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Applicant Conference

Request for Applications No. HHS0015677
Rural Hospital Improvement
March 14, 2025, at 11:30 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

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



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Procurement Roles

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 responsible for project scope, requirements, performance, results, and monitoring.



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Schedule of Events

Deadline for Submitting Questions

March 18, 2025, by 5:00PM CT

Any questions arising prior to the question deadline must be submitted in writing to John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov

Tentative Date Answers to Questions Posted

Estimated: on or after March 25, 2025

Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Applications

April 9, 2025, by 10:30 AM CT

Anticipated Grant Agreements Start Date

August 2025



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Solicitation Access

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.



Sole Point of Contact

- All communications relating to this RFA must be directed in writing to John Norton, Sole Point of Contact at 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

The purpose of this program is to provide time-limited financial support during the term of the Grant Agreement for any qualified Rural Hospital in Texas to invest in hospital improvement activities aimed to improve the financial stability of the hospital.



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Available Funding

- Estimated Funding: \$11,550,000
- Estimated Total number of awards: 33
- Estimated Maximum Award Amount: \$350,000



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Grant Term

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



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Eligible Applicants

- Be classified as a Rural Hospital in Texas



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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

- 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



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Application- Narrative

- 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 – Section 6.1

1. A description of the proposed Project and how the Project will improve facility's financial stability;
2. The intended goals and outcomes of the Project;
3. How the Project builds on prior progress or connects to related work by other organizations in the community, making it more timely or compelling;
4. The proposed plan and methodology to sustain the Project or outcomes after grant funds are exhausted;



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Application- Narrative Content

5. The anticipated impact of the Project in the community served by the Applicant's hospital.

The response must specifically address all the following impacts:

- a. Population impact;
- b. Geographic impact; and
- c. Financial impact;

6. The estimated cost of the Project and the impact the grant funding would provide.



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Specific Selection Criteria

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

Qualified Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

1. Proposed Project (50%)
2. Community Impact (40%); and
3. Project Cost (10%)



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Evaluation Process

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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Submission of Forms & Exhibits

Section XIII – Submission Checklist

1. Administrative Information – Form A
2. Narrative Proposal – Form B
3. Exhibits to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted
 - i. Exhibit A – HHS Solicitations Affirmations v. 2.6
 - ii. Exhibit F – Exceptions and Assumptions Form (if applicable)
 - iii. Exhibit G-2 – DUA Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry
 - iv. **Addenda – Signed (if applicable)**



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If you have RFA Questions - *Section 7.3*

Send questions only to the Sole Point of Contact – Find this information in *Section 7.2*

Schedule of Events - *Section 7.1*

- Questions must be submitted by **March 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM CT**
- Answers will be published on or after **March 25, 2025** on the [HHS Grants RFA web site](#), where this RFA was posted.



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Questions and Answers

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 - **RFA No. HHS0015677**
- 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
- F. Question;

Submit via email to: John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov **by 5:00PM on March 18, 2025.**



Question Deadline

- Questions are due by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, March 18, 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 March 25, 2025.**



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Delivery for Submission Option

Applicant 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, HHS Online Bid Room Instructions.
- **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 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

- 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/HHS0015677/>



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Thank you!

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Rural Hospital Improvement