

# Rural Health Transformation Program Technical Assistance for Zero-Hour Physical Education Initiative – May 4, 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: Dr. David Hunnicutt.

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. Zero-Hour Physical Education Initiative

- Funding opportunity solicitation number: 210.112
- Total Funding: \$700,000
- 10 awards of approximately \$70,000

### 5. Zero-Hour Physical Education Initiative

- Zero-Hour PE defined
- How Zero-Hour PE Initiatives work
  - Early morning scheduling
  - 30-60 min. sessions 2-3 times per week
  - High intensity
  - Heart rate monitoring and data tracking
  - Fitness not sports focused
  - Personal self improvement
  - Everyone welcome not just athletes
- Why Zero-Hour PE matters
- Pay-off of Zero-Hour PE Initiatives

### 6. Eligibility

#### Eligible:

North Dakota's rural and tribal, public and private school, regional education associations and/or school consortiums

#### Target Populations

- Middle School students
- Junior High students
- High School students

\*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.

## 7. Purpose and Outcomes

### Purpose

- Develop and deliver a Zero-Hour Physical Education (PE) Initiative
- Improve the health and well-being of students in rural and/or tribal communities

### Expected Outcomes

- Increase participation in wellness activities
- Increases in physical activity
- Enhanced mental well-being
- Enhanced relationships and social connection
- Improve academic performance
- Improvements in policies, systems and environments that help to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

## 8. Funding Opportunity 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.

### Timeline

- May 22, 2026, 5 p.m. CT: Applications due
- May 26-June 25, 2026:
  - Review and scoring
  - Communication with applicants for adjustments if needed
  - Approvals by CMS and ND HHS leadership
  - Agreement development
- August 30, 2026: Review of available funds (agreements may be amended based on availability of additional funds)
- September 2026: All year one funds must be awarded
- September 30, 2027: All year one funds must be expended

## 9. Application: Overview

Background

Narrative

- Identified Need and Proposed Goals
- Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes
- Sustainability

Action Plan

Budget

## 10. Application -1. Background

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

## 11. Application -2. 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.
- Identify similar projects (as needed)
  - How will your proposed project enhance or expand rather than duplicate existing efforts?
  - Why is the expansion needed?

## 12. Application -2. Narrative Continued

### Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes

- Target population(s)
- Leadership support
- Program champion and team

- Communication
- Baseline data collection
- Zero-hour PE Initiative
- Targeted coaching
- Policies and environmental support
- Transportation
- Recognition and celebration
- Outcomes
- Sustainability

## 13. Application -2. Narrative Continued

### Strategies, Activities and Measurable Outcomes

- How does your project align with elements of CMS's RHTP?
  - Increases in individual participation in wellness activities
  - Increases in physical activity
  - Enhanced mental well-being
  - Improved academic performance
  - Enhanced social connection
  - Improvements in policies, systems and environments that help to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.
- For the identified elements, briefly explain the connection to the project by responding to the stated questions.

## 14. Application – 3. 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

## 15. Application – 4. Budget

### Template for itemized budget

- Cover
- Budget
- Provide an itemized budget with appropriate justification for each cost category (personnel, fringe, transportation, supplies, etc.).

When developing your budget, consider that your program lead will be required to take part in an onboarding exercise. In addition, your program lead will also be required to take part in a one-day conference to share the status and progress of your initiative, budget accordingly.

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.

## 16. 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.
- Funds cannot be used to duplicate or replace existing funding, known as “supplanting.” However, RHTP funds may be used to expand or enhance an existing project.
- 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.
- Meals and food.
- 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.

## 17. Application Submission

Applications must be submitted through [Qualtrics](#)

- Can start, save and go back
- Submit early to avoid technical issues

Don't forget to include required attachments

- Policies and procedures
- Budget Template

Reminder:

- Applications due by 5 p.m. CT on May 22, 2026
- Applications not received by the submission date and time will be considered non-responsive and not reviewed

## 18. Application Review

**Dates: May 25-June 25, 2026**

- Review and scoring by a committee
- Communication with applicants for adjustments, if needed
- Approvals by CMS and ND HHS leadership
- Agreement development

[Scoring Tool](#)

## 19. Reporting

**Quarterly and annual reports**

- Reimbursement Requests
- Impact Stories
- Progress Reports
  - Metrics
  - Use of funds

## 20. Questions

- Review of questions received
- To ask a question today:
  - Submit via chat
- Funding opportunity FAQ and resources will be added to website

## 21. Resources and Reminders

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

## 22. Rural Health Transformation Program

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