

2021 RHC Vaccine Confidence Program FAQs

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has funded the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) to provide technical assistance to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for the RHC Vaccine Confidence Program. NOSORH is available, at no cost to RHCs, to assist with [HRSA-21-142](#) applications and review your RHCVC proposal. This includes tailoring your application to your local community and reviewing budget, work plan, project abstract, project narrative, methodology, and Grant.gov Workspace forms.

You may email NOSORH at rhcvoxconfidenceinfo@nosorh.org or the National Association of Rural Health Clinics (NARHC) at voxconfidence@narhc.org for more information or if you have additional questions. You may also email HRSA at RHCVaxConfidence@hrsa.gov.

General Application/Eligibility Questions

1. **I am having difficulty finding the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – can you direct me to the full application instructions?**
 - [Direct link to NOFO](#)
 - To apply: Go to opportunity [HRSA-21-142](#) on Grants.gov and click apply!
 - HRSA's website includes a brief [summary of the funding opportunity and a link to the NOFO](#).
2. **I was unable to attend HRSA's Technical Assistance (TA) Webinar for this funding opportunity. Are the webinar recording and slides available?**

HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) HRSA-21-142 Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence Program Technical Assistance webinar recording is now available [here](#) and on the [HRSA RHC Vaccine Confidence webpage](#). The webinar slide presentation is available [here](#).
3. **Why do I need to register for Data Universal Number System (DUNS), System for Award Management (SAM), and Grants.gov?**
 - DUNS numbers are required to identify organizations and it tracks how federal grant money is allocated. <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html>
 - SAM is used for designating an e-business point of contact. Registering with SAM is required for organizations to use Grants.gov <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>
 - Grants.gov is used to submit grant applications
4. **I am having difficulty accessing the Data Universal Number System (DUNS) to register or update my account. How do you recommend I proceed?**

Applicants should contact the Support Team:

1-844-225-9892

[https://support.dnb.com/
customerlearning@dnb.com](https://support.dnb.com/customerlearning@dnb.com)

- 5. I am having difficulty accessing the System for Award Management (SAM) to register or update my account. How do you recommend I proceed?**

Applicants should contact the Federal Service Desk Team:

1-866-606-8220

https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp.

- 6. I have yet to receive my SAM and am worried I will miss the application deadline of June 23 at 11:59PM ET. What should I do?**

Prepare all of your grant information before you receive your SAM account in order to submit your application immediately after your SAM account is activated. Call Grants.gov Support Team (1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov) if you have not received your active SAM account information by Sunday, June 20 (3 days before the application deadline) to request assistance using SAM administrative flexibilities in Section IV.3. of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

- 7. I am having difficulty accessing/navigating Grants.gov. How do you recommend I proceed?**

Applicants should contact the Grants.gov Support Team:

1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov

You may also view the [Grants.gov Applicant Overview Technical Assistance Webinar Recording](#).

- 8. What is the application due date?**

The application is due in Grants.gov **Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 11:59 PM**. HRSA will not consider any applications that do not meet the deadline of 11:59 PM on June 23. We recommend that you submit your application **3 days** prior to the deadline.

- 9. Can I edit and re-submit my application after I submit it to Grants.gov?**

You may edit and re-submit your application prior to the deadline of June 23, 2021 at 11:59PM. HRSA will only accept your last validated electronic submission, under the correct funding opportunity number, prior to the Grants.gov application due date as the final and only acceptable application. HRSA will not consider multiple applications from the same Employee Identification Number (EIN).

- 10. I am an accredited RHC, but have not yet been certified by CMS and do not have a CCN. Am I eligible to apply for HRSA-21-142 RHC Vaccine Confidence Program?**

New Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) that received and passed a CMS-approved certification or accreditation survey are eligible to apply for the RHC Vaccine Confidence Program. RHCs that are awaiting CCN assignment from their CMS Regional Office should attach their certification or accreditation approval letter from their state survey agency, the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. (AAAASF) or the Compliance Team. Both AAAASF and the Compliance Team are Medicare-approved private RHC accreditation

organizations. HRSA will require these new RHCs to provide a copy of their CMS Certification Number (CCN) within 60 days of receiving the Notice of Award (i.e. the grant).

11. Can foundations apply on behalf of RHCs?

Foundations that do not own/operate the RHC that is applying for funding or share an affiliation through Employer Identification Number (EIN) may not apply on the behalf of the RHC. Eligible applicants include public, nonprofit, or for-profit Medicare-certified RHCs or organizations that own and operate public, nonprofit, or for-profit Medicare-certified RHCs. Please see the Section III.1. of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for additional Eligibility Information.

12. Can multiple Independent/Free-Standing RHCs apply using one application?

Independent or Free-Standing RHCs may not apply for the RHCVC Program jointly (i.e. combined application) with other, separate RHCs. HRSA will confirm applicant EIN and CCN to verify eligibility. Engaging/collaborating with local partners and stakeholders, including other RHCs, for vaccine confidence activities is encouraged and an allowable use of RHC Vaccine Confidence Program funds. See the [SF-424 Application Guide](#) and Appendix A [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the work plan template, examples, suggested work plan activities, and additional details.

Eligible applicants include public, nonprofit, or for-profit Medicare-certified RHCs or organizations that own and operate public, nonprofit, or for-profit Medicare-certified RHCs. Please see the Section III.1. of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for additional Eligibility Information.

13. Do I list my RHC or operating/owning health organization (i.e., EIN) as the Project/Performance Site Location(s)?

Project Performance Site Location should include the Rural Health Clinic sites/locations. You do not need to include the site/location of your RHC's operating/owning health organization.

14. Are RHC applications subject to review by our state under Executive Order 12372 process?

The "Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process" information can be found at the following website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>. If your state is included in the Intergovernmental Review list, please follow instructions to notify your state contact of your application. States often want to know that the applicant is applying for a federal grant. Most states, however, do not participate in the Intergovernmental Review process and applicants in those states are not subject to review.

15. Where do I find and upload the required application forms?

Complete and submit your application with the below forms on the Grants.gov Workspace. You can find sample PDF forms available here <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-individual-family.html>.

Form Name	Instructions
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) [V3.0]	Complete form in Grants.gov
Attachments[V1.2]	Use form to attach Proof of Eligibility as Attachment 1
Project/Performance Site Location(s) [V3.0]	Complete form in Grants.gov
Project Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]	Use form to upload your Project Narrative document
Grants.gov Lobbying Form [V1.1]	Complete form in Grants.gov
Budget Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]	Use form to upload your Budget Narrative document
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) [V1.0]	Complete form in Grants.gov
Key Contacts [V2.0]	Complete form in Grants.gov
Project Abstract Summary [V2.0]	Complete form in Grants.gov

Purposes/Program Activities Questions

16. Can RHCs partner with a local organization for RHCVC Program outreach?

RHCs may partner with a local organization for RHCVC Program activities after the Notice of Award. Engaging/collaborating with local partners and stakeholders is encouraged and an allowable use of RHCVC Program funds. Please see Appendix A of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the work plan template, examples, suggested work plan activities, and additional details.

17. Can RHCs distribute, host, and/or participate in a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to educate people about the importance of vaccination?

RHCs may distribute, host, and/or participate in a PSA to educate people about the importance of vaccination and basic prevent measures to prevent COVID-19. Please see Appendix A of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the work plan template, examples, suggested work plan activities, and additional details.

18. Can RHCs purchase advertisement space for our PSA?

You may use RHCVC Program funds to purchase ad space for vaccine confidence activities, including PSAs, as long as the expense is allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Purchases for RHCVC Program are permitted expenses so long as the need, type, and cost is reasonably justified and the purchase will be used for the RHCVC Program for the duration. All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at [45 CFR part 75](#).

19. What is the purpose of the RHCVC Program?

The RHCVC Program will allow RHCs to use funding for a broad range of efforts to improve health care in rural areas and reinforce basic messages about prevention and treatment of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

Implementation efforts in rural communities may include, but are not limited to: vaccine promotion, information dissemination to rural residents about how and where to get vaccinated, coordinating with existing vaccination sites and public health partners to identify isolated and/or vaccine hesitate populations, and increased rural community and individual patient literacy on benefits of broad vaccination and the safety of vaccines. Please see Section I.1. Purpose and Appendix A of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the work plan template, examples, suggested work plan activities, and additional details.

20. Can I purchase equipment for vaccine confidence activities with RHCVC Program funds?

You may use RHCVC Program funds to purchase equipment for vaccine confidence activities as long as the expense is allowable, allocable, and reasonable. HRSA defines equipment as items with both a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Equipment purchases are permitted expenses so long as the equipment need, type, and cost is reasonably justified and the equipment will be used for the RHCVC Program for the duration. All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at [45 CFR part 75](#).

21. How do I know if my RHCVC Program expense is allowable, allocable, and reasonable?

Expenses necessary to support these activities will be allowable as long as they are consistent with the cost principles, for example you cannot use grant funds to purchase alcohol. RHCs may consider the one or more of the RHCVC Program activities in the work plan table and/or create their own activities. RHCs should consider tailoring their work plan and activities to the needs of the community, RHC capacity for activity implementation and completion, and vaccine availability. Additional resources are available from the [HHS We Can Do This COVID-19 Public Education Campaign](#) and [CDC's Vaccinate with Confidence](#). Please see Appendix A of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the work plan template, examples, suggested work plan activities, and additional details.

Implementation efforts in rural communities may include, but are not limited to: vaccine promotion, information dissemination to rural residents about how and where to get vaccinated, coordinating with existing vaccination sites and public health partners to identify isolated and/or vaccine hesitant populations, and increased rural community and individual patient literacy on the benefits of broad vaccination and the safety of vaccines. Please see Section I.1. Purpose [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at [45 CFR part 75](#).

22. Can my RHC offer Rewards and Incentives through this grant program?

For information pertaining to Rewards and Incentives offered by health care providers, please review HHSOIG guidance on COVID-19 vaccination incentives here: <https://oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus/authorities-faq.asp>. Vaccination incentives that are consistent with the OIG guidance for health care providers are allowable costs under the RHCVC grant. All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at [45 CFR part 75](#).

23. Can we brand materials we develop with our logo?

You may put your provider logo on materials you develop. HRSA requires grant recipients acknowledge HRSA when describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with HRSA funds. Information and suggested language [is available here](#). All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at [45 CFR part 75](#).

24. Does the RHCVC Program include vaccine confidence for other infectious diseases such as childhood immunizations, flu, and pneumococcal vaccines?

The RHCVC Program will allow RHCs to use funding for a broad range of efforts to improve health care in rural areas and reinforce basic messages about prevention and treatment of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. You may use grant funds to promote other infectious disease vaccines and combat general vaccine hesitancy. Please see Section I.1. of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for additional information on the Purpose.

Budget/Budget Narrative Questions

NOTE THAT THERE ARE TWO BUDGET CATEGORIES/COMPONENTS NEEDED TO SUCCESSFULLY SUBMIT A COMPLETE APPLICATION: 1) BUDGET and 2) BUDGET NARRATIVE

25. What is the correct estimated funding amount for each RHC?

You should request a total of \$50,000 per RHC you include in your application Proof of Eligibility template. Please see Section II.2. of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for additional information on Summary of Funding.

26. What happens if I receive the RHCVC grant and don't spend all of the funds?

When you receive a grant from HRSA, you will get a Notice of Award that describes how much money is available in the grant account for you to use. You will draw down grant funds to pay invoices as you carry out planned activities and incur expenses. If your expenses are lower than your originally submitted budget, you simply leave the unspent funds in the Payment Management System (PMS). At the end of the period of performance, HRSA will reclaim any unspent funds remaining in your grant account. There is no penalty if you are unable to spend your entire grant award. You are not required to take action to return unspent funds as long as you leave them in the PMS account.

27. How do I ensure that my RHC receives additional RHCVC Program funds should they become available?

You must include a statement at the beginning of your Methodology section stating that you are willing and able to accept increased funding above \$50,000.

HRSA **highly recommends** that you include the following language at the beginning of your Methodology section: “[Your Organization Name] is willing and able to accept increased funding for the Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence Program.”

Applications that lack this statement of interest in increased funding will receive \$50,000 per RHC and will not be considered for increased funding. Applications with the statement of interest should assume that HRSA will fund awards at \$50,000 per RHC.

28. If I include the statement of interest in increased funding in my Methodology section, does the requested funding amount change per RHC?

Applications with the statement of interest should still plan your budget assuming that HRSA will fund awards at \$50,000 per RHC. Therefore, your estimated funding amount should reflect a request of \$50,000 for each RHC you include in your application Proof of Eligibility template.

29. Are the budget and budget narrative different required categories/components of the application?

You must submit both a budget and a budget narrative for the 1-year period of performance in order to have a complete and acceptable application. The required budget categories are also called “object class categories” on the budget form. You should have the same total amounts in the required budget categories in your budget narrative and on the budget form.

For the budget, you must complete, upload, and submit the [Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs \(SF-424A\) \[V1.0\]](#) form or via the [Grants.gov Workspace](#).

For the budget narrative, you must complete, upload, and submit the [Budget Narrative Attachment Form \[V1.2\]](#) form or via the [Grants.gov Workspace](#).

Please see Section IV. Application and Submission- Section IV under the Program Funding Opportunity Description of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

30. How do I find and submit the required budget forms?

You must complete the form called “[Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs \(SF-424A\) \[V1.0\]](#)”. You can fill out this form online in your [Grants.gov Application Workspace](#). The required budget categories are also called “object class categories” on the budget form. You should have the same total amounts in the required budget categories in your budget narrative and in the budget form.

If you would like to download a practice form before you have access to the Workspace you can download it here <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-individual-family.html>.

If you have questions about how to access the Grants.gov Application Workspace, complete the required forms, and upload attachments in Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Team:

1-800-518-4726

support@grants.gov

You may also view the [Grants.gov Applicant Overview Technical Assistance Webinar Recording](#).

31. How do I submit the budget and write the budget narrative if my organization owns or operates multiple RHCs?

Organizations that own and operate multiple RHCs may apply for up to \$50,000 per RHC. The organization should submit ONE application for all RHCs owned and operated under the EIN.

Your budget narrative should reflect the total funding requested on your application. If you are requesting funds for multiple RHCs, your budget and budget narrative should reflect the total amount requested. HRSA will use the number of verified CCNs included in your application to calculate the number of RHCs and the total award amount for your application.

For example, an organization that owns and operates three RHCs can apply for a total of up to \$150,000 on one application and should submit a budget for a total of up to \$150,000.

Please see question 32 of these FAQ for an example of how you may present your budget narrative.

32. Is there a sample budget narrative available for review?

There is a calculation error in the example budget narrative in Appendix B of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Here is a sample narrative that corrects the error:

This is an example of how you can put together a Budget Narrative. You do not need to copy this exactly, but you should include all of the budget categories.

We are requesting \$50,000 to address COVID-19 related health disparities and advance health equity by engaging with our patients and larger rural community to improve vaccine confidence and counter vaccine hesitancy.

Total Request: \$50,000

As our needs are immediate, we anticipate utilizing our entire budget in 1 year. This budget narrative reflects 1 full planned year of funding at the full award amount of \$50,000.

Personnel total: \$10,500

We will have one staff member managing this award at 0.35 FTE. This staff member will be responsible for the overall management of the award and ensuring that we complete our activities in a timely manner.

Fringe Benefits total: \$4,504

Our fringe benefits includes health and life insurance and is calculated at 42.9% of salary costs.

Travel total: \$0

We are not requesting any funds for travel.

Equipment total: \$14,344

We are requesting \$14,344 to purchase a tent that can be set up as a mobile vaccination site to increase accessibility for our patients. We will complete this purchase by October 15, 2021. We estimate the useful life of this outdoor tent will be three years.

Supplies total: \$7,607

We will be purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) for our providers including masks and gloves.

Masks: \$5,000 (2,500 masks @ \$2/each)

Gloves: \$2,612 (2,607 gloves @ \$1/each)

Contractual total: \$4,000

We will contract with a company that provides childcare to patients during vaccination. The contract will cover two caregivers at a rate of \$15 per hour.

We will contract with a company that provides transportation for patients to and from the RHC for vaccination appointments. The contract will cover two drivers at a rate of \$15 per hour.

Construction: *This category is not applicable*

Other Direct Charges total: \$4,500

These costs will cover printing of educational materials and signage for vaccine confidence. It will also cover administrative charges related to the personnel assigned to manage this grant program, including telephone and internet service charges.

Total Direct Costs: \$45,455

This is the total of the direct costs budgeted for this project.

Indirect Costs total: \$4,545

33. Is there a cap for the indirect cost proposed in the application?

Your indirect costs are limited to the amount set by your indirect cost rate agreement or to the de minimis indirect cost rate. If indirect costs are included in the budget, you must include a copy of your federal negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. If you do not have an indirect cost rate agreement, but wish to include indirect costs, then you may use a rate of no more than 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC).

Review indirect cost guidance in [HRSA's SF-424 Application Guide](#) (page 30).

34. Do I need to have a signed, current federally negotiated indirect cost rate when I apply for this grant?

You do not need to have a signed, current federally negotiated indirect cost (IDC) rate at the time you apply. If you do not have an established IDC Rate Agreement, you may establish one with the Department of Health and Human Services through the Division of Cost Allocation. Alternatively you may choose to use the de minimis indirect cost rate.

35. After submitting my grant application, I received a request for additional information from HRSA's Division of Financial Integrity (DFI). What is DFI and why are they asking me for information?

The Division of Financial Integrity (DFI) performs assessments of all recipients receiving HRSA awards to confirm your ability to manage federal grant funds. For many first time applicants, financial information may not be available through the Federal Single Audit Database and/or the IRS Exempt Organizations database. If information is not otherwise available, DFI will request copies of financial information (for all applicants) and IRS Form 990s (for tax exempt organizations) to perform the required assessment. Any information obtained by DFI will be kept confidential and only used to perform this assessment on the organization as part of this grant award process.

Please provide timely response to any requests for information from HRSA DFI staff. You can confirm these are valid requests because they will come from official HRSA.gov email addresses. If you have any questions about a request, please email RHCVaxConfidence@hrsa.gov to confirm it is valid.

36. How can I ensure my application is complete?

Please see Appendix C of [HRSA-21-142 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#): Application Completeness Checklist.

- ☐ Have I read this NOFO thoroughly and referred to the SF-424 Application Guide where indicated?
- ☐ Is my organization a Medicare-certified RHC or an organization that owns and operates Medicare-certified RHCs and therefore eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?
- ☐ Am I applying to the correct funding opportunity number for the RHCVC Program HRSA-21-142?
- ☐ Does my proposed project increase vaccine confidence and accessibility for my community and/or patient population as specified in this NOFO?
- ☐ Does my application request a total of \$50,000 per RHC, understanding that the total award amount may be higher or lower depending on the number of applicants? Does my application indicate whether or not I have the capacity for increased funding, as indicated on p. 6 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity?
- ☐ Have I completed all forms and attachments as requested in Section IV of this NOFO and in the SF-424 Application Guide?
- ☐ Have I provided the information requested in this NOFO in 10-15 pages or less?
- ☐ Will I apply at least 3 calendar days before the deadline to accommodate any unforeseen circumstances?
- ☐ Have I received confirmation emails from Grants.gov noting validation of successful submission?

HRSA has funded the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) to provide technical assistance to Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for the RHC Vaccine Confidence Program. NOSORH is available, at no cost to RHCs, to assist with HRSA-21-142 applications and review your RHCVC proposal. This includes tailoring your application to your local community and reviewing budget, work plan, project abstract, project narrative, methodology, and Grant.gov Workspace forms.

You may email NOSORH at rhcvoxconfidenceinfo@nosorh.org or the National Association of Rural Health Clinics (NARHC) at vaxconfidence@narhc.org for more information or if you have additional questions.

37. I have a specific question about the Notice of Funding Opportunity that is not answered here.

Please review HRSA-21-142 RHCVC Program [TA webinar recording](#).

HRSA Staff Contact:

Lindsey Nienstedt

Email: rhcvoxconfidence@hrsa.gov or

Phone: (301) 443-0835.

Please note that HRSA staff will answer clarifying questions about the NOFO requirements, but cannot provide individual guidance on HRSA-21-142 applications, work plans, or other proposed approaches.

Additional RHC Vaccine Confidence Program information and updates, are available at <https://www.hrsa.gov/coronavirus/rural-health-clinics/confidence> including the HRSA RHCVC Program [technical assistance webinar recording](#), [slides](#), and [NOFO](#).

Acronym List

AAAASF - American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc.

CCN – Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Certification Number

CDC – Centers for Disease Control

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

DFI – HRSA Division of Financial Integrity

DUNS - Data Universal Number System

EIN – Employee Identification Number

HHS – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

HRSA – Health Resources & Services Administration

IDC – Indirect Costs

IRS – Internal Revenue Services

MTDC – Modified Total Direct Costs

NARHC – National Association of Rural Health Clinics

NOFO – Notice of Funding Opportunity

NOSORH – National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health

OIG – Office of the Inspector General

PMS – Payment Management System

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

PSA – Public Service Announcement

RHC – Rural Health Clinic

RHCVC Program – Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence Program

SAM – System for Award Management

TA – Technical Assistance