$60,000 or 70 percent of the total cost of the project, whichever is less, for the first year of a project;

B. \$40,000 or 50 percent of the total cost of the project, whichever is less, for the second year of a project; or

C. \$20,000 or 30 percent of the total cost of the project, for the third year of a project, whichever is less.

Subp. 6. **Continued support.** Support for demonstration projects is determined annually by the council on a competitive basis. Support for a project in the first year does not obligate the council to continue the support in a second or third year. The determination whether to continue support for a project must be based on the success of the project and the need for further grant-supported activities. A project sponsor must provide at least 15 percent of the total project cost in cash.

Subp. 7. **Letters of commitment.** Letters verifying the commitment of required matching funds must be submitted to the council at the time of application for demonstration project grants.

Subp. 8. **Criteria for application review and selection.** Demonstration project grant applications shall be reviewed by council staff, technical advisers to the council, and subcommittees as the council may direct, who shall make recommendations to the council. Applications shall be ranked by the council based upon the following factors:

A. the extent to which the project will meet the council's issue area goals (maximum 15 points);

B. the innovative qualities of the project, or the extent to which project results will provide new knowledge and benefits to rural residents (maximum 15 points);

C. the potential for future project replication in other areas of rural Minnesota, or the statewide impact of the project (maximum 15 points);

D. the merit of the project design and implementation plan (maximum 15 points);

E. the feasibility of the project work program, budget, and timeline for completion (maximum ten points);

F. the project sponsor's experience and ability to successfully implement the demonstration project (maximum ten points);

G. the potential for future leveraging of other sources of funds, or the ability to become self-sufficient (maximum ten points);

H. the proposed methods for publicizing project activities and results (maximum five points); and

I. the level of proposed coordination with appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and organizations with expertise in the project area (maximum five points).

Subp. 9. **Deadline for release of funds.** The council shall release grant funds to the sponsor or, if a fiscal agent is used, to the fiscal agent, according to the schedule contained in items A to C and the sponsor should plan expenditures with the following deadlines in mind:

A. The council shall release the initial 40 percent of the total grant funds upon execution of the grant agreement.

B. The council shall release an additional 40 percent of the total grant funds upon receipt of an expenditure report covering the portion of grant funds released under item A, that demonstrates compliance with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement.

C. The council shall release the final 20 percent of the total grant funds upon receipt of all reports required by part 4360.0900.

Subp. 10. **Accounts required.** The sponsor or fiscal agent shall establish and maintain for each project separate bookkeeping accounts for grant funds, matching funds in the form of money, and in-kind matching funds.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.0900 DEMONSTRATION GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

A project sponsor or fiscal agent receiving a demonstration grant shall submit the following reports to the council:

A. quarterly reports, on a form provided by the council, shall be submitted once each calendar quarter in the third week of the last month of the quarter according to the following schedule: first quarter (January, February, March); second quarter (April, May, June); third quarter (July, August, September); and fourth quarter (October, November, December), and a time period not covered in any report shall be addressed in the next subsequent report; the quarterly report shall include a project promotion and publicity component that will clearly show the progress of the project during the quarter in order to provide the general public, target population groups, members of the council, and other funders with timely communication on major project activities;

B. an expenditure report, showing in detail the purposes for which the initial 40 percent of the grant funds were spent and showing that those purposes complied with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement;

C. a final expenditure report, showing in detail the purposes for which the second 40 percent of the grant funds were spent, and showing that those purposes complied with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement;

D. a final project evaluation report, on a form provided by the council, to be submitted at least three weeks before the close of the final grant year for the project;

E. a brief narrative report, suitable for publication, explaining the project, the activities conducted during the grant period, and any suggestions based upon the experience of the sponsor that can be shared with organizations or individuals interested in replicating the project, to be submitted at least three weeks before the close of the final grant year for the project; and

F. a final audit, based upon generally accepted principals of accounting, of both grant funds and matching funds, demonstrating compliance with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement, to be submitted at least three weeks before the close of the final grant year for the project; and

G. a publicity report outlining the results of the project sponsor's ongoing promotion and publicity activities, to be submitted at least three weeks before the close of the final grant year for the project.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.1000 SEED GRANT.

Subpart 1. **Purpose.** The council, through the seed grant program, provides grant funds to encourage promising projects by providing funds that will attract other grants and contributions.

Subp. 2. **Eligible applicants.** Nonprofit organizations, units of state and local government, public institutions, and special districts within the state are eligible to apply for seed grants.

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Subp. 3. Eligible uses of funds. The council shall consider applications for seed grant funds for proposed projects that:

A. seek to accomplish one or more of the goals in one or more of the three priority issue areas that are related to the project;

B. will use seed grant funds to leverage other public or private funds or both public and private funds;

C. provide direct benefit to farmers, immediate farm family members, or low-income rural residents of Minnesota;

D. have objectively measurable short-term (less than 12 months) results;

E. will use seed grant funds to implement new and innovative projects and programs; and

F. inform appropriate agencies and organizations of the existence of the project.

Subp. 4. Ineligible uses of funds. The council shall not consider an application for seed grant funds for a proposed project that:

A. is receiving or has received council demonstration or seed grant funds;

B. does not primarily serve the needs of farmers, immediate farm family members, or low-income rural residents of Minnesota;

C. will use seed grant funds for physical construction or improvement of existing facilities;

D. duplicates or is substantially similar to other efforts already being made in the state;

E. uses seed grant funds to provide operating capital or start-up capital for for-profit private businesses or enterprises;

F. will replicate a council demonstration project in another geographic area of the state;

G. has not been submitted by the project sponsor to other agencies of federal, state, or local government for review and comment, as required by law; or

H. does not seek to accomplish one or more of the goals in one or more of the three priority issue areas related to the project.

Subp. 5. Matching funds required. A project sponsor must demonstrate the ability to secure matching funds equal to 70 percent of the total project cost for the grant period. Matching funds that have been secured before the time of application must be documented by submitting a letter of commitment from the source of the matching funds. A project sponsor must include in its application a fundraising strategy and identification of potential sources of matching funds. A project sponsor must provide at least 15 percent of the total project cost in cash.

Subp. 6. Grant limits. Seed grants may be made for up to the lesser of 30 percent of the total project cost for the grant period or \$10,000. Seed grants are available on a one-time basis and may not be considered as a source of future or continuing support for projects.

Subp. 7. Criteria for application review and selection. Seed grant applications shall be reviewed by council staff, technical advisers to the council, and subcommittees as the council may direct, who shall make recommendations to the council. Applications shall be ranked by the council based upon the following factors:

A. the extent to which the project will meet the council's issue area goals (maximum ten points);

B. the potential for leveraging other sources of funds to meet local match requirements (maximum ten points);

C. the merit of the project design and implementation plan (maximum ten points);

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D. the innovative qualities of the project or whether the project results will provide new knowledge and benefits to rural residents (maximum ten points);

E. the feasibility of the project work program, budget, and timeline for completion (maximum five points); and

F. the project sponsor's experience and ability to successfully implement the project (maximum five points).

Subp. 8. Deadline for release of funds. The council shall release grant funds to the sponsor or, if a fiscal agent is used, to the fiscal agent according to the schedule contained in items A to C, and the project sponsor should plan grant-related expenditures with the following deadlines in mind:

A. The council shall release the initial 40 percent of the total grant funds upon execution of the grant agreement.

B. The council shall release an additional 40 percent of the total grant funds upon receipt of an expenditure report covering the portion of grant funds released under item A, that demonstrates compliance with parts 4360.0100 to 4360.1100 and the conditions of the grant agreement.

C. The council shall release the final 20 percent of the total grant funds upon receipt of letters of commitment for matching funds and all reports required by part 4360.1100.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.1100 SEED GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

A project sponsor or fiscal agent shall submit to the council quarterly reports, an expenditure report, a final expenditure report, a final project evaluation report, a brief narrative report, a final audit, and a publicity report containing the same material and subject to the same requirements as the reports required in part 4360.0900, except that the reports required by this part shall contain information on and be submitted for the purpose of seed grants.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*

4360.1200 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE.

The Office of Management and Budget's Standard Industrial Classification Manual (Manual), published by the Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards, U.S. Department of Commerce, is adopted by incorporation by reference. The Manual was last published in 1977, is not subject to frequent change. It is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock Number 4101-0066), and the State Law Library, 117 University Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116J.961 subd 9*

History: *11 SR 866*