

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program-Planning

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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A. General Application FAQs

1. **I am having difficulty finding the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – can you direct me to the full application instructions?**
 - To access the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):
 - Visit: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=324246>
 - Select the “Package” tab
 - Select “Preview”
 - Select “Download Instructions”
 - To apply:
 - Visit <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=324246>
 - Click apply!
2. **I was unable to attend HRSA’s Technical Assistance Webinar for this funding opportunity. Is the webinar recording available?**
 - The full webinar recording is here: <https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/pig4gvessw6j/>
 - The webinar slides are available for download using the above Adobe Connect link (look under file share in the bottom left corner).
 - The audio-only recording is available at: 1-888-704-1108, passcode: 52720
3. **I am having difficulty accessing/navigating grants.gov. How do you recommend I proceed?**

- Applicants should contact the grants.gov support team at: 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov
4. **I am having difficulty accessing the System for Award Management (SAM) to register or update my account. How do you recommend I proceed?**
- Contact the Federal Support Desk at <https://www.fsd.gov/fsd-gov/home.do>. They can assist you with creating an account; assigning roles to an account; entity registrations; exclusions; and searching for data in SAM.
5. **I am having technological issues and might not be able to submit my application through grants.gov by the deadline. Can I request an extension?**
- You must submit your application electronically by the deadline posted on the NOFO. However, if you need to request a waiver from the electronic submission requirement, you may request an exemption in writing from DGPWaivers@hrsa.gov. This request must be received within 5 calendar days of the opportunity's closing date, and include details as to why you are technologically unable to submit electronically through the Grants.gov portal. You will receive a written response to your waiver request. Please refer to page 14 of the [SF-424 Application Guide](#) for additional guidance and detailed information.
6. **I have a specific question about the Notice of Funding Opportunity that is not answered here.**
- Please review the [TA webinar recording](#) if you have not already.
 - Contact Sarah O'Donnell, RCORP-Planning Program Coordinator: sodonnell@hrsa.gov or (301) 443-0298. Please note that HRSA staff will answer clarifying questions about the NOFO requirements, but cannot provide guidance on proposed approaches.
7. **Can I access examples of previously awarded RCORP-Planning grant applications?**
- Previous grant applications are not publicly available.
 - You are welcome to access further information about previous RCORP Planning Cohorts at <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/rcorp/planning>. You can also reference the "find grants" tool available at HRSA's data warehouse (<https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/find-grants>). Some programs have abstracts that are available for download.

B. Eligibility

8. **NEW: My target service area would be considered rural if the prison population were not included in the population total. Is there an exception available for situations such as this?**
- In determining eligibility for this funding, FORHP realizes there are some metropolitan areas that would otherwise be considered non-metropolitan if the core, urbanized area population count did not include federal and/or state prison populations. Consequently, FORHP has created an exceptions process whereby applicants from metropolitan counties in which the combined population of the core urbanized area is more than 50,000 can

request an exception by demonstrating that through the removal of federal and/or state prisoners from that count, they would have a population total of less than 50,000.

- If you are planning to request an exception, it is recommended that you include in your application evidence of the total population of the core urbanized area, along with the federal and/or state prison population. It is recommended that you use data from the Census Bureau and state or Federal Bureaus of Prisons, or Corrections Departments. Data should demonstrate that the total core urbanized area population (which is not the county or town population), minus any state and/or federal prisoners, results in a total population of less than 50,000.
- If it is not possible to determine rural eligibility from evidence provided in the application, HRSA may follow up with the applicant during the review period to request additional information.

9. Can applicants apply for this funding opportunity if they have previously received an RCORP-Planning, Implementation, and/or Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion award (as either the applicant organization or consortium member)?

- Per the NOFO (page 3-4), previous recipients or consortium members of RCORP-Planning, Implementation, and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion awards are eligible, but must clearly demonstrate that there is no duplication of effort between the proposed project and any previous RCORP project.
- If you previously received (or served as a consortium member for) a 2018 RCORP Planning grant, 2019 RCORP Planning grant, 2019 RCORP Implementation Grant, and/or 2019 RCORP MAT Expansion grant, you must include detailed information for each RCORP award in Attachment 6. Please reference page 3-4 of the NOFO for details on what information must be included in this attachment.

10. I already applied for FY20 RCORP-Implementation (HRSA 20-031). Am I still eligible to apply for RCORP-Planning?

- Yes, if you have already applied for FY20 RCORP-Implementation, you are still eligible to apply for FY20 CORP-Planning. However, please keep in mind that these two programs are significantly different. RCORP-Implementation is intended for organizations that are immediately ready to begin implementing direct services, in line with the core-activities specified in the NOFO. RCORP-Planning is intended for organizations that are not ready to begin implementing, and would benefit from a deeper understanding of the needs of the target population and how to address them. Note that you may not use RCORP-Planning funds to provide direct services.
- If you apply to both RCORP Planning and RCORP Implementation, you must ensure that the activities in your applications reflect distinct projects that are significantly different and in line with the requirements stated in each NOFO.
- If you are awarded FY20 RCORP-Implementation and your FY20 RCORP-Planning application receives a score that qualifies for an award, HRSA will examine both applications to confirm that the projects are distinct and significantly different before awarding the RCORP-

Planning grant. Additionally, if you are awarded both RCORP-Implementation and RCORP-Planning, you will be required to submit additional documentation confirming that there is no duplication of effort between the two projects. It is also expected that the two projects will coordinate over the course of the entire project period to avoid any potential overlap.

11. Can organizations submit more than one application?

- The NOFO limits organizations from serving as the applicant organization on more than one FY20 RCORP-Planning application—i.e., only one application can be associated with an EIN or DUNS number. An organization may provide a letter of support for multiple applications.
- However, HRSA recognizes a growing trend towards greater consolidation within the rural health care industry and the possibility that multiple organizations with the same EIN and/or DUNS number could be located in different rural service areas that have a need for SUD/OD services. Therefore, at HRSA discretion, separate applications associated with a single DUNS number and/or EIN may be considered for this funding opportunity if the applicants provide HRSA with the information specified on page 5 of the NOFO.

12. My organization is located in an urban area. Am I eligible to apply for the grant?

- Your organization may be located in an urban or rural area. However, all planned activities supported by this program must exclusively target populations residing in [HRSA-designated rural counties](#) or rural census tracts in urban counties.

C. Rural Service Areas and Target Populations

13. The target population is located in a county that is partially rural. How should my organization address this in the application?

- Applicants must confirm that the target population is located exclusively in the portions of the county that are considered rural, per HRSA's [List of Rural Counties And Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties](#).

14. How will HRSA determine whether a service area is “high risk” or “high need”?

- It is up to the applicant to demonstrate the target population's level of need/risk in the Needs Assessment section of the Project Narrative (see pp. 11-15 of the NOFO).

D. Project Abstract and Narrative

15. Can my application focus on individuals with other SUDs other than OUD?

- While the primary focus of your application must be opioid use disorder, HRSA recognizes that many individuals with OUD are polysubstance users. To that end, per page 1 of the NOFO, you may also choose to address one additional substance of concern in your community.

16. **Where can I find the data/information required for the Needs Assessment section of the application?**
- Per the NOFO, applicants should use the most recent available data/information from appropriate sources (e.g., local, state, tribal, federal) and cite any information they provide. Appendix C contains several resources applicants can leverage.
17. **The available age data for our service area is not broken into the categories listed in the Needs Assessment (i.e., children: 0-12; adolescents: 13-17; etc.). Is this problematic?**
- It is appropriate to deviate from the age categories provided in the Needs Assessment section of the Project Narrative to match the age categories of your data source. Please include a brief explanation of why you were unable to provide age data in the categories listed in the NOFO, along with the source for the data you used.
18. **There are no data available for my service area for some of the indicators requested in the Needs Assessment section of the Project Narrative. Is this problematic?**
- Per the NOFO (pg. 11), applicants encountering difficulty obtaining data for certain indicators are encouraged to contact their state or local health departments and/or refer to data and information provided by the [Rural Health Information Hub](#) and the [Opioid Misuse Community Assessment Tool](#) developed by NORC at the University of Chicago.
 - If you are still unable to locate appropriate and accurate data, per the NOFO, please provide an explanation for why the data could not be found and how you will leverage the RCORP-Planning grant to strengthen the quality and availability of OUD/SUD data in your target rural service area.
19. **Page 18 of the NOFO states that at least two of the three required letters of commitment “should be from organizations located within the target rural service area.” Do these organizations need to be headquartered within the targeted service area, or is it acceptable to have a satellite office(s) within the target rural service area?**
- While it is ideal for organizations to be headquartered within the target rural service area, HRSA recognizes that this may not always be possible due to the nature of rural settings. Therefore, it is acceptable to provide letters of commitment from satellite offices that are located within the target rural service area, and that primarily serve individuals residing in the target rural service area.
 - However, please be sure to note that for the purposes of this RCORP-Planning, a consortium is defined as an organizational arrangement among four or more separately owned domestic public or private entities, including the applicant organization. At least four individual consortium members, including the applicant organization, must have separate and different Employer Identification Numbers (EINs). Additionally, a majority of members in each consortium must be located within rural areas. To ascertain whether a particular county or census tract is rural, please refer to <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/RuralAdvisor/>. Please reference pages 8-9 of the NOFO for additional information.

E. Budget and Allowable Costs

NOTE: All budget costs are subject to the federal cost principles. Reference the [SF-424 Application Guide](#) for additional details.

20. Since award recipients will receive the full award amount in the first year of the grant, are they required to spend it over the 18-month period of performance?

- Yes, award recipients are required to allocate the award amount over the 18-month period of performance.

21. Are minor renovations an allowable cost for this grant?

- Certain minor renovations are allowable under this grant, with a maximum allowable amount of \$40,000.
- Successful award recipients proposing minor renovation projects will be required to submit a prior approval request to HRSA upon receipt of award and refrain from implementing the minor renovations until the request has been approved.

22. Are participant support costs allowable for this grant?

- Participant support costs—i.e., direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects—are allowable costs.
 - In this context, “employees” refers to individuals directly employed on an hourly, salaried or employment contract basis by the applicant organization/award recipient. Individuals employed by sub-contractors, consortium members and sub-recipients are not included in this definition.

23. Can I use RCORP-Planning funds to purchase a vehicle?

- Yes, you may use RCORP-Planning funds to purchase or lease a vehicle. However, HRSA prior approval is required. You may not begin any purchases until you receive HRSA approval and must have contingency plans in place to ensure that delays in receiving HRSA approval do not affect your ability to execute your work plan activities and HRSA deliverables on time.

24. Can I use RCORP-Planning grant funds to purchase medication?

- RCORP-Planning grant funds may be used to purchase naloxone, for distribution or training purposes.
- RCORP-Planning grant funds cannot be used to support the administration of naloxone, as this would be a direct service.

25. Can I use RCORP-Planning grant funds to purchase syringes?

- The purchases of syringes is not allowable.

- Please refer to page 27 of [HRSA's SF424 Application Guide](#) for guidance around syringe purchases using grant funds: "Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, no funds appropriated in this Act shall be used to purchase sterile needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of any illegal drug: Provided, That such limitation does not apply to the use of funds for elements of a program other than making such purchases if the relevant State or local health department, in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, determines that the State or local jurisdiction, as applicable, is experiencing, or is at risk for, a significant increase in hepatitis infections or an HIV outbreak due to injection drug use, and such program is operating in accordance with State and local law."

26. Will there be an in-person meeting for grantees to attend? If so, should we include that in our proposed budget?

- Yes, per pages 20-21 of the NOFO, You are expected to budget for the following three trips:
 - RCORP Annual Reverse Site Visit. For budgeting purposes, you can assume that this will be a 3-day conference in or near Washington, DC.
 - Learning Collaborative in-person meeting. For budgeting purposes, you can assume that this will be a 2-day conference in or near Washington, DC
 - RCORP Regional Meeting: For budgeting purposes, you can assume that that this will be a 2-day conference within your HRSA region.
- Note: HRSA will continue to monitor possible health risks associated with travel, and may adjust these trips accordingly.

27. Can use RCORP-Planning funds to provide direct services to the target rural population?

- No, direct services are not an allowable cost. Per page 1 of the NOFO, examples of direct services include but are not limited to: providing medication assisted treatment, providing peer-based recovery services, transporting individuals to receive treatment, and paying individuals to administer naloxone. If you have a question about whether an activity qualifies as a direct service, please reach out to Sarah O'Donnell at sodonnell@hrsa.gov.

F. Staffing

28. My organization will not have hired all of our project staff by the time the application is due. How do I account for this in my application?

- In Attachment 4 ("Staffing Plan"), it is appropriate to write "To Be Hired" under "Name" if the individual has not yet been hired. However, per page 19 of the NOFO, you are expected to immediately operationalize the proposed approach upon receipt of the award. To this end, include a timeline and process for rapidly filling any positions that are vacant at the time of application, including the projected start date for the position.

29. What is the FTE requirement for the Project Director?

- The notice of funding opportunity does not require a minimum FTE requirement for project directors and other key program staff. However, per page 19 of the NOFO, the project director is expected to commit a minimum of 25 percent time to the proposed project.
- Personnel supported by this award may not exceed 100% time and effort in total across all federally funded awards.

30. Can we designate more than one Project Director on the grant?

- It is allowable to have more than one Project Director in the staffing plan. However, only one Project Director can be designated in Box 8f of the SF424 Application Face Page, and this is the Project Director who will be officially reflected on the Notice of Award if awarded funding.

31. One of our staff members will be serving two separate and distinct roles on the grant that do not overlap. Can we submit two separate biosketches for that individual?

- Yes. However, you should ensure that individual does not exceed 1.0 FTE.

32. Are sub/contractors/sub-recipients required to register in SAM?

- If awarded funding, grant recipients must notify sub-contractors/sub-recipients that they must be registered in SAM and provide the grant recipient with their DUNS number. See pages 29-30 of the [HRSA SF424 Application Guide](#) for more information.