

Rural Health Transformation Program Technical Assistance for Ensuring Safety Net Service Delivery Funding Opportunity, May 8, 2026

Prepared from presentation slides and speaker notes. This handout is designed as an accessible companion document for participants who may not be able to use slide decks effectively.

1. Agenda

Presenter: Anna Johnson

Purpose: To help applications feel confident and prepared, we will review the funding opportunity guidance, highlight key requirements and provide a space for questions.

- Background
- Eligibility
- Purpose
- Unallowable costs
- Application and Review
- Reporting
- Questions
- Resources and Reminders

Information may change based on upon updated federal guidance or upon further consideration by North Dakota Health and Human Services (ND HHS).

2. Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP)

RHTP was authorized by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Section 71401 of Public Law 119-21) providing \$50 billion to all 50 states over five years

- North Dakota Health and Human Services (ND HHS) submitted an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
- ND was awarded \$198.9M for year one (12/29/2025 – 10/30/2026)

North Dakota's application identified 4 initiatives

- Make ND healthy again
- Strengthen and stabilize rural health workforce
- Bring high-quality healthcare closer to home
- Connect technology, data and providers for a stronger ND

3. Funding Opportunities

- Funding opportunities will be released in phases, with individual applications announced over time.
- Each funding opportunity will have a unique purpose, eligibility and timeline.
- Future year's funds will be determined by CMS based on the state's progress on the plan submitted in the RHTP application.
 - Use of funds must align with the state's RHTP application or provide justification.
 - Use of funds must follow state and federal guidance.
 - Awarded funds must receive proper state and federal approval.

4. Ensuring Safety Net Service Delivery Funding Opportunity

- Funding opportunity solicitation number: 210-341
- Total Funding: \$15 million
 - An estimated 50 awards of approximately \$300,000 each are expected to be funded in year one
 - Applicants may request funding at any level necessary to support their proposed project.

5. What does the Ensuring Safety Net Service Delivery Funding Opportunity include?

Technical assistance, training, planning and infrastructure development or equipment and remodeling for providers aiming to fill a gap in the current continuum of care.

Examples may include:

- medically managed withdrawal management services
- youth and adult partial hospitalization/day treatment programs
- behavioral health crisis response
- pediatric and ventilator beds
- obstetric care
- home-based services

Technical assistance, training, equipment and remodeling for providers expanding outreach and telehealth supports for underserved communities.

Examples may include:

- telehealth equipment
- development of outreach models

- mobile clinics
- virtual care rooms for telehealth visits

6. Purpose and Outcomes

Purpose

- Fill gaps in the health and behavioral health service delivery systems
- Improve the health care safety net
- Must support North Dakota's RHTP

Expected Outcomes

- Increase telehealth and remote patient monitoring (RPM) encounters for Medicaid members
- Reduce avoidable emergency department visits for Medicaid members
- Improve coordination of care for Medicaid members
- Improve getting care quickly for Medicaid members
- Improve getting appointments with specialists as soon as needed for Medicaid members
- Establish 4–5 medically managed withdrawal management (detox) programs and 3–5 partial hospitalization/day treatment programs for youth and adults
- Engage at least 15 hospitals and community providers through technical assistance, grants and incentive structures to expand behavioral health capacity
- Improve access to intermediate behavioral health services, reducing preventable emergency room visits and hospitalizations
- Increase rural behavioral health workforce skills and retention through targeted training and operational supports
- Decrease suicide attempts

7. Eligibility

Priority Considerations

- Behavioral health initiatives identified in North Dakota's RHTP application: medically managed withdrawal management services, behavioral health crisis response, youth or adult partial hospitalization programs and day treatment programs.
- Continuum of care gaps identified in North Dakota's RHTP application: pediatric and ventilator beds, obstetric care and home-based services.

Eligible:

- Hospitals, clinics and home care providers

- Long-term care facilities
- Behavioral health providers
- Tribes and tribal health organizations
- Emergency medical services providers
- Other health care providers
- Transportation providers
- Local public health
- Nonprofit organizations
- Education systems
- Community organizations

8. Target Populations

- Rural and/or tribal North Dakota residents
- Medicaid members

The entities within and the cities of Grand Forks, Fargo, West Fargo and Bismarck are considered urban and do not qualify for RHTP funding opportunities unless the population served by the grant applicant is at least 50% North Dakota rural citizens or the focus of the grant funding will be used for North Dakota rural citizens. RHTP funding must be used to support North Dakota rural citizens.

9. Timeline

Operating Period

- Begin: once the agreement has been fully executed, following all required approvals and signatures.
- End: September 30, 2027, and all funds must be fully expended by that date.

Key Dates:

- May 29, 2026, 5 p.m. CT: Applications due
- June 1 - 30, 2026:
 - Review and scoring
 - Communication with applicants for adjustments if needed
 - Approvals by CMS and ND HHS leadership
 - Agreement development
- September 2026: All year one funds must be awarded
- September 30, 2027: All year one funds must be expended

10. Requirements to Receive Federal Funding

- Register with the Secretary of State to perform business in the state.
- If your organization has not been paid by a state entity before, you must register with vendor registry before you can be paid.
- ND HHS will require a W9 form to set up by your organization within our contract system. If your organization would like to be paid with electronic funds transfer, you need to submit the substitute IRS form W-9.
- Organizations need to register with SAMS.gov and receive a UEI number to receive these funds.

11. Unallowable Costs and Limits

10% Cap on Admin Costs Across All Funding

- Pre-award costs.
- Meeting matching requirements for any other federal funds or for local entities.
- Services, equipment or supports that are the legal responsibility of another party under federal, state or tribal law.
- Supplanting existing state, local, tribal or private funding of infrastructure or services.
- New construction, building expansion or purchasing of buildings.
 - Renovations or alterations are allowed if they are clearly linked to program goals, cannot include cosmetic upgrades or significant retrofitting of buildings.
 - Renovation or alternations cannot exceed 20% of total funding in a budget period.
- Replacing payment(s) for clinical services that could be reimbursed by insurance.
 - Direct healthcare services may be funded if not currently reimbursable, will fill a gap in care coverage, and/or may transform current care delivery model.
 - Provider payments cannot exceed 15% of total funding in a budget period.

12. Unallowable Costs and Limits

- No more than 5% of total funding in a budget period can support funding the replacement of an electronic health record (EHR) system if a previous HITECH certified EMR is in place as of September 1, 2025.
- Funding toward initiatives similar to the “Rural Tech Catalyst Fund Initiative” cannot exceed the lesser of 10% of total funding or \$20 million of total funding awarded in a budget period.

- Financial assistance to households for installation and monthly broadband internet costs.
- Clinician salaries/wages for facilities that subject clinicians to non-compete clauses.
- Meals and food.

13. Application

- Background
- Narrative
 - Identified Need and Proposed Goals
 - Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes
- Action Plan
- Budget

14. Application - Background

- Organization name and background
- Project lead and contact information
- Project title and brief description of why you're applying

15. Application - Narrative

Identified need and proposed goals

- Identify the need for the proposed project
 - Challenges the proposed project aims to address
 - Relevant local data, as applicable
- Outline your overarching goal(s) and target population
 - Describe the broad, high-level change(s) your organization seeks to achieve
 - If the proposed project serves additional populations or is located in an urban area, describe how rural or tribal residents and Medicaid members will be served.
- Is your project already in progress, currently funded by another source or actively being implemented in your organization or community?
 - Identify current or similar projects and their funding sources.
 - Why is the expansion needed?
 - How will your proposed project enhance or expand rather than duplicate existing efforts?

16. Application - Narrative

Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes

- Use outcome-focused terms to describe the strategies and activities
 - Order in priority, if applicable
 - Specific, realistic, measurable and aligned with funding opportunity guidance, metrics and eligibility
- Sustainability (priority numbers)
- Continued maintenance and use of technology and equipment

17. Application - Narrative

Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes

How does your project align with elements of CMS's RHTP?

For the identified elements, briefly explain the connection to the project by responding to the stated questions.

- Improving access
- Improving outcomes
- Technology use
- Partnerships
- Workforce
- Data-driven solutions
- Financial solvency strategies
- Cause identification

18. Application – Action Plan

Timeline and Milestones

- Identify key milestones and estimated completion dates for each strategy and activity

Metrics

- For each outcome, identify specific metrics that will be used
- How will progress be tracked for reporting

Key Personnel

- Internal
- Consultants

19. Application – Budget

Template for itemized budget

- Cover
- Budget
- Lease vs. Purchase
- Appropriate justification for each cost category
- Proposals may exceed the estimated award amount
- Please submit in Excel format

RHTP funds are governed by applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 300, with guidance from the federal RHTP Notice of Funding Opportunity and CMS's Frequently Asked Questions document.

The limits and unallowable costs detailed in this section come from federal guidance and are non-negotiable.

20. Application Submission

Applications must be submitted through [Qualtrics](#).

- Your progress is automatically saved every time you click the Next button at the bottom of a page.
- If you need to stop, simply close your browser and you can resume within one week.
- To resume, click the original survey link again from the same device and browser.
- This feature will not work if you are using a private or incognito browser window.
- Submit early to avoid technical issues

Reminder:

- Applications due by 5 p.m. CT on May 29, 2026
- Applications not received by the submission date and time will be considered non-responsive and not reviewed
- Don't forget to include required attachment – Itemized Subrecipient Budget Template

21. Application Review

Dates: June 1 – 30, 2026

- Review and scoring by a committee
- Communication with applicants for adjustments, if needed

- Approvals by CMS and ND HHS leadership
- Agreement development

[Scoring Criteria on Funding Opportunity Webpage](#)

22. Reporting

Quarterly and annual reports

- Reimbursement requests
- Impact stories
- Progress reports
 - Metrics
 - Use of funds

23. Questions

- Review of questions received
- To ask a question today:
 - Submit via chat
- Funding opportunity FAQ and resources will be added to website
- We may not be able to answer all questions today.

24. Submitted Questions

Question: Are IHEs eligible applicants?

- Answer: Please resubmit question and define IHEs.

Question: Since the funding must be expended in the funding year are students in training expected to be complete in their professional plan of study?

- Answer: The Ensuring Safety Net Service Delivery funding opportunity training must be targeted at filling a gap in the continuum of care or to expand outreach and telehealth services for underserved communities. Funding for students falls under a different aspect of ND's RHTP, and additional funding opportunities will continue to be posted to address the projects identified in North Dakota's application.

25. Submitted Questions

Question: We are a for-profit out of state entity that could directly serve rural North Dakotans. Can we apply?

- Answer: Yes, for profit providers are eligible for subrecipient work. However, they cannot act in a purchase of service or contractor capacity to be a direct awardee. Additionally, applicants must serve rural or tribal North Dakota residents. If appropriate justification can be made on how an out of state entity would fill a gap in the continuum of care or expand telehealth and outreach for underserved rural or tribal North Dakota communities, an application could be submitted.
- For RHTP funding opportunities, the entities within and the cities of Grand Forks, Fargo, West Fargo and Bismarck are considered urban and do not qualify for RHTP funding opportunities unless the population served by the grant applicant is at least 50% ND rural citizens or the focus of the grant funding will be used for ND rural citizens. RHTP funding must be used to support ND rural citizens.

26. Submitted Questions

Question: We have at least two proposals we'd like to submit for this funding opportunity. How do we open up multiple Qualtrics applications?

- Answer: One application per organization should be submitted. As stated in the application guidance, if there are multiple strategies, please number in order of priority.

Question: On page 3 it says, "Increase rural behavioral health workforce skills and retention through targeted training and operation supports." Can you better define operational supports and would retention bonuses count as this or merit type of pay increases as one of our biggest challenges is pay/retention.

- Answer: No, retention bonuses fall under a different aspect of ND's RHTP, and additional funding opportunities will continue to be posted to address the projects identified in North Dakota's application.

27. Submitted Questions

Question: Our community's safety net service delivery priority is more in the realm of family practice, not necessarily specific to behavior health. Is this the best RHTP proposal for us to apply to, or will there be another one less specific to behavior health coming in the future?

- Answer: At this stage, all funding opportunity details have not been finalized. Applicants must submit an application for each funding opportunity that they want to be considered for and they can be awarded multiple funding opportunities. However, the same project cannot be funded by two different funding opportunities. If appropriate justification can be made on how the project would improve the health care safety net, the system of providers and programs

ensuring health care access for vulnerable populations, including those living in rural areas and needing specialized care, an application could be submitted for the Ensuring Safety Net Delivery funding opportunity.

28. Resources and Reminders

- Visit the [Rural Health Transformation Program webpage](#)
- [Sign up to receive email updates](#)
- [Funding Guidance](#)
- Submit questions: [FAQ Survey](#)

29. Rural Health Transformation Program

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