

Request for Information (RFI) 26-001



State of Alaska
Department of Health
Division of Finance and Management Services

Date Issued: July 21, 2025

RFI 26-001 - RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS

Introduction:

On July 4, 2025, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) was signed into law, establishing the federal \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) to improve rural health care across all fifty states. This landmark investment creates a unique opportunity for Alaska, where the vast majority of our communities are rural and providers face significant geographic and operational challenges.

The RHTP will be administered at the federal level through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In Alaska, allocated funds will flow through the Department of Health (the Department) to support health system transformation statewide.

Through this Request for Information (RFI), the Department is seeking input to help shape Alaska's strategy for implementing the RHTP. The Department is committed to advancing comprehensive, regionally-tailored solutions that improve the full continuum of care for residents – including primary care, behavioral health, complex care, and long-term services and supports. We invite the submission of ideas, insights, considerations, and project concepts aligned with the goals of the RHTP.

Background Information:

Rural Health Transformation Program

The RHTP provides \$10 billion annually for FY2026 through FY2030, and states have two years to spend each year's allocation. Each eligible state will receive a base allocation split evenly, with additional funds to be distributed by CMS based on each state's rural population, rural health facilities, and other factors outlined in Section 71401 of H.R. 1.

To receive funding states must submit a Rural Health Transformation Plan:

1. To improve access to hospitals, other health care providers, and health care items and services furnished to rural residents of the State;
2. To improve health care outcomes of rural residents of the State;
3. To prioritize the use of new and emerging technologies that emphasize prevention and chronic disease management;
4. To initiate, foster, and strengthen local and regional strategic partnerships between rural hospitals other health care providers in order to promote measurable quality improvement, increase financial stability, maximize economies of scale, and share best practices in care delivery;
5. To enhance economic opportunity for, and the supply of, health care clinicians through enhanced recruitment and training;
6. To prioritize data and technology driven solutions that help rural hospitals and other rural health care providers furnish high-quality health care services as close to a patient's home as is possible;

7. That outlines strategies to manage long-term financial solvency and operating models of rural hospitals in the state; and
8. That identifies specific causes driving the accelerating rate of stand-alone rural hospitals becoming at risk of closure, conversion, or service reduction.

States must also commit to using RHTP funds for three or more of the following allowable activities:

1. Promoting evidence-based, measurable interventions to improve prevention and chronic disease management.
2. Providing payments to health care providers for the provision of health care items or services, as specified by the CMS Administrator.
3. Promoting consumer-facing, technology-driven solutions for the prevention and management of chronic diseases.
4. Providing training and technical assistance for the development and adoption of technology-enabled solutions that improve care delivery in rural hospitals, including remote monitoring, robotics, artificial intelligence, and other advanced technologies.
5. Recruiting and retaining clinical workforce talent to rural areas, with commitments to serve rural communities for a minimum of 5 years.
6. Providing technical assistance, software, and hardware for significant information technology advances designed to improve efficiency, enhance cybersecurity capability development, and improve patient health outcomes.
7. Assisting rural communities to right size their health care delivery systems by identifying needed preventative, ambulatory, pre-hospital, emergency, acute inpatient care, outpatient care, and post-acute care service lines.
8. Supporting access to opioid use disorder treatment services, other substance use disorder treatment services, and mental health services.
9. Developing projects that support innovative models of care that include value-based care arrangements and alternative payment models, as appropriate.
10. Additional uses designed to promote sustainable access to high quality rural health care services, as determined by the CMS Administrator.

The Department is currently preparing to draft Alaska's application and Rural Health Transformation Plan, which must align with the required use categories and eligibility criteria defined by CMS. The Department intends to pursue a comprehensive approach that engages multiple areas to meet the needs of Alaskan communities. The Department encourages respondents to consider these categories as they develop responses to this RFI.

Department Priorities

The Department's overarching goal for the RHTP is to leverage federal funds to drive transformational improvements in the full continuum of health care across Alaska. Through strategic RHTP investments, the Department aims to position Alaskan communities to meet their current challenges and prepare for future health care needs, including considerations for an aging population. This includes:

- Ensuring a foundation of access to primary care and chronic condition management services in Alaskan communities.
- Strengthening delivery systems for behavioral health, complex care, and long-term services and supports.
- Elevating solutions that focus on prevention in hub communities and rural areas.
- Supporting regional coordination and community-based partnerships.
- Investing in sustainability beyond the lifetime of RHTP funding.

The RHTP is a powerful opportunity for Alaska to draw down federal funding for projects designed by Alaska communities to serve rural residents. The Department will prioritize projects that clearly articulate a vision for innovation and transformation, and which build in long-term sustainability plans after RHTP funds sunset in FY2032. The Department is also interested in partnerships with large organizations that represent various rural health care entities to support timely and effective distribution of RHTP funds.

Request for Information (RFI):

Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to gather input from stakeholders to inform Alaska's strategic approach to RHTP implementation. The Department will review all responses to this RFI and may use the information to:

- Shape Alaska's Rural Health Transformation Plan;
- Inform future funding opportunities and grant program design;
- Identify high-potential projects for expedited development; and
- Guide state and federal efforts related to rural health funding.

The Department invites a broad spectrum of responses, including but not limited to:

- Projects with a defined scope and implementation plan that are ready to launch in the near term
- Early-stage ideas that show promise for rural health care transformation
- General input about community needs, regional trends, and recommendations for leveraging RHTP funds

The Department is particularly interested in:

- Concepts or initiatives that could transform rural health care delivery, especially in the domains of primary care, behavioral health, complex care, and long-term services and supports
- Collaborative or regionally coordinated approaches that strengthen care delivery across service areas
- Opportunities to support workforce, infrastructure, and technology in hub communities and rural areas
- Insights into barriers or gaps in the current system that limit access, quality, or innovation
- Strategies that are designed with long-term sustainability in mind

This RFI is for planning and information-gathering purposes only. Submission does not constitute a commitment by the Department to fund any proposed activity. A formal Request for Proposals (RFP) or grant application process may follow at a later stage.

Stakeholders Encouraged to Respond

The Department welcomes responses from any interested party. This includes but is not limited to:

- Tribal Health Organizations
- Hospitals and provider networks
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and rural health clinics
- Community-based organizations
- Educational institutions and health care workforce programs
- Behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment providers
- Local governments
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organizations
- Rural residents, patients, and advocates

Respondents are encouraged to consider how their input may align with local or regional efforts, and where appropriate, to collaborate with other organizations serving the same communities or populations.

Response Format and Content

The recommended page limit for responses is 10 pages including attachments. Respondents may submit input in one of two general formats:

Option 1: Structured Response (Recommended)

This format is encouraged for any project idea — whether it is already fully scoped or still in development. Even if your idea is conceptual, this structure helps the Department understand what you're proposing and why it matters. Suggested structure:

1. Organizational Background and Experience
 - Briefly describe your organization, including mission and experience with rural health.
 - Identify lead entity and key contact person(s).
2. Overview
 - Provide a high-level summary of the idea.
 - Identify which of the ten RHTP required activities the idea aligns with.
 - Describe the anticipated impact on rural residents, including health outcomes or improvements to access and quality.
 - Outline your sustainability strategy beyond RHTP funding.
3. Implementation Considerations
 - Identify key partners and their roles.
 - Describe your organization's capacity and readiness to implement the idea and provide a high-level timeline for implementation activities, if applicable.
 - Identify any major implementation risks or barriers and briefly describe mitigation strategies for any financial or operational risks.

Option 2: General Input or Feedback

This is an open-format option. Responses do not need to follow a set structure. Respondents may submit narrative responses describing regional challenges, gaps in the current system or continuum of care, written reflections, emerging community needs or ideas, and any other feedback on how the Department should approach RHTP funds.

Response Information:

Please provide responses in writing via email no later than 4:00 p.m. Alaska time on August 22, 2025, to the following point of contact:

Annalisa Haynie
Procurement Specialist
Department of Health
Division of Finance and Management Services
annalisa.haynie@alaska.gov

Please also copy doh.procurement.proposals@alaska.gov on the submission.

It is the responsibility of the interested party to follow up with the procurement specialist listed above to ensure your response was received prior to the time and date specified.

All questions must be directed to the procurement specialist listed above.

Responses in Microsoft format are preferred, with attachments submitted as PDF, Microsoft Word, Adobe, Microsoft Excel, or PowerPoint files.

Please ensure the response includes your company's name and contact information (including email) for the individual(s) who should be notified if the Department releases a solicitation.

Important Notice:

Responding to this RFI is not a requirement for any future contract opportunities. Responses to this RFI are for informational purposes only and will not be evaluated. Do not include cost estimates as they will not be considered in a response. Proprietary information, if any, should be minimized and **MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED**. Information not marked as proprietary may become public. This RFI does not extend any rights to prospective vendors or obligate the state to conduct a solicitation or purchase any goods or services. Nor will the State be financially responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of any response for the requested information. This RFI is issued for the sole purpose of obtaining information as described in this notice. However, the information obtained from this request may be used to prepare a purchase, contract, or solicitation in the future.