U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HRSA
Health Resources & Services Administration

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Hospital State Division

State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program (SORHCDP)

Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-20-085
Funding Opportunity Types: New and Competing Continuation
Assistance Listings (CFDA) Number: 93.155

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year 2020

Application Due Date: December 20, 2019

*Ensure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations and passwords are current immediately!
HRSA will not approve deadline extensions for lack of registration.
Registration in all systems, including SAM.gov and Grants.gov,
may take up to 1 month to complete.*

Issuance Date: September 11, 2019

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Authority: Section 711 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 912), as amended.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2020 State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program (SORHCDP). The purpose of this program is to develop and maintain activities that will build the capacity of the 50 State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) and rural stakeholders nationwide through strengthening leadership, increasing opportunities for collaboration, offering education on policy and emerging health issues, and supporting the core functions of the SORH to better coordinate and improve rural health services.

The FY 2020 President's Budget does not request funding for this program. This notice is a contingency action taken to ensure that, should funds become available for this purpose, HRSA can process applications and award funds in a timely manner. You should note that this program may be cancelled prior to award.

Funding Opportunity Title:	State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program
Funding Opportunity Number:	HRSA-20-085
Due Date for Applications:	December 20, 2019
Anticipated Total Annual Available FY 2020 Funding:	$750,000
Estimated Number and Type of Awards:	Up to one cooperative agreement
Estimated Award Amount:	Up to $750,000 per year subject to the availability of appropriated funds
Cost Sharing/Match Required:	No
Period of Performance:	August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2025 (5 years)
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible applicants include all domestic public, private and nonprofit organizations. See Section III.1 of this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for complete eligibility information.

Application Guide

You (the applicant organization/agency) are responsible for reading and complying with the instructions included in HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide,* available online at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf424guide.pdf, except where instructed in this NOFO to do otherwise.

Technical Assistance

HRSA has scheduled the following technical assistance:

Webinar

Day and Date: Monday, October 28, 2019
Time: 2– 3 p.m. ET
Call-In Number: 877-918-6634
Participant Code: 7240138
Weblink: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/hrsa_ta_webinar/
Playback Number: 1- 800-513-1167

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I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

1. Purpose

This notice announces the opportunity to apply for funding under the State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program (SORHCDP). The purpose of this program is to develop and maintain activities that will build the capacity of the 50 State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) and rural stakeholders nationwide through strengthening leadership, increasing opportunities for collaboration, offering education on policy and emerging health issues, and supporting the core functions of the SORH.

The goals of the SORHCDP are to support the 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide to better coordinate and improve rural health services by:
1. Providing leadership development at national, regional, state, and local levels to increase the impact of SORH;
2. Facilitating partnerships and collaboration at the national, regional, state and local levels to improve the exchange of information and best practices that support rural health;
3. Assisting in the coordination of rural health care through education on policy and emerging health issues; and
4. Providing capacity development for SORH core functions to improve SORH efficiency.

The cooperative agreement will involve an ongoing partnership with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the final development and implementation of the submitted work plan.

2. Background

This program is authorized by Section 711 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 912), as amended.

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), located within HRSA, is the focal point for rural health activities within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). FORHP is statutorily required to advise the Secretary of HHS on the effects of current policies and proposed statutory, regulatory, administrative and budgetary changes in Medicare and Medicaid programs, on the financial viability of small rural hospitals, on the ability of rural areas to attract and retain physicians and other health professions, and on access to and the quality of health care in rural areas. To learn more about FORHP, visit https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health.

Federally funded since 1991, the purpose of the SORH program is to assist states in strengthening rural health care delivery systems by maintaining a focal point for rural health within each state. The program provides funding for a framework in each state that links small rural communities with state and federal resources to help develop long-term solutions to rural health problems. SORH perform the following functions:

- Establish and maintain within the state a clearinghouse for collecting and disseminating information on:
  - rural health care issues;
  - research findings relating to rural health care; and
  - innovative approaches to the delivery of health care in rural areas;
- Coordinate the activities carried out in the state that relate to rural health care, including providing coordination for the purpose of avoiding redundancy in such activities; and
- Identify federal and state programs regarding rural health, and provide technical assistance to public and nonprofit private entities regarding participation in such programs.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Application and Award

Types of applications sought: New, Competing Continuation

HRSA will provide funding in the form of a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is a financial assistance mechanism where substantial involvement is anticipated between HRSA and the recipient during performance of the contemplated project.

HRSA program involvement will include:
- Providing guidance in planning, operation, and evaluation activities;
- Providing guidance and assistance in identifying key organizations with whom to partner and collaborate;
- Participating, as appropriate, in the planning of any meetings, educational activities, or workgroups conducted during the period of the cooperative agreement;
- Identifying opportunities and providing guidance on strategies for disseminating information about programs and activities;
- Reviewing and providing input on activities and findings under this award prior to public dissemination; and
- Identifying or suggesting special projects, studies, products or publications around emerging rural health issues.

The cooperative agreement recipient's responsibilities will include:
- Working collaboratively with HRSA, responding to HRSA requests, comments, and questions on a timely basis;
- Working collaboratively with all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide;
- Supporting SORH in collecting and disseminating information, coordinating activities, building collaborative partnerships, convening stakeholders, and providing leadership development to improve rural health;
- Engaging SORH and rural stakeholders in the planning, execution and evaluation of activities, including the identification of education needs and development of high quality and relevant products, in coordination with HRSA;

- Providing capacity building, education, and leadership development activities to all 50 SORHs and rural stakeholders;
- Maintaining projects that will help support engagement with SORH and rural stakeholders in a broad range of activities; and
- Convening SORH and key rural health stakeholders across the local, regional, state, and national levels.

2. Summary of Funding

HRSA estimates approximately $750,000 to be available annually to fund one recipient. The actual amount available will not be determined until enactment of the final FY 2020 federal appropriation. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to $750,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year. The FY 2020 President's Budget does not request funding for this program. This program notice is subject to the appropriation of funds, and is a contingency action taken to ensure that, should funds become available for this purpose, HRSA can process applications and award funds in a timely manner. The period of performance is August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2025 (5 years). Funding beyond the first year is subject to the availability of appropriated funds for SORHCDP in subsequent fiscal years, satisfactory recipient performance, and a decision that continued funding is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

All HRSA awards are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 45 CFR part 75.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include domestic public, private and nonprofit organizations including domestic faith-based and community organizations, state governments and their agencies such as universities, colleges, research institutions, hospitals, local governments or their bona fide agents. Federally recognized tribal governments, tribes, and tribal organizations are also eligible.

2. Cost Sharing/Matching

Cost sharing/matching is not required for this program.

3. Other

HRSA will consider any application that exceeds the ceiling amount non-responsive and will not consider it for funding under this notice.

HRSA will consider any application that fails to satisfy the deadline requirements referenced in Section IV.4 non-responsive and will not consider it for funding under this notice.

NOTE: Multiple applications from an organization are not allowable.

If for any reason (including submitting to the wrong funding opportunity number or making corrections/updates) an application is submitted more than once prior to the application due date, HRSA will only accept your **last** validated electronic submission, under the correct funding opportunity number, prior to the Grants.gov application due date as the final and only acceptable application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

HRSA *requires* you to apply electronically. HRSA encourages you to apply through Grants.gov using the SF-424 workspace application package associated with this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) following the directions provided at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

The NOFO is also known as "Instructions" on Grants.gov. You must provide your email address when reviewing or preparing the workspace application package in order to receive notifications including modifications and/or republications of the NOFO on Grants.gov before its closing date. Responding to an earlier version of a modified notice may result in a less competitive or ineligible application. *Please note you are ultimately responsible for reviewing the For Applicants page for all information relevant to desired opportunities.*

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Section 4 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* provides instructions for the budget, budget narrative, staffing plan and personnel requirements, assurances, certifications, and abstract. You must submit the information outlined in the Application Guide in addition to the program-specific information below. You are responsible for reading and complying with the instructions included in HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* except where instructed in the NOFO to do otherwise. You must submit the application in the English language and in the terms of U.S. dollars (45 CFR § 75.111(a)).

See Section 8.5 of the *Application Guide* for the Application Completeness Checklist.

Application Page Limit
The total size of all uploaded files may not exceed the equivalent of **60 pages** when printed by HRSA. The page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments, and letters of commitment and support required in the *Application Guide* and this NOFO. Standard OMB-approved forms that are included in the workspace application package do not count in the page limit. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) do not count in the page limit. **We strongly urge you to take appropriate measures to ensure your application does not exceed the specified page limit.**

Applications must be complete, within the specified page limit, and validated by Grants.gov under the correct funding opportunity number prior to the deadline to be considered under this notice.

Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion Certification

1) You, on behalf of the applicant organization certify, by submission of your proposal, that neither you nor your principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.
2) Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 45 CFR § 75.371, including suspension or debarment. (See also 2 CFR parts 180 and 376, and 31 U.S.C. 3321).
3) Where you are unable to attest to the statements in this certification, an explanation shall be included in Attachment 9: Other Relevant Documents.

See Section 4.1 viii of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information on all certifications.

Program-Specific Instructions

In addition to application requirements and instructions in Section 4 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* (including the budget, budget narrative, staffing plan and personnel requirements, assurances, certifications, and abstract), include the following:

i. Project Abstract

See Section 4.1.ix of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.

Please include the following information at the top of the abstract:
- Project title
- Applicant organization name
- Applicant organization location (street, city, state, zip code)
- Applicant organization website, if applicable
- Project Director name and title
- Project Director contact information (phone and e-mail)

ii. Project Narrative

This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It should be succinct, self-explanatory, consistent with forms and attachments, and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

Successful applications will contain the information below. Please use the following section headers for the narrative:

- *INTRODUCTION -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (1) Need*
  Briefly describe the purpose of the proposed project and your knowledge of and experience working with all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide.

- *NEEDS ASSESSMENT -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (1) Need*
  Provide an overview of the unmet needs specific to all 50 SORH and their work better coordinate and improve rural health services. Use and cite data whenever possible to support the information provided. Discuss any relevant barriers that all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide face, specifically how the project hopes to overcome or address these barriers. This section will help reviewers understand the national context of SORH that you will serve with the proposed project.

- *METHODOLOGY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criteria (2) Response and (4) Impact*
  Propose methods that you will use to address the stated needs and meet each of the previously described program requirements and cooperative agreement recipient's responsibilities in this NOFO. Describe the methods that will support all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders by:

  - Providing leadership development at national, regional, state, and local levels to increase the impact of SORH. Activities may include, but are not limited to:
    - Collecting and disseminating innovations to enhance the impact of SORH as a partner to improve rural health; and
    - Providing continuing education programing (e.g., mentoring or peer-to-peer exchanges) to support SORH in leadership development.

  - Facilitating partnerships and collaboration at the national, regional, state and local levels to improve the exchange of information and best practices that support rural health. Activities may include providing opportunities for all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders to engage in educational activities and networking at the local, regional, state, and national levels.
    Potential partners may include:
      - State Rural Health Associations (SRHAs);
      - Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) and small rural hospitals;
      - Rural Health Clinics (RHCs);
      - Community Health Centers (CHCs);
      - Primary Care Offices (PCOs);
      - Area Health Education Centers (AHECs);
      - Rural focused philanthropies;
      - Federal rural health partners (i.e., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Veterans Affairs, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.);
      - Rural communities; and
      - Other existing and emerging partnerships to be determined in collaboration with HRSA.

- Assisting in the coordination of rural health care through education on policy and emerging health issues. Topics may include current HRSA priorities:
  - o Combatting the opioid crisis/Mental Health;
  - o Value-based care delivery and quality improvement initiatives;
  - o Transforming the workforce;
  - o Telehealth;
  - o Childhood Obesity; or
  - o Maternal Mortality.

- Enhancing the organizational capacity of SORH through the identification and development of resources targeted at the SORH core activities. Activities may include:
  - o Engaging of SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide in the planning, operation, and evaluation of activities;
  - o Providing education, resources, and support around SORH core functions; and
  - o Implementing strategies to determine the educational needs of all 50 SORH.

Include a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or project outputs so key target audiences receive the project information.

Include a description of any innovative methods that you will use to address the stated needs.

You must also discuss how your education materials created through this cooperative agreement will help SORH and rural communities build sustainability in coordination and improvement of rural health services.

- *WORK PLAN -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (2) Response*
  The work plan should be included as **Attachment 1** and in table format. Describe the activities or steps that you will use to achieve each of the objectives proposed during the entire period of performance in the Methodology section. Use a time line that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff. As appropriate, identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders in planning, designing, and implementing all activities, including developing the application.

  The work plan should cover a five (5) year period of performance explaining activities to begin August 1, 2020 and going no longer than July 31, 2025. You should include a year-by-year breakout of the work plan. The work plan should provide goals, objectives, activities, responsible staff, timelines (when possible), and metrics (process and outcome measures).

- *RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (5) Resources/Capabilities*
  Discuss challenges that you are likely to encounter in designing and implementing the activities described in the work plan, and approaches that you will use to resolve such challenges. Identify existing infrastructure that is in place that will assist the recipient organization in overcoming any potential barriers.

- *EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (3) Evaluative Measures*
  You must describe the plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation should monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.

  You must describe the systems and processes that will support your organization's performance management requirements through effective tracking of performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g., assigned skilled staff, data management software) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative data should be used to capture program performance and impact. The final list of measures will be determined collaboratively with HRSA. Examples of potential measures under each program goal include (but are not limited to):

  - Providing leadership development at national, regional, state, and local levels to increase the impact of SORH:
    - Number of SORH participating in leadership development activities; and
    - Impact of SORH participating in activities.

  - Facilitating partnerships and collaboration at the national, regional, state and local levels to improve the exchange of information and best practices that support rural health:
    - Number/types of convenings/forums of SORH and rural stakeholders to share promising practices and outcomes;
    - Number of new collaborations/partnerships as a result of convenings;
    - Number of promising SORH best practices identified; and
    - Number of promising practices implemented as a result of dissemination.

  - Assisting in the coordination of rural health care through education on policy and emerging health issues:
    - Number of educational materials accessed;
    - Number of SORH and rural stakeholders indicating satisfaction with educational materials;
    - Number of SORH and rural stakeholders indicating an increase of knowledge because of the educational materials;
    - Number of SORH and rural stakeholders indicating an action taken as a result of the educational material; and
    - Impact of educational materials to increase capacity of SORH and rural stakeholders.

- Providing capacity development for SORH core functions to improve SORH efficiency:
  - Number of SORH and rural stakeholders evaluated for educational needs;
  - Number of SORH identifying this need; and
  - Impact of activity to increase the capacity of SORH.

- *ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion (5) Resources and Capabilities*

  Succinctly describe your organization's current mission and structure, scope of current activities, and existing partnerships. Describe how these elements all contribute to the organization's ability to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations. Include an organizational chart (**Attachment 5**). Discuss how the organization will follow the approved plan, properly account for the federal funds, and document all costs to avoid audit findings.

  Describe your existing relationships and experience working with key partners and stakeholders listed below. Provide specific examples to support organizational relationships with these entities:
  - State Rural Health Associations (SRHAs);
  - Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) and small rural hospitals;
  - Rural Health Clinics (RHCs);
  - Community Health Centers (CHCs);
  - Primary Care Offices (PCOs);
  - Area Health Education Centers (AHECs);
  - Rural focused philanthropies;
  - Federal rural health partners (i.e., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Veterans Affairs, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.); and
  - Rural communities.

  This may include letters of support/agreement from proposed partners (**Attachment 4**).

  Describe organizational expertise and history regarding the activities listed below. Describe the qualifications and experience of the project personnel to carry out carry out all aspects of the project on a national level. Provide specific examples, data, and outcomes to support organizational experience and success, including:
  - Providing leadership development at national, regional, state, and local levels to increase the impact of SORH nationwide;
  - Facilitating partnerships and collaboration at the national, regional, state and local levels to improve the exchange of information and best practices that support rural health;
  - Assisting in the coordination of rural health care through education on policy and emerging health issues; and
  - Providing capacity development for SORH core functions to improve SORH efficiency for SORH nationwide.

NARRATIVE GUIDANCE

To ensure that you fully address the review criteria, this table provides a crosswalk between the narrative language and where each section falls within the review criteria. Any attachments referenced in a narrative section may be considered during the objective review.

Narrative Section	***Review Criteria**
Introduction	(1) Need
Needs Assessment	(1) Need
Methodology	(2) Response and (4) Impact
Work Plan	(2) Response
Resolution of Challenges	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity	(3) Evaluative Measures
Organizational Information	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Budget and Budget Narrative	(6) Support Requested – the budget section should include sufficient justification to allow reviewers to determine the reasonableness of the support requested.

iii. Budget

See Section 4.1.iv of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*. Please note: the directions offered in the SF-424 Application Guide may differ from those offered by Grants.gov. Follow the instructions included in the Application Guide and the additional budget instructions provided below. A budget that follows the Application Guide will ensure that, if HRSA selects the application for funding, you will have a well-organized plan and by carefully following the approved plan can avoid audit issues during the implementation phase.

Reminder: The Total Project or Program Costs are the total allowable costs (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs) incurred by the recipient to carry out a HRSA-supported project or activity. Total project or program costs include costs charged to the award and costs borne by the recipient to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement, as applicable.

The Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245), Division B, § 202 states, "None of the funds appropriated in this title shall be used to pay the salary of an individual, through a grant or other extramural mechanism, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II." See Section 4.1.iv Budget – Salary Limitation of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information. Note that these or other salary limitations may apply in the following FY, as required by law.

iv. Budget Narrative

See Section 4.1.v. of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.

v. Attachments

Provide the following items in the order specified below to complete the content of the application. **Unless otherwise noted, attachments count toward the application page limit.** Indirect cost rate agreements and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) will not count toward the page limit. You must clearly label **each attachment**.

Attachment 1: Work Plan

Attach the work plan for the project that includes all information detailed in Section IV.2.ii. Project Narrative. The work plan should be in table format. If you will make sub-awards or expend funds on contracts, describe how your organization will ensure proper documentation of funds.

Attachment 2: Staffing Plan and Job Descriptions for Key Personnel (see Section 4.1. of HRSA's SF-424 Application Guide)

Keep each job description to one page in length as much as is possible. Include the role, responsibilities, and qualifications of proposed project staff. Also, please include a description of your organization's timekeeping process to ensure that you will comply with the federal standards related to documenting personnel costs.

Attachment 3: Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel

Include biographical sketches for persons occupying the key positions described in Attachment 2, not to exceed two pages in length per person. In the event that a biographical sketch is included for an identified individual not yet hired, include a letter of commitment from that person with the biographical sketch.

Attachment 4: Letters of Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, and/or Description(s) of Proposed/Existing Contracts (project-specific)

Provide any documents that describe working relationships between your organization and other entities and programs cited in the proposal. Documents that confirm actual or pending contractual or other agreements should clearly describe the roles of the contractors and any deliverable. Make sure any letters of agreement are signed and dated.

Attachment 5: Project Organizational Chart

Provide a one-page figure that depicts the organizational structure of the project.

Attachment 6: Tables, Charts, etc.

To give further details about the proposal (e.g., Gantt or PERT charts, flow charts).

Attachment 7: For Multi-Year Budgets--5th Year Budget

After using columns (1) through (4) of the SF-424A Section B for a 5-year period of performance, you will need to submit the budget for the 5th year as an attachment. Use the SF-424A Section B, which does **not** count in the page limit: however, any related budget narrative does count. See Section 4.1.iv of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.

Attachments 8 – 15: Other Relevant Documents
> Include here any other documents that are relevant to the application, including letters of support. Letters of support must be dated and specifically indicate a commitment to the project/program (in-kind services, dollars, staff, space, equipment, etc.).

3. Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management

You must obtain a valid DUNS number, also known as the Unique Entity Identifier, for your organization/agency and provide that number in the application. You must also register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and continue to maintain active SAM registration with current information at all times during which you have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by an agency (unless the applicant is an individual or federal agency that is exempted from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d))**.**

HRSA may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time HRSA is ready to make an award, HRSA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as the basis for making an award to another applicant.

If you have already completed Grants.gov registration for HRSA or another federal agency, confirm that the registration is still active and that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) has been approved.

The Grants.gov registration process requires information in three separate systems:
- Dun and Bradstreet (http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html)
- System for Award Management (SAM) (https://www.sam.gov)
- Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/)

For further details, see Section 3.1 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.

SAM.GOV **ALERT:** For your SAM.gov registration, you must submit a notarized letter appointing the authorized Entity Administrator. The review process changed for the Federal Assistance community on June 11, 2018.

If you fail to allow ample time to complete registration with SAM or Grants.gov, you will not be eligible for a deadline extension or waiver of the electronic submission requirement.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Application Due Date
The due date for applications under this NOFO is *December 20, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. ET*. HRSA suggests submitting applications to Grants.gov at least **3 calendar days before the deadline** to allow for any unforeseen circumstances. See Section 8.2.5 – Summary of emails from Grants.gov of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information.

5. Intergovernmental Review

The State Offices of Rural Health Coordinator and Development Program is a program subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, as implemented by 45 CFR part 100.

See Section 4.1 ii of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information.

6. Funding Restrictions

You may request funding for a period of performance of up to 5 years, at no more than $750,000 per year (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs). The FY 2020 President's Budget does not request funding for this program. This program notice is subject to the appropriation of funds, and is a contingency action taken to ensure that, should funds become available for this purpose, HRSA can process applications and award funds in a timely manner. Awards to support projects beyond the first budget year will be contingent upon Congressional appropriation, satisfactory progress in meeting the project's objectives, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal Government.

The General Provisions in Division B of the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245) are in effect at the time this NOFO is posted. Please see Section 4.1 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information. Awards will be made subsequent to enactment of the FY 2020 appropriation. The NOA will reference the FY 2020 appropriation act and any restrictions that may apply. Note that these or other restrictions may be updated, as required by law, upon enactment of a FY 2020 appropriations act.

You cannot use funds under this notice for the following purposes:
   1) Purchasing or improving real estate
   2) Foreign travel

You are required to have the necessary policies, procedures, and financial controls in place to ensure that your organization complies with all legal requirements and restrictions applicable to the receipt of federal funding including statutory restrictions on use of funds for lobbying, executive salaries, gun control, abortion, etc. Like those for all other applicable grants requirements, the effectiveness of these policies, procedures, and controls is subject to audit.

All program income generated as a result of awarded funds must be used for approved project-related activities. The program income alternative applied to the award(s) under the program will be the addition/additive alternative. You can find post-award requirements for program income at 45 CFR § 75.307.

V. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

HRSA has procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review and to assist you in understanding the standards against which your application will be reviewed. HRSA has critical indicators for each review criterion to assist you in presenting pertinent information related to that criterion and to provide the reviewer with a standard for evaluation.

These criteria are the basis upon which the reviewers will evaluate and score the merit of the application. The entire proposal will be considered during objective review.

Review criteria are used to review and rank applications. The State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program has six review criteria. See the review criteria outlined below with specific detail and scoring points.

Criterion 1: NEED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Introduction and Needs Assessment

The reviewers will consider:
- The extent to which the application demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issues and barriers facing all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders at the national, regional, state and local levels.
- The extent to which the application describes a clear understanding of the purpose of this program as well as an understanding of distinct unmet needs associated with SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide.
- The extent to which the application proposes activities that responds to the program goals identified in the "Purpose".

Criterion 2: RESPONSE (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Methodology and Work Plan

Methodology (15 points)
The reviewers will consider the extent to which the application:
- Provides clear proposed goals and objectives that have a distinct relationship to the identified program goals including:
  - Providing leadership development at national, regional, state, and local levels to increase the impact of SORH;
  - Facilitating partnerships and collaboration at the national, regional, state and local levels to improve the exchange of information and best practices that support rural health;

- Assisting in the coordination of rural health care through education on policy and emerging health issues; and
- Providing capacity development for SORH core functions to improve SORH efficiency.
- Describes activities that are capable of addressing the problem and attaining the project objectives.
- Discusses the engagement of SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide in the planning, operation, and evaluation of activities.
- Incorporates the cooperative agreement recipient responsibilities into the proposed activities.
- Discusses a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or project outputs so key target audiences receive the project information.
- Provides a description of any innovative methods that will be use to address the stated needs.
- Discusses how the education materials created through this cooperative agreement will help SORH and rural communities build sustainability in coordination and improvement of rural health services.

Work Plan (15 points)
The reviewers will consider the extent to which the application:
- Provides a detailed work plan that is logical and has objectives and goals that fulfill the purpose of this cooperative agreement and address identified needs;
- Clearly identifies responsible staff for each activity;
- Clearly identifies activities requiring collaboration with relevant partners;
- Provides a complete work plan matrix (**in table format**) that represents the period of performance that includes goal(s), objective(s), and activities as they correlate with budget, personnel responsible, and timelines; and
- Outlines a five (5) year period of performance explaining activities to begin August 1, 2020 and going no longer than July 31, 2025.

Criterion 3: EVALUATIVE MEASURES (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity

The reviewers will consider the extent to which the application:
- Provides an effective method to monitor and evaluate the project's products, impact and outcomes;
- Clearly describes an evaluation plan that will contribute to continuous quality improvement;
- Clearly describes how the evaluative measures will be able to assess to what extent the program goals and objectives have been met; and
- Clearly describes how quantitative and qualitative data will be used to capture program performance and impact, and includes information specific to the recommended measures or discusses other relevant alternatives.

Criterion 4: IMPACT (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Methodology

The reviewers will consider:
- The extent to which the proposed methods and activities address the needs of all 50 SORH and will positively impact all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide; and
- The extent to which the project addresses how the applicant will work collaboratively with all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide to carry out project activities.

Criterion 5: RESOURCES/CAPABILITIES (35 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Resolution of Challenges and Organizational Information

Organizational Capacity (15 points):
The reviewers will consider:
- The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the mission and structure of the organization, the scope of current activities and an organizational chart;
- The extent to which the application clearly describes the capability of the organization to follow the proposed work plan, and properly account for the federal funds;
- The extent to which project personnel are qualified and have extensive experience to carry out all aspects of the project;
- The extent to which the application clearly describes the organization's capability to collaborate and existing relationships with appropriate partners (listed under *Organizational Information* on page 9 or **Attachment 4**) to carry out all the program requirements; and
- The extent to which the application clearly provides evidence of knowledge of SORH, rural health, and other relevant programs in order to link stakeholders to appropriate resources and programs.

Organizational Expertise (15 points):
The reviewers will consider:
- The extent to which the application provides specific examples of related experience that highlights the applicant organization's proven ability work with all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide; and
- The extent to which the applicant provides specific evidence of organizational experience and success assisting with capacity building of all 50 SORH and rural stakeholders nationwide.

Resolution of Challenges (5 points)
The reviewers will consider:
- The extent to which the application clearly identifies and describes potential challenges and barriers that may be encountered; and
- The extent to which the application clearly identifies approaches to resolving challenges in implementing program activities and attaining the project objectives.

Criterion 6: SUPPORT REQUESTED (5 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Budget and Budget Narrative

The reviewers will consider:
- The reasonableness of the proposed budget for each year of the period of performance in relation to the objectives, the complexity of the research activities, and the anticipated results;
- The extent to which costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable given the scope of work; and
- The extent to which key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project objectives.

2. Review and Selection Process

The objective review process provides an objective evaluation to the individuals responsible for making award decisions. The highest ranked applications receive consideration for award within available funding ranges. HRSA may also consider assessment of risk and the other pre-award activities described in Section 3 below. See Section 5.3 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for more details.

3. Assessment of Risk

HRSA may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial instability that directly relates to the organization's ability to implement statutory, regulatory or other requirements (45 CFR § 75.205).

HRSA reviews applications receiving a favorable objective review for other considerations that include past performance, as applicable, cost analysis of the project/program budget, assessment of your management systems, ensuring continued applicant eligibility, and compliance with any public policy requirements, including those requiring just-in-time submissions. HRSA may ask you to submit additional programmatic or administrative information (such as an updated budget or "other support" information) or to undertake certain activities (such as negotiation of an indirect cost rate) in anticipation of an award. However, even at this point in the process, such requests do not guarantee that HRSA will make an award. Following review of all applicable information, HRSA's approving and business management officials will determine whether HRSA can make an award, if special conditions are required, and what level of funding is appropriate.

Award decisions are discretionary and are not subject to appeal to any HRSA or HHS official or board.

Effective January 1, 2016, HRSA is required to review and consider any information about your organization that is in the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)](). You may review and comment on any information about your organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered. HRSA will consider any of your comments, in addition to other information in [FAPIIS]() in making a judgment about your organization's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed as described in 45 CFR § 75.205 HHS Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.

HRSA will report to FAPIIS a determination that an applicant is not qualified ([45 CFR § 75.212]()).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

HRSA will issue the Notice of Award (NOA) prior to the start date of August 1, 2020. See Section 5.4 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See Section 2.1 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.

Requirements of Subawards
The terms and conditions in the NOA apply directly to the recipient of HRSA funds. The recipient is accountable for the performance of the project, program, or activity; the appropriate expenditure of funds under the award by all parties; and all other obligations of the recipient, as cited in the NOA. In general, the requirements that apply to the recipient, including public policy requirements, also apply to subrecipients under awards. See [45 CFR § 75.101 Applicability]() for more details.

Data Rights
All publications developed or purchased with funds awarded under this notice must be consistent with the requirements of the program. Pursuant to 45 CFR § 75.322(b), the recipient owns the copyright for materials that it develops under an award issued pursuant to this notice, and HHS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use those materials for federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. In addition, pursuant to 45 CFR § 75.322(d), the Federal Government has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use data produced under this award and has the right to authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for federal purposes, e.g., to make it available in government-sponsored databases for use by others. If applicable, the specific scope of HRSA rights with respect to a particular federally supported effort will be addressed in the NOA. Data and copyright-protected works developed by a subrecipient also are subject to the Federal Government's data rights.

3. Reporting

Award recipients must comply with Section 6 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide* **and** the following reporting and review activities:

1) **Progress Report**(s). The recipient must submit a non-competing continuation (NCC) progress report to HRSA on an **annual** basis. Further information will be available in the NOA.

2) **Integrity and Performance Reporting.** The NOA will contain a provision for integrity and performance reporting in FAPIIS, as required in 45 CFR part 75 Appendix XII.

VII. Agency Contacts

You may request additional information and/or technical assistance regarding business, administrative, or fiscal issues related to this NOFO by contacting:

Kimberly Dews
Grants Management Specialist
Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Mailstop 10SWH03
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 443-0655
Email: KDews@hrsa.gov

You may request additional information regarding the overall program issues and/or technical assistance related to this NOFO by contacting:

Victoria Leach
Public Health Analyst
Attn: State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 17N166B
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 945-3988
Email: VLeach@hrsa.gov

You may need assistance when working online to submit your application forms electronically. Always obtain a case number when calling for support. For assistance with submitting the application in Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding federal holidays at:

> Grants.gov Contact Center
> Telephone: 1-800-518-4726 (International Callers, please dial 606-545-5035)
> Email: support@grants.gov
> Self-Service Knowledge Base: https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants

Successful applicants/recipients may need assistance when working online to submit information and reports electronically through HRSA's Electronic Handbooks (EHBs). For assistance with submitting information in HRSA's EHBs, contact the HRSA Contact Center, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET, excluding federal holidays at:

> HRSA Contact Center
> Telephone: (877) 464-4772
> TTY: (877) 897-9910
> Web: http://www.hrsa.gov/about/contact/ehbhelp.aspx

VIII. Other Information

Technical Assistance

HRSA has scheduled following technical assistance:

Webinar

Day and Date: Monday, October 28, 2019
Time: 2– 3 p.m. ET
Call-In Number: 877-918-6634
Participant Code: 7240138
Weblink: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/hrsa_ta_webinar/
Playback Number: 1- 800-513-1167

Tips for Writing a Strong Application

See Section 4.7 of HRSA's *SF-424 Application Guide*.