

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 How did Mississippi design the program?

To develop our application, the Mississippi Governor's office solicited public input and received 145 responses from stakeholders in nearly half of the counties in the State. Respondents included state health officials, public health workers, healthcare providers and administrators, health plan representatives, members of the public, legislators, and potential vendor partners. This input from stakeholders directly influenced the State's plan. The Governor's office also collaborated with the Mississippi State Department of Health, Department of Medicaid, and Department of Mental Health to develop our plan and application.

We also reviewed national best practices and innovative models from across the country, along with Mississippi-specific data, to guide initiatives focused on the areas of greatest risk.

While no single plan can address every challenge, the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) creates an opportunity to better understand health needs in rural Mississippi and invest in meaningful, locally-driven solutions, laying the foundation for lasting change.

Continued collaboration will be essential for the program. We encourage communities and stakeholders to engage in ongoing dialogue and collaboration, working together to address the complex realities of rural healthcare.

1.2 When will funding opportunities be available?

Timely distribution of funding, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, is our top priority. As program details are finalized, funding opportunities and updates will be made available on our website.

1.3 Will this improve access to care?

The state made improving access to health care a priority. Specific programs aimed at expanding access in rural Mississippi include transportation support, investments in workforce, and the expansion of telehealth and other technology.

1.4 Did Mississippi receive funding for everything in the application?

Mississippi's RHTP and detailed budget submission for the current funding year have been fully reviewed and approved by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Funding opportunities in the current funding year will align with the approved Plan and detailed budget.



1.5 Were there any exclusions/limitations to what the funding can cover?

Yes, there were several funding limitations set by CMS, including new construction, provider payments to replace payment for clinical services reimbursable by insurance, pre-award costs, and more. More information on funding restrictions can be found on [the CMS FAQ webpage](#).

1.6 Will Mississippi release additional budget information related to the RHTP, including funding amounts associated with specific objectives or initiatives?

As program funds are awarded, Mississippi will release additional information relating to its approved amended budget. The approved amended budget contains highly sensitive technical and detailed budgeting information that could jeopardize and undermine the competitive nature of the applicable procurement process. Specifically, if potential subgrantees are able to gain access to detailed budgeting information for each initiative in advance of procurement, they could use such information to inflate their bids and thereby deplete the limited federal funds that are critical to improving health outcomes in rural Mississippi. Protecting such detailed budgeting information from public disclosure prior to the conclusion of each procurement is necessary for the State to be good stewards of the grant funds and is consistent with Mississippi law.

1.7 When will grant opportunities for hospitals become available under the RHTP?

The first round of funding opportunities open to hospitals is expected to be released on June 15. Additional information, including eligibility requirements and application materials, will be posted under the Funding Opportunities tab on the Mississippi RHTP website (mississippirhtp.com) as such information becomes available.

1.8 Does Mississippi have a rural innovation program that startups can apply for under the MS RHTP?

Mississippi does not have a program specifically designed for startups. The MS RHTP will, however, be launching applications for various pilot programs where the State will consider a variety of applications that propose innovative projects to transform rural health in Mississippi.



II. TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION

2.1 How does the state plan to keep Mississippians updated on the RHTP?

Mississippi will post progress updates on the Mississippi RHTP website.

2.2 What transparency measures with the State implement regarding the awarding and use of RHTP funds?

As a condition of the RHTP cooperative agreement award, the State must comply with all applicable federal grant administration, procurement, monitoring, reporting, and audit requirements, including those set forth in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 300, as incorporated in the RHTP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Such federal requirements incorporate and are consistent with the procurement, auditing and transparency requirements under Mississippi law, including the Mississippi Public Records Act. The State will fully comply with all such requirements and remains committed to transparency, accountability, and public engagement throughout implementation of the program. Information regarding program activities, funding opportunities, procurements, and implementation progress will continue to be shared through appropriate public channels, including the MS RHTP website (mississippirhtp.com).

2.3 How does the State ensure fairness and equal access during the development and release of NOFOs and Requests for Proposals (RFPs)?

The State is committed to conducting all procurements and funding opportunities in a fair, competitive, ethical, and legally compliant manner. NOFOs, RFPs, and related procurement materials are not shared with stakeholders in advance of public posting in a manner that would provide an unfair competitive advantage or conflict with applicable procurement requirements, ethical obligations, or federal and state law.



III. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

3.1 How can an entity determine if they are an “eligible provider” under the MS RHTP grant programs?

Eligible providers include organizations located in Mississippi rural areas or that serve rural Mississippi populations. This is a key requirement. Mississippi classifies “rural” as counties with fewer than 50,000 residents, fewer than 500 people per square mile, or municipalities with populations under 15,000. Consistent with CMS guidance, organizations do not need to be physically located in a rural area to be eligible for participation in this initiative. Applicants must demonstrate how proposed activities will provide meaningful benefit to rural communities and rural residents of Mississippi.

Eligibility requirements vary by funding opportunity. Different programs may be limited to specific types of organizations based on the goals and requirements of that initiative. Applicants should carefully review the applicable NOFO to determine whether their organization is eligible to apply for a particular program.

3.2 Will applicants be required to demonstrate they serve a set percentage of rural populations in Mississippi to be deemed eligible under the MS RHTP?

No. Applicants are not required to show that they serve a defined percentage of rural patients and/or populations. Applicants must, however, demonstrate that they currently serve rural populations in Mississippi and quantify that service. Specifically, applicants will be required to provide, as part of their application, the number of rural encounters served annually, and the number of unduplicated rural patients served annually.

3.3 Are EMS/Ambulance providers eligible to apply for funding under the programs launching on June 15, 2026?

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and ambulance service providers are not specifically excluded from applying for grant funds under the Telehealth Hub Connectivity, Equipment & Education Grant (TCE), Rural Provider Technology Grant (RTG), and Rural Capital Project Care Gap Closure Grant (RCGC) program. These types of providers, however, would need to partner with eligible providers to apply for funding under these specific programs. There will be programs in Mississippi specifically geared towards supporting EMS and ambulance service providers. Information about these additional funding opportunities will be announced in the coming weeks on the MS RHTP website.

3.4 Can individual organizations apply without being part of a network?

Yes. Individual organizations that demonstrate they serve rural populations in Mississippi and meet the eligible provider listing are eligible to apply for funding under the MS RHTP.



3.5 Are 501(c)(3), community mental health centers, and/or universities eligible to apply for funding under any of the MS RHTP grant programs?

The programs scheduled to launch on June 15, 2026, are the TCE, RCGC, and RTG programs, all of which are geared towards providers. However, non-profit and community health organizations are permitted to join eligible providers to submit applications for funding under these three initial programs. Additionally, programs will launch in the coming months that may allow for additional funding opportunities for these types of entities. Please continue to follow the program website for updates on additional funding opportunities.

3.6 Can out of state entities who are serving rural areas in Mississippi apply for these grants?

Yes. Consistent with CMS guidance, organizations do not need to be physically located in a rural area to be eligible for participation in this initiative. Applicants must demonstrate how proposed activities will provide meaningful benefit to rural communities and rural residents in Mississippi.

3.7 Will entities that do not apply this year still be eligible to apply in subsequent years?

Eligible organizations that do not apply for a year one grant are generally eligible to apply in future years. However, the program strongly encourages eligible applicants to participate in year one as the State cannot guarantee funding availability past year one at this time.

3.8 Can an application include multiple providers across the state as part of a strategic partnership?

Yes. Partnerships are allowed; however, there will need to be a single applicant that would assume the roles and responsibilities of a subrecipient if awarded funds under a MS RHTP grant program.

3.9 Can one site/applicant apply for multiple grants for different clinical technologies and devices?

Applicants are encouraged to submit multiple applications for proposed projects that align with the objectives of one or more of the outlined MS RHTP grant programs.



IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1 When and how will entities be able to apply for funds?

We will post information about how to apply for funding on the Mississippi RHTP webpage as it becomes available.

4.2 Will there be a scoring rubric or framework used to direct RHTP funding to rural providers and patients in Mississippi?

Yes. Each RHTP funding opportunity will include its own project-specific scoring rubric and evaluation criteria designed to align with the goals and priorities outlined in Mississippi's approved RHT Plan. Funding decisions will be made based on how well proposed projects support the intended outcomes of the program and address the healthcare needs of rural Mississippians.

4.3 Will awarded contracts be made public in close proximity to the award decision?

Yes. Consistent with applicable federal and state transparency requirements, information regarding awarded contracts will be made publicly available following completion of the procurement and award process and in accordance with 2 CFR 200 requirements, Mississippi procurement laws, and any other applicable legal or contractual considerations. Procurement information and related updates may also be shared through the MS RHTP website (mississippirhtp.com) as appropriate.

4.4 Can you provide additional detail regarding the competitive procurement, application, and evaluation processes that will be used for RHTP contracts and funding opportunities?

All procurements, funding opportunities, and application processes conducted under the RHTP will be administered in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws, including procurement requirements, CMS requirements, and Uniform Guidance requirements under 2 CFR 200. Evaluation and award processes will be designed to promote fairness, transparency, competition, accountability, and alignment with the goals of Mississippi's approved RHT Plan.

4.5 Will a budget template be provided to applicants to submit with their application(s)?

Yes. Applicants will be provided with a budget template to fill out and submit with all grant applications.



4.6 If the proposed project fits more than one initiative, which initiative should the applicant apply for?

The Mississippi RHTP cannot tell an application which initiative they can apply for or assist in the writing of an application. However, if you feel you are in this position, we can provide limited direction, but we encourage applicants to evaluate the initiatives to determine which may be the best fit for their organization.

4.7 Is there a maximum amount per grant that applicants can request?

No. Applicants are encouraged to ask for the amount needed to complete the proposed project by July 2027.

4.8 Can an entity receive an award if they can only demonstrate sustainability for 5-year duration of the program?

The RHTP prioritizes projects that demonstrate a clear pathway to sustainability beyond the 5-year funding period. While proposals are not required to achieve sustainability before the program ends, they must include a credible sustainability plan. Applications that lack a clear and feasible pathway to long-term sustainability may receive lower scores and may not be selected for funding.

4.9 If you request \$40 million but only receive \$30 million in year one, can you request additional funds the next year? Are multi-year projects funded on a yearly allocation?

While we anticipate proposals that stretch over multiple years, the state can only award dollars budgeted for the current program year. Organizations will need to re-apply for future program year awards.

4.10 Who reviews applications?

Applications are reviewed by a committee consisting of program, technical, and compliance subject matter experts.



V. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND COMPLIANCE

5.1 Does Mississippi have to prove outcomes to CMS?

Yes, reporting is a requirement.

The annual reporting is consistent with other CMS grant opportunities and is structured to ensure states use funding consistent with the terms of the cooperative agreement. CMS uses these reports to track progress on state initiatives, evaluate compliance with cooperative agreement terms, and inform decisions on future funding amounts.

For the RHTP, states will also report quarterly and annually on progress on their work plans, timelines, milestones, and achievement of measurable outcomes.

The specific outcomes and milestones that Mississippi will be required to report to CMS will be determined by the final terms of the awarded cooperative agreement.

5.2 When is the first budget period?

The first budget period is through October 30, 2026. All first-year funds must be obligated by this date and spent by the end of federal Fiscal Year 2027, which ends on September 30, 2027.

5.3 Can you provide general information about the status of funding awards and commitments under the RHTP?

At this time, no programmatic funds have been awarded or promised to specific stakeholders outside of the procurement process, other than the third-party administrative support contract. Future funding opportunities and awards will be administered in accordance with applicable federal and state procurement, grant, and program requirements, including 2 CFR 200.

5.4 Will grant recipients be required to incur costs and seek reimbursement, or will funds be provided in advance?

In general, the standard approach for RHTP grants and funding opportunities will be reimbursement-based, meaning recipients will be expected to incur allowable costs and then seek reimbursement in accordance with applicable requirements. However, the State recognizes that some providers, particularly for larger expenditures or capital-intensive projects, may not be in a position to advance significant project costs. In those circumstances, alternative funding arrangements may be considered by the state on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable CMS guidance, 2 CFR 200 requirements, and state financial and grant management policies.



5.5 Can reimbursements be applied retroactively for eligible investments?

No. Reimbursement requests submitted by approved applicants cannot be for costs previously incurred prior to the award period of performance articulated in the sub award.

5.6 Will funds be paid at the provider or vendor level for projects awarded under the RCGC, TCE, and RTG programs?

The RCGC, TCE, and RTG programs are geared towards providers. There may be some cases where payments to vendors may be allowed. These programs, however, are designed to be reimbursement-based programs where grant funds are paid to approved subrecipients for eligible expenditures incurred on the approved project(s).

5.7 Is there an indirect rate cap for awards under MS RHTP?

Total indirect and administrative costs may not exceed 5% of the award amount. Typically, administrative costs refer to expenses for general management and administrative support, which can be charged *directly* or *indirectly* depending on how they benefit an award. Indirect costs are expenses incurred for common or joint purposes that cannot be readily tied to a single specific award, but for this grant all indirect costs would be considered part of administrative costs. The rules for classifying Indirect Cost and Direct Cost can be found at [2 CFR 200.412](#).

5.8 Once approved for a project, is there governance on who can be used from a supplier perspective or is it the choice of the rural entity?

All applicants selected to be awarded funds under the TCE, RCGC, and/or RTG programs will be classified as subrecipients. All subrecipients will be required to follow applicable procurement standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.

5.9 Are salary costs a permissible expense under the MS RHTP?

CMS imposed the following restrictions on an awardee's use of RHTP funds to pay for salary costs:

- Funds cannot be used to support clinician salaries or wages for facilities that have non-compete clauses.
- Non-clinician salaries may be allowable only under the following conditions:
 - Directly ties to an approved RHTP initiative
 - Not used to supplant existing funding
 - Properly documented and allocable to the project
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Executive Level II Salary Cap applies. Any amount paid above the federal salary cap will be required to be paid with non-federal funds.



- Salaries charged to the award may not exceed the federal salary cap of \$225,700.

5.10 Is there a possibility for grant extensions if success is demonstrated?

RHTP funding is structured as a one-year award period. Mississippi strongly encourages applicants to propose phased or scalable projects that can achieve meaningful implementation milestones within the available funding timeframe. Due to the one-year award period imposed by CMS, the State cannot guarantee any grant extensions at this time.

5.11 How would clawbacks affect subrecipients if CMS initiates them?

Funds may be recovered from subrecipients per contract terms.

5.12 Will CMS reclaim funds if programs lack sustainable outcomes after five years without continued program funding?

CMS generally does not recover funds solely because an initiative fails to achieve expected outcomes or long-term sustainability, provided the State is acting in good faith and in accordance with its approved application. However, funds may be withheld, reduced, or recovered if a State fails to comply with program requirements, including not following through on commitments in its application, failing to meet reporting or spending requirements, or otherwise using funds inconsistently with the approved plan.

5.13 What federal compliance requirements apply to awardees?

All activities must comply with 2 CFR Part 200, CMS program guidelines, the Cooperative Agreement (RHTCMS332063-01-03), and program-specific terms outlined in each NOFO. Recipients will be subject to ongoing monitoring including performance reporting, financial reviews, and compliance oversight.

5.14 What are the procurement requirements?

Procurement must comply with 2 CFR 200, Subpart D, Sections 317–327 and Appendix II. This is the most common source of federal clawbacks. Importantly, Appendix II contract provisions apply to purchase orders as well as formal contracts. The State conducts procurement reviews prior to purchase to help mitigate non-compliant expenditures.

5.15 Do written policies and procedures need to be federally compliant?

Yes. Policies and procedures related to internal financial controls (2 CFR 200.302–305) and procurement (2 CFR 200.317–327 and Appendix II) must be federally compliant. If policies cannot be updated before submission due to board approval timelines, upload current policies and mark that they are not yet compliant. The State will work with



applicants to cure this before subaward execution — but funding will be frozen until compliant documentation is received.

5.16 Do Single Audit requirements apply?

Yes. Awards may be subject to Single Audit requirements as defined in 2 CFR 200, Subpart F, for organizations that expend \$1,000,000 or more in federal funds in a fiscal year.

