

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due December 9, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)



Health Resources & Services Administration

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Policy and Research Division

National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program

Opportunity number: HRSA-25-009



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Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registrations are active and up-to-date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 9, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).



To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

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Basic Information

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Policy and Research Division

Supporting the development and distribution of rural health information and resources nationwide through the National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program.

Summary

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy is issuing this NOFO for a five-year cooperative agreement to support the National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program. The goal of the clearinghouse is to serve as a national central resource to anyone looking to know more about rural health and serving rural communities. The clearinghouse will provide information, data, tools, and news related to rural health to support improving health care in rural areas.

Funding details

Application types: New, Competing Continuation

Expected total available funding in FY 2025: \$3,500,000

Expected number and type of awards: 1 [cooperative agreement](#)

We plan to fund awards in five 12-month budget periods for a total five-year period of performance of June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2030.

The program and awards depend on the appropriation of funds and are subject to change based on the availability and amount of appropriations.



Have questions? Go to [Contacts and Support](#).

Key facts

Opportunity name:

National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program

Opportunity number:

HRSA-25-009

Announcement version:

New

Federal assistance listing:

93.223

Statutory authority:

Section 711(b)(5) of the Social Security Act, (42 U.S.C. 912(b)(5))

Key dates

NOFO issue date: October 10, 2024

Informational webinar:

October 28, 2024

Application Deadline:

December 9, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

Expected award date is by:

May 1, 2025

Expected start date: June 1, 2025

See [Other submissions](#) for other time frames that may apply to this NOFO

Eligibility

Who can apply:

You can apply if you are a domestic public or private organization.

Types of eligible organizations

These types of domestic* organizations may apply:

- Public institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Non-profits with or without a 501(c)(3) IRS status
- For profit organizations, including small businesses
- State, county, city, township, and special district governments, including the District of Columbia, domestic territories, and freely associated states
- Independent school districts
- Native American tribal governments
- Native American tribal organizations

*“Domestic” means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Individuals are not eligible applicants under this NOFO.

Completeness and responsiveness criteria

We will review your application to make sure it meets these basic requirements to move forward in the competition.

We will not consider an application that:

- Is from an organization that does not meet all [eligibility criteria](#).
- Requests funding above the award ceiling shown in the [funding range](#).
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is not responsive to the purpose of the NOFO.
- Is missing required sections of the application.
- Is not national in scope.

Application limits

You may not submit more than one application. If you submit more than one application, we will only accept the last on-time submission.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to share in the costs of the project, we will not consider it during merit review. We will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through reporting.

Program description

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to maintain and expand a national clearinghouse for information on rural health that supports improving health care in rural areas, including access to health care. The clearinghouse should build upon federally funded resources that currently exist, and will serve as a primary resource for information, opportunities, and tools related to rural health nationally.

Background

Section 711(b)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 912(b)(5)) authorizes the National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program. The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) is the focal point for rural health activities within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). By statute, FORHP advises the Secretary of HHS on the effects of current policies and proposed statutory, regulatory, administrative, and budgetary changes in Medicare and Medicaid programs on the financial viability of small rural hospitals, the ability of rural areas to attract and retain physicians and other health professionals, and access to and the quality of health care in rural areas. FORHP is also authorized to administer grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts to provide technical assistance and other activities as necessary to support activities related to improving health care in rural areas. For additional information about FORHP, please see <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health>.

FORHP accomplishes its mission through a broad range of policy and program activities. A centralized location for rural health information, resources, research, and best practices supports both the policy and program aspects of FORHP's mission.

Program requirements and expectations

FORHP is funding a cooperative agreement to one recipient to support the dissemination of rural health information that is publicly and freely accessible in a centralized repository maintained and expanded by the recipient. This program will be a national resource for rural communities for improving health care. Over 60 million Americans live in rural areas.^[1] Rural Americans are often older, sicker, poorer, and more likely to die prematurely than their urban counterparts.^[2] ^[3] Access to health care services is lower in rural areas, with many areas facing workforce shortages of essential providers like doctors, dentists, and nurses, as well as many residents needing to travel to reach a hospital or clinic.^[3] Understanding the rural health landscape and the impact of various interventions is crucial to informing efforts to reduce disparities between rural and urban areas. Rural providers, policymakers, and the public need high-quality information to understand what works in rural health care to improve outcomes in rural communities nationwide.

This program will support rural providers, community leaders, and community organizations in learning evolving best practices, and identifying national, state, and local resources that may be available. It will share innovations developed by rural community-based organizations that focus on health and health care. The program also supports policy makers by creating a reliable source for rural-specific policy information and analysis. To accomplish these goals and the broader purpose of improving health care in rural areas, this program has three primary objectives:

- Disseminate a wide range of up-to-date rural health information to diverse audiences nationally in a publicly and freely accessible manner.
- Identify and inform rural health providers and other interested parties of the latest relevant rural health news and developments in real-time.
- Analyze and share best practices, innovations, and policy updates pertaining to rural health care.

Award information

Cooperative agreement terms

Our responsibilities

Aside from monitoring and technical assistance, we also get involved in these ways:

- Sharing information about new and emerging rural health issues.
- Collaborating in the planning and development of publications and web resources on rural health issues.

- Providing technical assistance upon request with policy analysis and responses to user inquiries.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on work products, including but not limited to program documents (e.g., program plans, work plans), articles, toolkits, webinars, and guides, prior to implementation or dissemination.
- Supporting the recipient in building relationships with key contacts and organizations, including rural health stakeholders at the national, state, and local level; researchers; technical assistance providers; and policy experts.
- Sharing information about key national, regional, and state meetings on rural health.
- Sharing information about promising practices and innovations in the provision of rural health care.
- Sharing information about federal funding opportunities for rural health projects.

Your responsibilities

You must follow all relevant laws and policies. Your other responsibilities will include:

- Collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating promising practices in rural health care and information about rural health policy issues.
- Responding to a wide range of information requests from rural health stakeholders on rural health care policy issues within the scope of the award through multiple contact options, such as a toll-free telephone service and a public email box for inquiries.
- Systematically seeking out resources on a range of issues relevant to rural health care and providing access to them via the web, email, social media, and other channels appropriate to rural stakeholders.
- Providing information about the various federal agencies, foundations, and Technical Assistance (TA) providers working to improve health care in rural areas.
- Producing and electronically distributing information on rural health by email and public website.
- Attending and exhibiting at key national, regional, or state meetings.
- Maintaining a web-based directory of federal, state, foundation, and other funding available to support rural health that is available to the public within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance.
- Tracking, posting, or linking to policy documents and federal regulations that affect rural health care.
- Developing online resources relevant to rural community-based organizations.

- Producing an annual report listing accomplishments of the clearinghouse, identifying topics frequently requested by users, and outlining future activities.
- Following accessibility requirements based on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Following HRSA guidelines pertaining to acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced with HRSA award funds.

Funding policies and limitations

Policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
 - Support beyond the first budget year will depend on:
 - Appropriation of funds
 - Your satisfactory progress in meeting the project's objectives
 - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest
 - If we receive more funding for this program, we may:
 - Fund more applicants from the rank order list
 - Extend the period of performance
 - Award supplemental funding

General limitations

- For guidance on some types of costs we do not allow or restrict, see Project Budget Information in Section 3.1.4 of the [Application Guide](#). You can also see 45 CFR part 75, or any superseding regulation, [General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost](#).
- You cannot earn profit from the federal award. See [45 CFR 75.400\(g\)](#).
- Congress's current appropriations act includes a salary limitation, which applies to this program. As of January 2024, the salary rate limitation is \$221,900. This limitation may be updated.

See [Manage Your Grant](#) for other information on costs and financial management.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are costs you charge across more than one project that cannot be easily separated by project. For example, this could include utilities for a building that supports multiple projects.

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1 – Approved rate. You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

Method 2 – *De minimis* rate. Per [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs.

This rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See [2 CFR 200.1](#) for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Program income

Program income is money earned as a result of your award-supported project activities. You must use any program income you generate from awarded funds for approved project-related activities. Find more about program income at [45 CFR 75.307](#).



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

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Get registered

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist to find out what you'll need to register.

When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#). You must agree to those for grants specifically, as opposed to contracts, because the two sets of agreements are different. You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Find the Application Package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to [Grants Search at Grants.gov](#) and search for opportunity number HRSA-25-009.

After you select the opportunity, we recommend that you click the Subscribe button to get updates.

Application Writing Help

Visit HHS [Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#).

Visit [HRSA's How to Prepare Your Application](#) page for more guidance.

See [Apply for a Grant](#) for other help and resources.

Join the Webinar

For more information about this opportunity, join the webinar on October 28, 2024 at 2pm ET. You can join at <https://hrsa-gov.zoomgov.com/j/1610303846?pwd=fVaykDsC3Nl7kQH0bcaDdlQqPsW8b4.1>

If you are not able to join through your computer, you can call in:

Phone number: 1 (669) 254-5252

Meeting ID: 161 030 3846

Passcode: idd9UKUw

We will record the webinar. If you are not able to join live, please contact Sarah Scott at sscott2@hrsa.gov to obtain the playback link 48 hours after the live event.

Have questions? Go to [Contacts and Support](#)



Step 3:

Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

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Application contents and format

Applications include 5 main components. This section includes guidance on each.

Application page limit: 65 pages

Submit your information in English and express whole number budget figures using U.S. dollars.

Make sure you include each of these:

Components	Submission format
Project abstract	Use the Project Abstract Summary form
Project narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form
Budget narrative	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form
Attachments	Insert each in the Attachments form
Other required forms	Upload using each required form

Required format

You must format your narratives and attachments using our required formats for fonts, size, color, format, and margins. See the formatting guidelines in Section 3.2 of the [Application Guide](#).

Project abstract

Complete the information in the Project Abstract Summary form. Include a short description of your proposed project. Include the needs you plan to address, the proposed services, and the population groups you plan to serve. For more information, see Section 3.1.2 of the [Application Guide](#).

Project narrative

In this section, you will describe all aspects of your project. Project activities must comply with the [nondiscrimination requirements](#).

Use the section headers and the order listed.

Introduction

See merit review criterion 1: [Need](#)

This section should provide a framework and description of all aspects of the proposed national project. It should be succinct, self-explanatory, consistent with forms and attachments, and well-organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

Need

See merit review criterion 1: [Need](#)

- Describe the need for a publicly available central location and source for information on rural health nationwide.
- You should demonstrate an understanding of the evolution of rural health care and the historical challenges facing rural communities.
- You should demonstrate an understanding of rural demographics, disadvantaged populations, and linguistic and cultural barriers to care within rural communities.
- Use and cite demographic data whenever possible.
- Please discuss information gaps that the project hopes to address.

Approach

See merit review criterion 2: [Response](#) and 4: [Impact](#)

- Tell us how you'll address the rural needs you identify and meet the program requirements and expectations described in this NOFO, while ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of clearinghouse users.
- Describe how you will make human and technical resources available to operate a website that identifies existing information and creates new content about rural health.
- Describe how you will address the following activities or priorities of this program within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance:
 - Broadly disseminate a wide range of rural health related information to the public in an easily accessible, web-based platform. Content of the website may include but is not limited to:
 - An inventory of rural health relevant funding available from a wide range of federal or state grants as well as public or private foundations and how those programs and resources are relevant to rural communities.
 - An inventory of key national and state organizations with interests in rural health that includes links to their websites and descriptions of their missions.

- Information about rural health programs and interventions as well as policy documents and federal regulations that impact rural health care.
- Audio or video content about rural health, including but not limited to podcasts, video interviews, or webinars.
- Describe how you will conduct outreach and provide regular updates to rural providers and stakeholders about resources available to them and rural health related news. These activities may include but are not limited to:
 - Producing a general interest newsletter on rural health that is electronically published via e-mail and the website.
 - Writing and publishing articles about rural health topics and rural health care innovations.
 - Promoting the website to ensure maximum exposure among rural health care providers, associations, stakeholders, and rural communities.
 - Attending and exhibiting at key national, regional, or state meetings on rural health care.
- Describe how you will share best practices and innovations in rural health care that support rural providers and communities as well as inform evidence-based rural health policy development. This will involve the recipient creating new content and may involve data analysis, policy analysis, or conducting primary research. These products may include, but are not limited to:
 - Products such as toolkits, videos, or articles disseminating promising practices and evaluation findings from rural health projects and programs, including but not limited to projects funded by rural community-based grants.
 - Online toolkits sharing best practices for providing health care in rural areas related to specific topic areas.
 - Information on rural health care's economic impact on communities, developed by both the recipient and other researchers.
 - Interactive data tools or data visualizations to help rural people find data or information specific to their community or communicate policy issues.

High-level work plan

See merit review criteria 2: [Response](#) and 4: [Impact](#)

- Describe how you'll achieve each of the objectives at the start of and through the period of performance.
- Provide a timeline that includes each activity and identifies who is responsible for each. As needed, identify how key stakeholders will help plan, design, and carry out all activities.

- You will also include a more detailed work plan in your [Attachments](#) and you can reference information in the detailed work plan as applicable.

Resolving challenges

See merit review criterion 2: [Response](#) and 4: [Impact](#)

Discuss challenges that you are likely to encounter in designing and carrying out the activities in the work plan. Explain approaches that you'll use to resolve them.

Performance reporting and evaluation

See merit review criteria 3: [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) and 5: [Resources and capabilities](#)

- **Outcomes.** Describe the expected outcomes (desired results) of your funded activities.
- **Performance Measurement and Reporting.**
- Describe the performance data you will collect and how you will report these data accurately and on time.
- Describe how you will monitor and analyze your performance data to support continuous quality improvement.

See the [Reporting](#) section for more information.

Organizational information

See merit review criterion 5: [Resources and capabilities](#)

- Briefly describe your mission, structure, and the scope of your current activities. Explain how they support your ability to carry out the program requirements at the start of the period of performance and throughout the period. Include a project organization chart ([Attachment 6](#)).
- If you are planning on working with other organizations (i.e., as sub-recipients or under contract), you (the applicant organization) must serve as the lead organization. This means the applicant retains responsibility for administration of the cooperative agreement, including use of federal funds in a manner consistent with the terms of the cooperative agreement. If your application includes other organizations, you must:
 - Describe the capabilities and roles of each organization working on the proposed project, including capabilities evidenced by relevant activities/products including completed or current materials related to rural health care or rural health care policy.

- Discuss the capability of the applicant organization to provide overall program management.
 - Submit a complete list of subrecipients and contractors in [Attachment 4](#), describing the organizations you will partner with to fulfill the program goals and meet the objectives. Include key agreements and letters of support in [Attachment 4](#).
 - Ensure that the organizational chart in [Attachment 6](#) shows that the applicant organization is responsible for the overall management of the program and the relationship of all other involved organizations.
 - In [Attachment 4](#), provide any Letters of Agreement or Memoranda of Understanding that document the working relationships between your organization and others you refer to in the proposal.
- Discuss how you'll follow the approved work plan, account for federal funds, and record all costs to avoid audit findings.
 - Include a staffing plan and job descriptions for key faculty and staff in [Attachment 2](#).
 - You will also include biographical sketches for key staff in [Attachment 3](#).
 - The project director should have significant experience in the areas related to the NOFO, including communications, rural health, and program management. Demonstrating this experience may include, but is not limited to, time in the field (for example, at least 10 years of experience in these areas), extensiveness of relevant experience, or a history of successfully completed projects related to rural health information dissemination.
 - Describe the organization resources you have to fulfill the goals of the program within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance and throughout the period of performance.
 - The organization must have or propose an affiliation or partnership with an academic library with a health sciences focus. The applicant should provide evidence of this affiliation or partnership (either active or proposed) in [Attachment 4](#).
 - Describe how you will have the technical resources, either internally or through agreements with third-parties, to host large amounts of information online, as well as the human resources and experience with website design and editing.
 - The applicant **must** demonstrate the capacity to have an operational website for information dissemination within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance.
 - Demonstrate your organization's significant experience conducting similar work (from any funder) and relationships you have in place with key rural health and

human service stakeholders. Show how your work was high quality and met the needs of your users. Include specific examples of the following, as applicable:

- Experience providing information services and technical assistance to rural health care organizations on a national scale.
- Work communicating complex health care policy issues and data analyses to varied audiences in ways that identify key rural concerns.
- Experience working with national, regional, or state rural health organizations, including but not limited to the National Rural Health Association or individual State Offices of Rural Health.
- Experience creating video or audio content about rural health policy issues.
- Experience creating interactive web-based data tools.

Budget and budget narrative

See merit review criterion 6: [Support Requested](#)

Your budget should follow the instructions in Section 3.1.4. Project Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) of the [Application Guide](#) and the instructions listed in this section. Your budget should show a well-organized plan.

HHS now uses the definitions for [equipment](#) and [supplies](#) in 2 CFR 200.1. The new definitions change the threshold for equipment to the lesser of the recipient's capitalization level or \$10,000 and the threshold for supplies to below that amount.

The total project or program costs are all allowable (direct and indirect) costs incurred for the HRSA award activity or project. This includes costs charged to the award and non-federal funds used to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement.

The budget narrative supports the information you provide in Standard Form 424-A. See [other required forms](#). It includes an itemized breakdown and a clear justification of the costs you request. The merit review committee reviews both.

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are reasonable and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See [Funding policies and limitations](#).

To create your budget narrative, see detailed instructions in Section 3.1.5 of the [Application Guide](#).

Consultant services. Identify each consultant, the services they will perform, the total number of days, travel costs, and the total estimated costs.

Attachments

Place your attachments in this order in the Attachments form. See the [application checklist](#) to determine if they count toward the page limit.

Attachment 1: Work plan

Attach the project's work plan. Align the work plan with the intent and goals of the program. Activities in the work plan should link to the needs and approach you describe. The work plan should be a matrix that carefully and clearly integrates goals, objectives, outputs, and activities. These goals and objectives should be time framed, realistic, and measurable. The method of implementing the work plan should be clear. The plan should also indicate the person responsible for each activity. Make sure it includes everything required in the [Project Narrative](#) section.

Attachment 2: Staffing plan and job descriptions

See Section 3.1.7 of the [Application Guide](#).

Include a staffing plan that shows the staff positions that will support the project and key information about each. Justify your staffing choices, including education and experience qualifications, and your reasons for the amount of time you request for each staff position.

For key personnel, attach a one-page job description. It must include the role, responsibilities, and qualifications.

Attachment 3: Biographical Sketches

Include biographical sketches for people who will hold the key positions you describe in [Attachment 2](#).

Each biographical sketch should be no more than two pages. Do not include non-public, [personally identifiable information](#). If you include someone you have not hired yet, provide a letter of commitment from that person along with the biographical sketch.

Attachment 4: Agreements with other entities

Provide any documents that describe working relationships between your organization and others you refer to in the proposal. Documents that confirm actual or pending contracts or agreements should clearly describe the roles of subrecipients and contractors and any deliverable. Make sure you sign and date any letters of agreement.

Attachment 5: For multi-year budgets--5th year budget

For the fifth budget year, submit a copy of Section B of the SF-424A as an attachment. We do not count this in the page limit however, any related budget narrative does count. See Section 4 of the [Application Guide](#).

Attachment 6: Project organizational chart

Provide a one-page diagram that shows the full project's organizational structure.

Attachment 7 - 15 - Other relevant documents [Optional]

You may include any other documents that are relevant to the application.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some other forms. Upload the following forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and any available instructions at [Grants.gov Forms](#). These forms do not count against the page limit.

Forms	Submission Requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With application
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With application
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award
Budget Narrative Attachment Form	With application



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

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Application Review

Initial Review

We will review your application to make sure it meets [eligibility](#) criteria, including the [completeness and responsiveness criteria](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, it will not be funded.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

Merit Review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use these criteria.

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Need	10 points
2. Response	30 points
3. Performance reporting and evaluation	5 points
4. Impact	10 points
5. Resources and capabilities	40 points
6. Support requested	5 points

Criterion 1: Need

[10] points

See Project Narrative [Introduction](#) and [Need](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for how well it:

- Provides a framework and description of all aspects of the proposed national project.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the need for a national clearinghouse for information on rural health.
- Describes how the program will effectively address information gaps for rural communities nationally.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the historical context of rural health and the issues facing rural communities.

- Demonstrates a strong understanding of the demographics of rural areas and barriers to care in rural areas, including citations to demographic data.

Criterion 2: Response

[30] points

See project narrative [Approach](#), [High-Level Work Plan](#), and [Resolving Challenges](#) sections and the [Work Plan](#) attachment.

Alignment with Requirements in [Approach](#) Section (15 points)

The panel will review your application for:

- How well the applicant's proposal, including the work plan, addresses each of the items in the Approach section, including:
 - Identifying rural health needs.
 - Disseminating a wide range of rural health related information to the public in an easily accessible, web-based platform.
 - Conducting outreach and providing regular updates to rural providers and stakeholders to promote resources available to them and rural health related news.
 - Sharing best practices and innovations in rural health care that support rural providers and communities as well as inform evidence-based rural health policy development.
 - Creating new content such as toolkits, videos, interactive data tools and visualizations, and/or articles addressing the needs of rural health care providers and rural stakeholders for information on topics such as promising practices, evaluation findings from rural health projects and programs, the economic impact of rural health care on communities, and rural health policy issues.
- How well the applicant demonstrates capacity to have a high-quality website operating within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance.

Alignment with Intent and Goals of the Program (15 points)

The panel will review your application for:

- How well the applicant's proposed project responds to the program's [purpose](#), specifically making a full range of existing information about the provision of rural health care available within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance while also creating new content to address information gaps.

- How well the activities described will address the problem and meet project objectives.
- How well the application presents an approach for ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of users of the clearinghouse and to respond to challenges.
- How clearly the work plan incorporates a defined project timeline, clear designation of individual roles, and well-specified activities to clearly show how resources will be made available to rural stakeholders.

Criterion 3: Performance reporting and evaluation

[5] points

See Project Narrative [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) section.

The panel will review your application for:

- How strong and effective the method is to self-monitor and evaluate project results.
- Quality of evidence that the measures will effectively assess how well the recipient has met program objectives attributable to the project.

Criterion 4: Impact

[10] points

See Project Narrative [High-Level Work Plan](#), [Approach](#), and [Resolving Challenges](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for:

- How effective the proposed project is likely to be, considering:
 - The methods the applicant proposes to connect with target audiences.
 - The applicant's plan to target your web-based information resources to rural health care providers and communities and to promote the website to stakeholders.
 - The applicant's plan to resolve any challenges that may occur in carrying out the project.

Criterion 5: Resources and capabilities

[40] points

See Project Narrative [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) and [Organizational Information](#) sections, and the [Project Organizational Chart](#), [Staffing Plan](#), [Biographical Sketches](#), and [Agreements with other entities](#) (if applicable) Attachments.

Existing Infrastructure and Capabilities (20 points)

The panel will review your application to determine the extent to which:

- The applicant organization, along with other organizations discussed in the application (if applicable), has capabilities to fulfill the needs and objectives of the proposed project. This includes:
 - Having or proposing a feasible plan to obtain the technical resources to host large amounts of information online as well as the human resources and experience with website design and editing necessary to build and maintain the website.
 - Having the capabilities to manage the cooperative agreement, fulfill the approved workplan, and account for federal funds.
 - How effectively the applicant demonstrates the capacity to have an operational website for information dissemination within a reasonably prompt timeframe after the beginning of the period of performance.
- The applicant has or proposes a feasible plan to access the quality of facilities necessary to fulfill the proposed project. This includes an affiliation or partnership, either active or proposed, with an academic library with a health science focus and the technological resources, either internal or through a third-party, to create and host web-based content such as videos, podcasts, or webinars.

Experience (20 points)

The panel will review your application for:

- The strength of the applicant's experience working with key rural health interest groups, including but not limited to State Offices of Rural Health, state and national rural health associations, foundations, and research organizations.
- How well the applicant illustrates knowledge of rural health issues and of the key individuals and organizations involved in rural health.
- The breadth and quality of the applicant's experience providing technical assistance and information services on a national scale to rural health care providers and stakeholders about complex health policy issues.
- How well the applicant demonstrates experience with video and audio production and editing such as webinars or podcasts.
- How well the applicant demonstrates experience with data analysis, data visualization, and interactive web-based tools.
- How well the applicant shows that their relevant work was high quality and met user needs.

- To what extent project staff have the training or experience to carry out the project, including significant experience of the project director in rural health and other relevant areas such as communications and program management.

Criterion 6: Support requested

[5] points

See [Budget and budget narrative](#) section.

The panel will review your application to determine:

- How reasonable the proposed budget is for each year of the period of performance.
- The costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable and align with the project's scope.
- Key staff have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project objectives.

We do not consider **voluntary** cost sharing during merit review.

Risk review

Before making an award, we review your award history to assess risk. We need to ensure all prior awards were managed well and demonstrated sound business practices. We:

- Review any applicable past performance
- Review audit reports and findings
- Analyze the budget
- Assess your management systems
- Ensure you continue to be eligible
- Make sure you comply with any public policies

We may ask you to submit additional information.

As part of this review, we use SAM.gov Entity Information [Responsibility / Qualification](#) to check your history for all awards likely to be more than \$250,000 over the period of performance. You can comment on your organization's information in SAM.gov. We'll consider your comments before making a decision about your level of risk.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see [45 CFR 75.205](#).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- The amount of available funds.
- Assessed risk.
- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of HRSA-funded projects, including the diversity of project types and geographic distribution.

We may:

- Fund out of rank order.
- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

Award notices

We issue Notices of Award (NOA) on or around the [start date](#) listed in the NOFO. See Section 4 of the [Application Guide](#) for more information.



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

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Application submission and deadlines

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application. See the section on [finding the application package](#) to make sure you have everything you need.

Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements. When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#), and specifically with regard to grants.

Make sure that your SAM.gov registration is accurate for both contracts and grants, as these registrations differ. [See information on getting registered](#). You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

Deadlines

You must submit your application by December 9, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application.

Submission method

Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. You may do so using Grants.gov Workspace. This is the preferred method. For alternative online methods, [Applicant System-to-System](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks, or we may not get it. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

Have questions? Go to [Contacts and Support](#).

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

If your state has a process, you will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372](#). Under this order, states may design their own processes for obtaining, reviewing, and commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others do not.

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact](#). If you find a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as you can to learn their

process. If you do not find a contact for your state, you do not need to do anything further.

This requirement never applies to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit?
☐ Project abstract	Use the Project Abstract Summary Form.	No
☐ Project narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	Yes
☐ Budget narrative	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form.	Yes
Attachments	Insert each in the Other Attachments form.	
1. Work plan		Yes
2. Staffing plan and job descriptions		Yes
3. Biographical sketches		No
4. Agreements with other entities		Yes
5. Multi-year budgets—5th year budget		No
6. Project organizational chart		Yes
7 - 15. Other relevant documents		Yes
Other required forms*	Upload using each required form.	
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)		No
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)		No
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), optional		No
Project/Performance Site Location(s)		No
Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit?
Key Contacts		No

* Only what you attach in these forms counts toward the page limit. The forms themselves do not count.



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

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Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you need to know if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award (NOA). We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The regulations at [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards, and any superseding regulations.
- Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
 - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
 - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Equipment.
 - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Supplies.
 - 2 CFR 200.313(e), Equipment, Disposition.
 - 2 CFR 200.314(a), Supplies.
 - 2 CFR 200.320, Methods of procurement to be followed.
 - 2 CFR 200.333, Fixed amount subawards.
 - 2 CFR 200.344, Closeout.
 - 2 CFR 200.414(f), Indirect (F&A) costs.
 - 2 CFR 200.501, Audit requirements.
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement](#) (GPS). Your NOA will reference this document. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in [HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- The requirements for performance management in [2 CFR 200.301](#).

Non-discrimination legal requirements

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance ([HHS-690](#)). To learn more, see the [Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights](#).

Contact the [HHS Office for Civil Rights](#) for more information about obligations and prohibitions under federal civil rights laws or call 1-800-368-1019 or TDD 1-800-537-7697.

The HRSA Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) offers technical assistance, individual consultations, trainings, and plain language materials to supplement OCR guidance. Visit [OCRDI's website](#) to learn more about how federal civil rights laws and accessibility requirements apply to your programs, or contact OCRDI directly at HRSACivilRights@hrsa.gov.

Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment

[Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment \(E.O. 14025\)](#) encourages worker organizing and collective bargaining to promote equality of bargaining power between employers and employees.

You can support these goals by developing policies and practices that you could use to promote worker power.

Cybersecurity

You must create a cybersecurity plan if your project involves both of the following conditions:

- You have ongoing access to HHS information or technology systems.
- You handle personal identifiable information (PII) or personal health information (PHI) from HHS.

You must base the plan based on the [NIST Cybersecurity Framework](#). Your plan should include the following steps:

Identify:

- List all assets and accounts with access to HHS systems or PII/PHI.

Protect:

- Limit access to only those who need it for award activities.
- Ensure all staff complete annual cybersecurity and privacy training. Free training is available at 405(d): [Knowledge on Demand \(hhs.gov\)](#).
- Use multi-factor authentication for all users accessing HHS systems.
- Regularly backup and test sensitive data.

Detect:

- Install antivirus or anti-malware software on all devices connected to HHS systems.

Respond:

- Create an incident response plan. See [Incident-Response-Plan-Basics_508c.pdf \(cisa.gov\)](#) for guidance.
- Have procedures to report cybersecurity incidents to HHS within 48 hours. A cybersecurity incident is:
 - Any unplanned interruption or reduction of quality, or
 - An event that could actually or potentially jeopardize confidentiality, integrity, or availability of the system and its information.

Recover:

- Investigate and fix security gaps after any incident.

Reporting

If you are funded, you will have to follow the reporting requirements in Section 4 of the [Application Guide](#). The NOA will provide specific details.

You must also follow these program-specific reporting requirements:

Progress reports each year.

Annual performance reports through [Electronic Handbooks](#)



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program and eligibility

Sarah Scott

Public Health Analyst

Attn: National Rural Health Information Clearinghouse Program

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: sscott2@hrsa.gov

Call: (301) 287-2619

Financial and budget

Kimberly Dews

Grants Management Specialist

Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAAM

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: kdews@hrsa.gov

Call: (301) 443-0655

HRSA Contact Center

Open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, except for federal holidays.

Call: 877-464-4772 / 877-Go4-HRSA

TTY: 877-897-9910

[Electronic Handbooks Contact Center](#)

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 800-518-4726, search the [Grants.gov Knowledge Base](#), or [email Grants.gov for support](#). Hold on to your ticket number.

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Helpful websites

[HRSA's How to Prepare Your Application page](#)

[HRSA Grants page](#)

[HHS Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#)

Endnotes

1. Defining Rural Population. January 2024. Available at: <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/about-us/what-is-rural> ↑
2. Preventable Premature Deaths from the Five Leading Causes of Death in Nonmetropolitan and Metropolitan Counties, United States, 2010–2022. May 2024. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/ss/ss7302a1.htm> ↑
3. Rural Population Health in the United States: A Chartbook. June 2023. Available at: <https://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/product/rural-population-health-in-the-united-states-a-chartbook/> ↑