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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 35

01/07/2021 Authored by Elkins and Bahner The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on State Government Finance and Elections

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to state government; establishing a Website Accessibility Grant Advisory
1.3 Council; appropriating money for grants to cities and counties to improve website
1.4 accessibility; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 16B.

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

1.6 Section 1. 16B.90 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY GRANTS; ADVISORY COUNCIL.

1.7 Subdivision 1. Grant program established. A website accessibility grant program is
1.8 established. Within available appropriations, grants must be awarded by the commissioner
1.9 to local governments to improve the accessibility of local government websites for persons
1.10 with disabilities.

1.11 Subd. 2. Website Accessibility Grant Advisory Council. (a) A Website Accessibility
1.12 Grant Advisory Council is established. The purpose of the advisory council is to assist the
1.13 commissioner in awarding grants under subdivision 1. The advisory council consists of the
1.14 following members:

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

1.16 (2) one representative of the Association of Minnesota Counties, appointed by the
1.17 association;

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

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

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

2.1 (b) The terms, compensation, and removal of members is governed by section 15.059.
2.2 The council must elect a chair from among its members.

2.3 (c) The advisory council is subject to chapter 13D. The council must meet at the request
2.4 of the commissioner or the chair, but no fewer than two times per year to fulfill its duties.
2.5 The commissioner must provide meeting space and other administrative assistance to support
2.6 the work of the council.

2.7 (d) The council must review applications from local governments for grant funding to
2.8 support website accessibility projects and to make recommendations to the commissioner
2.9 for the award of grants. The commissioner may not award a grant unless it has been reviewed
2.10 by the advisory council. Consistent with the policies and procedures established by the
2.11 commissioner under sections 16B.97 and 16B.98, the council must establish uniform,
2.12 objective criteria to be used in evaluating grant applications. The criteria must include
2.13 standards to ensure grant funding is distributed equitably across the state, and that grant
2.14 funds are available without regard to a local government's population size.

2.15 Subd. 3. **Report to legislature.** No later than January 15, 2022, and annually thereafter,
2.16 the commissioner must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the
2.17 legislative committees with jurisdiction over state government finance and local government
2.18 detailing the grants awarded under this section, including the number of grant applications
2.19 received, the number of grants awarded, the geographic distribution of grant applications
2.20 and awards, and the amount of each grant awarded and how it was used.

2.21 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY GRANTS.**

2.22 \$100,000 in fiscal year 2022 and \$100,000 in fiscal year 2023 are appropriated from the
2.23 general fund to the commissioner of administration to be used for grants under Minnesota
2.24 Statutes, section 16B.90.