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# Applicant Conference

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**Request for Applications No. HHS0015545**  
**2-1-1 Texas Information & Referral Network (TIRN)**  
**March 25, 2025, at 10:30 AM CST**





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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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## Speaker

- **Michelle Boyd**, Contract Administrative Manager

Sole Point of Contact for RFA

Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS)




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# 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.
- 2-1-1 TIRN is responsible for contract management activities throughout the life of the Grant Agreements including, contract development, execution, monitoring, annual reconciliation, and grant closeout activities.
- 2-1-1 TIRN is responsible for project scope, service delivery requirements, program performance, results, and monitoring. 



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# Schedule of Events

Event	Date/Time
Funding Announcement Posting	March 20, 2025
Applicant Conference - Attendance Optional	March 25, 2025, at 10:30am CST
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification	March 28, 2025, by 5pm CST
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted	April 2, 2025
<b>Deadline for Submission of Applications</b>	<b>April 17, 2025, by 10:30am CST</b>
Anticipated Notice of Award	April 2026
Anticipated Project Start Date	September 1, 2026



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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 **Michelle Boyd, Sole Point of Contact at [michelle.boyd@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:michelle.boyd@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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# RFA Purpose

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This funding opportunity invites grant applications requesting funding for the 2-1-1 TIRN. The funds will be provided to the **AIC** for service delivery and operations. The purpose of this program is to provide I&R to governmental and community programs and services. Service delivery and operations for I&R will be provided by phone, web-based chat, outreach, and online at <https://www.211texas.org/>.

The goal is to connect the public in Texas with resources, encourage prevention, and foster self-sufficiency. The outcomes of the information and referral services provided include decreased unmet needs; accessible disaster response, participation in special projects and/or initiatives; increased outreach and marketing for 2-1-1 TIRN and community resource awareness; and the provision of information necessary to support community planning activities, internal analysis, and advocacy.



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# RFA Purpose

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## *Continued*

The 2-1-1 TIRN is committed to continuous improvement of the efficiency and quality of services. In addition to providing services during normal operations and public emergency events, AICs also participate in special initiatives and collaborative projects that serve Texas residents. The Applicant must demonstrate the capacity to expand their programming to accommodate these types of initiatives.




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# Program Background

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HHSC administers TIRN, which is comprised of 25 Regional locations that provide general I&R services to individuals in Texas. Information and referral services are provided 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week, 365 days a year. HHSC developed the 2-1-1 TIRN which provides a single, statewide number and database for consumers to dial for information about community resources. Each multi-county regional AIC is responsible for collecting, providing, and updating accurate, well-organized, and accessible information from State and local HHS programs.

Individuals and families seeking I&R can contact their local AIC by dialing "2-1-1" which is the national abbreviated dialing code for free access to HHS I&R. Individuals can also access information through the TIRN by visiting the public website at: <https://www.211texas.org/>. 



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# Program Requirements

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## Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN)

To meet the mission and objectives of the 2-1-1 TIRN program, Grantee shall meet the following requirements of this Solicitation, and the requirements set forth in **Exhibit C, Grant Requirements and Exhibit J, Additional Provisions-Grant Funding c. 1.0.**



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# Program Requirements

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## Emergency Services Escalation Centers (ESEC)

If an applicant would like to be considered an ESEC Applicant eligible for evaluations, Applicant shall meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. ESECs play key roles in disaster/event-related situations by quickly ramping up to increase their call handling capacity. As part of this RFA, additional funding will be awarded to multiple Applicants that demonstrate the capacity to conduct the AIC operations described in **Exhibit D, Emergency Services and Escalation Centers Grant Requirements**, as well as the additional capacity necessary to perform the functions of an ESEC. See **Exhibit S, AIC Regions and Estimated Funding Amount** to review funds available for ESECs.



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# Program Requirements

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## *ESEC Continued*

- B. Only Applicants that apply to be an AIC will be considered for ESEC funding. HHSC will not accept, review, or award applications for standalone ESECs. HHSC may at its sole discretion, redirect the funding to meet the ESEC business needs.



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# Application Screening Requirements

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In order to be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluation, Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. Be a nonprofit or governmental organization.
- B. Applicants must either be fully accredited by [Inform USA](#), formerly known as Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) or currently be in reaccreditation status from [Inform USA](#) at the time of application, referenced in the **Exhibit R, Inform USA Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral v.10.0.**



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# Application Screening Requirements

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- C. Applicants must have demonstrated a minimum of three (3) years of experience providing I&R, or similar, services.
- D. Applicants must provide three (3) years of audited financial reports and evidence of adequately capital within their provided Certified Public Accountant's Statement of Tangible Net Worth for the most current State Fiscal Year.
- E. Applicant must submit a Certificate of Fact-Status or Certificate of Good Standing from the [Secretary of State](#) as evidence that the Applicant is authorized to do business in the State of Texas.



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# Application Screening Requirements

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F. Applicant's staff members, including the executive director, must not serve as voting members on Applicant's governing board.

Applicants must meet these requirements throughout the application process and, if selected for a Grant Award, must continue to meet them throughout the Grant term. HHSC expressly reserves the right to review and analyze the documentation submitted and request additional documentation to determine the Applicant's eligibility to compete for a Grant Award.





# Grant Term

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The initial term of the Grant Agreement is **September 1, 2026**, through **August 31, 2029**. The System Agency may, at its sole discretion, extend the term for up to two (2) additional years, not to exceed a five-year Grant Term.

The initial term will include three Project Periods as follows:

- **First Project Period:** September 1, 2026, through August 31, 2027;
- **Second Project Period:** September 1, 2027, through August 31, 2028;
- **Third Project Period:** September 1, 2028, through August 31, 2029.



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# Available Grant Funding

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The total amount of state and federal funding available for the Texas 2-1-1 TIRN grant program is \$56,213,574.60 for the entire Project Period.

The total amount of Federal funding is \$28,300,724.13 and State funding is \$27,912,850.47.


It is the System Agency's intention to make multiple awards to Applicants that successfully demonstrates that they can implement an effect program that qualifies for state and federal funding.



# Grant Funding Prohibitions

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**Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:**

- A. Any use of grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-grant sources.
- B. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization.
- C. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. § 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly.
- D. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation of, an elected or appointed government official. 



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# Grant Funding Prohibitions

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## *Continued*

- E. Vehicles for general agency use; to be allowable, vehicles must have a specific use related to Project objectives or activities.
- F. Entertainment, amusement, or social activities and any associated costs including but not limited to admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity, or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose.



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# Grant Funding Prohibitions

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## *Continued*

- G. Costs of promotional items, and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs.
- H. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or where such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose.
- I. Membership dues for individuals.
- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the grant Project.



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# Grant Funding Prohibitions

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## *Continued*

- K. Any activities related to fundraising.
- L. Equipment and other capital expenditures such as capital improvements, property losses and expenses, real estate purchases, mortgage payments, remodeling, the acquisition or construction of facilities, or other items that are unallowable pursuant to 2 CFR 200.439; Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state, or local law; and
- M. Other unallowable costs as listed under TxGMS, Appendix 7, Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart and/or 2 CFR 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, where applicable.



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# Application Exhibits and Forms Submissions

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The Application must be organized in the order below and include each required section and the forms and exhibits in accordance with the RFA, Article XIII, Submission Checklist.

## A. Administrative Information

1. Form A: Face Page – Applicant Information
2. Form B: Administrative Information
3. Form B-1: Governmental Entity
4. Form B-2: Nonprofit Entity, if applicable
5. Form D: Financial Management and Administration Questionnaire

## B. Narrative Proposal

1. Form C: Narrative Proposal



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# Application Exhibits and Forms Submissions

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*Continued*

## **C. Indirect Costs**

1. Form E: Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate(ICR) Questionnaire

## **D. Requested Budget**

1. Exhibit E - Expenditure Proposal Template (Excel)



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# Application Exhibits and Forms Submissions

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## E. Exhibits to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted with Application

1. Exhibit A – HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.6
2. Exhibit H-HHS Data Use Agreement v8.5 or Exhibit H-1-Governmental Entity Version HHS Data Use Agreement v8.5 (as applicable)
3. Exhibit H-2 – Texas HHS System–Data Use Agreement- Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI)
4. Exhibit K – Assurances – Non-Construction Program
5. Exhibit L – Certification Regarding Lobbying



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# Application Exhibits and Forms Submissions

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6. Exhibit M – HHS Federal Funding Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA) Certification Form
7. Exhibit Q – Exceptions Form
8. Exhibit V – HHS Information Security Acceptable Use Agreement

## F. Signed Addenda:

1. Each Addendum, if any, must be signed and submitted with the Application.

***Applicants must complete and submit the required Exhibits and Forms in accordance with the RFA, Article XIII. Submission Checklist.***



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# Submission Requirements

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## Option 1

**HHS Online Bid Room:** Applicants must upload the following documents to the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit P, HHS Online Bid Room**. **File Size Limitation:** Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.

- A. One (1) copy marked as “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire application in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.
- B. One (1) copy of **each** completed **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal Template** in its original Excel format. **Note:** **An Expenditure Proposal is required for each AIC Region.**



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# Submission Requirements

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## Option 1 – Online Bid Room continued

- C. One (1) copy of the complete Application marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable, in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act-Application Disclosure Requirements**, in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.



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# Submission Requirements

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## Option 2

### Submission Option #2 Sealed Package with USB

**Drives:** Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives:

- A. One (1) USB drive with the complete Application file marked as "Original Application" in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed Application package and mark the USB and envelope with "Original Application." USB drive must include the completed **Exhibit E, Expenditure Proposal Template**, in its original Excel format.



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# Submission Requirements

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## Option 2 – Sealed Package with USB Continued

- B. One (1) USB drive with a copy of the complete Application file marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable and in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act**. The copy must be in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed package and mark the USB and envelope with “Public Information Act Copy” or “PIA Copy.”



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# Application Screening and Evaluation

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**All Applications must be received by the Deadline for Submission of Applications as outlined in Section 7.1, Schedule of Events, or subsequent Addenda.**

1. Eligibility screening will be based upon Section 3.2 Application Screening Requirements, and Section 3.3 Grant Award Eligibility.
2. Evaluation will be based upon Section 9.4 Evaluation Criteria
- 3. Final Selection is based upon Section 10.1 Final Selection.**



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# Non-ESEC Evaluation Criteria

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**All eligible applications for AIC awards will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the following criteria:**

- A. Narrative and Qualifications (15%);
- B. Performance Requirements/Project Workplan (40%);
- C. Personnel and Organization (15%); and
- D. Cost Proposal (30%).



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# ESEC Evaluation Criteria

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**Applicants must meet the minimum scoring criteria to be awarded AIC fund and have applied to be an ESEC to move to the ESEC Evaluation phase to be considered for ESEC funding.**

**Qualified Applications will be evaluated and scored with the following criteria:**

- A. Emergency Management Preparedness (30%);
- B. Emergency Management Escalation (20%);
- C. Project Workplan for State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) (30%); and
- D. Cost (20%).



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# Past Performance

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- The System Agency (HHSC) reserves the right to request additional information and conduct investigations as necessary to evaluate any Application.
- By submitting an Application, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing information about the Applicant at the request of the System Agency.
- System Agency may examine Applicant's past performance which may include, but is not limited to, information about the Applicant provided by any governmental entity, whether an agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas, another state, or the Federal Government.



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# Past Performance

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- Any negative findings, as determined by the State Agency in its sole discretion, may result in System Agency removing the Applicant from further consideration for award.

## **Past Performance regarding Applicants may include but it not limited to:**

- Notice of termination;
- Cure notices;
- Liquidated damages;
- Audit reports; and
- Non-renewal of grants or contracts based on Applicant's unsatisfactory performance.



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# Past Performance

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Applicants may also be rejected because of unsatisfactory past performance under any grant(s) or contract(s) as reflected in vendor performance reports, reference checks or other sources. An Applicant's past performance may be considered in the initial screening process and prior to making an award determination.



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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. Identifying Solicitation number;
- B. Section number;
- C. Paragraph number;
- D. Page number;
- E. Text of passage being questioned; and
- F. Question.

Submit questions via email to: [michelle.boyd@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:michelle.boyd@hhs.texas.gov)   
**by 5:00PM on March 28, 2025.**



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# Questions Due Date and Deadline

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- Questions are due by **5:00PM CST on March 28, 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 2, 2025.**



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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://resources.hhs.texas.gov/rfa>





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# Thank you!

**Request for Applications No. HHS0015545**

**2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network (TIRN)**

