

Notice of Funding Opportunity

**Application due April 14, 2025**

# HRSA

Health Resources & Services Administration

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy








Rural Strategic Initiatives Division

# Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Pathways

Opportunity number: HRSA-25-093



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# Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registrations are active and up-to-date.

## **SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)**

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

## **Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)**

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

## **Apply by the application due date**

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 14, 2025.



To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.



# Step 1:

# Review the Opportunity

## In this step

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# Basic information

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Rural Strategic Initiatives Division

*Support rural youth through developing pathway programs to behavioral health careers and engaging youth to address behavioral health challenges among their peer groups.*

## Summary

The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Pathways aims to support rural youth with behavioral health care challenges while also bolstering the behavioral health care workforce in rural communities. The purpose of RCORP-Pathways is to create **innovative new youth-focused, peer-driven behavioral health care support programs, while also offering career pathway opportunities in rural communities. Through these efforts, RCORP-Pathways will ultimately support improved health care in rural areas.** Applicants will establish and work within a network of organizations to engage youth in developing and implementing behavioral health support programming. The first year of the program may be used for planning activities and to formalize a network, and the remaining two years must be dedicated to implementation.

## Funding details

**Application Types:** New

**Expected total available funding in FY 25:** \$4,800,000

**Expected number and type of awards:** up to 12 grants

**Funding range per award:** Up to \$400,000 per year

We plan to fund awards in three 12-month budget periods for a total 3-year period of performance from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2028.

The program and awards depend on the appropriation of funds and are subject to change based on the availability and amount of appropriations.



Have questions?

Go to [Contacts and Support](#).

## Key facts

**Opportunity name:** Rural Communities Opioid Response Program - Pathways

**Opportunity number:** HRSA-25-093

**Announcement version:** New

**Federal assistance listing:** 93.912

**Statutory authority:** 42 U.S.C. 912(b)(5) (§ 711(b)(5) of the Social Security Act)

## Key dates

**NOFO issue date:** January 14, 2025

**Informational webinar:** To be scheduled

**Application deadline:** April 14, 2025

**Expected award date is by:** August 1, 2025

**Expected start date:** September 1, 2025

See [other submissions](#) for other time frames that may apply to this NOFO.

# Eligibility

## Who can apply

You can apply if you are a domestic public or private, non-profit or for-profit, entity.

## Types of eligible organizations

These types of domestic\* organizations may apply:

- Public institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Non-profits with or without a 501(c)(3) IRS status
- For-profit organizations, including small businesses
- State, county, city, township, and special district governments, including the District of Columbia, domestic territories, and freely associated states
- Independent school districts
- Native American tribal governments
- Native American tribal organizations

\* “Domestic” means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

**Individuals are not eligible applicants under this NOFO.**

## Other eligibility criteria

To be reviewed and scored, your application must:

- Specify a target rural service area that contains only counties and/or census tracts that are designated rural per the [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#).
- Include letters of commitment from at least three additional potential network members.
- Ensure that at least 50% of proposed network members are located within the target rural service area.

**NOTE:** HRSA will review [Attachment 1](#) and [Attachment 4](#) to determine whether the application meets this eligibility criteria. If [Attachment 1](#) and [Attachment 4](#) do not include all required information, then your application may be considered ineligible, and will not be reviewed or scored.

## Completeness and responsiveness criteria

We will review your application to make sure it meets these basic requirements to move forward in the competition.

We will not consider an application that:

- Is from an organization that does not meet all [eligibility criteria](#).
- Requests funding above the award ceiling shown in the [funding range](#).
- Is [submitted after the deadline](#).
- Is missing any required attachments and narrative sections, or required attachments and narrative sections are not complete.

## Application limits

You may submit more than one application under the same Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) if each applicant organization is located in a different rural area, serving a different population, and proposes a distinct project. Your application must be unique and independently developed and written. All applicants applying under the same EIN/UEI MUST submit the required information described in Attachment 11.

NOTE: Single organizations (e.g., a parent organization/headquarters) may not apply more than once for this funding opportunity on behalf of its satellite offices or clinics.

We will only review your last validated application for each distinct project before the deadline. If you provide insufficient information in [Attachment 7](#), or submit multiple applications that are nearly identical, we will only accept the last on-time submission associated with the EIN/UEI number.

## Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to share in the costs of the project, we will not consider it during [merit review](#). We will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through [reporting](#).

# Program description

## Purpose

The purpose of RCORP-Pathways is to create innovative new youth-focused behavioral health care support programs, while also offering behavioral health care career pathway opportunities in rural communities. Award recipients will establish and work within a network of organizations to engage youth in developing and implementing behavioral health care support programming. Through these efforts, RCORP-Pathways will improve behavioral health care in rural areas.

### Goal 1: Pathway

Establish pathway programs to introduce youth to behavioral health careers and facilitate admittance into formalized training programs.

### Goal 2: Engagement

Engage youth to develop and implement peer-driven behavioral health programming in rural communities.

### Goal 3: Sustainability

Develop innovative, multi-sectoral approaches to ensure the continued availability of RCORP-Pathways supported activities in the target rural service area.

## Target Population

The target population for RCORP-Pathways is middle school and high school aged youth living in rural communities. However, no individuals may be excluded from RCORP-Pathways activities on the basis of age.

## Program Highlights

- You must collaborate with a network of at least four total organizations, including your organization and three additional organizations. At least 50% of the organizations in the network must have a physical location in the target rural service area. HRSA strongly encourages you to include community colleges and local middle/high schools in your network.
- If necessary, you may use the first year of the award for planning purposes, including establishing partnerships, developing curriculum, and engaging youth. Implementation of your project must begin by year two of the award.
- If awarded, you will participate in the RCORP-Pathways Learning Collaborative, facilitated by the RCORP technical assistance provider.



- Required staff roles include a project director, data coordinator, and learning collaborative point of contact.
- All awardees must conduct a financial resources assessment, to identify avenues for sustainability after the award.

## Background

This program is authorized by Section 711(b)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 912(b)(5)). HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) is the focal point for rural health activities within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. FORHP programs provide technical assistance and other activities as necessary to support improving health care in rural areas. For additional information about FORHP, please see [www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth](http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth). FORHP administers the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP), a multi-year initiative aimed at reducing disease and death related to substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD), in high-risk rural communities. For more information about FORHP, please see <https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/opioid-response>.

According to the [2021-2022 National Survey of Children's Health](#), 24.5 percent of children aged 3-17 have experienced an emotional, developmental, or behavioral health problem – a nearly 2 percent increase from the [previous two years](#). [The Kaiser Family Foundation reports](#) that deaths due to drug overdose among adolescents more than doubled from 2018 (253 deaths) to 2022 (723 deaths).

Additionally, compared to their urban counterparts, rural children are more likely to experience a [total of four or more adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\)](#), increasing their risk of substance use disorder. [Individuals with over 5 ACEs](#) are 7 to 10 times more likely to report substance use disorders compared to those without ACEs and are 4 to 12 times more likely to misuse drugs.

Compounding these challenges for rural children and adolescents, behavioral health services in rural areas can be harder to access. Of the 6,234 [mental health-health professional shortage areas](#) (HPSAs) in the U.S., 3,861 (61.93 percent) are in rural areas, representing 28,946,148 people – including children and adolescents - who do not have adequate access to mental health care providers. While about 64 percent of all U.S. counties had at least one mental health facility serving young people, [only about 30 percent of highly rural counties had such facilities](#).

# Program requirements and expectations

## Target rural service area requirements

RCORP-Pathways supported activities may only be delivered in HRSA-designated rural counties and rural census tracts, as defined by the [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#). Within partially rural counties, activities supported by this award may only be delivered within HRSA-designated rural census tracts.

## Requirements for achieving RCORP-Pathways goals

### Goal 1: Pathway

Establish pathway programs to introduce youth to behavioral health careers and facilitate admittance into formalized training programs.

- Create new or significantly expand programs to introduce middle and high school-aged youth to behavioral health careers.
- Ensure that programs developed or expanded with RCORP-Pathway funds are strongly connected to existing local, state, and national resources such as [Area Health Education Centers](#) and [National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program](#).
- Facilitate entrance into formal training programs for behavioral health careers through partnerships with community colleges, universities, and other training institutions.
- Examples of possible activities under Goal 1 include, but are not limited to:
  - Train students as community health workers to assist with behavioral health issues in their communities.
  - Offer behavioral health job shadowing opportunities.
  - Support students through applying to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

### Goal 2: Engagement

Engage youth to develop and implement peer-driven behavioral health programming in rural communities.

- Engage youth to identify behavioral health needs within their peer groups, and develop and implement actionable, youth-driven programming and solutions.
- Examples of possible activities under Goal 2 include, but are not limited to:
  - Establishing a peer-to-peer mentoring program for youth in local middle and high schools.
  - Initiate student-driven support groups or clubs focused on behavioral health issues.

### Goal 3: Sustainability

Develop innovative, multi-sectoral approaches to ensure the continued availability of RCORP-Pathways supported activities in the target rural service area.

- Work with your network throughout the period of performance to ensure that RCORP-Pathways supported activities are sustainable.
- Examples of activities under Goal 3 include but are not limited to:
  - Leveraging other funding streams available within the community to enhance and sustain youth-driven behavioral health services and programming.
  - Demonstrating the collective impact of the network to secure durable community buy-in.
  - Establishing new partnerships beyond the network to further support RCORP-Pathways services.
- NOTE: You will also receive personalized technical assistance throughout your project, to help plan for the sustainability of RCORP-Pathways funded activities.

## Network Requirements

Engaging youth in behavioral health care can be uniquely challenging in rural communities where such resources and services may be less available or separated by significant distances. Therefore, you must implement your RCORP-Pathways project as part of a network of organizations that represent different aspects of youth engagement and behavioral health.

- If awarded, you must submit a single memorandum of understanding signed by each network member within the first year of the project.
- At least 50% of your network members must have a physical location (either a headquarters or a satellite site) within the target rural service area.
- Each member of your network must be fully integrated into the RCORP-Pathways project.
- At a minimum, network members should commit to:
  - Meeting regularly (at least once a quarter).
  - Coordinating with other network members on RCORP-Impact activities.
  - Sharing aggregate data for performance reporting to HRSA.
  - Sustaining services after the period of performance ends.
- We **strongly encourage** you to engage local community colleges or other institutions of higher education in your network.
- We **strongly encourage** you to engage local middle and high schools in your network.

## Planning Period

You may, but are not required to, spend up to the first year of the award conducting planning activities. Planning activities include, but are not limited to:

- Formalizing network partnerships
- Developing and signing memorandum of understanding for the network
- Conducting focus groups with youth and other stakeholders in the target rural service area
- Developing curriculum

You must begin implementing trainings no later than September 1, 2026 – one year into your period of performance.

## Learning Collaborative

If awarded, you will participate in the RCORP-Pathways learning collaborative, facilitated by the HRSA-funded RCORP technical assistance provider. The learning collaborative will offer the opportunity to network, share best practices, address challenges, and receive targeted technical assistance for your project.

- You must designate one individual to serve as the point of contact for the learning collaborative.
- The Learning Collaborative will meet on a regular basis; additional information will be provided after the beginning of the period of performance.

## Data Collection

Measuring success is a key element of RCORP-Pathways. We encourage you to use RCORP-Pathways funds to enhance the data collection and analysis capacity of your network. We also encourage you to implement ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Recipients will be expected to report detailed quantitative data related to the number of youths engaged in RCORP-Pathways supported programming. HRSA will provide additional information during the period of performance.

## Staffing Requirements

To achieve RCORP-Pathways goals and meet the program requirements, you must include the following roles in your project. Individuals may fulfill more than one role:

### Project Director

- Primary point of contact and leadership for the award.
- Directs project activities.

- Makes staffing, financial, or other adjustments to align project activities with the project outcomes.
- Engages community members and key stakeholders to implement project activities.
- Must attend monthly calls with HRSA program staff and the HRSA-funded RCORP technical assistance team.
- You may decide the job qualifications and percentage of effort needed to effectively fulfill these duties, but we strongly recommend a minimum time commitment of at least .25 FTE for the Project Director.

## Learning Collaborative Point of Contact

- Participates in regular learning collaborative meetings.
- Should be a key staff member with the authority to speak on behalf of your project.
- You may decide the job qualifications and percentage of effort needed to effectively fulfill these duties.

## Data Coordinator

- Coordinates with your network members to collect, aggregate, track, and report quantitative and qualitative data and information to fulfill HRSA's reporting requirements.
- You may decide the job qualifications and percentage of effort needed to effectively fulfill these duties.

## Sustainability

Throughout the period of performance, you should work with your network to make RCORP-Pathways supported services sustainable. Additionally, all award recipients must conduct a financial resources assessment, to identify avenues for sustainability after the award. HRSA will provide additional information during the period of performance.

# Award information

## Funding policies and limitations

### Policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives appropriated funding annually. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget year will depend on:
  - Annual appropriation of funds.
  - Your satisfactory progress in meeting the project's objectives.
  - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we may:
  - Fund more applicants from the rank order list.
  - Extend the period of performance.
  - Award supplemental funding.

### General limitations

- For guidance on some types of costs we do not allow or restrict, see Project Budget Information in Section 3.1.4 of the [Application Guide](#). You can also see 45 CFR part 75, or any superseding regulation, [General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost](#).
- You cannot earn profit from the federal award. See [45 CFR 75.400\(g\)](#).
- Congress's current appropriations act includes a salary limitation, which applies to this program. As of January 2025, the salary rate limitation is \$225,700. This limitation may be updated.

### Indirect costs

Indirect costs are costs you charge across more than one project that cannot be easily separated by project. For example, this could include utilities for a building that supports multiple projects).

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

**Method 1 – Approved rate.** You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

**Method 2 – *De minimis* rate.** Per [2.CFR.200.414\(f\)](#), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs.

This rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See [2.CFR.200.1](#) for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

## Program income

Program income is money earned as a result of your award-supported project activities. You must use any program income you generate from awarded funds for approved project-related activities. Find more about program income at [45.CFR.75.307](#).



# Step 2:

## Get Ready to Apply

### In this step

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# Get registered

## SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist to find out what you'll need to register.

When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#). You must agree to those for grants specifically, as opposed to contracts, because the two sets of agreements are different. You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

## Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

# Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to [Grants Search at Grants.gov](#) and search for opportunity number HRSA-25-093.

After you select the opportunity, we recommend that you click the Subscribe button to get updates.

# Application writing help

Visit [HHS Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#).

Visit [HRSA's How to Prepare Your Application](#) page for more guidance.

See [Apply for a Grant](#) for other help and resources.

## Join the webinar

For more information about this opportunity, we will schedule a webinar.

Have questions? Go to [Contacts and Support](#).



# Step 3:

# Prepare Your Application

## In this step

Application contents and format

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# Application contents and format

Applications include 5 main components. This section includes guidance on each.

**Application page limit:** 60 pages.

Submit your information in English and express whole number budget figures using U.S. dollars.

**Make sure you include each of these:**

Components	Submission format
<a href="#">Project abstract</a>	Use the Project Abstract Summary form.
<a href="#">Project narrative</a>	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.
<a href="#">Budget narrative</a>	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form.
<a href="#">Attachments</a>	Insert each in the Attachments form.
<a href="#">Other required forms</a>	Upload using each required form.

## Required format

You must format your narratives and attachments using our required formats for fonts, size, color, format, and margins. See the formatting guidelines in Section 3.2 of the [Application Guide](#).

## Project abstract

Complete the information in the Project Abstract Summary form. Include a short description of your proposed project. Include the needs you plan to address, the proposed services, and the population groups you plan to serve. For more information, see Section 3.1.2 of the [Application Guide](#).

## Project narrative

In this section, you will describe all aspects of your project. Project activities must comply with the [non-discrimination requirements](#).

Use the section headers and the order listed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All required information must be located in the corresponding narrative section, as described below.

## Background

See merit review criterion 1: [Background](#)

- State the objective(s) of your proposed project.
- Briefly summarize the over-arching needs you are planning to address with your project.
- Briefly describe the target rural service area. Reminder: RCORP-Pathways supported activities may only be delivered in HRSA-designated rural counties and rural census tracts, as defined by the [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#). **If your target rural service area contains any counties or census tracts that are NOT designated rural per the [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#), your application will not be reviewed or scored.**
- Briefly describe target rural population.

## Organizational Information

See merit review criterion 2: [Organizational](#) Information

### Overview

- Describe how the mission of your organization and the scope of current organizational activities align with the purpose and goals of RCORP-Pathways project.
- Describe your organization's connections and partnerships within the target rural service area and target rural population.
- Describe how the leadership of your organization will support the implementation of your proposed RCORP-Pathways project.
- Describe how the different components of your organization, apart from leadership, will support the implementation of your proposed RCORP-Pathways project and the effective management of HRSA funds (e.g., finance, human resources, etc.).
- Describe how you will ensure that implementation of the project begins no later than September 1, 2026.
- Describe how your organization will work with your network to manage staff turnover and ensure continuity of the project's operations and services.

## Staffing Plan

- Describe how you will manage your proposed project and ensure that the work plan is implemented effectively.
- Provide a high-level summary of your proposed staffing plan.
  - The staffing plan **must** include a project director, learning collaborative point of contact, and data coordinator.
    - Be sure to list the designated Project Director in Box 8f of the SF-424 Application Page.
- For positions that are currently vacant, describe how you will quickly fill the position if awarded, to avoid any delays in implementing the work plan.
- In [Attachment 3](#), provide a staffing plan.

## Staff Biosketches

- For each staff member reflected in the staffing plan, provide a brief biographical sketch in [Attachment 6](#) that clearly demonstrates the staff member has appropriate and applicable experience for their role on the project. If an individual is fulfilling multiple roles in the proposed project, you may use a single biographical sketch to address their qualifications for each role.
- The names reflected in the staffing plan must align with the names identified in the biographical sketches.

## Network

Reminder: You must specify the at least three additional organizations that you anticipate will be in your network and provide letters of commitment from each. Your network must consist of at least 4 separately owned entities (your organization plus 3 additional organizations). **Applications that do not include letters of commitment from three proposed network members will not be reviewed or scored.** At least 50% of your network members must have a physical location (either a headquarters or a satellite site) within the target rural service area. **If you don't meet this requirement, your application will be non-responsive, and will not be reviewed or scored.**

- Describe how the network will be structured and managed.
- Describe how you will engage network members to ensure effective and productive collaboration.
- Describe how the network members represent the sectors that are necessary to support a coordinated, comprehensive, and sustainable approach to the goals of RCORP-Pathways.
- Describe how you will ensure that all network members have the capability and agree to share aggregate data to meet HRSA performance reporting requirements.

- In [Attachment 4](#), include information for organizations that you anticipate will serve in the network and attest that the network will meet at least quarterly.
- In [Attachment 5](#), include a letter of support from at least three anticipated network members.

## Approach

See merit review criterion 3: [Approach](#)

### Goal 1: Pathway

Establish pathway programs to introduce youth to behavioral health careers and facilitate admittance into formalized training programs.

#### Justification of Need

- Use recent, reliable quantitative data to justify the need for the youth-focused, behavioral health workforce pathway programs you are proposing to implement in your target rural service area.
- Describe any existing behavioral health workforce pathway programs in your target rural service area, and how your network will complement, and not duplicate, these efforts.

#### Approach

- Describe in detail the youth-focused, behavioral health workforce pathway programs you will implement. Include any certifications that students will receive after completion of the pathway program(s).
- Describe how you will ensure that the pathway program(s) is strongly connected to existing local, state, and national resources.
- Explain how you will recruit students and support them through completion of the pathway program(s).
- Describe how you will facilitate admittance into formal behavioral health workforce training programs for students who have completed the pathway program(s) and would like to pursue a career in the field.
- Demonstrate that the anticipated number of students participating in the pathway program(s) is proportional to the size of your requested budget.

#### Resolution of Challenges

- Describe any challenges you may encounter, and how you will resolve them.

## Goal 2: Engagement

Engage youth to develop and implement peer-driven behavioral health programming in rural communities.

### Justification of Need

- Use recent, reliable quantitative data to clearly and comprehensively justify the need for youth-focused, peer-driven behavioral health programming in your target rural service area.

### Approach

- Describe in detail how your network will engage youth to identify behavioral health risks and challenges within their peer groups and develop solution-oriented programming.
  - Specify how you will ensure that engagement of youth draws on trauma-informed approaches.
- Describe in detail how your network will support and empower youth to engage in implementing solution-oriented programming to address identified behavioral health challenges within their peer group.
  - Specify how you will ensure appropriate supervision and support of the youth who are implementing programming.
  - Specify how you will ensure that youth-driven programming adheres to the principals of trauma-informed care and psychological safety.

### Resolution of Challenges

- Describe any challenges you may encounter, and how you will resolve them.

## Goal 3: Sustainability

Develop innovative, multi-sectoral approaches to ensure the continued availability of RCORP-Pathways supported activities in the target rural service area post-federal funding.

### Justification of Need

- Describe existing collaborations or networks that are supporting the youth-focused behavioral health programming in the target rural service area, and why these efforts are insufficient and/or not sustainable.

### Approach

- Describe how the network will work towards ensuring the continued availability RCORP-Pathways activities implemented under Goals 1 and 2, to support the ongoing strengthening of the behavioral health workforce.



## Resolution of Challenges

- Describe any challenges you may encounter, and how you will resolve them.

## High-level work plan

See merit review criteria 4: [Work Plan](#)

- In [Attachment 2](#), provide a work plan that includes the specific activities and action steps that you will take to implement each of the approaches described in the previous section.

## Data and Reporting

See merit review criteria 5: [Data and Reporting](#)

- Describe how you will ensure that the network effectively collects, shares, and reports required HRSA performance measures.
  - **NOTE:** Recipients will be expected to report detailed quantitative data, which may include information related to the number of youths completing pathway programs, entering formal training for a behavioral health profession, and engaging in peer-driven behavioral health programming. HRSA will provide additional guidance during the period of performance.
- Describe how you will use data, including but not limited to required HRSA performance measures, for the continuous improvement of RCORP-Pathways supported activities.

## Budget and budget narrative

See merit review criterion 6: [Support requested](#)

Your **budget** should follow the instructions in Section 3.1.4 Project Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) of the [Application Guide](#) and the instructions listed in this section. Your budget should show a well-organized plan.

We **strongly encourage** you to consider budgeting RCORP-Pathways funds to support network members' participation in the project.

HHS now uses the definitions for [equipment](#) and [supply](#) in 2 CFR 200.1. The new definitions change the threshold for equipment to the lesser of the recipient's capitalization level or \$10,000 and the threshold for supplies to below that amount.

The total project or program costs are all allowable (direct and indirect) costs used for the HRSA award activity or project. This includes costs charged to the award and non-federal funds used to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement (which may include maintenance of effort, if applicable).

The **budget narrative** supports the information you provide in Standard Form 424-A. See [other required forms](#). It includes an itemized breakdown and a clear justification of the costs you request. The merit review committee reviews both.

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are reasonable and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See [funding policies and limitations](#).
- **Travel:** You must budget travel funds for up to two (2) program staff to attend a three-day program meeting in Washington, DC, once in every project year. You may also propose additional meetings and conferences that are directly related to the purpose of the program and will complement your project's objectives.
- **Sustainability:** Your work plan and budget/budget narrative should reflect a shift towards sustainability over the course of the three-year period of performance.
- **Network Members:** We encourage you to consider budgeting RCORP-Pathways funds to support network member participation in the project.

To create your budget narrative, see detailed instructions in Section 3.1.5 of the [Application Guide](#). Three separate and complete budgets must be submitted with this application.

## Attachments

Place your attachments in this order in the Attachments Form. See [application checklist](#) to determine if they count toward the page limit.

### Attachment 1: General Project Information

**IMPORTANT:** The information included in this attachment will be used to determine your application's eligibility. Be sure that the information is complete and correct.

Provide the following information about your proposed project:

- Project Title
- Requested Award Amount
- Applicant Organization Name
- Applicant Organization Address
- Applicant Organization Facility Type (e.g., Rural Health Clinic, Critical Access Hospital, Tribe/Tribal Organization, Health System, Institute of Higher Learning, Community-based Organization, Foundation, Rural Health Network, etc.)
- Project Director Name and Title (should be the same individual designated in Box 8f of the SF-424 Application Form)

- Project Director Contact Information (phone and email)
- How You First Learned About the Funding Opportunity (select one: State Office of Rural Health, HRSA News Release, Grants.gov, HRSA Project Officer, HRSA Website, Technical Assistance Provider, State/Local Health Department)
- Whether you are a: current RCORP award Recipient, previous RCORP award recipient, current RCORP Consortium member, or previous RCORP consortium member.
- RCORP-Pathways target service area:
  - Fully Rural Counties: Provide the county name and state
  - Partially-Rural Counties: Provide county name, state, and the rural census tract

**Reminder: If your target rural service area contains any counties or census tracts that are NOT designated rural per the [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#), your application will not be reviewed or scored.**

## Attachment 2: Work Plan

Provide a work plan that includes the specific activities and action steps that you will take to implement each of the approaches described in the previous section. **We strongly recommend that you provide your Work Plan in a well-formatted, easy to read table that has columns for activity/task, responsible staff, start date, completion date, and activity status.**

The work plan must:

- Address all three RCORP-Pathways goals.
- Reflect a 3-year period of performance, including up to one year of planning. Activities must be fully operational by September 1st, 2026.
- Include the names of the individuals/organizations who are responsible for implementing each specific activity.
- Include specific time frames for each activity (please do not list a time frame as ongoing. There should be a specific beginning and end date for each activity).

## Attachment 3: Staffing plan & job descriptions

See Section 4.1.vi of the [Application Guide](#). Provide a staffing plan that includes the information below for each project staff and key information about each. It is strongly recommended that you provide this information in a table format. Be sure to include all required staff as described in the [Staffing Requirements](#).

- Name (if not yet hired, state “TBH”).
- Title.

- Organizational affiliation.
- Full-time equivalent (FTE) devoted to the project (Note: You cannot bill more than 1.0 FTE across federal awards).
- List of roles and responsibilities on the project.
- Job title (e.g., project director, a learning collaborative.)
- Timeline and process for hiring/onboarding, if applicable.

## Attachment 4: Network Members

- **Reminder:** You must specify the at least three additional organizations that you anticipate will be in your network and provide letters of commitment from each. Your network must consist of at least 4 separately owned entities (your organization plus 3 additional organizations). **Applications that do not include letters of commitment from three proposed network members will not be reviewed or scored.** At least 50% of your network members must have a physical location (either a headquarters or a satellite site) within the target rural service area. **If you don't meet this requirement, your application will be non-responsive, and it will not be reviewed or scored.**

### PART A:

Provide the following information for all organizations that you anticipate will serve in the network.

- Organization name
- Organization's physical address
- Sector represented (e.g., education, health, transportation, etc.)
- Point of contact, including name, position title, and email

### PART B:

Attest that your network will meet, at a minimum, once a quarter.

## Attachment 5: Letters of Support

Provide a letter of support from at least three additional anticipated network members.

The letter should include:

- An overview of the organization's anticipated role in the proposed RCORP-Pathways project
- A description of the organization's ties to the target rural service area.
- A commitment to share performance data as needed with HRSA.

## Attachment 6: Biographical Sketches

For each staff member reflected in the staffing plan, provide a brief biographical sketch that clearly demonstrates the staff member has appropriate and applicable experience for their role on the project. If an individual is fulfilling multiple roles in the proposed project, you may use a single biographical sketch to address their qualifications for each role. The names reflected in the staffing plan must align with the names identified in the biographical sketches.

## Attachment 7: Shared EIN

Distinct organizations located in different rural areas and serving different populations may submit individual applications, even if they have the same EIN/UEI. The applications must be unique and independently developed and written. All applicants applying under the same EIN/UEI MUST submit the required information described below.

NOTE: Single organizations (e.g., a parent organization/headquarters) may not apply more than once for this funding opportunity on behalf of its satellite offices or clinics.

If you provide insufficient information in Attachment 11, or submit multiple applications that are nearly identical, HRSA will only accept the last submitted application associated with the EIN/UEI number.

- EIN and UEI number for which there will be multiple applications.
- Name and street address of each organization applying under the same EIN/UEI.
- Name, title, email, and phone number for a point of contact at each of the organizations applying under the same EIN/UEI.
- Name and street address of the “parent” organization.
- Name, title, email address, and phone number for a point of contact at the parent organization.
- Proposed RCORP-Pathways target rural service area for each of the organizations under the same EIN (**these should not overlap**).
- Attest that each organization applying under the same EIN/UEI will be independently responsible for the planning, program management, financial management, and decision making of their project.
- Include signatures from the points of contact at each applicant organization and the parent organization.

## Attachment 8-15: other relevant documents

You may use attachments 8 through 15 to add other relevant documents, such as your indirect cost rate agreement.

## Other required forms

You will need to complete some other forms. Upload the following forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and any available instructions at [Grants.gov Forms](#).

Forms	Submission Requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With application.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award.
Budget Narrative Attachment Form	With application
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	With application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With application.
Key Contacts	With application.



# Step 4:

# Learn About Review and Award

## In this step

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Selection process	<a href="#">37</a>
Award notices	<a href="#">37</a>

# Application review

## Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets [eligibility](#) criteria, including the [completeness and responsiveness criteria](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, it will not be funded.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

## Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use these criteria.

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Background	5 points
2. Organizational Information	25 points
3. Approach	50 points
4. Work Plan	10 points
5. Data and Reporting	5 points
6. Support requested	5 points

## Criterion 1: Background (5 points)

See the project narrative [Background](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for how well it demonstrates:

- Extensive knowledge and understanding of the target rural service area and target population.
- The objectives of the proposed project are closely aligned with the goal and purpose of RCORP-Pathways.
- The needs of the target population are closely aligned with the purpose of RCORP-Pathways.



## Criterion 2: Organizational Information (25 points)

See the project narrative [Organizational Information](#) section.

### Overview (7 points)

The panel will review your application for how well it demonstrates:

- The mission and activities of the applicant organization are closely aligned with the mission and goals of the proposed RCORP-Pathways Project. In other words, the proposed project fits well within the applicant organization.
- Strong connections and relationships with the target rural service area and the target rural population.
- Strong support from organizational leadership to implement the proposed project.
- Strong support from other components of the applicant organization, apart from leadership, to implement the proposed project and ensure effective use of RCORP-Pathways funds.
- The ability to begin implementing the project no later than September 1, 2026.
- The ability to manage any staff or clinician turnover, so that if these changes occur, the project's administrative operations and services will not be disrupted.

### Staffing Plan (8 points)

The panel will review your application for how well it describes a staffing plan and biosketches that:

- Will be effective and support achievement of the RCORP-Pathways goals.
- Closely aligns with the project approach and work plan.
- Includes all required roles (project director, learning collaborative point of contact, data coordinator)
- Includes a plan for hiring vacant positions that is feasible and likely to avoid project delays if awarded.
- Biosketches for all the individuals fulfilling key roles on the proposed project.
- Project staff are qualified to effectively fulfill their specific roles on the proposed project.

## Network (10 points)

The panel will review your application for how well it describes a Network that:

- Will collaborate effectively and productively, with engagement from all members.
- Has the capacity and agrees to report HRSA-required performance data.
- Meets at least once a quarter (per attestation in [Attachment 4](#)).
- Thoroughly understands their roles on the project and has strong ties to the target rural service area, as demonstrated in the letters of support.

## Criterion 3: Approach (50 points)

See the project narrative [Approach](#) section.

### Goal 1: Pathway (20 Points)

The panel will review your application for how well it describes an approach that:

- Addresses significant, demonstrated need for the youth-focused behavioral health workforce pathway programs you are proposing to implement in the target rural services area.
- Ensures pathway programs are strongly connected to existing local, state, and national resources.
- Effectively engages and recruits students and supports them to ensure completion of their program.
- Engages partners to facilitate admittance into formal behavioral health workforce training programs for students who have completed the pathway program and would like to pursue a career in the field.
- Demonstrates that the anticipated number of individuals to be trained will be proportional to the size of the requested budget.
- Clearly and specifically identifies challenges that may be encountered while implementing this goal and describes realistic, achievable solutions.

### Goal 2: Engagement (20 Points)

The panel will review your application for how well it describes an approach that:

- Addresses significant, demonstrated need for youth-focused, peer-driven behavioral health programming in your target rural service area.
- Will effectively engage youth to identify behavioral health risks and challenges in their peer groups and develop solution-oriented programming.
- Supports and empowers youth to engage in implementing solution-oriented programming that addresses identified behavioral health challenges within their peer group.

- Ensures appropriate supervision and support of youth who are engaging in the implementation of programming.
- Ensures all efforts, including youth engagement and the programming itself, adheres to the principals of trauma-informed care and psychological safety.
- Clearly and specifically identifies challenges that may be encountered while implementing this goal and describes realistic, achievable solutions.

### Goal 3: Sustainability (10 points)

The panel will review your application for how well it describes an approach that:

- Ensures the continued availability of RCORP-Pathways supported activities under Goals 1 and 2, so that pathway and engagement programming can continue after the period of performance.
- Ensures continuity of operations for the network and minimizes the impact of potential service disruptions.
- Clearly and specifically identifies challenges that may be encountered while implementing this goal and describes realistic, achievable solutions.

### Criterion 4: Work plan (10 points)

See Project Narrative [Work Plan](#) section.

The panel will review your application for how well the work plan:

- Demonstrates the ability to achieve the project's objectives within the three-year period of performance.
- Includes all the required elements and reflects all RCORP-Pathways goals and proposed project approaches.
- Reflects a 3-year period of performance.
- Includes the names of the individuals/network members who are responsible for implementing each specific activity.
- Includes specific time frames for each activity (There should be a specific beginning and end date for each activity; activities should not be listed as "ongoing").
- Clearly demonstrates that all activities will be operational by 9/1/2026.

### Criterion 5: Data and reporting (5 points)

See Project Narrative [Data and Reporting](#) section.

The panel will review your application for how well it describes an approach that:

- Effectively collects, shares, and reports required HRSA performance measures.
- Effectively uses data to continuously improve RCORP-Pathways activities.

## Criterion 6: Support requested (5 points)

See the [Budget and budget narrative](#) section.

The panel will review your application for how well it demonstrates that:

- The number of individuals the applicant plans to serve, the size of the target rural service area, and the scope of proposed services justify the RCORP-Pathways budget request.

We do not consider **voluntary** cost sharing during merit review.

## Risk review

Before making an award, we review your award history to assess risk. We need to ensure all prior awards were managed well and demonstrated sound business practices. We:

- Review any applicable past performance.
- Review audit reports and findings.
- Analyze the budget.
- Assess your management systems.
- Ensure you continue to be eligible.
- Make sure you comply with any public policies.

We may ask you to submit additional information.

As part of this review, we use SAM.gov Entity Information [Responsibility/Qualification](#) to check your history for all awards likely to be more than \$250,000 over the period of performance. You can comment on your organization's information in SAM.gov. We'll consider your comments before making a decision about your level of risk.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see [45 CFR 75.205](#).

# Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- The amount of available funds.
- Assessed risk.
- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of HRSA-funded projects, including the diversity of project types and geographic distribution.

We may:

- Fund out of rank order.
- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

# Award notices

We issue Notices of Award (NOA) on or around the [start date](#) listed in the NOFO. See Section 4 of the [Application Guide](#) for more information.

By drawing down funds, you accept the terms and conditions of the award.



# Step 5:

# Submit Your Application

## In this step

Application submission and deadlines	<a href="#">39</a>
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# Application submission and deadlines

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application. See the section on [finding the application package](#) to make sure you have everything you need.

Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements. When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#), and specifically with regard to grants.

Make sure that your SAM.gov registration is accurate for both contracts and grants, as these registrations differ. [See information on getting registered](#). You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

## Deadlines

### Application

**You must submit your application by April 14, at 11:59 p.m. ET.**

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives applications.

## Submission method

### Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. You may do so using Grants.gov Workspace. This is the preferred method. For alternative online methods, see [Applicant System-to-System](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks, or we may not get it. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

**Have questions?** Go to [Contacts and Support](#).

# Other submissions

## Intergovernmental review

If your state has a process, you will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372](#). Under this order, states may design their own processes for obtaining, reviewing, and commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others do not.

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact](#). If you find a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as you can to learn their process. If you do not find a contact for your state, you do not need to do anything further.

This requirement never applies to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.



# Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit*?
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Project abstract</a>	Use the Project Abstract Summary Form.	No
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Project narrative</a>	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Budget narrative</a>	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form.	Yes
<a href="#">Attachments</a>	Insert each in the Attachments Form in this order.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. General Project Information		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Work Plan		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Staffing plan and job descriptions		
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Network members		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Letters of support		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Biographical sketches		No
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Shared EIN		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement		No
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Other relevant document		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Other relevant document		Yes
<a href="#">Other required forms*</a>	Upload using each required form.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)		No

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit*?
<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL), optional		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Project/Performance Site Location(s)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Contacts		No

\*Only what you attach in these forms counts toward the page limit. The forms themselves do not count.



# Step 6:

# Learn What Happens After Award

## In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [44](#)

# Post-award requirements and administration

## Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you need to know if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award (NOA). We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The regulations at [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards, and any superseding regulations. Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Equipment.
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Supplies.
  - [2 CFR 200.313\(e\)](#), Equipment, Disposition.
  - [2 CFR 200.314\(a\)](#), Supplies.
  - [2 CFR 200.320](#), Methods of procurement to be followed.
  - [2 CFR 200.333](#), Fixed amount subawards.
  - [2 CFR 200.344](#), Closeout.
  - [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), Indirect (F&A) costs.
  - [2 CFR 200.501](#), Audit requirements.
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement](#) (GPS). Your NOA will reference this document. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your NOA.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in [HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- The requirements for performance management in [2 CFR 200.301](#).

## Non-discrimination legal requirements

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance ([HHS-690](#)). To learn more, see the [Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights](#).

Contact the [HHS Office for Civil Rights](#) for more information about obligations and prohibitions under federal civil rights laws or call 1-800-368-1019 or TDD 1-800-537-7697.

The HRSA Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) offers technical assistance, individual consultations, trainings, and plain language materials to supplement OCR guidance. Visit [OCRDI's website](#) to learn more about how federal civil rights laws and accessibility requirements apply to your programs, or contact OCRDI directly at [HRSACivilRights@hrsa.gov](mailto:HRSACivilRights@hrsa.gov).

## Executive order on worker organizing and empowerment

[Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment \(E.O. 14025\)](#) encourages worker organizing and collective bargaining and promotes equality of bargaining power between employers and employees.

You can support these goals by developing policies and practices that you could use to promote worker power.

## Cybersecurity

You must create a cybersecurity plan if your project involves both of the following conditions:

- You have ongoing access to HHS information or technology systems.
- You handle personal identifiable information (PII) or personal health information (PHI) from HHS.

You must base the plan based on the [NIST Cybersecurity Framework](#). Your plan should include the following steps:

### Identify:

- List all assets and accounts with access to HHS systems or PII/PHI.

### Protect:

- Limit access to only those who need it for award activities.

- Ensure all staff complete annual cybersecurity and privacy training. Free training is available at 405(d): [Knowledge on Demand \(hhs.gov\)](#).
- Use multi-factor authentication for all users accessing HHS systems.
- Regularly backup and test sensitive data.

#### Detect:

- Install antivirus or anti-malware software on all devices connected to HHS systems.

#### Respond:

- Create an incident response plan. See [Incident-Response-Plan-Basics\\_508c.pdf \(cisa.gov\)](#) for guidance.
- Have procedures to report cybersecurity incidents to HHS within 48 hours. A cybersecurity incident is:
  - Any unplanned interruption or reduction of quality, or
  - An event that could actually or potentially jeopardize confidentiality, integrity, or availability of the system and its information.

#### Recover:

- Investigate and fix security gaps after any incident.

## Reporting

If you are funded, you will have to follow the reporting requirements in Section 4 of the [Application Guide](#). The NOA will provide specific details.

You must also follow these program-specific reporting requirements:

- Progress reports each year.
- Annual performance reports through Electronic Handbooks.
- **Copy of RCORP-Pathways Application:** Award recipients must submit a copy of their RCORP-Pathways application to the HRSA-funded RCORP technical assistance provider and evaluator to provide them with background and context for the proposed project. HRSA will provide additional information during the period of performance.
- **Baseline Data Report:** Award recipients will be expected to provide baseline data 90 days after award receipt. HRSA will provide additional information during the period of performance.
- **Memorandum of Understanding:** Award recipients must submit a single memorandum of understanding signed by each network member within the first year of the project. HRSA will provide additional guidance during the period of performance.

- **Performance Integrity Management System (PIMS) Reports:** The award recipient must submit quantitative performance reports on an annual basis. Award recipients will receive additional data collection and reporting guidance upon receipt of award.
- **Financial Assessment:** The recipient must submit a comprehensive financial assessment of the resources available to sustain the program after the grant ends. HRSA will provide additional information during the period of performance.



# Contacts and Support

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# Agency contacts

## Program and eligibility

### Caitlin Dunn

Program Coordinator, Rural Strategic Initiatives Division

Attn: RCORP-Pathways

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: [ruralopioidresponse@hrsa.gov](mailto:ruralopioidresponse@hrsa.gov)

Call: 301-480-9743

## Financial and budget

### Lissette Young

Grants Management Specialist

Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAAM

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: [lyoung@hrsa.gov](mailto:lyoung@hrsa.gov)

Call: 301-287-9864

## HRSA Contact Center

Open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, except for federal holidays.

Call: 877-464-4772 / 877-Go4-HRSA

TTY: 877-897-9910

[Electronic Handbooks Contact Center](#)

## Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 800-518-4726, search the [Grants.gov Knowledge Base](#), or [email Grants.gov for support](#). Hold on to your ticket number.

## SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

# Helpful websites

- [HRSA Grants page](#)
- [HHS Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#)