

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
Rural Health Transformation Program – Workforce Expansion Initiative (RHTP/WEI)

Funding Opportunity Number: RHTP-WEI FY2027-001

Issuing Agency: AccelerateMS

Funding Initiative: Workforce Expansion Initiative (WEI)

Contact Information: info@MississippiRHTP.com

Application Period: July 15, 2026, through August 17, 2026, at 5:00 pm CST

I. Program Overview

Mississippi's Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Workforce Expansion Initiative (WEI) is designed to address critical healthcare workforce shortages impacting rural communities throughout the state. Rural healthcare providers continue to face significant challenges recruiting, training, and retaining physicians, nurses, behavioral health professionals, allied health professionals, emergency medical personnel, and other essential healthcare workers.

Through strategic investments in workforce development, education, training, employer partnerships, and innovative recruitment and retention strategies, the Workforce Expansion Initiative seeks to strengthen Mississippi's healthcare workforce pipeline while expanding access to quality healthcare services in underserved communities. The initiative supports both immediate workforce needs and long-term sustainability through coordinated efforts among healthcare providers, educational institutions, workforce development organizations, and community partners.

This NOFO pertains to four separate grant opportunities under the Mississippi RHTP WEI initiative. Eligible applicants may apply for funding for eligible projects under the following four grant programs beginning July 15, 2026, and ending August 17, 2026, at 5:00 pm CST:

- 1. Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative**
- 2. Secondary Education Medical Career Outreach Initiative**
- 3. Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative**
- 4. Preceptor Expansion Initiative**

Details regarding eligibility criteria for each of these grants is outlined in Section IV(A-D) in this NOFO.

II. WEI Program Objectives

The Workforce Expansion Initiative seeks to:

- Expand access to healthcare services in rural and underserved communities.
- Increase recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.
- Strengthen workforce pipelines for high-demand healthcare occupations.
- Promote career awareness and healthcare career pathways.
- Support workforce advancement and credential attainment.
- Expand clinical training, apprenticeships, internships, and residency opportunities.

- Enhance healthcare workforce sustainability through strategic partnerships.
- Improve health outcomes through increased workforce capacity.
- Support long-term economic and community development through healthcare workforce investments.

III. Funding Availability

A total of \$16.8 million is available under this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Award amounts will be determined based on:

- Demonstrated need
- Strength of application
- Anticipated impact
- Program sustainability
- Availability of funds

All requested costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities.

IV. WEI Grant Opportunities

Applicants may apply for one or more of the below grant opportunities under the WEI initiative. Separate budgets, scopes of work, and performance measures must be submitted for each initiative.

A. Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development Initiative

- **Goal:** Recruit and retain healthcare professionals in rural communities while creating sustainable workforce support systems.
- **Eligible Activities:** Projects may include, but are not limited to:
 - Recruitment campaigns
 - Vendor management services
 - Signing bonuses
 - Residency and fellowship expansion
 - Apprenticeship programs
 - Internship development
 - Certification and credentialing programs
 - Behavioral health workforce development
 - Simulation-based training
 - Professional development activities
 - Accreditation costs
 - Onboarding support
 - Community partnership development
 - Workforce sustainability investments
 - Service Commitment Requirement

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.

B. Secondary Education Medical Career Outreach Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase awareness and interest in healthcare careers among secondary education students and create long-term workforce pipelines.
- **Eligible Activities:** Projects may include, but are not limited to:
 - Healthcare career awareness campaigns
 - Career exploration modules
 - Healthcare pathway development programs
 - Healthcare camps
 - Job shadowing opportunities
 - Clinical observation experiences
 - Work-based learning programs
 - Apprenticeships
 - Dual enrollment healthcare programs
 - Paramedic pathway programs
 - Career coaching
 - Simulation experiences
 - Evening healthcare academies
 - Student tuition assistance
 - Instructor recruitment incentives
- Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with:
 - Healthcare employers
 - K-12 school districts
 - Community colleges
 - Universities
 - Workforce development organizations
 - Community-based organizations

C. Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Initiative

- **Goal:** Create workforce pathways through paid training, credential attainment, and employment-focused healthcare programs.
- **Eligible Activities:** Projects may include, but are not limited to:
 - Participant stipends
 - Participant wages
 - Apprenticeship programs
 - Paid clinical rotations
 - Rural residency support
 - Fellowship support
 - Incumbent worker upskilling

- LPN-to-RN career pathways
 - Leadership development programs
 - Childcare assistance
 - Transportation assistance
 - Uniforms and training equipment
 - Certification fees
 - Licensure examination fees
 - Mobile simulation labs
 - Accelerated credential pathways
- **Service Commitment Requirement:** Participants receiving wage or stipend support must complete a minimum (5) five-years' service commitment in rural Mississippi upon completion of training.

D. Preceptor Expansion Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase rural clinical training capacity through recruitment, development, and retention of healthcare preceptors and mentors.
- **Eligible Activities:** Projects may include, but are not limited to:
- Preceptor Recruitment and Retention
 - Preceptor stipends
 - Incentive payments
 - Recognition programs
 - Recruitment activities
 - Training and Development
 - Clinical teaching certifications
 - Mentorship training
 - Competency-based assessment training
 - Continuing education activities
 - Rural health training
 - Clinical Placement Expansion
 - Rural rotation site development
 - Residency and fellowship support
 - Apprenticeship placements
 - University partnerships
 - Community college partnerships
 - Infrastructure Support
 - Preceptor management software
 - Placement coordination staff
 - Tele-precepting technology
 - Learning management systems
 - Student outcome tracking systems
 - Faculty development
 - Instructor certification

- Simulation instructor support

V. Target Population

The target population includes healthcare professionals, trainees, and workforce pipeline participants serving Mississippi communities, particularly rural and underserved populations.

Eligible participant populations include:

- Clinical Professionals
- Physicians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- Physician Assistants
- Behavioral Health Professionals
- Psychiatrists
- Licensed Psychologists
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)
- Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs)
- Specialty and Allied Health Occupations
- Cardiology
- Neurology
- Otolaryngology (ENT)
- Anesthesiology
- Paramedics
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians
- Dentists and Dental Hygienists

Priority will be given to initiatives addressing workforce shortages and improving healthcare access in rural Mississippi communities.

VI. Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Rural hospitals
- Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)
- Rural healthcare providers
- Rural health clinics
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Nonprofit healthcare organizations
- Public health agencies
- Physicians' practices
- Local health departments
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics
- Substance use disorder treatment facilities

- Dental providers
- Long-term care facilities
- Nursing homes
- EMS providers
- School districts
- Community colleges
- Residency programs
- Universities
- Independent universities and educational entities
- Institutions of higher learning
- Public health organizations
- Native American Sovereign Tribe healthcare facilities
- Professional training organizations
- Workforce development organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Other entities working to address workforce shortages and improve healthcare access in rural Mississippi communities.

Organizations are not required to be physically located in a rural area but must demonstrate meaningful benefit to rural Mississippi residents.

VII. Award Information

The State anticipates an initial round of funding under WEI with the potential for additional opportunities in future years:

Program Year	Amount Available	Application Opens	Application Deadline	Award Announcements (Tentative)	Performance Period
Program Year 1	\$16.8 million	07/15/2026	08/17/2026 5:00 pm CST	September 2026	Date of Award to 07/31/2027

All awards are subject to the State's receipt of funds under the RHT Program. The State anticipates that additional funding opportunities may be available in future RHT Program years; however, an Applicant's receipt of funding in one Program Year does not guarantee funding in subsequent years. The State will provide additional information regarding the structure and requirements of future-year WEI funding at a later date. WEI proposals should complement, but not duplicate, other programs included in the State's Plan.

For Program Year 1, the State expects to announce awardees as early as September 2026. The performance period for Program Year 1 runs from the award through July 31, 2027, meaning all Program Year 1 funds must be spent or incurred by then. Given the compressed window, the State will provide awardees with a strict deadline for final reimbursement submissions before the end of the Performance Period.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose phased or scalable projects capable of demonstrating measurable outcomes within the performance period.

Projects should clearly identify:

- One-year deliverables
- Milestones
- Sustainability plans
- Future scalability opportunities

All requested costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and directly related to approved project activities.

VII. Awardee Classification

Selected applicants chosen to receive funding will be classified as ‘subrecipients’. A subrecipient is an entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity (AccelerateMS) to carry out part of a Federal program and is responsible for programmatic decision-making (not just providing goods/services) and compliance requirements applicable to its portion of the Federal award.

A subrecipient:

- Carries out part of the Federal program
- Uses judgment/discretion in delivering program activities
- Is accountable for program compliance for its portion of the award

Subrecipients are responsible for carrying out the approved work as planned and using grant funds only for allowable, well-documented program costs. They must maintain appropriate financial and internal controls, keep accurate records, and submit complete and timely financial and progress reports to AccelerateMS.

They are also required to retain records, comply with monitoring and audit requirements (including Single Audit¹ requirements when applicable), and provide documentation for oversight. When procuring goods or services with grant funds, subrecipients must follow applicable federal procurement standards², including maintaining documentation to support purchasing decisions.

All awards are subject to applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance, including 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 300, the terms and conditions of the federal award (including Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements for the RHT Program), state procurement rules, and the subaward agreement issued by AccelerateMS, and any subsequent changes and/or updates to applicable state and federal law, regulations, and guidance. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all activities, costs, procurement actions, contracts, and project management practices comply with these requirements. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disallowed costs or corrective action, including recoupment.

VIII. Funding Disbursement

Subrecipients will receive funds on a reimbursement basis. AccelerateMS will execute and maintain the subrecipient agreements and the State will draw down funds from CMS for disbursement to subrecipients in accordance with the CMS award terms and applicable requirements (including 2 CFR Part 200). To support the drawdown, subrecipients must submit payment requests on an agreed-upon cadence using a prescribed request form, and each request must be based on documented incurrence of cost and expenditure for allowable program

purposes (e.g., executed contracts with invoiced goods or services, purchase orders, payroll obligations and subsequent check or ACH) that are within the approved budget, scope of work, and period of performance. AccelerateMS and the State will review requests for allowability and compliance with all applicable procurement requirements and, upon approval and drawdown from CMS, will work with the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (MS DFA) to disburse funds to the subrecipient. Subrecipients must maintain documentation supporting the obligations and expenditures and provide such records upon request.

Subrecipients may apply for advance funding if they are able to prove the reimbursement model would detrimentally impact their ability to succeed in the timely implementation and completion of their proposed capital project. A separate request form, detailing the evidence necessary for a subrecipient to receive funding in advance, can be provided to awarded subrecipients upon request. If approved, such advanced funding will be capped as a percentage of the subrecipient's total award.

IX. Reporting and Compliance

The State will monitor a subrecipients' performance, including, but not limited to, through review of financial and programmatic reports and performance measures, under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this NOFO.

Award recipients must:

- Submit monthly progress reports
- Submit monthly reimbursement request reports with applicable supporting documentation
- Submit performance and outcome reports
- Maintain financial documentation
- Comply with all applicable federal and state requirements
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation activities
- Support implementation of the Mississippi Statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE)
- All expenditures must be documented and supported by appropriate records.

Subrecipients shall provide all applicable reports in the format specified in an accurate, complete, and timely manner and shall maintain appropriate supporting backup documentation. Failure to meet submission deadlines for required reports or other requested information may result in the State, in its sole discretion, placing the Grantee on financial hold without first requiring a corrective action plan, in addition to pursuing any other corrective or remedial actions under the Grant Agreement.

X. Funding Restrictions

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Construction projects
- Major renovations
- Land acquisition
- Building purchases
- Entertainment expenses
- Costs incurred before award execution
- Indirect costs exceeding approved limits

- Activities unrelated to approved project objectives
- All expenditures must directly support approved grant activities and occur within the approved project period.

XI. Prequalification Questions

Applicants must certify the following:

1. Is your organization an eligible Mississippi entity (as described in VI) under the Rural Health Transformation Program Workforce Expansion Initiative?

Note: Mississippi classifies “rural” as counties with fewer than 50,000 residents, fewer than 500 people per square mile, or municipalities with population 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 in Mississippi.

2. Does the proposed project align with one or more approved initiative categories?
 - Workforce Retention and Sustainable Ecosystem Development
 - Secondary Education Medical Career Outreach
 - Earn While You Learn (EWYL)
 - Preceptor Expansion
3. If applying under multiple initiatives, does your organization understand that separate budgets, scopes of work, and performance measures are required for each initiative?
4. Does your organization commit to supporting the Mississippi Statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE)?
5. Does your organization understand that all activities must be completed within the approved performance period and that proposed projects should be capable of operating independently if future funding is unavailable?

XII. Application Narrative Requirements

Applicants must provide responses to the applicable initiative-specific questions contained in the official application package, including:

XIIIXIC. Application Submission Information

Application Open Date: **July 15, 2026**

Application Close Date: **August 17, 2026, at 5pm CST**

Applications must be submitted through the State-designated grant management system and include all required forms, certifications, budgets, and narrative responses.

Late or incomplete applications may not be considered for funding.

XIV. Questions

Applicants may submit questions regarding the grant opportunities outlined herein during the open question and answer period. Questions should be submitted as follows:

- Questions about this Grant Application, including requests for clarification or additional information, must be made in writing and submitted via email to info@mississippirhtp.com no later than 11:59 PM CT on Wednesday, July 22.
- Deadline for Questions and Requests for Clarification: 11:59 PM CT on Wednesday, July 22.
- All responses will be posted on the Mississippi RHTP website following the close of the public question period.

A recording of an informational webinar regarding the WEI NOFO is available on the state website under the downloadable resources tab.

Potential applicants should not communicate in any other manner with State officials or State agents regarding WEI. Any attempts by a potential applicant – either directly or indirectly - to influence or otherwise impact the outcome of the WEI application process will disqualify such potential applicant from any WEI award.