

Rural Health Innovation Micro Funding Program

The Rural Health Innovation Micro Funding Program (RHIMP) aims to support Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) by addressing their specific needs and enhancing their capabilities for rural communities. The focus of funding is to improve quality of care, operational processes, and targeted community health improvement efforts. This involves leveraging existing data to pinpoint areas for enhancement, devising improvement strategies, and executing projects with measurable outcomes. Additionally, population health proposals require analyzing local health data to identify key health drivers, selecting projects aimed at enhancing community health outcomes, and fostering collaboration with community partners.

The goal is to empower rural facilities to develop and apply skills that elevate their healthcare delivery standards and ultimately improve the health of their populations.

PROGRAM STATS



This Micro Funding program was born out of the collaboration between the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) grant and the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Grant. Previously three separate micro funding programs were executed annually. To streamline the processes, leverage available funding, and ensure hospitals and clinics have the greatest access to these programs, we have combined the application processes.

Awards range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per awarded proposal.

Eligible rural facilities are welcome to submit multiple proposals to any of the micro funding focus areas.

For questions about this program please reach out to:

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TIMELINE



CAH Population Health

This focus area provides an opportunity to assess the drivers of health in the community based on data review, improvement project development, and strategizing and collaborating with community partners to ensure the success of the project. All project proposals must execute work in collaboration with community partners. Please ensure partners are identified in your proposal, even if they are proposed.

- Must collaborate with groups and organizations outside of the facility
- Must identify social drivers of health

FOCUS AREAS

RHC Greatest Needs

This focus area provides RHCs with an opportunity to self-assess the greatest need of their organization, select a project to address this need, and strategize and potentially collaborate with community partners to ensure the success of the project.

- Leadership development
- Quality improvement
- Address workforce shortages
- Reduce disparities and improve access

Although the Greatest Needs area is designed for RHC applicants, CAHs may apply for work at their provider-based RHCs.

CAH Quality Improvement

The key component of this program is data and measure tracking to show improvement. Applications for this funding opportunity must use data as support for the proposal and identify evaluation measures. This includes process, output, and outcome measures. Quality focused proposals can be used to assess the extent of a problem or to identify improvement measures.

- Identify measures and processes in need of improvement
- Develop and conduct PDSA cycles
- Report measured change, even if unsuccessful

Financial Improvement - NEW!

This focus area provides RHCs and CAHs with an opportunity to assess their financial stability and select a project to improve financial metrics.

- Assess financial metrics
- Explore financial improvement solutions
- Implement financial best practices and strategies

Conditions

Eligibility

All Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and designated Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) in Washington State are eligible to apply. Clinics and hospitals are welcome to apply on behalf of community partners they are collaborating with, but the contract and work must be managed by the eligible entity applying.

Critical Access Hospitals - only those in good standing with the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP) minimum reporting requirements will be awarded. If you have a question about your standing, please reach out as soon as possible.

The project proposal must:

1. Identify the area for improvement and provide data to support the problem.
2. Develop an intervention to improve it.
3. Collect and analyze data to determine whether the change was effective.
4. Decide whether to adopt, adapt, or try another change.

Due to the extensive effort these steps take, it is acceptable to describe the full course of work, but only achieve one or two milestones within the contracted year.

Funding

Funds are paid through contracted work. Once awarded you will receive information on the contracts process as we work through the agency system to complete an executed contract. Awarded proposal contracts must be signed and managed by the eligible applicant, but other facilities and collaborating organizations can execute and lead the work with regular contract manager participation. Payment is not rendered until the end of the project period.

Awardee Reporting Requirements

Contract deliverables consist of reporting on the work you are completing. The applicant must provide a brief progress update mid project cycle. A final electronic report and one-page instructional synopsis will be due June 30th. The final report template will be sent to awardees.

Billing / Reimbursement

Upon completion of the project period, receipt of an A19 invoice and deliverables, payment will be made within 30 days. Projects do not have to be successful or completed for payment to be rendered but reporting deliverables must be met.

Program Application

Narrative

Problem and Background: Describe what you are trying to improve, your need, or your identified problem and provide data as support for this need. What data is available to show the significance of your problem? What data are you planning to collect about the problem during your proposed work?

Social Drivers of Health: *Required for population health proposals, optional for others.* Defined in Healthy People 2030 as conditions in the environment where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

What is the problem you are trying to address? How does your project address the social drivers of health? How does your project impact the determinants and potential outcomes?

Project Overview: Describe an overview of the assessment or improvement project, scope of work, and a high-level timeline with potential project milestones.

Goals and Objectives: Indicate goals and objectives of the proposed project. Consider SMART objectives. If your project may develop goals and objectives for an initiative through the proposed work, please indicate so.

Evaluation and Measurement: How will you measure change or success? Please describe potential outputs as well as process and outcome measures for the project or how measures will be developed during the work. If data will not be available at the conclusion of the contracted work regarding the impact of the program, how will you evaluate the work that was accomplished?

Community Participation & Collaboration: Required for population health proposals, optional for others. Please identify community partners that are currently participating or will be invited to participate in this work. What roles will these organizations play and how they will contribute to the project. If you are still exploring and developing your intervention, how will you identify your partners?

Scoring Rubric

Scoring will be applied to your application depending on the focus area you selected

SCORING CRITERIA		
Significance: How significant is the problem that is being addressed?		
Advanced (3)	Intermediate (2)	Basic (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timely issue identified ▪ Addresses a critical need ▪ Describes potential impact to patient outcomes <i>as applicable</i> ▪ Identifies one or more social determinants of health to improve <i>as applicable</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timely issue identified ▪ Addresses a critical need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue Identified
Data Driven: Does the proposal provide data and evidentiary support for the identified problem?		
Advanced (3)	Intermediate (2)	Basic (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data provided to support the need or <u>details</u> how data will be collected ▪ Provides improvement measures that will be tracked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some supporting data provided ▪ Briefly discusses measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimal data discussion
Improvement Plan: Does the proposal detail action steps and the interventions that will be executed? Is there a detailed timeline with major milestones?		
Advanced (3)	Intermediate (2)	Basic (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes timeline and milestones ▪ Details action steps and improvement interventions to be executed ▪ Describes the potential PDSA cycles to be used for the proposal <i>as applicable</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes timeline and potential milestones ▪ Details action steps or interventions to be executed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefly describes timeline, but does not detail action steps for the project
Evaluation: How does the proposal describe evaluating the project's success? Were goals and objectives provided? Are output, process, and outcome measures identified?		
Advanced (3)	Intermediate (2)	Basic (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes a thorough evaluation plan ▪ Specifically discusses output, process, and outcome measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefly discusses evaluation ▪ Provides some evaluation measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefly discusses evaluation plan ▪ Provides no measures
Collaboration: How well does the proposal describe collaboration with community partners? <i>If applicable</i>		
Advanced (3)	Intermediate (2)	Basic (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describes multiple potential collaborating community partners ▪ <u>Details</u> how collaboration will occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies a few collaborating partners or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefly addresses collaboration