

Delta Health Care Services Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2026

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Number: RDBCP-DHCS-2026

Publication Date: April 1, 2026

Application Due Date: June 1, 2026

J.R. Claeys

RBCS Administrator

PROGRAM SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Funding Opportunity Title: Delta Health Care Services Grant Program (DHCS)

Funding Opportunity Number: RDBCP-DHCS-2026

Announcement Type: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Assistance Listing Number: 10.874

Dates: Completed electronic applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on June 1, 2026. DHCS program will start accepting applications on April 1, 2026. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Executive Summary:

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) announces that the Rural Business Service (RBCS, Agency) is accepting fiscal year (FY) 2026 applications for the Delta Health Care Services (DHCS) grant program. The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to address the continued unmet health needs in the Delta Region through cooperation among health care professionals, institutions of higher education, research institutions, and economic development entities in the Delta Region. FY 2026 funding is approximately \$6,000,000, which includes \$3,000,000 carryover funding from FY 25. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications. Ten percent of funds must support projects located in persistent poverty counties in the Delta Region and as described under paragraph 1.2(b) of this Notice.

TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

- To do business with the Federal Government and to submit your application electronically using Grants.gov, you must—
 - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
 - Be registered in SAM.gov (System for Award Management), the Government's primary registrant database;
 - Provide your UEI number and TIN on your application; and
 - Maintain an active SAM registration with current information throughout the application review period and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.
- Register and submit applications early. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF THE APPLICATION DEADLINE.**
- Thoroughly read this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and follow all the instructions.
- Thoroughly review the guidelines and policies as outlined in this notice to ensure the application is received and eligible for consideration, and to understand allowable and unallowable costs.
- Apply for the correct grant program
 - Assistance Listing number “**10.874**” and Funding Opportunity Number “**RDBCP-DHCS-2026**”

- Make sure you have the most recent copy of Adobe Reader installed on your computer and that it is compatible with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) software. Grants.gov supports Adobe Reader version 9.0.0 and higher.
- Limit Application File Name Characters (50 or less).
- When uploading attachments, click the “Add Attachments” button (do NOT use the “paperclip” icon in Adobe Reader). Acceptable file types include .doc, .docx, .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, .png, .gif, .xls, .xlsx, .txt, .ppt, and .pptx. If you would like to submit another file type, please contact the program office first for approval.
- Do not password-protect your documents and make sure all tracked-changes are “accepted”.
- Avoid Special Characters in File Names (\$, %, &, *, Spanish "ñ", etc.).
- Input the correct UEI number on the SF-424 cover page.
- Review the Grants.gov Applicant User and Registration Guides:
<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs>
<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview>

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1.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 RBCS Key Priorities

Rural Business Cooperative Service Priorities: The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following RBCS Priorities:

Domestic Manufacturing and Industrial Capacity

Domestic Energy Production and Energy Security

New and expanded markets for American Farmers and Rural Producers

Program integrity, including the prevention and reduction of fraud, waste, and abuse

1.2 Purpose of the Program

The primary objective of the program is to provide financial assistance to address the continued unmet health needs in the Delta Region through cooperation among health care professionals, institutions of higher education, research institutions, and other individuals and entities in the Delta Region. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

1.3 Statutory and Regulatory Authority

(a) Statutory. The DHCS program is authorized by Section 379G of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2008u).

(b) Persistent Poverty Counties. The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4) and the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37), provide funds under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Acts. The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, incorporating the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-42), Division B, Title VII, Section 736, and the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37), Division B, Title VII, Section 733 (Section 73, allocate funding for projects in Persistent Poverty Counties. Persistent Poverty Counties as defined in Section 736 and Section 733 is “any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, and 2007–2011 American Community Survey 5-year average, or any territory or possession of the United States[.]” Another provision in Section 736 expands the eligible population in Persistent Poverty Counties to include any county seat of such a Persistent Poverty County that has a population that does not exceed the authorized population limit by more than 10 percent. Therefore, applications for projects in Persistent Poverty County seats with populations up to 55,000 (per the 2020 Census) are eligible. Funding in the amount of \$600,000 (equal to 10% of allocation) will be allocated to support Persistent Poverty Counties.

1.4 Definitions

Academic Health and Research Institute – A combination of a medical school, one or more other health profession schools or educational training programs (such as allied health, dentistry, graduate studies, nursing, pharmacy, or public health), and one or more owned or affiliated teaching or health systems; or a health care nonprofit organization or health system, including nonprofit medical and surgical hospitals, that conduct health related research.

Conflict of Interest – A situation in which a person or entity has competing personal, professional, or financial interests that make it difficult for the person or business to act impartially. Federal procurement standards prohibit transactions that involve a real or apparent conflict of interest for owners, employees, officers, agents, or their immediate family members having a financial or other interest in the outcome of the Project; or that restrict open and free competition for unrestrained trade. Specifically, Project Funds may not be used for services or goods going to, or coming from, a person or entity with a real or apparent conflict of interest, including, but not limited to, owner(s) and their immediate family members. An example of a conflict of interest includes when the consortium member’s employees, board of directors, or the immediate family of either, have the appearance of a professional or personal financial interest in the recipients receiving the benefits or services of the grant.

Under 2 CFR 400.2 occurs when personal, professional, or financial interests compromise impartiality in Federal award actions. Recipients must maintain written standards of conduct, disclose potential conflicts in writing, and ensure no employee, officer, agent, or their immediate family participates in decisions where they have a financial or other interest. Project funds cannot be used for goods or services from entities with real or apparent conflicts, including owners or their families. Organizational conflicts—such as those involving parent or affiliate entities—must also be addressed to preserve open and fair competition and prevent undue influence.

Consortium – A group of three or more entities that are regional Institutions of Higher Education, Academic Health and Research Institutes, and/or Economic Development Entities located in the Delta Region that have at least one year of prior experience addressing the health care issues in the region. At least one of the consortium members must be legally organized as an incorporated organization or other legal entity and have legal authority to contract with the Federal Government.

Delta Region – The 252 counties and parishes within the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee that are served by the Delta Regional Authority. To view the areas identified within the Delta Region visit dra.gov/about-dra/dra-states.

Economic Development Entity – Any public or non-profit organization whose primary mission is to stimulate local and regional economies within the Delta Region by increasing employment opportunities and duration of employment, expanding or retaining existing employers, increasing labor rates or wage levels, reducing outmigration, and/or creating gains in other economic development-related variables such as land values. These activities should primarily benefit low- and moderate-income individuals in the Delta Region.

Health System – The complete network of agencies, facilities, and all providers of health care to meet the health needs of a specific geographical area or target population.

Institution of Higher Education – A postsecondary (post-high school) educational institution that awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or a postsecondary vocational institution that provides a program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

Nonprofit Organization – Any organization or institution, including an accredited institution of higher education, no part of the net earnings of which may inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Project – All activities funded by the DHCS grant.

Project Funds – Grant funds requested plus any other contributions to the proposed Project.

Rural and rural area– Includes (1) Any area of a state other than (a) a city or town that has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants, according to the latest decennial census of the United States and (b) any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town described in (a); and (2) Urbanized areas that are rural in character as defined by 7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13). For the purposes of this definition, cities and towns are incorporated population centers with definite boundaries, local self-government, and legal powers set forth in a charter granted by the State.

State – Includes each of the 50 States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and, as may be determined by the Secretary to be feasible, appropriate and lawful, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

1.5 Application of Awards

The Agency will review, evaluate, and score applications received in response to this Notice. Awards under the DHCS Program will be made on a competitive basis. The Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the full burden in preparing and submitting an application in response to this notice.

2.0 FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Type of Awards: Grants

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2026

Available Funds: Funding is approximately \$6,000,000. This includes \$3,000,000 in carryover funds from FY 25. RBCS may at its discretion, increase the total level of funding available under this Notice from any available source provided the awards meet the requirements of the statute which made the funding available to the Agency.

Minimum Award Amounts: The minimum award amount is \$50,000.

Maximum Award Amounts: The maximum award amount is \$1,000,000.

Anticipated Award Date: August 31, 2026

Performance Period: Up to 24 months

Type of Assistance Instrument: Financial Assistance Agreement (Grant Agreement)

3.0 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet all the following eligibility requirements. Your application will not be considered for funding if it does not provide sufficient information to determine eligibility or is missing required elements. Applicants that fail to submit the required elements by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated further. Information submitted after the application deadline will not be accepted. Grants funded through DHCS may be made to a Consortium as defined in [Section 1.3](#) of this Notice. One member of the Consortium must be designated as the by the other members of the Consortium and have legal authority to contract with the Federal Government.

The lead entity is the recipient (see [2 CFR 200.1](#)) of the DHCS grant funds and accountable for monitoring and reporting on the Project performance and financial management of the grant. It is expected that the recipient will make subawards in the form of a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract, as appropriate, to the other members of the Consortium. If a grant or cooperative agreement is awarded, the organization receiving the subaward is a subrecipient (see [2 CFR 200.1](#)) and the recipient is responsible for complying with all applicable requirements of [2 CFR part 200](#), including provisions for making and monitoring an award. If a contract is awarded, the organization receiving the subaward is a contractor, and the recipient is responsible for following its written procurement procedures and complying with the Federal Acquisition Regulation. Both subrecipients and contractors are required to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including performance and financial reporting, as described in their award document.

(a) An applicant is ineligible if they do not submit Evidence of Eligibility and Consortium Agreements as described in [Section 4.2](#) of this Notice.

(b) An applicant is ineligible if they have been debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in Federal assistance programs, under 2 CFR Part 180 (OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-Wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement),) and 2 CFR Part 417 (Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension). These regulations require verification of exclusion status through the [SAM.gov](#) Exclusions list before awarding funds. Additional disqualifying conditions include: An outstanding judgment obtained by the United States in a Federal Court (other than U.S. Tax Court), delinquency on Federal income taxes, or delinquency on other Federal debt. Applicants must certify in their applications that none of these conditions apply. The Agency will verify compliance using the Do Not Pay system and SAM.gov prior to award.

(c) Any corporation (1) that has been convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the past 24 months or (2) that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being

paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, is not eligible for financial assistance provided with funds appropriated by the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-47), Division B, Title VII, Sections 744 and 745 unless a Federal agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and has made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

(d) Applications will be deemed ineligible if the application includes any funding restrictions identified under [Section 4.6](#).

3.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no cost sharing or matching requirements associated with this grant. However, if you are adding any other contributions to the proposed Project, you must provide documentation indicating who will be providing the matching funds, the amount of funds, when those funds will be provided, and how the funds will be used in the Project budget. Examples of acceptable documentation include: a signed letter from the source of funds stating the amount of funds, when the funds will be provided, and what the funds can be used for or a signed resolution from your governing board authorizing the use of a specified amount of funds for specific components of the Project. The matching funds you identify must be for eligible purposes and included in your work plan and budget. Additionally, expected program income may not be used as matching funds at the time you submit your application. If you choose, you may use a template to summarize the matching funds. The template is available either from your RD State Office or the program website at: www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/delta-health-care-services-grants.

3.3 Other

(a) *Use of Funds*. Your application must propose to use Project Funds for eligible purposes. Eligible Project purposes include: (1) the development of health care services; (2) the development of health education programs; (3) the development of health care job training programs; and (4) the development and expansion of public health-related facilities in the Delta Region.

(b) *Project Eligibility*. The proposed Project must take place within the Delta Region as defined in this Notice. However, the applicant need not propose to serve the entire Delta Region. The Agency will allocate at least ten percent of available funds to support projects located in persistent poverty counties as described in [Section 1.2\(b\)](#). The application must identify if the Project will be located in a persistent poverty county, or counties and the total Project Funds associated with supporting persistent poverty counties.

(c) *Project Input*. Your proposed Project must be developed based on input from local governments, public health care providers, and other entities in the Delta Region.

(d) *Grant Period Eligibility*. All awards are limited to up to a 24-month grant period based upon the complexity of the Project. Your proposed grant period should begin no earlier than September 1, 2026, and should end no later than 24 months following that date. If you receive an award, your grant period will be revised to begin on the actual date of award the date the financial assistance agreement is executed by the Agency, and your grant period end date will be adjusted accordingly. Your Project

activities must begin within 90 days of the date of award. If you request funds for a time period beginning before September 1, 2026, and/or ending later than 24 months from that date, your application will be ineligible. The length of your grant period should be based on your Project's complexity, as indicated in your application work plan.

(e) *Multiple Application Eligibility.* The Consortium, including its members, is limited to submitting one application for funding under this Notice. We will not accept applications from Consortiums that include members who are also members of other Consortiums that have submitted applications for funding under this Notice. If we discover that a Consortium member is a member of multiple Consortiums with applications submitted for funding under this Notice, all applications will be considered ineligible for funding.

(f) *Satisfactory Performance Eligibility.* If you have an existing DHCS award, you must be performing satisfactorily to be considered eligible for a new DHCS award. Satisfactory performance includes being up to date on all financial and performance reports as prescribed in the grant award, and current on tasks and timeframes for utilizing grant and matching funds as approved in the work plan and budget. If you have any unspent grant funds on DHCS awards made prior to FY 2022 your application will not be considered for funding. If your FY 2023 or FY 2024 award has unspent funds of 50 percent or more than what your approved work plan and budget projected at the time your FY 2026 application is evaluated, your application may not be considered for funding. The Agency will verify the performance status of FY 2023 and FY 2024 awards and make a determination after the FY 2026 application period closes.

(g) *Completeness Eligibility.* Your application must provide all the information requested in [Section 4.2](#) of this Notice. Applications lacking sufficient information to determine eligibility and scoring will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for scoring.

(h) *Indirect Costs.* Your negotiated indirect cost rate approval does not need to be included in your application, but you will be required to provide it if a grant is awarded. Approval for indirect costs that are requested in an application without an approved indirect cost rate agreement is at the discretion of the Agency.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 Address to Request Application Package

The application guide and necessary forms are available at [Grants.gov](#). Additionally, the application guide, general program information, and other application tools for this funding opportunity is located at www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/delta-health-care-services-grants. Use of the application guide is strongly recommended to assist you with the application process. You may also contact your RD State Office for more information. Contact information for RD State Offices is located at www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices.

4.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

You must submit your application electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). Your application must contain all required information. To apply, you must follow the instructions for this funding announcement at [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). Please note that we cannot accept applications through mail, courier delivery, in-person delivery, email, or fax. Paper applications are not accepted.

You can locate the Grants.gov downloadable application package for this program by using a keyword, the program name, or the Assistance Listing Number for this program. When you enter the Grants.gov website, you will find information about applying electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

You must submit all application documents electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). Applications must include electronic signatures. Original signatures may be required if funds are awarded. After applying electronically through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov), you will receive an automatic acknowledgement from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number.

The organization submitting the application will be considered the lead entity. The Contact/Program Manager must be associated with the lead entity submitting the application.

Your application must also contain the following required forms and proposal elements:

(a) *Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance*. The application for Federal assistance must be completed by the lead entity as described in [Section 3.1](#) of this Notice. Your application must include your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) Commercial code and expiration date. If you do not include the expiration date and the UEI in your application, it will not be considered for funding. The form must be signed by an authorized representative.

(b) *Form SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs*. This form must be completed and submitted as part of the application package.

(c) *Form SF-424C, Budget Information - Construction Programs*. This form must be completed, signed, and submitted as part of the application package for construction Projects.

(d) *Executive Summary*. A summary of the proposal, not to exceed one page, briefly describing the Project, tasks to be completed, and other relevant information that provides a general overview of the Project must be provided.

(e) *Evidence of Eligibility*. Evidence of the Consortium's eligibility to apply under this Notice must be provided. This section must include a detailed summary demonstrating that the applicant is a Consortium as defined in [Section 1.3](#) of this Notice and explain how each Consortium member meets the definition of an eligible entity as defined in [Section 1.3](#) of this Notice.

(f) *Consortium Agreements*. The application must include a formal written agreement with each Consortium member that addresses the negotiated arrangements for administering the Project to meet Project goals, the Consortium member's responsibilities to comply with administrative, financial, and reporting requirements of the grant, including those necessary to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal regulations and policies, and facilitate a smooth functioning collaborative venture. Under the

agreement, each Consortium member must perform a substantive role in the Project and not merely serve as a conduit of funds to another party or parties. This agreement must be signed by an authorized representative of the lead entity and an authorized representative of each partnering consortium entity.

(g) *Scoring Criteria*. Each of the scoring criteria in this Notice must be addressed in narrative form. Failure to address each scoring criterion will result in the application being determined ineligible.

(h) *Performance Measures*. The Agency has established annual performance measures to evaluate the DHCS program. Estimates on the following performance measures, as part of your application, must be provided:

- (1) Number of businesses assisted;
- (2) Number of jobs created;
- (3) Number of jobs saved; and
- (4) Number of individuals assisted/trained.

It is permissible to have a zero in a performance element. When calculating jobs created, estimates should be based upon actual jobs to be created by your organization as a result of the DHCS funding or actual jobs to be created by businesses as a result of assistance from your organization. When calculating jobs saved, estimates should be based only on actual jobs that would have been lost if your organization did not receive DHCS funding or actual jobs that would have been lost without assistance from your organization.

You can also suggest additional performance elements, for example where job creation or jobs saved may not be a relevant indicator. These additional elements should be specific, measurable performance elements that could be included in an award document.

(i) *Financial Information and Sustainability*. Current financial statements and a narrative description demonstrating sustainability of the Project, all of which show sufficient resources and expertise to undertake and complete the Project and how the Project will be sustained following completion must be provided. Applicants must provide three years of pro-forma financial statements for the Project.

(j) *Evidence of Legal Authority and Existence*. The lead entity must provide evidence of its legal existence and authority to enter into a grant agreement with the Agency and perform the activities proposed under the grant application.

(k) *Service Area Maps*. Maps with sufficient detail to show the area that will benefit from the proposed facilities and services and the location of the facilities improved or purchased with grant funds, if applicable, must be provided.

(l) *Environmental information necessary to support the Agency's environmental finding*.

Required information can be found in [7 CFR part 1b](#). Construction related activities funded by RD must comply with State and local building codes and [7 CFR part 1924](#). Depending on the actions anticipated, an appropriate [7 CFR part 1b](#) compliant environmental document must be submitted and approved, prior to commencement of construction.

4.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

(a) At the time of application, each applicant must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application in accordance with [2 CFR part 25](#). To register in SAM, entities will be required to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Instructions for obtaining the UEI are available at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

(b) Each applicant must maintain an active SAM registration, with current, accurate and complete information, at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal agency.

(c) Each applicant must ensure they complete the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in SAM.

(d) Applicants must provide a valid UEI in its application, unless determined exempt under [2 CFR 25.110](#).

(e) The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all SAM requirements including providing the UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4.4 Submission Dates and Times

Completed applications must be submitted electronically to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time June 1, 2026, to be eligible for funding. Please review the [Grants.gov](#) website at [Grants.gov/register](#) for instructions on the process of registering your organization as soon as possible to ensure you can meet the electronic application deadline. Grants.gov will not accept applications submitted after the deadline. All application documents identified in this Notice are required in the submission to be considered a complete application.

The Agency will not solicit or consider new scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline. The Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification on materials contained in the submitted application. See the application guide for a full discussion of each item comprising a complete application. For complete application requirements, refer to [Section 4.2](#) of this Notice.

4.5 Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, applies to this program. This EO requires that Federal agencies provide opportunities for consultation on proposed assistance with State and local governments. Many states have established a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to facilitate this consultation. For a list of States that maintain a SPOC, please see the USDA Website: <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-chief-financial-officer/federal-financial-assistance-policy/intergovernmental-review>. If your State has a SPOC, you may submit a copy of the application directly for review. Any comments obtained through the SPOC

must be provided to your State Office for consideration as part of your application. If your state has not established a SPOC, you may submit your application directly to the Agency.

4.6 Funding Restrictions

Project funds may not be used for ineligible purposes. In addition, you may not use Project Funds for the following:

- (a) To duplicate current services or to replace or to substitute support previously provided, however, Project Funds may be used to expand the level of effort or a service beyond what is currently being provided;
- (b) To pay for costs to prepare the application for funding under this Notice;
- (c) To pay for costs of the Project incurred prior to the effective date of the period of performance;
- (d) To pay expenses for applicant employee training not directly related to the Project;
- (e) To fund political activities;
- (f) To pay for assistance to any private business enterprise which does not have at least 51 percent ownership by those who are either citizens of the United States or reside in the United States after being legally admitted for permanent residence;
- (g) To pay any judgment or debt owed to the United States;
- (h) To engage in any activities that are considered a Conflict of Interest, as defined by this Notice; or
- (i) To fund any activities prohibited by [2 CFR part 200](#).

In addition, your application will not be considered for funding if it does any of the following:

- (1) Assists a hemp producer without a valid license issued by a State, Tribe or USDA, as applicable, or in accordance with [7 CFR part 990](#).
- (2) Requests more than the maximum grant amount; or
- (3) Proposes ineligible costs that equal more than 10 percent of the Project Funds.

The Agency will consider your application for funding if it includes ineligible costs of 10 percent or less of total Project Funds, if it is determined eligible otherwise. However, if your application is successful, those ineligible costs must be removed and replaced with eligible costs before the Agency will make the grant award or the amount of the grant award will be reduced accordingly. If the Agency cannot determine the percentage of ineligible costs, your application will not be considered for funding.

4.7 Other Submission Requirements

To submit an application, you must follow the instruction for this funding opportunity at [Grants.gov](#). A password is not required to access the website. You should not submit your application in more than one format or in more than one submission. Applications will only be accepted through Grants.gov. Applications will not be accepted if the text is less than 11-point font. Applicants having technical difficulties with submitting an application should contact [Grants.gov](#) directly. Technical

difficulties submitting an application through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) will not be a reason to extend the application deadline.

5.0 APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

All eligible and complete applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Evaluators will base scores only on the information provided or cross-referenced by page number in each individual scoring criterion. DHCS is a competitive program, so you will receive scores based on the quality of your responses. Simply addressing the criteria will not guarantee higher scores. The total points possible for the criteria are 100. The minimum score requirement for funding is 60 points. It is at the Agency's discretion to fund applications with a score of 59 points or less if it is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

(a) *Community Needs and Benefits Derived from the Project (maximum of 30 points)*. A panel of USDA employees will assess how the Project will benefit the residents in the Delta Region. This criterion will be scored based on the documentation in support of the community needs for health services and public health-related facilities and the benefits to people living in the Delta Region derived from the implementation of the proposed Project. It should lead clearly to the identification of the Project participant pool and the target population for the Project and provide convincing links between the Project and the benefits to the community to address its health needs. You must discuss the:

(1) Health care needs/issues/challenges facing the service area and explain how the identified needs/issues/challenges were determined. Discussion should also identify problems faced by the residents in the region.

(2) Proposed assistance to be provided to the service area and how the Project will benefit the residents in the region.

(3) Implementation plan for the Project and provide milestones which are well-defined and can be realistically completed.

(4) Expected outcomes of the proposed Project and how they will be tracked and monitored. Applicants must provide specific, quantifiable outcomes for all proposed project activities. Outcomes must be stated in measurable terms and directly tied to the project's goals and work plan. Each application is required to identify performance metrics, the target values for each metric, and the method that will be used to measure and report progress.

(b) *The Project Management and Organization Capability (maximum of 30 points)*. A panel of USDA employees will evaluate the Consortium's experience, past performance, and accomplishments addressing health care issues to ensure effective Project implementation. This criterion will be scored based on the documentation of the Project's management and organizational capability. You must discuss:

(1) Your organization's management and fiscal structure including well-defined roles for administrators, staff, and established financial management systems.

(2) Relevant qualifications, capabilities, and educational background of the identified key personnel (at a minimum, the Project Manager) who will manage and implement programs.

(3) Your organization's current successful and effective experience (or demonstrated experience within the past five years) addressing the health care issues in the Delta Region.

(4) Your organization's experience managing grant-funded programs.

(5) The extent to which administrative/management costs are balanced with funds designated for the provision of programs and services.

(6) The extent and diversity of eligible entity types within the applicant's Consortium of regional institutions of higher education, academic health and research institutes, and economic development entities located in the Delta Region.

(c) *Work Plan and Budget (maximum of 30 points)*. You must provide a work plan, construction project scope, if applicable and budget that includes the following: (1) the specific activities, such as programs, services, trainings, and/or construction-related activities for a facility to be performed under the Project; (2) the estimated line item costs associated with each activity, including grant funds and other necessary sources of funds; (3) the key personnel who will carry out each activity (including each Consortium member's role); and (4) the specific time frames for completion of each activity.

An eligible start and end date for the Project and for individual Project tasks must be clearly shown and may not exceed Agency specified timeframes for the grant period as referenced in [Section 3.3 \(d\)](#). You must show the source and use of both grant and other contributions for all tasks. Other contributions must be spent at a rate equal to, or in advance of, grant funds.

A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your work plan for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the proposal. Clear and comprehensive work plans detailing all project goals, tasks, timelines, costs, and responsible personnel in a logical and realistic manner will result in a higher score.

(d) *Local Support (maximum 10 points)*. A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your application for local support of the proposed Project. Your discussion on local support should include previous and/or expected local support and plans for coordinating with local government institutions, public health care providers, and other entities in the Delta Region. Evidence of support must be included in your application and should be provided in the form of letters of support from local entities, residents and/or stakeholders.

5.2 Review Selection Processes

Applications will be funded in highest ranking order until the funding limitation has been reached. Applications that cannot be fully funded may be offered partial funding at the Agency's discretion. If your application is ranked and not funded, it will not be carried forward into the next competition. The Agency reserves the right to offer the applicant less than the grant funding requested.

6.0 FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

6.1 Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification for funding by electronic mail, containing instructions on requirements necessary to proceed with execution and performance of the award. Applicants must comply with the terms of the award, including meeting all applicable statutes and regulations before the grant award can be approved and funded.

If you are not selected for funding, you will be notified in writing by electronic mail and informed of any review and appeal rights. Funding of successfully appealed applications will be limited to available FY 2026 funding.

6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

(a) *Civil Rights*. All awards of Federal financial assistance made under this NOFO are subject to applicable civil rights laws, which may include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1973, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

(b) *Build America, Buy America (BABAA)*. Awardees that are Non-Federal Entities, defined pursuant to [2 CFR 200.1](#) as any State, local government, Indian Tribe, Institution of Higher Education, or nonprofit organization, shall be governed by the requirements of Section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58), and its implementing regulations at [2 CFR part 184](#). Any requests for waiver of these requirements must be submitted pursuant to USDA's guidance available online at usda.gov/ocfo/federal-financial-assistance-policy/USDABuyAmericaWaiver.

(c) Additional requirements that apply to grantees selected for this program can be found in 2 CFR parts [25](#), [170](#), [180](#), [200](#), [400](#), [415](#), [417](#), [418](#), and [421](#); and [48 CFR 31.2](#), and successor regulations to these parts. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first tier subawards and executive compensation (see [2 CFR part 170](#)). You will be required to have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act reporting requirements (see [2 CFR 170.200\(b\)](#)), unless you are exempt under [2 CFR 170.110\(b\)](#). These regulations may be obtained at ecfr.gov.

The following additional requirements apply to grantees selected for this program:

- (a) Execution of an Agency approved Financial Assistance Agreement.
- (b) Acceptance of a written Letter of Conditions.
- (c) Submission of Form RD 1940-1, Request for Obligation of Funds.
- (d) Submission of Certification for Contracts, Grants and Loans.
- (e) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities if applicable.

6.3 Reporting

After grant approval and through grant completion, you will be required to provide the following:

(a) A SF-425, Federal Financial Report, and a project performance report will be required on a semiannual basis (due 30 working days after the end of the semiannual period). For the purposes of this grant, semiannual periods end on June 30th and December 31st. The project performance reports shall include a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for that period.

(b) Reasons why established objectives were not met, if applicable.

(c) Reasons for any problems, delays, or adverse conditions, if any, which have affected or will affect attainment of overall project objectives, prevent meeting time schedules or objectives, or preclude the attainment of particular objectives during established time periods. This disclosure shall be accompanied by a statement of the action taken or planned to resolve the situation.

(d) Objectives and timetable established for the next reporting period.

(e) A final project and financial status report within 120 days after the expiration or termination of the grant.

(f) Outcome project performance reports and final deliverables.

(g) An annual audit in accordance with [2 CFR part 200 subpart F](#) unless the recipient expends less than \$1,000,000 in total Federal awards during its fiscal year.

7.0 FEDERAL AWARD AGENCY CONTACTS

For general questions about this funding opportunity, please contact your USDA RD State Office. Contact information for RD State Offices can be found at rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices. You may also contact Ann Stahl, Business Loan and Grant Analyst, Intermediary Branch, Program Management Division, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250; or email ann.stahl@usda.gov; or call 567-245-3383 for further information.

8.0 OTHER INFORMATION

8.1 Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), OMB must approve all “collection of information” as a requirement for “answers to *** identical reporting or recordkeeping requirements imposed on ten or more persons ***” (44 U.S.C. 3502(3)(A)). The Agency has concluded that the reporting requirements contained in this rule/funding announcement will involve less than 10 persons and do not require approval under the provisions of the Act.

8.2 National Environmental Policy Act

All recipients under this Notice are subject to the requirements of [7 CFR part 1b](#). The Agency will review each grant application to determine its compliance with [7 CFR part 1b](#). The applicant may be asked to provide additional information or documentation to assist the Agency with this determination.

8.3 Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

All applicants, in accordance with [2 CFR part 25](#), must be registered in SAM and have a UEI number as stated in [Section 4.3](#) of this notice. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive total compensation in accordance [2 CFR part 170](#).

8.4 Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations.

(a) Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at, and subject to the protections and requirements of, this part and any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements, including 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq. USDA will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

(b) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the Government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

(c) A faith-based organization may not use direct Federal financial assistance from USDA to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except when consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and any other applicable requirements. An organization receiving Federal financial assistance also may not, in providing services funded by USDA, or in their outreach activities related to such services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.

8.5 Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-assistant-

[secretary-civil-rights/how-file-program-discrimiint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(a) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights,
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410,
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(b) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(c) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.