

NORTH DAKOTA
CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL (CAH) NETWORKING GRANT

2025

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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CAH NETWORKING GRANT OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, Medical Services Division, (Department) is accepting applications for a vendor to provide Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Networking support for the development, expansion and sustainability of a statewide clinically integrated network (CIN) that serves independent critical access hospitals in North Dakota.

The 69th North Dakota Legislative Assembly in 2025 appropriated \$2,000,000 through HB1012, Section 18, from the Community Health Trust Fund to fund this project.

This funding builds on the previous biennium's efforts (SB2012, 2023) to strengthen rural healthcare capacity, data-sharing, and value-based care readiness.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Be a statewide value-based CIN supporting a majority of independent critical access hospitals in North Dakota.

SCOPE OF WORK, ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

The vendor shall carry out CAH Networking supporting strategic objectives and activities and complete deliverables which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Develop and implement a strategic plan and structured framework to enhance healthcare delivery and outcomes, with a clear path for progress monitoring across the state. Include a project timeline with start and end dates for each phase of the project.
 - This will be a draft document submitted with the application, with a final strategic plan due within 30 days of contract execution.
- Work on initiatives that directly contribute to demonstratable improvements in healthcare outcomes including but not limited to
 - Implementation of care delivery models that improve access to services.
 - Adoption of technology solutions that enhance patient care and safety.
 - Workforce development and retention initiatives in critical service areas.
 - Quality improvement projects that reduce preventable readmissions or adverse events.
 - Other initiatives as approved by the Department.
- Implement care management and referral coordination practices.
- Provide technical assistance and education for participating rural hospitals.
- Meet or provide written report to the North Dakota legislature upon request to discuss progress of project.
- Meet with the Department on a regular basis or as needed to discuss approach, strategies, implementation and progress.
- Identify measurable outcomes, establish baseline data, and propose target performance levels to be achieved within the budget period for each project or initiative (e.g. provide SMART goals).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the activities, including outcomes, cost savings, and participant satisfaction.

- Submit a reimbursement at least quarterly, may submit monthly, using the Department provided SFN 1763. No advance or lump-sum disbursements are permitted. Actual costs must be reported.
 - Reimbursement requests must be supported by appropriate documentation.
- Submit a detailed progress report of activities, outcomes and the status of accomplishing the CIN strategic plan goals with the reimbursement request that supports reported costs.
- Submit a final report at the end of the contract period which
 - Summarizes outcomes, barriers, and opportunities.
 - Identifies potential future funding sources or financial models that may sustain this project beyond the life of the grant.
 - Discusses the ethical considerations involved in the project's execution, particularly relating to patient care and data usage.
 - Provides information on how funded activities are evaluated for effectiveness and how they contribute to long-term sustainability. Evaluation metrics may include patient and provider engagement, hospital participation, value-based care (VBC) contract execution, and data-sharing success.

COMPLIANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Vendor will

- Comply with all relevant Department fiscal and audit standards.
- Maintain all supporting records for a period of at least three years.
- Ensure the project adheres to any regulatory and legal requirements applicable to clinical integrated networks, including antitrust laws and patient privacy protections.

The Department reserves the right to request additional reports or documentation to verify progress and compliance. The grant award agreement may be amended or terminated based on non-performance, non-compliance, or funding availability.

FUNDING

A total of \$2,000,000 is available for this funding opportunity.

An application priced at more than \$2,000,000 will not be reviewed.

The budget period is October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027.

All grant funding must be expended, and all project activities completed, no later than June 30, 2027. All activities and related costs must be incurred during the period of October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027. Any activities and related costs incurred prior to October 1, 2025 or after June 30, 2027 are not allowable for reimbursement.

CAH NETWORKING GRANT APPLICATION

APPLICATION FORMAT AND CONTENT

FORMAT

An applicant is required to submit an application, in order to be considered for the CAH Networking Grant. The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, Medical Services Division (Department) will not be providing an application template; however, applications are recommended to be organized in alignment with the content items required below.

CONTENT

An applicant must submit a signed application that includes the following:

1. Applicant Information

- a. Complete name and address of applicant's organization.
- b. Provide name, title, email address, mailing address, and telephone number of the person to be contacted regarding the application.
- c. Provide name and title of the individual responsible for the project identified in this application.

2. Experience and Qualifications

- a. Describe your organization's experience regarding statewide value-based CIN supporting a majority of independent critical access hospitals in North Dakota.
- b. Describe organizational infrastructure and governance to coordinate strategic goals and partnerships.
- c. Describe staffing of CIN infrastructure and leadership team. Define the roles and responsibilities of each participant and partner organization within network, including governance, operational management, and evaluation responsibilities.
- d. Provide organizational chart regarding project work.

3. Strategy of Work

- a. Describe the proposed project.
- b. Describe how the project addresses a need or gap.
- c. Discuss how you will hold stakeholders accountable for their contributions and engagement in the project. Outline how you will engage with various participants, including healthcare providers, patients, and stakeholders throughout the process.
- d. Provide a draft strategic plan and structured framework to enhance healthcare delivery and outcomes, with a clear path for progress monitoring across the state. Include a project timeline with start and end dates for each phase of the project.
- e. Provide a project work plan (i.e. initiatives) and timeline the applicant intends to follow and illustrate how the project will be successfully implemented. The timeline should include milestones with estimated dates. These initiatives should include but not limited to
 - Implementation of care delivery models that improve access to services.
 - Adoption of technology solutions that enhance patient care and safety.
 - Workforce development and retention initiatives in critical service areas.
 - Quality improvement projects that reduce preventable readmissions or adverse events.
 - Other initiatives as proposed by the applicant.

- f. Describe the type of work each of the applicant's staff will perform in carrying out the project and describe relevant credentials and experiences of each staff member. If the offeror plans to use external sources, such as consultants, this must be included in the plan.
- g. Provide detailed descriptions of all activities including implementation of a shared data analytics platform, establishing governance structures, and developing care protocols.
- h. Describe the methods, cadence and tools to be used for monitoring progress, collecting data, and evaluating outcomes throughout the contract period including outcomes, cost savings, and participant satisfaction.
- i. Describe how process and outcome measures will be gathered and reported.
- j. Describe the anticipated impact the project will have. Utilize data when possible.
- k. Describe how the project will be sustained after funding ends.

4. Budget

- a. Provide a detailed itemized budget for the period of October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027. Below is a sample budget template which the applicant may submit or may submit a similar budget. An applicant may list each initiative with related costs.

Category	Amount
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Subcontracting	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Operations	
Other	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	
Indirect Costs	
TOTAL BUDGET	

- b. Include a budget narrative describing each cost category and budget amount proposed.

5. Signature

- a. All applications must be signed and dated.

CAH NETWORKING GRANT SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Timeline	
Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcement Issued	August 25, 2025
Deadline for Submission of Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Questions must be submitted to Lonny Mertz at lwmertz@nd.gov	September 5, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. CT
Grant Application Submission Deadline <ul style="list-style-type: none">Application must be submitted to Lonny Mertz at lwmertz@nd.gov	September 15, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. CT
Approximate Grant Award Status Notification Date	September 22, 2025
Grant Award Start Date	October 1, 2025
Grant Award End Date	June 30, 2027

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Personal financial gain and private benefit to staff of the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services is prohibited. If an evaluator has a conflict of interest, they will not evaluate the grant applicant and shall recuse themselves from the review of that particular grant application.

The evaluation team will utilize the Evaluation Tool (Attachment A) to review all applications.

After reviewing an application and completing an evaluation, the team will determine if the application should be awarded, partially awarded, or not awarded. Department reserves the right not to award an application.

- **Applications that are not awarded:** The applicant will receive a notice of not being awarded.
- **Applications that are partially awarded:** The applicant will receive a notice of being partially awarded with the amount that is being awarded. Applicant will then enter into a Grant Agreement with Department (Attachment B). Applicant shall acknowledge receipt of award. Department reserves the right to follow-up on progress and request repayment of inappropriately used funds.
- **Applications that are awarded:** The applicant will receive a notice of being awarded with the amount being confirmed. Applicant will then enter into a Grant Agreement with Department (Attachment B). Applicant shall acknowledge receipt of award. Department reserves the right to follow-up on progress and request repayment of inappropriately used funds.

An awarded applicant is required to register as a Vendor with the Secretary of State. The North Dakota Secretary of State has registration requirements for individuals and businesses transacting business in North Dakota. If the applicant is determined to have a registration requirement with the North Dakota Secretary of State, they shall be registered before the contract award and registration shall remain active for the duration of the contract period ([N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-09.1](#)).

- See the OMB [Guidelines to Vendor Registry](#) for more information.

Visit the Secretary of State's [Vendor Registration](#) webpage for information on registration requirements and fees. Visit [FirstStop](#), the Secretary of State's business and licensing software, for online form options.

- Check the [Business Records](#) database to see if a business is registered.
- Contact Secretary of State's office by [email](#) or call 701-328-2900 (choose menu item 2, then option 1).
- If you need to register, fees apply.
- Vendors may need to obtain businesses licenses. See the [list of licenses required of businesses](#) in the State of North Dakota. The link includes information on who to contact, application fees, renewal dates, and the legal reference.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Evaluation Tool

Attachment B: Sample Grant Agreement