



MS RHTP PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

WORKFORCE EXPANSION INITIATIVE (WEI)

APPLICATION OPENS: JULY 15, 2026 AT 2PM CST | DEADLINE TO APPLY: AUGUST 17, 2026 AT 5PM CST

Questions	Answers
Application structure: Is there a limit on how many of the four initiative categories a single institution may apply under simultaneously?	There is not a limit on the number of applications that an applicant may submit for the active grant opportunities under the WEI initiative. Please keep in mind, however, that there is a defined budget for the grant opportunities currently open under WEI. The total budget may be found in the NOFO posted on the website: https://mississippirhtp.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/WEI-NOFO.710.26ADAPreflight.pdf
Rural eligibility: For programs with clinical rotations across multiple sites, does only one site need to meet the rural definition, or must all placements funded under the award be at rural sites?	All applications submitted under the WEI initiative must be submitted by a single applicant. Applicants are welcome to collaborate with other entities on their application, however, the application will need to be submitted by one eligible applicant. If awarded, the subaward will be executed with the single eligible applicant. Applicants must demonstrate they meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for funding. If an applicant is applying for a project across multiple sites the applicant will need to demonstrate that those sites are currently serving rural patient populations and that this project proposed will impact rural populations in the State of Mississippi.
Service commitment: What are the consequences, for the institution or the participant, if someone receiving stipend or salary support under Track A or C does not complete the full five-year rural Mississippi service commitment? Is there a mechanism for partial credit (e.g., someone who serves three of five years)?	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
Does "residency and fellowship expansion" under Track A extend to nursing and advanced-practice doctoral residencies (e.g., DNP), or is this scoped primarily to physician residency models?	Yes. The resident and fellowship expansion under Track A would expand to nursing and advanced-practice doctoral residencies.
Beyond the five listed award-amount factors (demonstrated need, strength of application, anticipated impact, program sustainability, availability of funds), is there a published scoring rubric or weighting available to applicants?	The application scoring rubric is located on the website under the funding opportunities tab: https://mississippirhtp.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/RHTP_ApplicationCriteria_scoresheet_071526PREFLIGHT.pdf
Application structure: If our college has multiple schools each proposing projects under different initiative categories (A–D), should this be submitted as one institutional application with multiple scopes of work, or as separate applications per school/initiative?	There is not a limit on the number of applications that an applicant may submit for the active grant opportunities under the WEI initiative. Please keep in mind, however, that there is a defined budget for the grant opportunities currently open under WEI. The total budget may be found in the NOFO posted on the website: https://mississippirhtp.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/WEI-NOFO.710.26ADAPreflight.pdf . Additionally, all applications submitted under the WEI initiative must be submitted by a single applicant. Applicants are welcome to collaborate with other entities on their application, however, the application will need to be submitted by one eligible applicant. The application should outline a defined scope of work to be carried out by the applicant submitting the application along with a clear budget for the proposed scope of work.
"Budget/allowable costs: Can existing faculty salary or administrative time be charged to the grant, or only new/incremental positions? What counts as an "approved limit" for indirect costs — is there a set indirect cost rate cap for this NOFO?"	Please see FAQs 5.7 and 5.9.
The webinar mentioned that Residency Program Expansion Grant would be a 5th sub-initiative on WEI, but residency expansion is mentioned as eligible for funding under the Workforce Retention and Sustainability Ecosystem Development Initiative in this NOFO (attached). Residency and fellowship support is also mentioned in the other sub-initiatives in the NOFO. Are residency and fellowship expansion and support limited to the 5th sub-initiative, or eligible through any and all sub-initiatives where they are listed as eligible activities?	Residency and fellowship support projects are eligible for consideration under the WEI initiative. As stated on the webinar, additional opportunities for these typos of expenses will be forthcoming as well.

"Is there a cap on the amount proposed for workforce grant?"	There is not a defined cap on the amount that may be requested in an application for the active grant opportunities under the WEI initiative. Please keep in mind, however, that there is a defined budget for the grant opportunities currently open under WEI. The total budget may be found in the NOFO posted on the website: https://mississippirhtp.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/WEI-NOFO.7.10.26ADAPreflight.pdf. Awards are limited overall by the amount of the total budget as outlined in the NOFO. We encourage applicants to review the NOFO prior to submitting an application and request funds that may be reasonably expended within the performance period for these grant opportunities.
"Hello, I have a question about the Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative under the WEI NOFO (RHTP-WEI FY2027-001). We are a Mississippi healthcare provider and licensed training program. We train Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Phlebotomy Technicians, and Peer Support Specialists (certified through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health). My question: Do these three types of trainees count as eligible participants under EWYL? I ask because the participant list in Section V mentions "Specialty and Allied Health Occupations" but does not specifically name CNAs, phlebotomists, or peer support specialists. In Mississippi, community and junior colleges classify CNA training as an allied health program, and the EWYL activities in the NOFO include things like certification fees, licensure exam fees, uniforms, and participant stipends — which fit entry-level training like ours. So we want to confirm these participants qualify before we build our application. Also, for short entry-level programs like CNA and phlebotomy, how should the five-year rural service commitment be applied and documented for participants who receive a stipend or wage? Thank you for your help."	We strongly encourage applicants to consider if the current WEI sub initiatives with a five-year service commitment are appropriate for the types of positions you are seeking funding for. We understand that the five-year service commitment can potentially negatively impact a recipient of the stipend and their ability to relocate during this five-year commitment period. For that reason, we encourage applicants to only seek stipend funding for positions specifically outlined in the NOFOs as all stipends will come with a mandatory five-year commitment period. Failure to meet the give year commitment will result in the subrecipient having to pay back the State for these awarded stipends.
"In the NOFO for the WEI Grant, it indicates that grants can be used for LPN to RN career pathways. Would CNAs to LPN career pathways be an acceptable use? I'm not seeing anything that I feel would prohibit it, but would like to know for sure."	Yes. Projects providing for pathways for CNAs to LPNs would be eligible to apply for funding under this initiative.
Do hospice clinical staff — including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, licensed clinical social workers, and nurse practitioners — qualify as eligible participant populations under Section V of the NOFO?	We strongly encourage applicants to consider if the current WEI sub initiatives with a five-year service commitment are appropriate for the types of positions you are seeking funding for. We understand that the five-year service commitment can potentially negatively impact a recipient of the stipend and their ability to relocate during this five-year commitment period. For that reason, we encourage applicants to only seek stipend funding for positions specifically outlined in the NOFOs as all stipends will come with a mandatory five-year commitment period. Failure to meet the give year commitment will result in the subrecipient having to pay back the State for these awarded stipends. You may also consider applying for funds for projects that would not trigger the five-year commitment period such as training programs.
For the Earn While You Learn Initiative, would upskilling of incumbent hospice employees (for example, LPN-to-RN pathways and certification or licensure fees) constitute eligible activities?	While these types of projects are eligible to apply under this initiative we strongly encourage you to consider that these projects would come with a five-year mandatory service commitment.
Does a Medicare-certified hospice provider qualify as an eligible applicant under Section VI of the NOFO, either as a "rural healthcare provider," a "long-term care" affiliated provider, or under the category of "other entities working to address workforce shortages and improve healthcare access in rural Mississippi communities"?	Potentially so long as you are able to meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the NOFO and application questions.
"Under the Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative, are retention bonuses for existing employees an eligible activity (for example, under ""workforce sustainability investments"")? If so, does the five-year rural service commitment described in Section IV(A) apply to employees receiving retention bonus payments, and may the commitment be satisfied through continued employment with the applicant organization?"	The five-year service commitment will apply to all retention bonuses. Additionally, you will need to demonstrate in your application the need for this retention bonus as well as the proposed impact it will have on rural healthcare in Mississippi.
"If a supported participant fails to complete the 5-year rural service commitment, what are the repayment or recoupment obligations, and do they fall on the subrecipient or the individual?"	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi.
"On page 5 of your NOFO for the Workforce Expansion Initiative, you list ""eligible participant populations." Community Health Workers are noticeable absent from this list. Are they excluded from the WEI? Please advise at your earliest convenience."	Same thing with five year commitment where detrimental if have to recoup from individuals salaried at a lower rate but training would be eligible

Section VI lists "professional training organizations," "workforce development organizations," and "other entities working to address workforce shortages" among eligible applicants. Can the State confirm whether a national healthcare workforce organization that is not physically located in Mississippi may apply as the prime applicant, provided it demonstrates meaningful benefit to rural Mississippi residents?	Applicants will be required to demonstrate service to rural populations in the State of Mississippi in order to be considered under the WEI initiative. Please see FAQ 3.6 for further information.
"Could you please clarify whether the requested information is asking us to provide all federal awards received? It appears that we only need to submit awards related to this project; however, the preceding question asks about all federal funding received within the past five years. Federal Funding History Has your organization received federal funding within the past 5 years? If Yes, list all federal awards related to this project, including the federal agency, program name, award number award amount and performance period."	Applicants are required to outline any federal funds received by the applicant within the past five years. This questions relates to all federal funds received by the applicant within the last five years, not simply those that relate to the proposed project outlined in your application.
"Previous NOFOs provided funds could not be used for ""clinician salaries or wage support for clinicians subject to non-compete contractual limitations."" This language does not appear in the WEI or PES NOFOs. Are these NOFOs subject to the same restriction?"	This is a restriction imposed by CMS and does apply to all initiatives including the WEI program.
The NOFO says \$16.8M is available for all four WEI funding streams. How many awards do you expect to make from that funding? This information will help develop a reasonable budget.	The State does not have a set amount of awards that will be awarded under the WEI initiative, however, the State is limited by the total budget as outlined in the NOFO and articulated in your question. We encourage applicants to review the NOFO prior to submitting an application and request funds that may be reasonably expended within the performance period for these grant opportunities.
"Is this a one-year grant?"	Yes. This is a one-year grant as required by CMS guidance. Please see FAQ 5.2 for additional information.
"For the attached NOFO, would service at a non-rural hospital serving rural counties satisfy the service commitment? Also, how many submissions are allowed?"	Applicants will be required to demonstrate service to rural populations in the State of Mississippi in order to be considered under the WEI initiative. Please see FAQ 3.6 for further information.
Eligible Uses of Funds in the RHTP-WEI EWYL includes a reference to "transportation assistance" — we want to confirm whether that category extends to vehicles purchased for staff conducting home visits.	"Transportation assistance is generally provided in the form of participant support, such as gas vouchers, public transportation passes, mileage reimbursement (where applicable), or other reasonable transportation assistance that directly enables participants to attend approved training, clinical placements, work-based learning experiences, or employment-related activities. This category does not extend to the purchase or lease of vehicles for staff conducting home visits or other program operations. Vehicles for staff use are considered operational or capital expenses and are not an eligible use of funds under the participant transportation assistance category."
Is there a minimum and maximum cap amount to apply?	There is not a defined cap on the amount that may be requested in an application for the active grant opportunities under the WEI initiative. Please keep in mind, however, that there is a defined budget for the grant opportunities currently open under WEI. The total budget may be found in the NOFO posted on the website: https://mississippirhtp.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/WEI-NOFO.710.26ADAPreflight.pdf . Awards are limited overall by the amount of the total budget as outlined in the NOFO. We encourage applicants to review the NOFO prior to submitting an application and request funds that may be reasonably expended within the performance period for these grant opportunities.
We have a school of nursing where we teach participants to become CNAs. Does this meet the eligibility requirement?	This will depend on the scope of your project as defined in your submitted application and project narrative. We encourage you to consult the NOFO and review the application on the program website to determine if the open opportunities under the WEI initiative are a fit for your proposed project.
Our organization does not have an indirect cost rate agreement. Can we claim the indirect cost, and if so, what is the cap?	Please see FAQs 5.7 and 5.9.
Does the WEI NOFO permit funding for loan repayment programs?	No. Loan repayment programs are not eligible under the open WEI initiatives.
"Does the WEI NOFO permit funding for equipment related to workforce training programs, including, but not limited to, IT equipment, furniture, training materials, etc.?"	This will depend on the scope of your project as defined in your submitted application and project narrative. We encourage you to consult the NOFO and review the application on the program website to determine if the open opportunities under the WEI initiative are a fit for your proposed project.

Section VII classifies awardees as subrecipients that exercise programmatic decision-making rather than solely providing goods or services. Where an organization would both design and operate program activities (for example, preceptor recruitment and placement coordination under Initiative D), would the State view that organization as a subrecipient, or as a contractor to a healthcare or educational applicant?	All applicants awarded funds under the WEI initiative will be considered subrecipients, and required to comply with all applicable provisions of 2 CFR 200.
Section IV(A) lists "vendor management services" as an eligible activity. Should applicants interpret this as an activity to be procured by an awardee, or as an activity an applicant may propose to deliver directly?	This could be for activity to be procured by an applicant or activity to be performed by the applicant itself.
For applications submitted by a coalition (for example, multiple Critical Access Hospitals or a community college consortium), does the State require a single lead applicant to hold the subaward, and may that lead applicant subcontract delivery components to a third-party organization under the federal procurement standards referenced in Section VII?	All applications submitted under the WEI initiative must be submitted by a single applicant. Applicants are welcome to collaborate with other entities on their application, however, the application will need to be submitted by one eligible applicant. If awarded, the subaward will be executed with the single eligible applicant. Applicants must demonstrate they meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for funding.
Given the performance period ending July 31, 2027, does the five-year rural service commitment in Sections IV(A) and IV(C) need to be documented at the participant level before the close of the performance period, or may it extend beyond it?	Five-year service commitments will have to be tracked by the subrecipient and reported back to the State until the commitment is fulfilled in full by the recipient of the funds.
"Eligible Uses of Funds in the RHTP-WEI EWYL includes a reference to ""transportation assistance"" — we want to confirm whether that category extends to vehicles purchased for staff conducting home visits. Thank you for your assistance."	Transportation assistance is generally provided in the form of participant support, such as gas vouchers, public transportation passes, mileage reimbursement (where applicable), or other reasonable transportation assistance that directly enables participants to attend approved training, clinical placements, work-based learning experiences, or employment-related activities. This category does not extend to the purchase or lease of vehicles for staff conducting home visits or other program operations. Vehicles for staff use are considered operational or capital expenses and are not an eligible use of funds under the participant transportation assistance category.
The Workforce Recruitment application identifies physicians as an eligible target population and includes recruitment, training, credential attainment, employment placement, and workforce-capacity outcomes. The webinar materials also list residency and fellowship expansion as eligible activities but reference a separate Residency Program Expansion Grant at a later date. Please clarify whether accredited physician residency and fellowship programs may apply under the current Workforce Recruitment initiative. If so, which costs are eligible, must funding be limited to new or expanded positions, how should residents and fellows be counted in recruitment metrics, and when does the five-year rural service commitment apply?	"For this open RFA, the four funding opportunities are the Workforce Recruitment & Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative, Secondary Education Medical Career Outreach Initiative, Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative, and Preceptor Expansion Initiative. As such, the Preceptor Expansion Initiative may be the most appropriate opportunity for residency and fellowship-related activities. Please refer to the eligibility criteria outlined in Section IV (A–D) of the NOFO. Funding should support new or expanded rural workforce capacity, not existing operational costs. The five-year rural service commitment applies only to individuals receiving direct recruitment or retention incentives funded through this initiative, however the forthcoming Residency Program Expansion Grant will provide a separate funding opportunity focused specifically on graduate medical education expansion."
"The funding opportunity says “all requested costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities.” What is a reasonable amount on a per FTE basis? For example, are retention or recruiting bonuses capped at 25% - 50% of salaries for that position? In terms of goals (up to three can be listed), what metrics are the most ideal to the state? Turnover vs vacancy, etc? Can goals and metrics be reported in aggregate, or do they need to be specific to each position?"	Applicants should develop budgets and performance measures that are reasonable, well-justified, and appropriate for the scope and objectives of the proposed project. Each application will be evaluated based on the proposed activities, demonstrated need, anticipated outcomes, and alignment with the goals of the initiative. Because projects may vary significantly in size, target population, and approach, we cannot establish a standard per-FTE amount or prescribe specific performance metrics applicable to all applicants. Applicants are encouraged to propose meaningful, measurable outcomes that clearly demonstrate the project's impact and describe how those outcomes will be tracked and reported. Applications should include performance measures that align with the proposed project activities and provide sufficient detail to evaluate the project's success.
In the NOFO for the Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative, there is a stipulation of, "Residents, fellows, and other supported participants receiving a direct benefit such as salary or stipend support must commit to a minimum of five (5) years of service in rural Mississippi upon program completion." Given the deadline of these projects being July 2027, can you provide guidance on how the applicants can respond to this stipulation and account for it in the project plan? Specifically the 5 year commitment.	Five-year service commitments will have to be tracked by the subrecipient and reported back to the State until the commitment is fulfilled in full by the recipient of the funds.

"Under the Workforce Recruitment and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative, would help with child care be an allowable expense? It would help enormously with both recruitment and retention of clinical and nonclinical employees! If it IS allowable, would it be acceptable to request funds just for childcare vouchers, or could an applicant itself hire qualified licensed personnel to offer child care services on site at its larger facilities?"	Child care may be proposed as a supportive strategy if the applicant can clearly demonstrate how it directly supports the recruitment and retention objectives of the proposed project and aligns with the goals of the Workforce Recruitment & Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative. Because projects and implementation models vary, we cannot pre-determine the allowability of a specific approach, such as childcare vouchers or employer-operated on-site childcare. Applicants should clearly describe the proposed activity, justify the need, demonstrate how it supports the project's workforce outcomes, and ensure that all requested costs are reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities. All proposed activities and associated costs will be evaluated based on the information submitted in the application and their alignment with the requirements of the funding opportunity.
Since a five-year service commitment to rural MS is required, will the grant organization (hospital) or the individual grant funded recipient (doctor) be responsible to ensure they remained employed in MS in some capacity during that five year commitment timeframe? For example, if a physician was hired by a hospital using grant funds in Year 1 of the MS RHTF period; but in Year 3 this same physician left employment and took a job somewhere else in Mississippi; does the original employer/hospital have to verify and monitor the new employment agreement? Or, if the grant funded physician left the state to go work in Alabama, in Year 3 of her service agreement, does the employer (hospital) have to pay all of the money back for the position or just a prorated share of the 60 month commitment requirement, or does that fall on the employed physician to pay back?	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
Does the Workforce Retention initiative cover retention incentive payments to current employees in exchange for a multi-year service commitment, or only signing bonuses for new hires/trainees?	All bonuses and retentions awarded with RHTP funds will be subject to the mandatory five-year service commitment.
Is software an allowable cost under the WEI workforce retention and sustainable ecosystem initiative?	This will depend on the scope of your project as defined in your submitted application and project narrative. We encourage you to consult the NOFO and review the application on the program website to determine if the open opportunities under the WEI initiative are a fit for your proposed project.
"We are considering a project for the Workforce Expansion Initiative (WEI) and would like guidance on how to categorize it for budget and narrative purposes before finalizing an application. The project is a self-hosted digital recruiting platform for provider recruitment and retention: a candidate database, recruiter dashboard, and related infrastructure (server hosting, domain/SSL, database, authentication, and notification services). The platform would also track residents and medical students through clinical training pipelines, and would be supported by a small internship program handling day-to-day recruiting outreach. Could you advise which WEI initiative this project would best fall under — Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development, Preceptor Expansion, or another — and how you'd recommend we categorize the platform's infrastructure costs within that initiative's budget and narrative?"	Your budget template should breakdown the line item costs associated with your project so that the review team can easily discern the total amount of funds associated with each line item and the description of that corresponding line item.
"Allowability of graduate credential support for licensed professionals. Would tuition, fees, and examination costs for currently licensed behavioral health professionals (e.g., licensed psychologists practicing in rural Mississippi) to complete a postdoctoral master's degree or similar advanced credential be considered an allowable activity under the Earn While You Learn Initiative (as incumbent worker upskilling and certification/licensure fees) and/ or the Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative (as certification and credentialing programs)?"	"The allowability of tuition, fees, examination costs, and other educational expenses will depend on the specific activities proposed and how they align with the objectives and eligible activities of the selected initiative. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how the proposed credentialing or educational activity directly supports the goals of the initiative, addresses a documented rural healthcare workforce need, and contributes to measurable workforce outcomes. All requested costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities. Applications will be evaluated based on the proposed project, alignment with the funding opportunity, and the justification provided for the requested costs."

"If a clinician or staff member receives a recruitment or retention bonus but does not complete the required service obligation, is repayment to the funder required? If the employer is expected to collect repayment, what documentation or reporting will you require from us? If repayment is required, is the amount full or pro rated based on time served? If prorated, can you provide the formula or an example calculation? Are there any allowable offsets (for example, taxes withheld or benefits paid) that reduce the repayment amount? If an employee leaves our facility but continues working for another rural Mississippi facility, does their service obligation transfer to the new employer or remain with the original employer/funder?"	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
"Specifically, I would like to know if the approved training programs can include allied health training pathways. Could you please confirm if the following programs are eligible under the grant: Phlebotomy Medical Assistant Dental Assistant Pharmacy Technician"	Training programs would be considered eligible for consideration under the WEI initiative.
If a new salaried employee agrees and signs a contract for 5 years and then fails to complete, how will that situation be handled? Do we replace that employee and move forward? Does the time period start over with a new contract? Do we have to refund the money used?	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
Under the Earn While You Learn track, are the following allied health occupations eligible for incumbent worker upskilling and certification support: surgical technologist, sterile processing technician, certified clinical medical assistant, patient care technician, pharmacy technician, and phlebotomy technician?"	We strongly encourage applicants to consider if the current WEI sub initiatives with a five-year service commitment are appropriate for the types of positions you are seeking funding for. We understand that the five-year service commitment can potentially negatively impact a recipient of the stipend and their ability to relocate during this five-year commitment period. For that reason, we encourage applicants to only seek stipend funding for positions specifically outlined in the NOFOs as all stipends will come with a mandatory five-year commitment period. Failure to meet the give year commitment will result in the subrecipient having to pay back the State for these awarded stipends. You may also consider applying for funds for projects that would not trigger the five-year commitment period such as training programs.
"Under Section X. Funding Restrictions, it reads that grant funds may not be used for indirect costs exceeding approved limits. What are the approved limits, and where can we find those posted? If we are an institution with negotiated rates, are we able to provide those? Also, does this opportunity require letters of support? If so, is there a place on the state-designated portal where they should be uploaded?"	Please see FAQs 5.7 and 5.9.
"If retention bonuses are allowable, is there a maximum dollar amount or other limitation on the bonus? Would payment of wages to interns be considered under the EWYL or the Preceptor Expansion Initiative? Do current interns qualify for wages or support?"	The funding opportunity does not establish a maximum dollar amount for retention bonuses. Applicants should ensure that any proposed incentive is reasonable, necessary, well-justified, and directly supports the goals and objectives of the proposed project. All proposed costs will be evaluated as part of the application review process. Payment of wages to interns may be proposed under the Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative when the wages are directly associated with eligible work-based learning or training activities described in the application. Whether support for current interns is allowable will depend on the proposed project, the activities being funded, and how the applicant demonstrates alignment with the objectives and requirements of the selected initiative. Applicants should clearly justify the need for the requested support and how it contributes to the intended workforce outcomes.
Are lease payments an eligible use of grant funding? For example, if a health care organization was leased to a school, as part of a workforce expansion initiative and training center, would an associated property lease agreement by eligible to be reimbursed by the grant?	Lease payments may be proposed as part of a project if the leased space is necessary to carry out approved project activities and directly supports the objectives of the selected initiative. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how the leased facility will be used to expand workforce capacity, training, or other eligible program activities. All proposed lease costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities. The allowability of lease expenses will be evaluated based on the information and justification provided in the application, as well as the proposed scope of work.

Joint applications between institutions. May two eligible institutions of higher learning submit a single joint application in which one institution serves as the lead applicant/subrecipient and issues a subaward to the partner institution, consistent with 2 CFR Part 200?	All applications submitted under the WEI initiative must be submitted by a single applicant. Applicants are welcome to collaborate with other entities on their application, however, the application will need to be submitted by one eligible applicant. If awarded, the subaward will be executed with the single eligible applicant. Applicants must demonstrate they meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for funding. If an applicant is applying for a project across multiple sites the applicant will need to demonstrate that those sites are currently serving rural patient populations and that this project proposed will impact rural populations in the State of Mississippi.
Are training programs delivered through online didactic instruction combined with in-person clinical or externship hours at the employer's facility eligible for funding under the Earn While You Learn track?	Training programs may be proposed in the project narrative for consideration for funding under the WEI initiative.
Costs spanning the performance period. For multi-year training programs, may Program Year 1 funds be used for tuition and fees for academic terms that begin within the performance period, provided the costs are incurred and invoiced prior to July 31, 2027? Relatedly, would continuation of such a training cohort be an appropriate subject for anticipated future-year WEI funding opportunities?	This is a one-year grant as required by CMS guidance. Please see FAQ 5.2 for additional information. We encourage applicants to apply for funding for project expenses that can reasonably be expended by July 31, 2027.
For Earn While You Learn vouchers (transportation assistance and childcare), are we able to request vouchers for multiple years in advance, or must vouchers be requested year by year?	This is a one-year grant as required by CMS guidance. Please see FAQ 5.2 for additional information. We encourage applicants to apply for funding for project expenses that can reasonably be expended by July 31, 2027.
Service commitment for incumbent rural workers. For participants who are already employed and practicing in rural Mississippi at the time of the award, how does the five-year rural service commitment apply? Specifically, does the commitment begin upon completion of the supported training, and is continued practice in their existing rural setting sufficient to satisfy it?	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
Costs spanning the performance period. For multi-year training programs, may Program Year 1 funds be used for tuition and fees for academic terms that begin within the performance period, provided the costs are incurred and invoiced prior to July 31, 2027? Relatedly, would continuation of such a training cohort be an appropriate subject for anticipated future-year WEI funding opportunities?	This is a one-year grant as required by CMS guidance. Please see FAQ 5.2 for additional information. We encourage applicants to apply for funding for project expenses that can reasonably be expended by July 31, 2027.
Could you describe what an approved WEI internship typically looks like, including typical duration, whether it is paid or unpaid, supervision requirements, and expected learning objectives?	The RHTP-WEI does not prescribe a standard internship model, including a required duration, compensation structure, supervision requirements, or specific learning objectives. These elements should be determined by the applicant based on the proposed project, workforce needs, and industry best practices. Applicants are encouraged to design internship experiences that align with the goals of the selected initiative, provide meaningful workforce training and hands-on learning opportunities, include appropriate supervision, and support measurable workforce outcomes. The proposed internship model and associated activities will be evaluated as part of the overall application.
Is the list of target occupations in the NOFO exhaustive, or illustrative? If illustrative, what standard will reviewers apply in determining whether an occupation not named in the NOFO qualifies?	The list of target occupations identified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is exhaustive. Applications should focus on serving one or more of the identified target populations outlined in the NOFO. Projects proposing populations outside of those identified would not be considered responsive to the funding opportunity.
"Could you please share the exact policy or contract language that explains repayment or claw back for breached service obligations? If repayment is required, who is responsible for recovering the funds — the employer or the funder?"	Failure to comply with the mandatory five-year Mississippi service requirement will result in the subrecipient awarded funds under the WEI initiative needing to pay these funds back to the State of Mississippi. The subrecipient would need to pursue recapture from the individual recipient of the stipend but the subrecipient would be held responsible for paying these back to the State.
Do nationally recognized allied health certifications, such as those issued by the National Health career Association (NHA) and the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT), qualify as eligible credentials for certification fee support under the Earn While You Learn track?	Nationally recognized allied health certifications, including those offered by organizations such as the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) and the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT), may be proposed for certification fee support under the Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative, provided the certification aligns with the proposed training program and supports business and industry workforce needs and employment requirements. Applicants should demonstrate that the certification is recognized by employers within the applicable healthcare field, is appropriate for the occupation being trained, and contributes to employment or advancement opportunities.
Does the five-year rural service commitment apply to incumbent employees completing short-format (four to six month) certification programs, and if so, does continued employment at the participant's current rural Mississippi facility satisfy the commitment?	Mandatory five-year commitments apply to all stipends and bonuses funded with RHTP funds.

Are training programs delivered through online didactic instruction combined with in-person clinical or externship hours at the employer's facility eligible for funding under the Earn While You Learn track?	This will depend on the scope of your project as defined in your submitted application and project narrative. We encourage you to consult the NOFO and review the application on the program website to determine if the open opportunities under the WEI initiative are a fit for your proposed project.
More broadly, may grant funds be used to hire employees when additional staffing is necessary to successfully implement and sustain an approved initiative? If so, are there any restrictions or requirements regarding these positions (e.g., temporary vs. permanent, full-time vs. part-time, or sustainability after the grant period)?	Grant funds may be proposed to support personnel costs when additional staffing is necessary to successfully implement an approved project and the positions are directly related to eligible project activities. Applicants should clearly justify the need for each position and describe how it will support the project's goals and expected outcomes. The funding opportunity does not prescribe specific requirements regarding whether positions must be temporary or permanent, full-time or part-time. However, applicants are encouraged to describe their plan for sustaining key project activities beyond the grant period, as sustainability is an evaluation criterion within the application. All proposed personnel costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities.
"Is there a cap or guidance regarding the amount that may be awarded for a signing bonus for new hires? Earn While You Learn Initiative (EWYL)"	The Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative does not establish a maximum amount for signing bonuses. Applicants proposing signing bonuses should ensure the requested amount is reasonable, necessary, and appropriately justified based on the proposed project, local workforce needs, and recruitment strategy. All requested costs must be allocable, directly related to approved project activities, and supported by a clear justification in the application. Proposed incentive amounts will be evaluated as part of the overall application review process.