



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Best and Brightest – Rural Healthcare Workforce Recruitment

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL # PHTHORC26010

Contract Term: February 15, 2026 to September 30, 2031

HHS Issuing Officer

Name: Julie Jones

Email: Julie.Jones@hhs.iowa.gov

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SECTION 1 -- GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

1.01 Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) # PHTHORC26010 is to solicit applications that will enable the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (referred to as Agency) to select the most qualified applicants to recruit highly skilled Healthcare Providers in Rural Iowa by offering competitive incentives that make rural practice both attractive and sustainable. Funds through this RFP shall be used for recruitment bonuses, relocation costs, or other provider incentives for Healthcare Providers providing In-Person, Full-Time care in Rural Iowa. This work implements a portion of the Hometown Connections initiative of the Iowa Healthy Hometowns Project, funded through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Rural Health Transformation Program, opportunity #: CMS-RHT-26-001.

1.02 Contract Term

The anticipated **Contract Term** is from February 15, 2026, to September 30, 2031. Continuation of the contract is at the Agency's sole discretion and is subject to: review of the contractor's performance, contractor's compliance with the special and general terms and contingent terms of the contract, availability of funds, program modifications, or any other grounds determined by the Agency to be in the Agency's best interests. The contract term, including all possible extensions provided by the Agency shall not exceed a six-year period.

The issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Agency to award a contract.

1.03 Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet each of the following eligibility requirements for consideration.

Eligible Applicants

Public, private, non-profit, academic, community-based or governmental organizations or healthcare facilities that employ Healthcare Providers who provide direct care services to patients. The practice site(s) for the recruited healthcare provider must be in a Rural area, as defined in this RFP. The Healthcare Provider receiving the funds must provide care In-Person and Full-Time within one or more Rural areas of Iowa.

Eligible Healthcare Providers for the purpose of this RFP must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Provide services in one of more of the following areas of practice: maternal/child health, cancer, cardiovascular health, mental/behavioral health, and/or chronic disease prevention and management (which includes primary care Healthcare Providers).
2. Be licensed to practice in Iowa as one of the following prior to 9/29/2027:
 - a. Provider Type 1: Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)
 - b. Provider Type 2: Registered Nurse (RN), Physician Assistant (PA)

Organizations may submit up to two applications within the same Rural county, one for funding to recruit a Healthcare Provider from Provider Type 1 and one for funding to recruit a Healthcare Provider from Provider Type 2.

Note: Applicants for the Best & Brightest- Medical Equipment Procurement RFP #PHTHORC26009 are also eligible to apply for this RFP. Applicants are not required to apply for both the Best & Brightest- Medical Equipment Procurement RFP and this RFP.

Electronic Communication Requirements

Applicant is required to maintain and provide to the Agency, upon application, a current and valid email account for electronic communications with the Agency.

Official email communication from the Agency regarding this application will be issued from grants@iowagrants.gov. Applicants are required to assure these communications are received and responded to accordingly.

1.04 Service Delivery Area

Applicants must meet the Rural designation eligibility criteria as defined in this RFP. Providers selected to receive an award through this procurement process are required to deliver In-Person clinical services at a contracted Rural healthcare facility for the duration of their service obligation.

The Agency will consider geographic location during the selection and award process. Refer to Section 4.

1.05 Available Funds

The source of funding is federal funding from the Rural Health Transformation Program, authorized under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Agency anticipates up to \$18,000,000 available for up to 150 awards. Refer to section 2.04 for additional funding details. Actual total awards and individual contract funding levels may vary from those listed or funding may be withdrawn completely, depending on availability of funding or any other grounds determined by the Agency to be in the Agency's best interests.

1.06 Schedule of Important Dates (All times and dates listed are local Iowa time.)

The following dates are set forth for informational purposes. The Agency reserves the right to change them.

EVENT	DATE
RFP Issued	December 8, 2025
Written Questions and Responses	
Round 1 Questions Due:	December 10, 2025
Responses Posted By:	December 12, 2025
Final Questions Due:	December 17, 2025
Responses Posted By:	December 19, 2025

Applications Due	January 5, 2026, by 4:00 PM Local Iowa Time
Post Notice of Intent to Award	On or around January 27, 2026

A. RFP Issued – The Agency will post the RFP under Grant Opportunities quick link at www.IowaGrants.gov on the date referenced in the Schedule of Events table above. The RFP will remain posted through the Applications Due date.

B. Applicant's Conference – An applicant's conference will not be held.

C. Written Questions and Responses – Written questions related to the RFP must be submitted through www.IowaGrants.gov no later than the dates specified in the table above. Applicant must be registered with IowaGrants in order to submit a question (Refer to the links section for instructions on registering and logging in to IowaGrants).

Written questions submitted after the date specified for final questions in the table above will not be considered and a response will not be provided by the Agency.

- Registered Users login to www.IowaGrants.gov
- Click on 'Users click here to login'
- ID.iowa.gov, sign-in (email address), click next (enter password), hit enter or click verify
- Search Funding Opportunities
- Select this Funding Opportunity
- Click on 'Ask A Question' link located at the top right-hand side of the Opportunity Details page, and enter a single question in the 'Post Question' box
- Click the 'Save' button

Additional questions may be submitted by repeating the process above for each individual question. If the question or comment pertains to a specific section of the RFP, the section and page must be referenced. Verbal questions will not be accepted. Questions will not be displayed in IowaGrants until written responses are posted by the Agency.

The Agency will prepare written responses to all pertinent, timely and properly submitted questions according to the schedule of events table above. The Agency's written responses will be considered part of the RFP.

To view posted questions and responses:

- Login to www.IowaGrants.gov
- Search Funding Opportunities
- Select this Funding Opportunity
- Scroll to the bottom of the Opportunity Details page, under the **Questions** subsection to view the posted questions and answers.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to check this Funding Opportunity in www.IowaGrants.gov periodically for written questions and responses to this RFP.

D. Application Creation – The application will consist of multiple required forms (refer to Section 3) available within the Electronic Grant Management system at www.IowaGrants.gov.

Each form of the application must be completed in its entirety or IowaGrants will not permit the application to be submitted.

Each individual within the applicant organization who desires access to the application must be registered in IowaGrants (refer to the links section for instructions on registering and logging in to IowaGrants). **The first user to initiate an application for a Funding Opportunity is designated by the system as the primary user (Registered Applicant) for that application.** This primary user can add additional registered users as Grantee Contacts within their organization to the Funding Opportunity for completion/edit/review of forms and submission of the application. If multiple users are editing the same form within an application at the same time, the last saved version will over-ride any changes made by other users.

IowaGrants will permit multiple registered users of the applicant organization to create separate applications for the same Funding Opportunity, thereby creating multiple applications for the same Funding Opportunity. The applicant is responsible for ensuring only one entire application is completed and submitted for each requested service area (refer to Sections 1.04 and 1.14) in response to this RFP.

E. Applications Due – Applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. (local Iowa time) **January 5, 2026** in the Electronic Grant Management System at www.IowaGrants.gov. Attempted submission of a completed application after stated due date and time will not be allowed by the system. This Funding Opportunity will not be available as a Current Opportunity on the Electronic Grant Management System after the stated due date and time. If submission of an application is attempted after the stated date and time, the applicant will receive a notice stating “The Funding Opportunity is closed”.

Applications submitted to the Agency in any manner other than through Electronic Grant Management System of the IowaGrants website (e.g. electronic mail to any other address, faxed, hand-delivered, mailed or shipped or courier-service delivered versions) will be rejected, not reviewed by the Agency and a rejection notice will be sent to the applicant. Any information submitted separately from the application will not be considered in the review process.

The date and time system of the IowaGrants Electronic Grant Management System shall serve as the official regulator for the submission date and time of an application.

The due date and time requirements for submission of the application within the Electronic Grant Management System of IowaGrants website are mandatory requirements and will not be subject to waiver as a minor deficiency.

Submission Confirmation Screen: After an applicant submits an application, a confirmation screen containing an Application ID number will appear on your computer screen.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to complete all Funding Opportunity Forms and submit the application in sufficient time.

F. Release of Names of Applicants – January 7-9, 2026. The names of all applicants who submitted applications by the deadline shall be released to all who have requested such notification via an email request to Julie Jones at Julie.Jones@hhs.iowa.gov. The announcement of applicants who timely submitted an application does not mean that an

individual application has been deemed technically compliant or accepted for evaluation.

G. Notice of Intent to Award – A Notice of Intent to Award the contract(s) will be posted for 10 business days on the Agency Web page <https://hhs.iowa.gov/about/funding-opportunities/notice-intent-award> on or around the date specified in the Schedule of Events table above. Applicants are solely responsible for reviewing the Notice of Intent to Award to determine their award status.

H. Contract Negotiations and Execution of the Contract – Following the posting of the Notice of Intent to Award, the Authorized Official for the successful applicant(s) will receive a contract document via email from the Agency. The successful applicant has eight (8) working days from date of receipt in which to sign a contract with the Agency. If a contract has not been executed within eight (8) working days of applicant's receipt, the Agency reserves the right to cancel the award and to send a contract to the next highest ranked applicant or other entity deemed appropriate by the Agency. Individual contract negotiations following the award will not be allowed and failure to sign the contract in the time provided by the Agency may result in award/contract rescission.

1.07 Inquiries

Inquiries related to the RFP shall be submitted in accordance with Section 1.06 (C).

For assistance regarding IowaGrants, please contact the Agency IowaGrants Helpdesk at iowagrants.helpdesk@hhs.iowa.gov or by calling 1-866-520-8987 (available between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on weekdays, excluding state holidays).

Unauthorized contact regarding this RFP with other state employees may result in disqualification. In no case shall verbal communications override written communications. Only written communications are binding on the Agency.

The Agency assumes no responsibility for representations made by its officers or employees prior to the execution of a legal contract, unless such representations are specifically incorporated into the RFP or the contract.

Any verbal information provided by the applicant shall not be considered part of its application.

1.08 Amendments to the RFP

The Agency reserves the right to amend the RFP at any time. In the event the Agency decides to amend, add to, or delete any part of this RFP, a written amendment will be posted at www.IowaGrants.gov under the Attachments section of this Funding Opportunity. The applicant is advised to check this website periodically for amendments to this RFP. In the event an amendment occurs after the Funding Opportunity is closed, the Agency will email the written amendment to the individuals identified in the submitted application as the Project Officer (Registered Applicant) and the Authorized Official listed in the Cover Sheet- General Information

Form.

1.09 Open Competition

No attempt shall be made by the applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application for the purpose of restricting competition.

1.10 Withdrawal of Applications

An application created in IowaGrants.gov cannot be deleted. An application may be withdrawn by request of an applicant at any time prior to the due date and time. An applicant desiring to withdraw an application shall submit notification including the funding opportunity number, application ID, title of the application, and the applicant organization name via email to iowagrants.helpdesk@hhs.iowa.gov. After this funding opportunity closes, the Agency may withdraw applications that have not been submitted.

1.11 Resubmission of Withdrawn Applications

A withdrawn application may be resubmitted by an applicant at any time prior to the stated due date and time for the submission of applications.

To access a withdrawn application:

- Registered Users login to www.IowaGrants.gov as a returning user;
- Search Funding Opportunities;
- Select this Funding Opportunity;
- Click on 'Copy Existing Application';
- Select the application that you want to copy by marking it under the 'Copy' column (Note: all applications whether in editing, submitted or withdrawn status will be displayed to be copied);
- Click the 'Save' button.

The application that was copied will be open in this funding opportunity. Be sure to re-title the application if necessary, by going into the General Information form and editing it. Continue to complete the application forms and submit following the guidance provided in sections 1.06 (D) and (E), and in section 3 of this RFP.

Withdrawn applications for this RFP posting must be submitted by the due date provided in section 1.06 in order to be considered for funding. Withdrawn, submitted, or editing status applications are also available to copy to other Funding Opportunities in IowaGrants at any time.

1.12 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

- A. An applicant's submission of an application constitutes acceptance of the terms, conditions, criteria and requirements set forth in the RFP and operates as a waiver of any and all objections to the contents of the RFP. By submitting an application, an applicant agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Agency or the State of Iowa based on the terms or conditions of the RFP or the procurement process.

B. The Agency reserves the right to accept or reject any exception taken by an applicant to the terms and conditions of this RFP. Applicants must submit proposed or requested contract changes during the Question-and-Answer period for the Agency to address for all applicants. Individual contract negotiations following the award will not be allowed and failure to sign the contract in the time provided by the Agency may result in award/contract rescission. Rescissions will occur at the Agency's sole discretion. If an award is rescinded, the Agency may select another award based on the evaluation process identified in Section 4.

1.13 Costs of Application Preparation

All costs of preparing the application are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The Agency is not responsible for any costs incurred by the applicant which are related to the preparation or submission of the application or any other activities undertaken by the applicant related in any way to this RFP.

1.14 Multiple Applications

An applicant may submit only one application per type of provider per county. Applicants may submit more than one application.

1.15 Oral Presentation

Applicants may be requested to make an oral presentation of the application. The determination of need for presentations, the location, order, and schedule of the presentations is at the sole discretion of the Agency. If an oral presentation is required, applicants may clarify or elaborate on their applications but may in no way change their original application.

1.16 Disqualification of Applications/Cancellation of the RFP

A. The Agency reserves the right to disqualify, in whole or in part, any or all applications, to advertise for new applications, to arrange to receive or itself perform the services herein, to abandon the need for such services, and to cancel this RFP if it is in the best interests of the Agency.

B. Any application will be disqualified outright and not evaluated for any of the following reasons:

1. The applicant is not an eligible applicant as defined in section 1.03.
2. The intended practice site for providers to receive recruitment incentives is not within an eligible Rural location as defined in this RFP.
3. An applicant submits more than one application for the same provider type in the same county.
4. An application is submitted in a manner other than the Electronic Grant Management System at www.IowaGrants.gov.

C. Any application may be disqualified outright and not evaluated for any one of the

following reasons:

1. The applicant fails to include required information or fails to include sufficient information to determine whether an RFP requirement has been satisfied.
2. The applicant fails to follow the application instructions or presents information requested by this RFP in a manner inconsistent with the instructions of the RFP.
3. The applicant provides misleading or inaccurate answers.
4. The applicant states that a mandatory requirement cannot be satisfied.
5. The applicant's response materially changes a mandatory requirement.
6. The applicant's response limits the right of the Agency.
7. The applicant fails to respond to the Agency's request for information, documents, or references.
8. The applicant fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, or stipulation requested by this RFP.
9. The applicant initiates unauthorized contact regarding the RFP with a state employee.

1.17 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities

Iowa Code Chapter 68B contains laws which restrict gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Applicants are responsible for determining the applicability of this chapter to their activities and for complying with these requirements.

In addition, Iowa Code Chapter 722 provides that it is a felony offense to bribe a public official.

1.18 Use of Subcontractors

The use of Subcontractors is not permitted for the work performed in this contract.

1.19 Reference Checks

The Agency reserves the right to contact any reference to assist in the evaluation of the application, to verify information contained in the application and to discuss the applicant's qualifications and the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the application.

1.20 Criminal Background Checks

The Agency reserves the right to conduct criminal history and other background investigations into the applicant, its officers, directors, managerial and supervisory personnel, clerical or support personnel, and health care professional personnel retained by the applicant for duties related to the performance of the contract. Such information may be used in determining contract awards. The applicant shall cause all waivers to be executed by appropriate persons to effectuate the investigations.

1.21 Information from Other Sources

The Agency reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning

an applicant, including the applicant's product or services, personnel, and subcontractors, and the applicant's capability and performance under other Agency contracts, other state contracts and contracts with private entities. The Agency may use any of this information in evaluating an applicant's application.

1.22 Verification of Application Contents

The Agency reserves the right to verify the contents of an application submitted by an applicant. Misleading or inaccurate responses may result in rejection of the application pursuant to Section 1.16.

1.23 Litigation and Investigation Disclosure

The applicant shall disclose any pending or threatened litigation, administrative, or regulatory proceedings or similar matters which could affect the ability of the applicant to perform the required services. Failure to disclose such matters at the time of application within the Business Organization Form (Refer to Section 3 of this RFP) may result in rejection of the application or in termination of any subsequent contract. This is a continuing disclosure requirement. Any such matter commencing after submission of an application must be disclosed within 30 days in a written statement to the Agency.

1.24 Financial Accountability

The applicant shall maintain sufficient financial accountability and records. The applicant shall disclose each irregularity of accounts maintained by the applicant discovered by the applicant's accounting firm, the applicant, or any other third party. Failure to disclose such matters, including the circumstances and disposition of the irregularities, at the time of application within the Business Organization Form (Refer to Section 3 of this RFP) may result in rejection of the application or in termination of any subsequent contract. This is a continuing disclosure requirement. Any such matter commencing after submission of an application must be disclosed within 30 days in a written statement to the Agency.

1.25 RFP Application Clarification Process

The Agency may request clarification from applicants for the purpose of resolving ambiguities or questioning information presented in the application. Clarifications may occur throughout the application evaluation process. Requests for clarification will be issued to the primary user (Registered Applicant) through email from an Agency Service Contract Compliance Officer. Clarification responses shall be in writing in the format provided by the Agency and shall address only the information requested. Responses shall be submitted to the Agency within the time stipulated at the time of the request. An applicant will not be permitted to modify or amend its application if contacted by the Agency for this reason.

1.26 Waivers and Variances

The Agency reserves the right to waive or permit cure of non-material variances in the application's form and content providing such action is in the best interest of the Agency. In the event the Agency waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not

modify the RFP requirements or excuse the applicant from full compliance with RFP specifications or other contract requirements if the applicant is awarded the contract. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of the Agency.

1.27 Disposition of Applications

All application submissions become the property of the Agency.

If the Agency awards funds to an applicant, the contents of all applications will be in the public domain at the conclusion of the selection process and will be open to inspection by interested parties subject to exceptions provided in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other provision of law.

1.28 Public Records and Requests for Confidential Treatment of Application Information

The Agency's release of public records is governed by Iowa Code chapter 22. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting an application in response to this RFP.

The Agency will copy and produce public records upon request as required to comply with Chapter 22 and will treat all information submitted by an applicant as non-confidential records unless applicant requests specific parts of the application be treated as confidential at the time of the submission as set forth herein AND the information is confidential under Iowa or other applicable law.

All information submitted by an applicant will be treated as public information following the conclusion of the selection process unless the applicant properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time the application is submitted.

Failure of the Applicant to request information be treated as confidential as specified herein shall relieve Agency personnel from any responsibility for maintaining the information in confidence. Applicants may not request confidential treatment with respect to pricing or budget information and transmittal letters. An applicant's request for confidentiality that does not comply with this section or an applicant's request for confidentiality on information or material that cannot be held in confidence as set forth herein are grounds for rejecting an application as non-responsive.

A. Confidential Treatment of Information is Requested by the Applicant

An applicant requesting confidential treatment of information contained in its application shall be required to submit two copies of its application (one complete application (containing confidential information) and one redacted version (with confidential information excised) and complete and submit Form 22 with both applications; as outlined herein:

1. Complete and Submit Form 22 with both applications

APPLICANT NOTE: SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM 22 IS REQUIRED ONLY IF
REQUESTING CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF APPLICATION
INFORMATION.

In order to request information contained in an application to be treated as confidential, the applicant must complete and submit FORM 22 with both applications. Failure of the applicant to accurately and fully complete FORM 22 with the application submission may result in the application to be considered non-responsive and not evaluated. The Form 22 is available to download from a link located in the attachments section of the standard application form titled Application Certification and Conditions (refer to section 3 of this RFP). Applicant must download Form 22 from a link within this form, complete it, and upload it into the specific field of the electronic Application Certification and Conditions form in both applications.

Form 22 will not be considered fully complete unless, for **each** confidentiality request, the applicant: (1) enumerates the specific grounds in Iowa Code chapter 22 or other applicable law that supports treatment of the material as confidential, (2) justifies why the material should be maintained in confidence, (3) explains why disclosure of the material would not be in the best interest of the public, and (4) sets forth the name, address, telephone, and e-mail for the person authorized by applicant to respond to inquiries by the Agency concerning the confidential status of such material. Requests to maintain an entire application as confidential will be rejected as non-responsive.

2. An applicant that submits an application containing confidential information must submit two copies of its application (one complete application and one redacted version of the application) for this RFP. Completed Form 22 shall be uploaded in the Application Certifications and Conditions form in **both** copies.

One copy of the application must be completed and submitted in its entirety, containing the confidential information. This is the application that will be reviewed.

The applicant must submit one copy of the application labeled "Redacted Copy" from which the confidential information had been excised. In order to do this, the applicant shall rename the copy with the word 'Redacted' added as the **first** word in the application title, using the exact same title as the first copy of the application. The applicant must then revise each form within the copied/redacted application removing the confidential information and inserting the word 'redacted' in the required fields. The confidential material must be excised from the redacted version in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the application as possible.

Both copies of the application must be submitted by the applicant by the due date and time outlined in Section 1.06 (D).

B. Public Requests

In the event the Agency receives a public request for application information marked confidential, written notice shall be given to the applicant seventy-two (72) hours prior to the release of the information to allow the applicant to seek injunctive relief pursuant to

Iowa Code Section 22.8. The information marked confidential shall be treated as confidential information to the extent such information is determined confidential under Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other provisions of law by a court of competent jurisdiction. If the Agency receives a request for information that applicant has marked as confidential and if a judicial or administrative proceeding is initiated to compel the release of such material, applicant shall, at its sole expense, appear in such action and defend its request for confidentiality. If an applicant fails to do so, the Agency may release the information or material with or without providing advance notice to the applicant and with or without affording applicant the opportunity to obtain an order restraining its release from a court possessing competent jurisdiction.

Additionally, if applicant fails to comply with the request process set forth herein, if applicant's request for confidentiality is unreasonable, or if applicant rescinds its request for confidential treatment, Agency may release such information or material with or without providing advance notice to applicant and with or without affording applicant the opportunity to obtain an order restraining its release from a court possessing competent jurisdiction.

The applicant's failure to request confidential treatment of material pursuant to this section and the relevant law will be deemed by the Agency as a waiver of any right to confidentiality which the applicant may have had.

1.29 Copyrights

By submitting an application, the applicant agrees that the Agency may release the application for the purpose of facilitating the evaluation of the application or to respond to requests for public records. By submitting the application, the applicant consents to such release and warrants and represents that such release will not violate the rights of any third party. The Agency shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the applications. In the event the applicant copyrights its application, the Agency may reject the application as noncompliant.

1.30 Review of Notice of Disqualification or Notice of Intent to Award Decision

Applicants may request reconsideration of either a notice of disqualification or notice of intent to award decision by submitting a written request to the Agency. The Agency must receive the written request for reconsideration **within five calendar days (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal state holidays)** from the date of the notice of disqualification or notice of intent to award decision, whichever is earlier.

The reconsideration shall be addressed to the issuing officer cited in the RFP (Julie Jones), and shall be submitted via email, including a read receipt verification, to the following email address: reconsiderationrequest@hhs.iowa.gov.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to assure timely delivery of the request for reconsideration. The request for reconsideration shall clearly and fully identify all issues being contested by reference to the page and section number of the RFP.

The Agency will expeditiously address the request for reconsideration and issue a decision. The Applicant may choose to file an appeal with the Agency within five days of the date of the

decision on reconsideration exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal state holidays.

1.31 Definition of Contract and Exclusivity

The full execution of a written contract by both parties shall constitute the making of a contract for services and no applicant shall acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract until the contract has been fully executed by the successful applicant and the Agency. Any contract resulting from this RFP shall not be an exclusive contract.

1.32 Construction of RFP

This RFP shall be construed in light of pertinent legal requirements and the laws of the State of Iowa. Changes in applicable statutes and rules may affect the award process or the resulting contract. Applicants are responsible for ascertaining the relevant legal requirements. Any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this RFP shall be brought in the appropriate Iowa forum.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

2.01 Background

Iowa's rural communities face persistent and intensifying public health challenges, including limited access to care, workforce shortages, and disparities in health outcomes. In response, the Agency developed the Healthy Hometowns initiative¹ as the state's submission to the federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), authorized under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act². This initiative is designed to transform the delivery of healthcare in rural Iowa by building a high-quality, sustainable system of care that improves health, well-being, and quality of life for rural residents.

Through the Iowa HHS Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan in Action³, the Agency has committed to elevate organizational health, advance operational excellence, and help Iowa thrive. The Iowa Rural Health Transformation Plan, Healthy Hometowns, is in direct alignment with those goals by promoting access to health and human services resources and helping individuals, families, children, and communities thrive. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds set the foundation for Healthy Hometowns via House File 972 of the 91st Iowa General Assembly. This legislation, enacted July 1, 2025, establishes a multi-prong strategy for improving rural health care access and health outcomes for rural Iowans. This plan revolves around the concept that Iowa describes as Health Hubs, often referred to as hub-and-spoke models of care. The vision for Healthy Hometowns is to implement a robust hub-and-spoke framework that supports long-term, sustainable and high-quality health care for Iowans living in Rural Areas.

Healthy Hometowns has three primary goals:

1. Iowans will be able to get health care within their rural communities at the most appropriate locations for type and level of care thanks to support from newly developed partnerships, more rural primary care physicians and specialists, and upgraded equipment.
2. Iowans living in Rural Areas will have improved health outcomes with similar rates of morbidity and premature mortality to those living in Iowa's more populous areas.
3. Iowa will invest in the development and utilization of innovative technology and data infrastructures to support sustainable care options close to home, seamless care partnerships, and data sharing throughout the state.

Purpose:

As part of Healthy Hometowns, the objective of this RFP is to seek Applicants with an identified need to recruit healthcare providers to work in Rural Iowa.

Healthy Hometowns Rural Healthcare Workforce Recruitment program has one primary objective: to enable qualifying organizations to recruit the best and brightest Healthcare Providers for Rural Iowa by offering competitive incentives that make rural practice attractive and sustainable.

¹ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/initiatives/rural-health-transformation-rht>

² <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/rural-health-transformation-rht-program/overview>

³ <https://hhs.iowa.gov/about/strategic-plan>

The Agency anticipates funding applications for healthcare organizations that are hiring, to provide incentives for Healthcare Providers to work in Rural areas. These incentives could include relocation expenses, signing bonuses, or other incentive types provided to the healthcare provider for a service commitment within the Rural area. Funds provided through this RFP may not be used for administrative costs associated with the recruitment of Healthcare Providers. The funds within this RFP must go to Healthcare Providers who commit to serving in Rural Iowa for at least five years.

Expected Outcomes are to:

1. Increase rural provider-to-population ratios.
2. Enhance access to specialty and primary care services in rural communities.

2.02 Definitions

B. RFP General Definitions. When appearing as capitalized terms in this RFP, including attachments, the following quoted terms (and the plural thereof, when appropriate) have the meanings set forth in this section.

“Agency” means the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.

“Business Day” means any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or State holiday as specified by Iowa Code § 1C.2.

“Request for Proposal” or “RFP” means a formal Request for Proposal that involves the state Agency soliciting bids to purchase services through a competitive process.

“Performance Measures” means measures that assess the Deliverables or activity under this Contract. Performance measures include, but are not limited to quality, input, output, efficiency, and outcome measures.

C. Definitions Specific to this RFP. When appearing as capitalized terms in this RFP, including attachments, the following quoted terms (and the plural thereof, when appropriate) have the meanings set forth in this section.

“Full-Time” service means a minimum of 40 hours per week.

“Healthcare Provider” means Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), Registered Nurse (RN), and/or Physician’s Assistant (PA) who provide services in one of more of the following areas of practice: maternal/child health, cancer, cardiovascular health, mental/behavioral health, and/or chronic disease prevention and management (which includes primary care).

“In-Person Care” means clinical interactions in which both the client and the practitioner are physically present in the same room or space.

“Rural” means an area designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as an eligible geographic location to apply for rural health grants. Applicants

should use the “Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer ([Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#))” to determine rurality for the purpose of this funding opportunity ([How We Define Rural | HRSA](#)).

2.03 Scope of Work.

- A. Work Plans.** The Applicant will develop and implement Work Plans compliant with the Deliverables and timelines listed in section 2 within the forms in IowaGrants as described in Section 3 of this RFP.
- B. Deliverables.** In compliance with the Agency-approved work plan within IowaGrants, the Contractor shall:

Provide financial incentives to providers recruited to serve in Rural healthcare settings in Iowa. Organizations must ensure that recruited providers receiving funds through this RFP begin practicing within the Rural area before September 30, 2027 and commit to serving for a five-year time period.

Organizations must provide recruitment bonuses, relocation funding, or other recruitment incentives to providers that deliver services in the areas of maternal/child health, cancer, cardiovascular health, mental/behavioral health, and/or chronic disease prevention and management.

1. The Contractor must plan for and implement a recruitment plan to hire a Healthcare Provider.
2. The Contractor must provide a hiring incentive to a Healthcare Provider, in the form of a relocation incentive, hiring bonus, or other form of hiring incentive as approved by the Agency.
3. The Contractor must ensure that the Healthcare Provider receiving funds through this RFP is not subject to a non-compete agreement.
4. The Contractor must ensure that the Healthcare Provider receiving funds through this RFP agrees to provide services In-Person, Full Time within a Rural area of Iowa for a minimum of five years.
5. The Contractor will submit minimal reports and data to the Agency to ensure compliance with federal funding requirements and Agency evaluation needs.

- C. Required Reporting.** The Agency requires reporting of compliance with the resulting Contract and performance of the Deliverables and Work Plans pursuant to proposed action/work plans, provision of services, and incurred expenses by resulting contractors. Successful applicants will be awarded a contract to be managed within an Electronic Grant Management system within www.IowaGrants.gov. The required reports and related information will be submitted within the Grant Tracking system. The reports and submission requirements are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Agency. The Agency shall review and monitor submitted reports, as well as other data and information for completeness, timeliness, and overall performance pursuant to the Contract.

Anticipated reports (progress and data) include:

- **Quarterly Progress Reports (2/15/26 through 9/30/2027):** These reports will include:
 - The status update on progress made toward recruiting a healthcare provider.
 - Identification of any delays or barriers encountered and plans to address these.
 - Any updated timelines on recruitment progress and any plans for start date of providers.
 - Any other information deemed necessary by the Agency.
- **Provider Recruitment Completion Report:** The Contractor shall complete this report to the satisfaction of the Agency due on or before September 1st, 2027. Submit verification of hiring and evidence that the provider has agreed to serve in a Rural area in Iowa for five years and is not subject to any non-compete agreements. The Agency may request additional information or documentation to ensure this report is complete.
- **Annual Data Reports:** The Contractor shall complete this report to the satisfaction of the Agency due by September 1st of each year, from 2028 – 2031. This report shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Confirmation that the Healthcare Provider is still employed and working in Rural Iowa.
 - Description of services provided by the recruited Healthcare Provider
 - Description of how the Healthcare Provider provides services in the areas of maternal/child health, cancer, cardiovascular health, mental/behavioral health, and/or chronic disease prevention and management.
 - Description of how the Healthcare Provider is improving healthcare in Rural Iowa

2.04 Contract Payment Methodology

A. Contractor Payments. The Contractor is anticipated to be paid according to the following payment schedule for services as described in section 2.03.

Contract payments will be through IowaGrants and will be done upon fulfillment of each deliverable requirements, which will be a fixed cost reimbursement. See reimbursement section below for additional details. The Contractor shall submit a claim (invoice) via IowaGrants claim component to be submitted to the Agency associated with meeting the Deliverables of the Contract.

The Agency does not anticipate additional funds to be available beyond 9/30/27. However, there will be minimal data and reporting requirements that shall be reported throughout the entire contract period.

B. Cost Restrictions.

1. The Contractor shall only be eligible to receive reimbursement for services described within the Scope of Work, and for expenses as approved in the budget.
2. Indirect and administrative cost charges are not allowed with these funds.
3. Equipment may not be purchased with these funds.
4. Funds may not be used for any Healthcare Provider already serving in a Rural

area of Iowa at the time of the issuance of this RFP. These funds are intended to bring new Healthcare Providers to Rural Iowa.

5. Contractors must follow all funding restrictions and requirements described within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Rural Health Transformation Program, opportunity #: CMS-RHT-26-001

C. Reimbursement.

Deliverable (description)	Fixed Cost	Due Date
Submission of Provider Recruitment Completion Report	Up to \$120,000/Healthcare Provider	TBD

*Reimbursements will not be provided until the Agency approves the deliverable.

SECTION 3 -- APPLICATION CONTENT

In compliance with the minimum requirements and scope outlined in Section 2 – Description of Work and Services, applicants must complete each form listed below from within IowaGrants for this Funding Opportunity.

3.01 Application Instructions

Each user will complete the registration process, only if not already registered. Follow the steps outlined for new registration and logging in to IowaGrants through the link provided in the links section of this RFP and in the Funding Opportunity Details in IowaGrants. New Users should allow at least a few days for the registration to be processed.

Refer to Section 1.06 (D) for instructions on Application Creation.

Note: IowaGrants will permit multiple users within the Applicant Organization to register and begin creation of an application for each funding opportunity.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring **only one entire application is completed and submitted for the same service area** (refer to Sections 1.04, 1.06, and 1.14) in response to this RFP.

For general instructions on completing applications in IowaGrants, as well as how to copy previously created applications, refer to the 'HHS Application Instruction Guidance' as posted under the Attachment section of the Funding Opportunity.

- Submitted applications must meet all minimum and eligibility requirements outlined in this RFP.
- Promotional materials or other items not required by this RFP will not be considered during the review process.
- Any information or materials not required to be submitted as an attachment by this RFP application will not be considered in the review process.

Upon starting an application, the first screen that appears is the General Information Form. This is where the applicant will title their application and identify the Organization they are representing. The registered applicant must be representing an eligible entity (refer to section 1.03). After clicking 'Save'; the applicant can re-open and edit this form to add other users registered with the represented organization in IowaGrants.gov as 'Additional Contacts'.

The saved **General Information** Form appears as the first form in your application.

3.02 Application Forms:

Applicants must complete each application form listed below following the instructions here and within the Electronic Grant Management System at www.iowagrants.gov. Each required field of each Application Form must be completed or the system will not allow the form to be saved. Once an application form is completed, the applicant must mark it as complete. All forms must be marked as complete or IowaGrants will not permit the application to be submitted.

Follow the instructions for each section and field within the form in IowaGrants. A summary of each form's contents is listed below.

Cover Sheet - General Information: This form requires the applicant to identify the Authorized Official, the Fiscal Contact, and additional required information.

Business Organization: This form requires information about the applicant organization, including legal name, address, alternate mailing address for warrant/payments, business structure, history, table of organization, any pending or threatened litigation or investigation which may affect the Applicant's ability to perform the required services (refer to RFP Section 1.23), as well as identification of the applicant's accounting firm and reporting any irregularities discovered in any of the accounts maintained by the applicant (refer to RFP Section 1.24), and disclosure of history of contract default or terminations.

Application Certification and Conditions: This form provides for the certification and assurance of the Applicant's intent and commitment to provide the services included in the application if an award is issued. This form will also identify the individual designated as the Grantee Contact with full responsibility for assignment of individuals to a resulting grant site (if applicable) in IowaGrants. Optional sections of this form include a section for the request for confidentiality in compliance with section 1.28 of this RFP and upload field for transmittal letters and other applicable communications.

The Certification and Conditions Form is **required** to be completed, electronically signed and dated by the Executive Director (ED) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the applicant.

- o Iowa Code Section 554D.103 defines an electronic signature as "an electronic sound, symbol, or process, attached to or logically associated with a contract or other record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record." An applicant may insert an electronically scanned signature, a digital signature, or a typed name, symbol, etc. in compliance with this definition for the electronic signature.

An applicant's submission of an application indicates the applicant's agreement to conduct this transaction by electronic means.

Background and Demonstrated Experience: This form requires applicants to describe their organization's background and relevant experience that demonstrate readiness to implement the services outlined in this RFP. Applicants should highlight prior work related to healthcare workforce recruitment, retention, and support—particularly in Rural areas. Applicants should include a description of existing community partnerships and how those relationships will support the proposed project.

Location and HIE Verification Form: In this form, Applicants will identify the physical location(s) where the provider will work and confirm this (these) location's rurality designation based on the "Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer ([Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](#))" to determine rurality for the purpose of this funding opportunity ([How We Define Rural | HRSA](#)).

Applicants will also indicate whether their organization participates in the Iowa Health Information Exchange (HIE), currently operated by CyncHealth Iowa, Iowa Health Information

Network.

Healthy Hometowns Project Work Plan Form: Applicants will **upload** a Work Plan which requires applicants to identify the details for implementing the work and services as described in this RFP. Applicants shall demonstrate within their work plan their capability to implement the minimum requirements and deliverables as described in section 2. **The uploaded work plan must follow the formatting specifications outlined in Attachment B.**

The work plan shall include the Applicant's approach and methodology to fulfilling the requirements of this RFP. The work plan must include the following headers:

- **Provider type and description:** Provide the position the applicant intends to hire, including the anticipated job title and professional credentials required (for example, MD, RN, etc). Provide the full address of all practice locations for the Provider, including confirmation that this practice site is Rural. Provide a description of the services the Healthcare Provider will complete. The applicant shall describe the expected total dollar amount of the salary for the Healthcare Provider and the intended use of the funds for recruitment of the Healthcare Provider. The Applicant should indicate the amount of funds the applicant is requesting from the Agency through this RFP (maximum \$120,000 per application), and justification for how this cost was derived.
- **Needs Assessment:** Provide a description of the need for the Healthcare Provider at this geographic location and within this organization. This should include, but is not limited to the following information:
 - A list of expected services the Healthcare Provider will perform. Applicants must describe how these services relate to one of more of the following service areas: maternal/child health, cancer, cardiovascular health, mental/behavioral health, and chronic disease prevention and management. This information should be provided in simple, easy to understand language, for those with or without formal medical training.
 - The service area of the applicant (where current patients typically live compared to the location of the healthcare organization)
 - A description of current service limitations due to the lack of this Healthcare Provider.
 - Data supporting the need for the Healthcare Provider, including patient volume, service gaps, and rural health disparities.
 - An explanation of how the newly recruited Healthcare Provider will expand access to care or improve health outcomes in the Rural service area. A description of the number of people the applicant anticipates the Healthcare Provider will serve on an annual basis and the community benefits provided by having access to this Healthcare Provider.
 - Describe any existing efforts to recruit Healthcare Providers, including any outstanding vacancies and length of the outstanding vacancies.
- **Organizational Readiness:** Provide a description of the applicant's ability to recruit the Healthcare Provider within the provided timelines. This information should include, at a minimum, the following:
 - Describe the applicant's plan for recruiting the Healthcare Provider and how the

funds within this RFP will assist with this plan.

- Explain the current applicant staff who will be responsible for any activities related to recruitment and retention.
- Describe the applicant's plan for all contractual reporting and communication with the Agency. This includes how the Applicant will ensure the provider fulfills the 5 year service obligation and how the Applicant will ensure funds are returned to the Agency if the Healthcare Provider does not meet the five-year service obligation.
- **Sustainability:** Describe the following with reference to sustainability:
 - How does the applicant plan to retain the Healthcare Provider for the five year service obligation and beyond.
 - What community support exists for recruiting and retaining Healthcare Providers.
 - How does this Healthcare Provider improve the long-term ability of the applicant to provide services to rural Iowans (impact on financial stability and sustainability of applicant organization).
 - How does this Healthcare Provider support sustainability of high-quality health care availability within rural Iowa.
- **Healthcare Recruitment Timeline:** Provide an anticipated timeline, inclusive of all major steps, for the Recruitment of the Healthcare Provider.
- **Tracking and Reporting Capacity:** Provide a description of how the applicant will track and report required metrics and complete required reports associated with this funding.

Reimbursement Attestation: This form requires the applicant to attest to their understanding of the deliverable-based reimbursement structure and available funds as outlined in this RFP.

Minority Impact Statement: This form collects information about the potential impact of the project's proposed programs or policies on minority groups.

SECTION 4 – APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

4.01 Overview of Evaluation

Evaluation of applications submitted under this RFP will be conducted in three phases.

Phase I -- Technical Review: The first phase will involve a preliminary review by the Agency staff of an applicant's compliance with the mandatory requirements, such as eligibility, Rurality of provider location, and application content for submitted applications. Applications which fail to satisfy technical requirements or application content may be eliminated from the application review. These applications may be disqualified. The Agency will notify the applicant of a disqualification that occurs during Phase I of the evaluation process. The Agency reserves the right to waive minor variances at the sole discretion of the Agency.

Phase II – Evaluation Committee: Applications determined to be compliant with technical requirements and application content will be accepted for the second phase of evaluation, which may be completed by an evaluation committee or committees established by the Agency. The review committee(s) shall evaluate applications in accordance with a point system. Each committee member will review the applications and the evaluation criteria outlined in this chapter and assign a point total for each criterion. If an applicant is requested to make an oral presentation of the application pursuant to RFP Section 1.15, the committee members may consider the oral presentation of the applicant in determining the points awarded.

The total score awarded by each committee member will be averaged to arrive at the final score for each application and the applications will then be ranked based on the average of the evaluation scores. The Agency staff may solicit additional input and recommendations from the evaluation committee(s).

Based on the number of applicants, the Agency reserves the right to segment the state geographically and use multiple review committees to expedite the review process. This would mean, for example, that one review team will review all applications from within one prescribed geographic region and the other review team will review all applications from the other geographic region.

Phase III -- Agency Review and Award: The third phase will be a final review. The Agency will consider the submitted applications and the evaluation committee's scores and recommendations.

The Agency will also consider geographical distribution and diversification of organizations or provider types. Geographical diversification is essential to the success of this program to ensure healthcare throughout the entire state of Iowa. Additionally, diversification in organizational affiliation and provider type increases the ability for Iowa to have sustainable rural healthcare. The Agency may consider any information received pursuant to Sections 1.18 - 1.25 of the RFP, and any other information the Agency deems important for the success of the program described within this RFP. The Agency reserves the right not to award contracts to the applicants with the highest point averages. The Agency reserves the right to not award all 150 provider incentive awards.

4.02 Scoring of Applications

Accepted applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- A. All parts of each section are included and addressed.
- B. Descriptions and detail are clear, organized and understandable.
- C. Descriptions are responsive to the intent of the RFP scope of work and goals and objectives.
- D. The overall ability of the applicant, as judged by the evaluation committee, to successfully complete the project within the proposed schedule. This judgment will be based upon factors such as budget, project implementation and management plan and availability of staff.

Points will be assigned to each evaluation component as follows, unless otherwise designated:

4	Applicant has agreed to comply with the requirements and provided a clear and compelling description of how each requirement would be met, with relevant supporting materials. Applicant's proposed approach frequently goes above and beyond the minimum requirements and indicates superior ability to serve the needs of the Agency.
3	Applicant has agreed to comply with the requirements and provided a good and complete description of how the requirements would be met. Response clearly demonstrates a high degree of ability to serve the needs of the Agency.
2	Applicant has agreed to comply with the requirements and provided an adequate description of how the requirements would be met. Response indicates adequate ability to serve the needs of the Agency.
1	Applicant has agreed to comply with the requirements and provided some details on how the requirements would be met. Response does not clearly indicate if all the needs of the Agency will be met.
0	Applicant has not addressed any of the requirements or has provided a response that is limited in scope, vague, or incomplete. Response did not provide a description of how the Agency's needs would be met.

The maximum points to be awarded for each application section are as follows:

Application Form	Component	Weight	Potential Maximum Score
Cover Sheet- General Information	-	N/A- Required	N/A
Business Organization	-	N/A- Required	N/A
Application Certification and Conditions	-	N/A- Required	N/A
Background and Demonstrated Experience	General Section Score	4	16
Location and HIE Verification	Healthcare Provider will work in Rural area	N/A- Required	N/A
	HIE Participation: If Yes, score provided will be a 4, if no, score provided will be zero	1	4
Healthy Hometowns Project Work Plan	Provider type and description	3	12
	Needs Assessment	5	20
	Organizational Readiness	4	16
	Sustainability	4	16
	Healthcare Provider Recruitment Timeline	5	20
	Tracking and Reporting Capacity	3	12
Project Work Plan Total:		96	
Reimbursement Attestation		N/A- Required	N/A
Minority Impact Statement		N/A- Required	N/A
Total Maximum Points:			116

SECTION 5 – CONTRACT

5.01 Contract Conditions

Any contract awarded by the Agency shall include specific contract provisions including the General Terms and Contingent Terms as posted on the Agency's website (refer to the links section of this RFP & Funding Opportunity Details in IowaGrants). Refer to the Attachments section on the Funding Opportunity page for the Draft Sample Contract Template. The Draft Sample Contract Template included is for reference only and is subject to change at the sole discretion of the Agency.

The contract terms contained in the general terms and contingent terms are not intended to be a complete listing of all contract terms but are provided only to enable applicants to better evaluate the costs associated with the RFP and the potential resulting contract. Applicants should plan to include such terms in any contract awarded as a result of the RFP. All costs associated with complying with these requirements should be included in the application. If the contract exceeds \$500,000, or if the contract together with other contracts awarded to the Contractor by the Agency exceeds \$500,000 in the aggregate, the Contractor shall be required to comply with the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 8F, including certification and reporting requirements.

Results of the Agency's evaluation process or changes in federal or state law may require additions or changes in final contract conditions requirements.

5.02 Incorporation of Documents

The RFP, any amendments and written responses to applicant questions, and the application submitted in response to the RFP form a part of the contract. The parties are obligated to perform all services described in the RFP and application unless the contract specifically directs otherwise.

5.03 Order of Priority

In the event of a conflict between the contract, the RFP and the application, the conflict shall be resolved according to the following priorities, ranked in descending order:

1. the Contract;
2. the RFP;
3. the Application.

SECTION 6 – ATTACHMENTS

The following reference documents are posted separately under the Attachment section of this Funding Opportunity.

- A- RFP PHTHORC26010 Best and Brightest Workforce
- B- Attachment B Work Plan Formatting Specifications
- C - HHS Application Forms Instruction Guidance (IowaGrants)
- D- FY26 Best and Brightest Workforce Sample Draft Contract.

SECTION 7 – LINKS

The following reference documents are available by clicking on the link provided in the website Links section of this Funding Opportunity.

- A. IowaGrants Registration and Login Instructions
- B. General Terms and Contingent Terms