



## **Will the slide deck presented during the Webinar become available?**

Yes, the slide deck presented during the Webinar [can be found here](#).

## **How is "rural" defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and within the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)? How does this affect initiatives?**

CMS defines rural according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which defines 51 of Montana's 56 counties as non-metropolitan. Certain census tracts within the five remaining counties (Cascade, Gallatin, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, and Yellowstone) may be considered rural, as well.

Initiatives must focus on rural health but need not exclude non-rural regions. Initiatives in non-rural areas that significantly impact rural health are also allowed.

## **What restrictions are outlined by CMS in the NOFO as to how funds can be used?**

CMS outlines that funding cannot be used to cover many specific costs, including construction or major building projects, supplanting existing funding streams, cosmetic upgrades, independent research costs, and telecommunications equipment flagged under federal law.

There are many other restrictions CMS details on pages 18 through 22 in the NOFO, which can be referenced for a comprehensive view.

## **In the award period, when must funds be used? How will DPHHS pass funds from the federal government onto local governments and organizations?**

The Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) is broken into five award budget periods, with funds transferred to the State once a year. Awarded funds must then be used by the conclusion of the following budget period. Otherwise, they will be redistributed.

Funding can be paid out as subawards or subcontracts to other organizations and entities to execute initiatives with strong State oversight. The State has not yet made decisions about specific subawards or subcontracts.

In addition, there is a strong emphasis within the NOFO on sustainable initiatives and impact that last longer than the five-year funding period.



## **How are budget and effective use of funds included within the NOFO's grading standards?**

DPHHS's application must include a detailed budget outlining how funds will be used across initiatives. Within the rubric, the Strategy and Workplan and Monitoring areas include details around how effectively funds are used. Requirements include a robust investment plan and funding that has an immediate impact.

The NOFO prohibits the use of funds for construction or building expansions that materially increase value.

## **Should RFIs be resubmitted now that the NOFO is released and the rubric has been outlined? What additional info is needed between now and November 5th?**

There is no need to resubmit RFIs unless submitters have material additional information around financial sustainability, implementation, and other factors prioritized in the NOFO that can inform initiative development. If so, an addendum may be submitted. Previously submitted RFIs have been reviewed and DPHHS may modify prioritized initiatives to adhere to CMS guidelines. The RFI remains open for submissions. New proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis, but given CMS timelines, early submission is preferred.

## **How will DPHHS consider and utilize RFI responses and submitted proposals? Will DPHHS submit initiatives for X program? Will they use the funding for Y program?**

DPHHS will consider all RFI responses and submitted proposals and will make decisions based on what will maximize both funding from RHTP, and the impact for Montana. DPHHS leadership is responsible for all decision-making about the initiatives that will be included in the State's submission to CMS.

There is no guarantee that specific initiatives, proposals, or programs will be incorporated into the final application. If appropriate, proposals may be combined, matched, or grouped, and individual aspects from RFIs may be utilized without using proposed initiatives in full.