

The Minnesota Dental Foundation (MDF) offers financial support and in-kind services for outreach programs that meet the mission of the MDF by providing dental services to underserved populations, by promoting dental health initiatives, or by supporting dental profession career and volunteer opportunities. The focus is on providing resources that will make lasting improvements in the oral health of Minnesotans and enhance the dental profession in the state.

Each year the MDF Board of Directors reviews applications for grants that fit these criteria. Support for programs and oral health initiatives may change each year based upon issues facing the dental profession, but the core principle of benefiting the underserved remains constant. Since 2001, through December 31, 2025, the Foundation has awarded \$5,061,870 in grants and/or in-kind services to fund 826 oral health initiatives. In addition, \$2,000,000 has been dispersed by the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation in the collaborative project to help access dental care in rural HPSAs. And collaborative projects with DentaQuest are valued at \$7,500. Thus, a total of \$7,069,370 has been allocated to help the underserved access dental care.

2025 Recipients

In 2025, MDF gave a total of \$385,183 in cash to 37 projects in our granting program. Some of the recipients may have received assistance for more than one project. Of those dollars, funding was also provided for six internal programs – Disaster Relief, Give Kids a Smile Marketing, Donated Dental Services, Martha Mordini Rukavina Loan Forgiveness Program, Minnesota Mission of Mercy and the Retired Dentist Program. All of the funded programs help increase access to care for underserved populations or help to build a sustainable oral health workforce in Minnesota.

Give Kids a Smile

The following community clinics received funding for the two-day charitable program in February that provides free preventive and restorative dental care to children from low-income families. Grant monies help defray the costs for dental supplies and oral health education materials for the children seen at these non-profit clinics. In 2025, 1,245 children were seen in 48 community clinics and private dental offices. The value of the services provided was \$858,305 by 969 volunteers, which included 154 dentists.

- CentraCare Foundation, Willmar
- Children's Dental Services, Minneapolis
- Community Dental Care, Buffalo
- Community Dental Care, Crystal
- Community Dental Care, Maplewood
- Community Dental Care, Rochester
- Community Dental Care, St. Paul
- Lake Superior College Dental Hygiene Clinic, Duluth
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- University of Minnesota School of Dentistry - Give Kids a Smile, Minneapolis

Community Outreach and Allied Dental Educational Programs

A number of community-based clinics, outreach programs and allied dental education programs provide critical dental services to children and adults who otherwise would not have access to oral health care.

- Apple Tree Dental, New Brighton
- Bright Smiles Community Clinic & Dental, Minneapolis
- CARE Clinic, Red Wing
- Children's Dental Health Services, Rochester
- Community-University Health Care Center, Minneapolis

- Cook Area Health Services, Inc., dba Scenic Rivers Health Services, Cook
- Gillette Children's Hospital Foundation, St. Paul
- HealthFinders Collaborative, Inc., Faribault
- Herzing University, Minnesota Campus, St. Louis Park
- Just Kids Dental, Two Harbors
- Let's Smile, Inc., Owatonna
- Mission Outpost Dental Clinic, Burnsville
- Mobile Loaves Twin Cities, Minneapolis
- Northern Dental Access Center, Bemidji
- Ready, Set, Smile, Minneapolis
- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Marais
- Sharing and Caring Hands Dental Clinic, Minneapolis
- Southern Minnesota Women's Center, Austin
- TeamSmile, Riverside, MO
- The Salvation Army Good Samaritan Dental Clinic, Rochester

Internal Programs

The following programs of the Minnesota Dental Foundation provided care to the underserved.

Disaster Relief Program

The Disaster Relief Program became a formal program of the Minnesota Dental Foundation in 2025. It helped restore the Scenic Rivers Dental Clinic in Cook that was severely damaged by flooding in the area.

Donated Dental Services (DDS), a program of Dental Lifeline Network, provided free dental care to disabled, elderly and medically fragile patients in private dental offices. In the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, 158 patients received \$763,711 in comprehensive care by 383 dental volunteers and 81 laboratories. This program was funded by a \$90,000 grant from the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation. Since the program's inception in 2003, 2,844 patients have received \$18,030,716 in free dental services. Again, COVID-19 had a significant impact on this program.

The **Martha Mordini Rukavina Loan Forgiveness Program** is funded by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) to help dentists pay back educational loans if they are willing to practice in the Taconite Assistance Area of northeastern Minnesota for at least five years. This program started in 2009 and became a program of the Minnesota Dental Foundation in 2011. Since 2011, four dentists have completed the five-year requirements of the program and three dentists are still receiving financial assistance. Funds are available for more applicants.

The **Minnesota Mission of Mercy (MnMOM)** has had events in Mankato in 2012, Bemidji in 2013, Mankato again in 2014, Duluth in 2015, Moorhead in 2016, Minneapolis in 2018, St. Cloud in 2022 and Duluth again in 2024. In the eight events since the inception of the program in Minnesota, 57,322 free dental procedures valued at \$7.94 million in 11,331 patient encounters have been provided. The next event will be in 2027 in Rochester.

The **Retired Dentist Program** is a project for retired dentists who are no longer earning any income from dentistry which reimburse them for their license, professional liability insurance, CPR and CE in return for providing volunteer dentistry to the underserved. Retired dentists must provide at least 100 hours per year and receive no compensation. As of December 31, 2025, there were nine retired dentists in the program. Total expenditures for the program in 2025 were \$2,308 and \$533,366 in free dentistry was provided. Since the inception of the program in 2014, 22 retired dentists have volunteered 6,966 hours providing free dentistry valued at \$4.25 million

The **Minnesota's Heroes Orthodontic Program** was initiated in 2015 to provide needed orthodontic care to children and spouses in Gold Star Families (families who have lost a family member in service to our country since 9/11). This program is in collaboration with Smiles Change Lives and the Minnesota Association of Orthodontists. Five kids have been treated through this program. The orthodontists provide the treatment for free and there have been no direct costs for this program.

The **Dedicated to Minnesota Dentists Loan Repayment for Service Program** provides loan repayment up to \$200,000 per individual if they practice in a rural Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for at least five years. This program is in collaboration with the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation and it provides the funding of the program. A total of ten dentists and \$2 million now have been utilized to provide dental services in rural HPSAs of Minnesota. The cities include Bigfork, Cook, Deerwood, Ely, International Falls, Montevideo, Mora, Tyler, Walker and Warroad. Funding is no longer available for this program.

The **Give Kids a Smile** program became a program of the Minnesota Dental Association in 2003 and was transferred to the Minnesota Dental Foundation in 2016. Solventum (3M Oral Care), the Minnesota Dental Association and several individual donors contributed funds for the media exposure and program management. Since the program's inception in Minnesota, over 87,760 children have received \$28.4 million worth of free dentistry.