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# Applicant Conference

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**Request for Applications No. HHS0015180**  
**Rural Hospital Debt Reduction**  
**March 27, 2025, at 10:30 AM CT**





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# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Housekeeping Items
3. Project Overview & Scope
4. Funding Stream Updates & Tracking
5. Grant Term
6. Program Requirements & Allowable Activities
7. Prohibitions
8. Closing Comments



# Introductions

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## Speakers

- **John Norton**, Grants Specialist  
Sole Point of Contact for RFA  
Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS)
- **April Ferrino**, Director, Rural Hospital Finance & Coordination
- **Laurie Anderson**, Grant Specialist, Rural Hospital Finance & Coordination



# Procurement Roles

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## Procurement Team

- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) is responsible for all procurement and solicitation activities.
- Office of Rural Hospital Finance & Coordination is responsible for contract management activities throughout the life of the Grant Agreements including contract development, execution, and monitoring.
- Office of Rural Hospital Finance & Coordination is also responsible for project scope, requirements, performance, and results.



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# Schedule of Events

## Deadline for Submitting Questions

March 31, 2025, by 5:00 PM

Any questions arising prior to the question deadline must be submitted in writing to [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov)

## Tentative Date Answers to Questions Posted

Estimated: *April 7, 2025*

## Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Applications

April 24, 2025, by 10:30 AM

## Anticipated Grant Agreements Start Date

August 2025



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# Solicitation Access

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HHSC will post all official communication regarding this RFA on the following website, including the notice of award:

- The HHS Grants website is located at <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/pcs/rfa.cfm>

HHSC reserves the right to cancel this RFA, or to make no award if it determines such action is in the best interest of the State.

HHSC may, in its discretion, reject any and all applications or portions thereof.



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# Sole Point of Contact

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- All communications relating to this RFA must be directed in writing to John Norton, Sole Point of Contact at [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov).
- All communications between applicants and HHSC staff members, or any other HHS staff members, concerning this RFA are **strictly prohibited**.
- Failure to comply with these requirements may result in application disqualification.



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# Executive Summary of Program

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The purpose of this program is to provide time-limited financial support during the term of the Grant Agreement for qualified rural hospitals to reduce their debt that will improve the financial stability of the hospital.



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# Available Funding

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- Estimated Funding: \$6,250,000
- Estimated Total number of awards: 25
- Estimated Maximum Award Amount: \$250,000



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# Grant Term

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- Anticipated Project Start Date: August 1, 2025
- Project End Date: August 31, 2026



# Eligible Applicants

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- Be classified as a Rural Hospital in Texas that has debt



# Eligible Applicants

## *Section 1.2 – Definitions*

### **Rural means:**

(A) is located in a Texas county with 68,750 or fewer persons according to the 2020 U.S. Census;

(B) is designated by Medicare as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH), a Sole Community Hospital (SCH), or a Rural Referral Center (RRC) that is not located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget; or

(C) meets all of the following:

- (i) has 100 or fewer beds;
- (ii) is designated by Medicare as a CAH, [an] SCH, or [an] RRC; and
- (iii) is located in an MSA.



# Application- Narrative

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- Described in *Section 6.2, Narrative Proposal Page Limit and Formatting*
- Cannot exceed two (2) pages
- Be organized in a logical manner and address all information as set forth in *Section 6.1, Narrative Proposal*
- Be properly paginated, formatted as an 8 ½" x 11" page with 1-inch margins



# Application- Narrative

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- Use a 12 point or larger font
- If a font smaller than 12 point is used, the text when printed on 8 ½" x 11" paper must not require magnification to be legible. *Times New Roman font is preferred.*
- Do not include other documents embedded as electronic files within the text and do not include hypertext links.
- Submit as an electronic file, should be pre-formatted for printing on 8 ½" x 11" paper.



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# Application- Narrative Content

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1. An explanation of how the Rural Hospital accumulated debt;
2. As of the Rural Hospital's fiscal year 2023, the total amount of debt, type of debt, its origins, duration of debt, percentage of debt service that was owed and paid in fiscal year 2023;
3. An explanation of how the debt is influencing the financial stability of the Rural Hospital, including how it impacts the Rural Hospital's operations; and
4. A description of the impact this grant would have on the improvement of the financial stability of the Rural Hospital.



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# Application- Form C Financial Information

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- Using Form C attached to this RFA, Applicants shall provide the requested Financial Information of the rural hospital.
- Applicant must provide supplemental documentation (e.g., income statements, profit and loss accounts, balance sheets) to verify the financial information reported in Form C.
- Applications must be submitted by 10:30 AM on Thursday, April 24, 2025.



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# Specific Selection Criteria

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Narrative Application Scoring Criteria – *Section 9.4 – Evaluation Criteria*

Qualified Applications for Debt Reduction shall be evaluated based upon:

1. Narrative (70%) 
2. Financial Information (30%)



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# Submission of Forms & Exhibits

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## *Section XIII – Submission Checklist*

1. Applicant Information – Form A
2. Narrative Proposal – Form B
3. Debt Reduction Application – Form C
4. Supplemental Documentation to support financial information
5. Exhibits to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted
  - i. Exhibit A – HHS Solicitations Affirmations v. 2.6
  - ii. Exhibit F – Exceptions Form (if applicable)
  - iii. Exhibit G-2 – Data Use Agreement Attachment 2
  - iv. Addenda



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# Evaluation Process

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A three-step selection process will be used:

1. Eligibility screening based upon *Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements*
2. Evaluation based upon *Section 9.4, Evaluation Criteria*
3. Final Selection is based upon *Section 10.1, Final Selection.*



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# Questions and Answers

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All questions **must** be submitted in writing to the Sole Point of Contact using the formatting below from the RFA, Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification:

- A. RFA Number
- B. Section or Paragraph number;
- C. Page Number;
- D. Exhibit, Attachment and Section, or Paragraph number;
- E. Page Number;
- F. Language, Topic, Section Heading; and
- G. Question;

Submit via email to: [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov) **by 5:00 PM on March 31, 2025.**



# Question Deadline

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- Questions are due by **5:00 PM on Monday, March 31, 2025.**
- Questions received after this deadline cannot be responded to.
- An addendum will be posted to the HHS Grants Website with the answers to questions **on or after April 7, 2025.**



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# Delivery for Submission Option

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Applicants must correctly deliver Solicitation Responses by one of the methods below:

- **Submission Option #1:** Applicant shall submit the application through the HHS Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures identified in Exhibit E, Online Bid Room.
- **Submission Option #2 with USB Drives:** Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives to the correct mailing address, which is dependent upon the mailing method identified in this section (see mailing address options in the RFA, Section 8.3, Required Submission Method).



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# Closing Comments

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- Applicants are responsible for meeting the RFA requirements, including any addendums.
- All Addendums must be signed and submitted with the original application.
- Applicants must check the HHS Grants website frequently for any addendums that may have been added to this solicitation.



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## HHS Grants Website

The link is: <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/PCS/HHS0015180/>





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# Thank you!

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