

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (ADECA)
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
ALABAMA RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM
RURAL WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

I. Program Overview

Purpose

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program was authorized by Public Law 119-21 on July 4, 2025. The RHT Program is a \$50 billion federal initiative planned to establish funding to strengthen rural hospitals and modernize the healthcare ecosystem for all 50 states. The RHT Program is designed to transform the rural healthcare ecosystem along five strategic axes: supporting rural health innovations, improving provider sustainability, developing the local healthcare workforce, expanding care delivery models, and testing technology-based solutions.

The Alabama Rural Health Transformation Program (ARHTP) is Alabama’s broader statewide framework for advancing the goals of the Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program through coordinated, state-designed strategies, initiatives, and investments intended to improve rural healthcare access, strengthen quality and delivery systems, support innovation, and promote long-term sustainability and accountability in rural communities. ARHTP is focused on transformational, practical approaches that strengthen provider networks, improve access to appropriate services closer to home, and support more resilient models of rural healthcare delivery across Alabama.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), on behalf of the ARHTP, invites eligible applicants to apply for funding under the Rural Workforce Initiative. The purpose of the Rural Workforce Initiative is to strengthen the healthcare workforce in rural Alabama by increasing the number, distribution, and quality of healthcare professionals through expanded training, education, recruitment, and retention strategies, including support for remote and accelerated training programs, graduate medical education expansion, and incentive-based efforts to encourage long-term rural practice. This NOFO establishes the application requirements, review framework, and award parameters for competitive funding designed to address critical workforce shortages and improve access to care in rural communities across the state.

The Rural Workforce Initiative is intended to support practical, scalable workforce strategies that strengthen training, recruitment, and retention of healthcare professionals serving rural Alabama. Consistent with the State’s ARHTP framework, this initiative supports projects involving the creation, expansion, implementation, or operationalization of workforce development, training, and incentive models under one or more of the defined strategy categories described below.

Projects funded under this NOFO must serve rural Alabama, align with at least one of the defined Rural Workforce Initiative strategy categories listed below, and clearly demonstrate how the proposed project advances one or more of the initiative goals identified in this section. Applicants do not need to be physically located in a rural area to apply, but each proposal must clearly demonstrate that the project is specifically designed to provide a direct benefit to rural Alabama communities, providers, students, trainees, or patients.

Defined Strategy Categories

- 1) **GME Program:** Projects that establish new or expand existing Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs in rural areas to increase physician training capacity.

- 2) **EMS Workforce:** Projects that develop and implement remote training opportunities for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics to expand access to workforce training in rural areas.
- 3) **Workforce Education:** Projects that provide free or reduced-cost education or training support to healthcare practitioners, dentists, and/or dental hygienists which are tied to rural service commitments.
- 4) **Recruitment Incentives:** Providing incentives tied to rural service commitments that recruit healthcare practitioners, dentists, and dental hygienists to relocate to rural areas.

Initiative Goals

- 1) Increase the number of healthcare professionals serving rural Alabama.
- 2) Strengthen rural healthcare workforce capacity through education, training, recruitment, and retention strategies.
- 3) Expand access to workforce training and preparation opportunities that support rural healthcare careers.
- 4) Encourage healthcare professionals to train and practice in rural Alabama through incentive models and rural service commitment approaches.
- 5) Promote scalable, sustainable workforce investments that strengthen long-term provider pipelines in rural communities.

Note: Eligibility requirements, allowable costs and application instructions, are summarized in the sections that follow in this NOFO.

II. Eligibility and Funding Structure

Eligible Applicant

Eligible applicants under this NOFO may include hospitals, health systems, EMS agencies, educational institutions, training providers, and other healthcare providers capable of carrying out an eligible Rural Workforce Initiative project and complying with all applicable award requirements. To receive a subaward, applicants must have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and maintain an active SAM.gov registration throughout the life of this award.

Eligibility will vary depending on the strategy category and proposed activity. For example, projects under the GME Program may be most appropriately led by hospitals or health systems sponsoring or proposing to sponsor GME programs. Projects under EMS Workforce may be most appropriately led by EMS agencies, training providers, or educational institutions. Projects under Workforce Education or Recruitment Incentives may be most appropriately led by rural healthcare providers or educational institutions capable of administering practitioner incentive models or education and training support tied to rural service commitments.

Applicants may submit more than one application under this NOFO if each application is for a separate and clearly defined project. Each application must independently satisfy eligibility, scope, budget, and documentation requirements.

Funding Purpose

Funding under this NOFO is intended to support the implementation, expansion, or operationalization of eligible Rural Workforce Initiative projects that advance one or more initiative goals and fall within one or more of the defined strategy categories identified in Section I. Depending on the proposed strategy and scope of work, funding may support activities related to establishment or expansion of GME programs in rural areas, development and implementation of remote training opportunities for EMTs and paramedics, recruitment incentives for healthcare practitioners serving rural communities tied to rural service commitments, and free or reduced education or training support tied to rural service commitments.

All funding under this opportunity is expected to be distributed through a competitive subaward process. Selected applicants will be treated as subrecipients and will be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and programmatic requirements associated with the award.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Funds awarded under this NOFO may be used only for costs directly related to the approved project and consistent with the approved application, budget, and scope of work. Depending on the proposed project, allowable costs may include program development and implementation costs related to establishing or expanding GME programs in rural areas; accreditation support, faculty support, resident training expenses, and other approved GME-related costs; curriculum development, virtual training platforms, instructional delivery, training equipment, and other costs directly related to remote EMT or paramedic training; recruitment incentives, relocation assistance, and retention payments designed to recruit and retain practitioners, dentists, and dental hygienists in rural areas; tuition assistance, stipends, training-related expenses, and other approved education or training support tied to rural service commitments; contracted services directly related to project implementation; and other direct project costs necessary to carry out the approved scope of work. Any incentives for healthcare practitioners or incentives for ongoing education opportunities funded under this NOFO must be tied to a minimum five-year rural service commitment.

Unallowable costs include costs that are not compliant with Title 2 CFR 200, CMS RHT Program requirements, or the terms and conditions under ADECA's Cooperative Agreement RHTCMS332060, and costs that are not directly related to the approved project, outside the approved scope of work, or incurred outside the approved period of performance. Administrative costs and indirect costs are not allowable under this NOFO and may not be included in the proposed budget or charged to the award.

Funding Availability

ADECA anticipates making approximately \$25,000,000 available under this NOFO, consistent with the approved Rural Workforce Initiative budget. ADECA intends to make awards under all strategy categories described in Section I. The number, size, and distribution of awards within each strategy category will depend on application quality, applicant readiness, geographic distribution, and other factors identified in this NOFO.

All awards under this NOFO are subject to ADECA's receipt of funds under the RHT Program. ADECA anticipates that additional funding opportunities may be available in future program years; however, an award under this NOFO for the initial funding period does not guarantee the award of funds in future years. ADECA will provide additional information regarding the structure and requirements of any future funding opportunities at a later time. Applicants should limit the scope and amount of funding requested under this NOFO to activities and expenditures that can be completed or incurred during the period of performance.

Any funding amounts, subaward counts, or average award assumptions described by ADECA are planning estimates only and do not guarantee specific award amounts or numbers of awards. ADECA reserves the right to adjust individual award amounts, make partial awards, or decline to make an award to a particular applicant based on application quality, applicant readiness, geographic distribution, or other considerations identified in this NOFO.

Federal Award Information

Funding under this NOFO is supported by federal funds provided under Cooperative Agreement RHTCMS332060. CMS is the federal awarding agency for the RHT Program, and ADECA is serving as the pass-through entity responsible for administering these funds under this NOFO. Awards made under

this NOFO will be subject to applicable federal and state requirements, program guidance, and the terms and conditions of the applicable subaward agreement.

Awards made under this NOFO will be subject to all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, rules, and guidance, including but not limited to 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards), the terms and conditions of the applicable federal award, including requirements and guidance issued by CMS for the RHT Program, applicable Alabama law and state procurement requirements, public disclosure of amount and percentage of federal grant funding required by the Steven's Amendment, and the terms and conditions of the subaward agreement issued by ADECA. Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that proposed activities, costs, procurement actions, contracts, and project administration practices comply with all applicable requirements.

Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance for awards made under this NOFO will begin at the time of award and end on July 31, 2027, unless otherwise specified by ADECA in the award documents or subsequent guidance. Applicants should propose projects that are feasible within this implementation period and should clearly identify any critical dependencies, procurement lead times, staffing needs, or coordination requirements that may affect readiness and completion.

Subaward Structure

Entities selected for funding under this NOFO will receive subawards from ADECA and will be classified as subrecipients. A subrecipient is an entity that receives a subaward to carry out part of a federal program and that is responsible for programmatic decision-making and compliance requirements applicable to its portion of the award.

As subrecipients, awardees will be expected to:

- Carry out the approved scope of work in accordance with the subaward terms and applicable program requirements.
- Use funds only for allowable, properly documented, and award-related costs.
- Maintain appropriate financial management systems, internal controls, and records sufficient to support expenditures, performance, and compliance.
- Comply with applicable federal and state requirements, including procurement, reporting, monitoring, and audit requirements associated with the subaward.
- Provide timely financial, programmatic, and other information requested by ADECA to support oversight, reporting, and compliance activities.

Failure to comply with applicable subrecipient requirements may result in corrective action, disallowance of costs, recoupment of funds, or other remedies permitted under the subaward agreement.

Funding Disbursement

Subrecipients will receive funds on a modified reimbursement basis. To support reimbursement, subrecipients must submit monthly payment requests through the ARHTP portal as Requests for Reimbursement (RFRs), and each request must be based on documented, allowable costs that have been incurred within the approved budget, scope of work, and period of performance under the subaward agreement.

Reimbursement requests must include supporting documentation appropriate to the expenditure type, which may include invoices, receipts, proof of payment, payroll records, contracts, purchase orders, procurement records, or other documentation to demonstrate that the requested costs are allowable,

properly obligated where required, and attributable to the approved project. Supporting documentation requirements may vary depending on the nature of the expenditure. ADECA will review reimbursement requests for allowability, completeness, and compliance with applicable award requirements before disbursing funds. Certain expenditures, including procurement-related costs, may be subject to additional procurement procedures or documentation requirements before reimbursement may be requested. Selected applicants will receive additional reimbursement instructions through the ARHTP portal and, where applicable, will receive procurement guidance and training as part of award administration. Subrecipients must maintain records supporting all obligations, expenditures, and reimbursement requests and must provide such records to ADECA upon request.

III. Reporting Requirements

ADECA will monitor subrecipient performance through review of financial and programmatic reports, performance information, reimbursement documentation, and other materials related to the approved project. ADECA will use the results of pre-award risk assessment, together with project-specific and performance-related considerations, to inform the level and type of monitoring, oversight, and follow-up applied to a particular subrecipient or project. Monitoring may include desk-based review, follow-up requests for additional information, and on-site monitoring activities to assess programmatic performance, financial management, compliance, and progress toward approved objectives. As part of ADECA’s oversight responsibilities, subrecipients may also be required to participate in monthly status meetings, monitoring calls, or in-person or virtual presentations regarding project implementation, expenditures, performance, and other matters related to the award pursuant to the subaward’s scope of work. Reporting requirements under this NOFO are intended to support ADECA’s oversight responsibilities, subrecipient monitoring, and any reporting obligations associated with the RHT Program.

Subrecipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports and a final report in a format and on a schedule prescribed by ADECA. In addition, subrecipients may be required to respond to follow-up questions or provide supplemental information requested by ADECA to support oversight, compliance review, performance monitoring, or other program administration needs.

Quarterly Progress Reports

Quarterly progress reports must provide sufficient information for ADECA to assess project implementation status, use of funds, and progress toward approved objectives. Subrecipients will be expected to track and report performance information relevant to the approved project, including project-specific outputs, implementation status, service delivery progress, and other indicators demonstrating progress toward the approved objectives and the Rural Health Initiative goals. Performance reporting must be tied to the scope of work and approved measures, and sufficiently detailed, as deemed by ADECA, to assess whether the project is being implemented as proposed and achieving meaningful progress. Quarterly reports must be submitted according to the reporting schedule below for the first 4 quarters with similar cadence in future periods.

| Report Type | Reporting Period | Due Date |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Quarter 1 Progress Report | First reporting quarter | 01/10/2027 |
| Quarter 2 Progress Report | Second reporting quarter | 04/10/2027 |
| Quarter 3 Progress Report | Third reporting quarter | 07/10/2027 |
| Quarter 4 Progress Report | Fourth reporting quarter | 10/10/2027 |

At a minimum, quarterly reports will include, as applicable:

- Expenditures to date by approved budget category.

- Progress against the approved scope of work, workplan milestones, and implementation timeline, including any delays, risks, or challenges affecting project execution.
- All performance information, output measures, or outcome indicators relevant to the approved project and the initiative goals it is intended to advance.
- Updates regarding staffing issues, procurement delays, partner participation issues, or other developments that may affect performance, sustainability, or compliance.

Final Report

At the conclusion of the period of performance, each subrecipient will be required to submit a final report and any related closeout materials necessary for ADECA to complete subaward closeout. Final reporting and closeout requirements will include but are not limited to, as applicable:

- A summary of activities completed under the approved project, including the status of major deliverables and implementation milestones.
- A cumulative summary of expenditures and use of funds.
- All performance and outcome information associated with the project.
- A discussion of implementation challenges, lessons learned, and sustainability considerations, as applicable.
- Information regarding equipment, inventory, or other funded assets acquired under the subaward.
- Any required certifications, attestations, reconciliations, or supporting documentation related to final financial reconciliation, use of funds, completion of the approved project, equipment or asset reporting, and compliance with applicable award requirements.
- Information needed to resolve any outstanding monitoring, compliance, audit, or other administrative matters related to the subaward.

ADECA will provide final report and closeout instructions, including applicable submission requirements and deadlines, as part of award administration. Subrecipients may also be required to submit closeout materials in advance of the overall program end date in order to allow adequate time for review, reconciliation, and final fund administration.

Report Format and Timeliness

All reports and requested supporting information must be submitted in the format prescribed by ADECA and must be accurate, complete, and timely. Subrecipients must maintain documentation sufficient to support reported expenditures, activities, performance information, and other matters addressed in required reports.

Failure to Report

Failure to submit required reports or supporting information in an accurate, complete, and timely manner may result in delayed reimbursements, corrective action, additional monitoring, or other remedies permitted under the subaward agreement.

IV. Application Information

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted through the ARHTP portal, which will become available on or about June 3, 2026, and can be accessed through the ARHTP website. The portal will contain instructions as to how applicants should complete the application process. During the application period, applicants are encouraged to review the program website for FAQs, updates, announcements, and other guidance related to this NOFO and the application process.

Application Preparation and Technical Assistance

ADECA may provide additional technical assistance to support applicants' understanding of this NOFO and general application expectations. Technical assistance may include website-posted guidance, FAQs, responses to submitted questions, or other forms of applicant support identified by ADECA. The program website will also include a form for reporting technical issues related to application access or use of the application system. Any clarifications or additional guidance provided during the application period will be shared through the program website so that all applicants have access to the same information. Neither technical assistance nor compliance with instructions received in connection with technical assistance guarantee funding or modify the terms of this NOFO.

Submission Deadline: June 26, 2026, at 5:00 PM Central Time

Each application must be complete at the time of submission and must include all required information, attachments, certifications, and supporting documentation. Incomplete applications may be deemed non-responsive and may not be considered for funding.

Award Timeline and Post-Selection Process

Following the application submission deadline, ADECA will conduct eligibility and completeness review, substantive review, and award determinations. Applicants should plan for awards to be announced approximately 3–4 weeks after the submission deadline, subject to the volume of applications received, review needs, and any required approvals. After selection, applicants may be required to complete additional award administration steps before funds are available, such as responding to follow-up requests, submitting final documentation, completing any required risk assessment or pre-award review materials, and executing a subaward agreement with ADECA. Selected applicants will also receive further instructions regarding project start-up, reporting, reimbursement procedures, and other award administration requirements. This timeline is provided for planning purposes only and may be adjusted by ADECA.

Required Documentation

Applicants must submit all required documentation. Required documentation will include, as applicable:

- Current Certificate of Existence from the Alabama Secretary of State dated within 30 days of the application.
- Current SAM.gov registration information.
- Completed and signed IRS Form W-9.
- Alabama Vendor Disclosure Statement.
- Written policies and procedures related to conflicts of interest, financial management, internal controls, procurement, and written standards of conduct required by applicable federal requirements.
- Financial statements for the last three completed fiscal years. If audited financial statements are unavailable, the applicant must provide the most recent internally prepared, compiled, or reviewed annual financial statements and explain why audited statements are unavailable.
- Single Audit or program-specific audit reports for the last three complete fiscal years.
- Any audit findings, questioned costs, management letters, or corrective action plans related to the financial statements or audit materials submitted.
- Project plan completed using the template provided by ADECA.
- Completed grant budget workbook template and budget narrative, including any required supplemental schedules.
- Documentation supporting any matching funds or in-kind contributions identified in the application.

- Any initiative- or project-specific documentation required by ADECA, such as participation agreements, partner commitments, or other supporting materials necessary to evaluate the proposed project.

ADECA may require additional documentation, clarifications, or corrections as part of the application review process.

Application Review

Applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for completeness, responsiveness, and eligibility. Applications determined to be incomplete, non-responsive, or ineligible may be removed from further consideration.

Applications that satisfy threshold review requirements will proceed to substantive review using the criteria summarized below.

| Section | Subsection | Points |
|------------------|--|---------------|
| Design | Need, Rurality, and Service Gaps | 15 |
| | Project Design and Strategy Alignment | 20 |
| | Comparative Long-Term Viability | 10 |
| | Budget Narrative | 5 |
| | Total | 50 |
| Execution | Implementation Plan and Readiness | 30 |
| | Management Capacity and Organizational Readiness | 5 |
| | Outputs and Outcomes | 15 |
| | Total | 50 |
| Total | | 100 |

As part of the application review and pre-award process, ADECA will conduct a risk assessment for applicants being considered for funding. The risk assessment will be based on factors such as the applicant’s financial stability, prior experience managing federal or other public funds, audit history, internal controls, procurement and financial management systems, history of performance, and other information relevant to the applicant’s capacity to carry out the proposed project in compliance with applicable requirements.

In making award decisions, ADECA may also consider overall availability of funds and geographic distribution.

V. Questions

Applicants should check www.alabamarhtp.com regularly for program updates, announcements, and additional guidance. Any questions regarding the program or application process should be submitted to info@alabamarhtp.com.

VI. FAQs

We encourage applicants to review the RHT Program FAQs before submitting applications. The FAQs provide further guidance and clarification on program requirements, eligibility, application expectations, and other common questions. Upon publication, applicants may access FAQs here: [Rural Health Transformation Program FAQs](#).

As we continue to receive stakeholder questions and feedback, ADECA will publish state-specific FAQs, expected to be released in June 2026.