



EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF)

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- 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, \$300,000 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
 - Long URL www.mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/eraf/index.jsp
- Email: eraf.deed@state.mn.us
- Phone: 651-539-2390 (1-833-391-8050)
- Program Coordinator: Ray.McCoy@state.mn.us
- Technician: TBD
- Supervisor: Lindsey.Hanson@state.mn.us