

## Home and Community-Based Services Connector Grants for Historically Underserved Communities

Twelve organizations across Minnesota have been awarded **Home and Community-Based Services Connector Grants** to help older adults and people with disabilities in underserved communities access **culturally specific** and **culturally responsive** home and community-based services (HCBS).

These grants are awarded to nonprofit social service agencies, including community-based and religious organizations, with demonstrated experience connecting individuals to HCBS—particularly in rural or historically underserved areas across the state.

Funded by the Minnesota State Legislature, a total of over **\$1.2 million** has been allocated for the grant period **July 2025 – June 2026**.

### Purpose

Grantees will engage individuals from underserved cultural, ethnic, and rural communities who are eligible for HCBS. They will use outreach and service development efforts to connect people to one or more of the following programs:

- [Alternative Care \(AC\) Program](#)
- [Brain Injury \(BI\) Waiver Program](#)
- [Community Access for Disability Inclusion \(CADI\) Waiver](#)
- [Community Alternative Care \(CAC\) Waiver](#)
- [Community First Services and Supports \(CFSS\)](#)
- [Developmental Disabilities \(DD\) Waiver Program](#)
- [Elderly Waiver \(EW\) Program](#)
- [Essential Community Supports](#)
- [Housing Stabilization Services](#)
- [State Plan Home Care Services](#)

### Grant recipients

East African Integration Center - \$114,000

The East African Integration Center (EAIC) aims to make it easier for East African immigrants and other non-English-speaking community members to learn about and access HCBS in the **7-county metro area and Mankato**. Their plan includes sharing information in multiple languages, using outreach that reflects the community's culture and values, and meeting people where they are—at events, in homes, and through trusted community spaces. They'll also offer one-on-one help to guide people through the process of getting services and build stronger connections with service providers who understand their language and culture. The goal is to build trust, improve understanding, and make sure more people get the support they need.

#### **Project FINE - \$88,882**

Project FINE's plan focuses on helping refugees and immigrants in **Winona County** learn about and access HCBS in ways that are respectful of their language and culture. The project will start by creating and translating outreach materials into Hmong and Spanish, working closely with local partners to ensure the information is accurate and helpful. From there, they'll connect with the community through social media, phone calls, home visits, and local events to share resources and answer questions. They'll also host conversations and gather feedback to better understand the challenges people face when trying to access services. To make the process easier, Project FINE will build strong relationships with service providers and work together to create a smoother, more welcoming referral system. [Project FINE - Home](#)

#### **Al-Maa'uun - \$124,939**

Al-Maa'uun's project focuses on helping more people in the community learn about and access HCBS in **Hennepin County**. It includes creating easy-to-understand materials in Somali, Arabic, and Spanish, sharing them through social media, newsletters, and local gathering places. The plan also brings HCBS information to community events and offers workshops and one-on-one help so people can learn how to get the services they need. Staff will be provided specialized training to better support clients and connect them to the right resources. <https://almaauun.org/>

#### **Alliance of Chicanos, Hispanics, and Latin Americans - \$122,371**

Alliance of Chicanos, Hispanics, and Latin Americans (ACHLA) project is focused on helping Latino and rural communities in **Southeast Minnesota** learn about and access HCBS. The team will create easy-to-understand, bilingual materials and share information through community events, social media, and local radio to raise awareness. Staff will meet with individuals and families one-on-one to explain what services are available, help with paperwork, and make sure people are connected to the right support. A new Project Manager and team of navigators will lead this work, making sure everyone gets the help they need in a way that feels personal and culturally respectful. The goal is to connect 500 people in need to services that improve their daily lives. <https://www.achla-mn.org/>

#### **Community Action Center - \$119,042**

With this grant, Community Action Center plans to improve access HCBS for underserved populations in **Rice County**, particularly Latine and East African immigrant communities. The grantee will focus on multilingual outreach, integration of HCBS screening into existing intake processes, direct application support, and collaboration with community partners like the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) and Rice County Social

Services (RCSS). Community Action Center plans on producing and distributing outreach materials, training staff, incorporating data tracking, and formalizing inter-agency workflows. Overall, Community Action Center aims to streamline access to HCBS by addressing language barriers, increasing awareness, and enhancing coordination among service providers. <https://communityactioncenter.org/>

#### **Community Resource Connections, Inc. - \$78,104**

This grant will help people learn about and access HCBS by training Community Resource Connections, Inc. (CRC) staff on service eligibility and application processes, distributing information to caregivers and potential clients, and building partnerships with providers. CRC staff will be trained to understand how HCBS works and how to help people apply for service benefits. CRC staff will use this knowledge in their day-to-day work—engaging with clients, assisting with applications, and offering client support. Services will be provided from six different locations throughout a 4-county area in **north central Minnesota**. The project team will reach out directly to local HCBS providers to introduce themselves as a means of building productive working relationships and creating a friendly and supportive environment for clients. Special attention will be given to Indigenous and LGBTQ+ providers to better support people with diverse needs. As service information is gathered, CRC will update its resource directory, share informational materials in the communities served, and track progress made. <https://www.crcinform.org/>

#### **Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota - \$125,000**

The Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota's Family Connectors Program aims to improve access to essential services for individuals with Down syndrome and their families, with a focus on underserved communities. The **statewide** initiative emphasizes culturally responsive outreach and peer support for BIPOC families, targeted engagement in rural areas, and stronger partnerships with medical and educational systems. Through outreach events, staff training, and direct navigation services, the program seeks to increase awareness and use of HCBS. Ultimately, it strives to ensure that more families across Minnesota are better informed and connected to the resources they need. <https://dsamn.org/>

#### **The Karen Organization of Minnesota - \$66,000**

The Karen Organization of Minnesota's aims to increase awareness and access to HCBS among Karen/Karenni-speaking communities in **Freeborn, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Mower, Nobles, Ramsey and Washington counties**. This includes organizing in-person and virtual information sessions, creating bilingual educational materials, and building stronger partnerships with service providers. Staff will also assist community members in navigating and enrolling in HCBS programs, with measurable goals such as increased knowledge, new partnerships, and a target number of service connections. <http://www.mnkaren.org/>

#### **Minnesota Disability Support Alternatives - \$90,627**

Minnesota Disability Support Alternatives' (MNDSA) project will strengthen community access to HCBS by providing personalized mentorship, culturally relevant community events, and targeted outreach to local organizations in **Aitkin, Benton, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright counties**. MNDSA will train volunteer mentors to support individuals one-on-one, helping them understand and connect to available services. Through public events and partnerships, the project will raise

awareness in rural, LGBTQ+, and East African communities, ensuring materials and messaging are inclusive and accessible. Community agencies like clinics and therapy centers will also receive training, so they are better equipped to guide clients through HCBS options. <https://www.mndsa.org/>

#### **Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center - \$124,675**

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC) project aims to strengthen connections between MIWRC and HCBS to better support clients through staff education, strategic hiring, and relationship-building in the **7-county metro area**. MIWRC staff engage in learning opportunities about HCBS programs and how to identify potential referral opportunities that align with their existing services. A new full-time staff member will be hired to lead community education and outreach, including the development of culturally appropriate materials using evidence-based approaches. Staff will build a comprehensive list of local HCBS providers, foster relationships through events and networking, and help guide clients to the right services. These efforts will expand MIWRC's referral network, improve service coordination, and deepen community trust. <https://www.miwrc.org/>

#### **United Hmong with Disabilities - \$99,972**

United Hmong with Disabilities' project aims to improve access to HCBS for the Hmong disability community by increasing awareness, building support networks, and strengthening organizational capacity in **Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties**. The project will begin by creating and sharing culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, hosting informational sessions, and engaging with the community through events and media. Peer support groups, resource fairs, and the formation of a Hmong Disability Network will foster deeper connections and shared knowledge among individuals and families. This project also offers individualized help with HCBS applications, creates a step-by-step resource toolkit, and hosts enrollment drives to make services more accessible. Finally, staff and volunteers will receive cultural competency training, and partnerships will be built with service providers and Hmong community leaders to improve referrals and trust across the community. <https://www.unitedhmongwithdisabilities.org/>

#### **Wellshare International - \$124,718**

WellShare International's project aims to improve access to essential care services by supporting immigrant and underserved communities in the **metro and Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Olmsted counties**. The plan includes creating community-specific maps of service providers, holding informative and culturally relevant events, and offering personalized help to individuals navigating the system. Staff will work closely with local partners and trusted community spaces to ensure services are welcoming and accessible. By combining outreach with hands-on support, the initiative will help more people understand their options and connect with the care they need. <https://wellshareinternational.org/>