

Request For Information (RFI) 26-001
Rural Health Transformation Projects

Responses Provided to Questions Received

Q1.	The RFI mentions that, "The RHTP provides \$10 billion annually for FY2026 through FY2030, and states have two years to spend each year's allocation." Will funds be distributed each fiscal year or every two years? A1. Under Section 71404 of the <i>One Big Beautiful Bill Act</i>, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will issue an annual allotment to each state with an approved Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) application. These annual allotments will occur over five years, from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026 through FFY 2030. Each annual allotment will remain available for expenditure for two fiscal years. For example, states have until the end of FFY 2027 to spend funds allotted in FFY 2026.
Q2.	Given that funding will begin in FY2026, is there a timeline in pursuing this project? A2. To receive Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) funding, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) must approve a state's application outlining their Rural Health Transformation Plan. CMS is currently developing the application process, and the application deadline has not yet been announced. However, all state applications must be approved or denied by CMS no later than December 31, 2025, as required by Section 71404 of the <i>One Big Beautiful Bill Act</i>; therefore, the application period will occur sometime prior to that date. Further details from CMS about the application structure and timeline are expected to be released soon.
Q3.	Is an organization limited to a total of ten pages, or may separate proposals be submitted on different topics? For example, a five-page proposal for one project and an eight-page proposal for another program? A3. The recommended 10-page limit in the RFI is a general guideline intended to encourage clarity and conciseness, but it is not a strict cap. Organizations may also submit multiple responses on different topics if that is the most effective way to convey their input. Respondents are encouraged to be as concise as possible while ensuring their proposed project, concept, or feedback is clearly articulated. Given the range of response types anticipated, the Department has intentionally left flexibility in the format, length, and quantity of submissions.
Q4.	Would the state be interested in partnering with a consultant to assist with these plans? We have assisted state and local agencies with federal funding opportunities for almost 30 years. A4. The Department welcomes input from a wide range of entities, including organizations with experience supporting federally-funded initiatives. As noted in the RFI, responses may include detailed proposals, early-stage ideas, or general input to inform the Department's planning and program design.
Q5.	In reviewing the RFI 26-001, the issue has arisen of "what meets the definition of rural" for the purpose of responding to this RFI?

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A5. Organizations are encouraged to submit responses without concern for a specific definition of “rural.” The Department seeks broad input at this stage and is focused on understanding ideas, needs, and opportunities statewide. Section 71401 of H.R. 1 outlines the criteria that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will use to define rural hospitals and assess rural health needs when determining state allocations; these criteria are used internally by CMS and do not restrict the types of input the Department is seeking through this RFI.