U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

HRSA

Health Resources & Services Administration

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Policy Research Division

Rural Health Research Dissemination Program

Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-21-025
Funding Opportunity Types: New, Competing Continuation
Assistance Listings (CFDA) Number: 93.155

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year 2021

Application Due Date: November 17, 2020

*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 15, 2020

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is accepting applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Rural Health Research Dissemination Program. The purpose of this program is to disseminate and promote Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) funded rural health services research to diverse audiences, such as decision makers and rural stakeholders at national, state, and community levels, with the goal of informing and raising awareness of key policy issues important to rural communities.

Funding Opportunity Title:	Rural Health Research Dissemination Program
Funding Opportunity Number:	HRSA-21-025
Due Date for Applications:	November 17, 2020
Anticipated Total Annual Available FY 2021 Funding:	$145,000
Estimated Number and Type of Award:	Up to one cooperative agreement
Estimated Award Amount:	Up to $145,000 per year subject to the availability of appropriated funds
Cost Sharing/Match Required:	No
Period of Performance:	July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026 (five years)
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible applicants include public and non-profit entities. Faith-based and community- based organizations, tribes, and tribal organizations are eligible to apply. 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 R&R Application Guide,* available online at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf424rrguidev2.pdf, except where instructed in this NOFO to do otherwise.

<u>Technical Assistance</u>

HRSA has scheduled the following technical assistance:

Webinar

Day and Date: Thursday, October 1, 2020
Time: 12 – 1 p.m.
Call-In Number: 1- 800-369-2096
Participant Code: 9160956
Weblink: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/trcp/
Playback Number: 1-866-372-3815

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I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

1. Purpose

This notice announces the opportunity to apply for funding under the Rural Health Research Dissemination Program. The purpose of this program is to disseminate and promote rural health services research funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) to diverse audiences, such as decision makers and rural stakeholders at national, state, and community levels, with the goal of informing and raising awareness of key policy issues important to rural communities. FORHP funds health services research through the Rural Health Research Center (RHRC) Program and other cooperative agreements. The successful applicant for this program will develop and maintain a website that catalogues the entire body of research funded by FORHP and allows that research to be easily and freely accessible to the public. The successful applicant will also develop and maintain strategies to effectively disseminate this research through a variety of innovative mechanisms including (but not limited to) a listserv, social media accounts, presentations, and exhibits at national conferences and webinars.

2. Background

This program is authorized by 42 U.S.C. 912(b)(5). The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA's) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy 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 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; the ability of rural areas to attract and retain physicians and other health professions; and the accessibility and quality of health care in rural areas. FORHP accomplishes this mission through a broad range of policy and program activities, including the RHRC Program. For additional information about FORHP, please see http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/index.html.

The RHRC program supports approximately eight research centers that produce policy relevant health services research on issues of nation-wide importance to rural areas. The research is intended to assist providers and decision-makers at the federal, state and local levels to better understand the landscape or problems faced by rural communities and provide information that will improve access to health care and population health. Each RHRC conducts four research projects per year and the program in aggregate produces a minimum of 32 research products (policy briefs, chartbooks and/or journal articles) per year. The RHRC program has released an average of 64 products annually over the last four years. RHRCs are responsible for locating and releasing their own research products on their respective websites. The role of the Rural Health Research Dissemination recipient is to develop and maintain a website that links to the individual RHRC websites and to disseminate and increase awareness of the RHRC's HRSA-funded publications and products to diverse public audiences concerned with a variety of key rural health issues. A successful recipient will have experience disseminating research to diverse audiences concerned with rural health issues and policies. The Rural Health Research Dissemination Program

provides a public benefit by ensuring that the research completed under the RHRC Program is targeted to rural stakeholders and disseminated in a manner that meets their unique needs.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Application and Award

Types of applications sought: Competing Continuation, New

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

HRSA program involvement will include:
- Providing input on dissemination strategies and selection of publications/products for distribution including target audiences for dissemination;
- Assuring the timely cooperation of the RHRCs in responding to information requests by the recipient;
- Providing input into the decisions on content, presentation approach, and selection of products/publications;
- Reviewing and providing comments on draft products and publications, such as research alerts, prior to dissemination to diverse audiences;
- Providing input and knowledge on the current and future policy issues that will be informed by past and future RHRC studies;
- Providing input on metrics that will be used to evaluate the recipient; and
- Assisting the recipient in selecting appropriate professional meetings, including the total number of meetings, at which to exhibit each year.

The cooperative agreement recipient's responsibilities will include:
- Adherence to HRSA guidelines pertaining to acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced by HRSA award funds;
- Coordinating with RHRC award recipients and other research focused programs managed by FORHP to summarize the key research questions for ongoing research and summarize findings for completed publications/products;
- Updating the Rural Health Research website and listserv based on information from the RHRC recipients about new, on-going, and recently completed research;
- Assessing the market, in terms of target audiences and reach, to understand how to best target audiences who will benefit from products published by the RHRCs;
- Executing and monitoring dissemination strategies to increase RHRC publication and Rural Health Research (Rural Health Research Dissemination recipient) website awareness;
- Providing input to RHRCs prior to product publication regarding how to effectively communicate the research findings to diverse target audiences;
- Identifying appropriate professional meetings at which to exhibit each year;

- Developing brief (1-2 pages) research summaries using findings from RHRC research products on key topic areas (e.g., quality, workforce, post-acute care) for a general public audience; and
- Establishing evaluation metrics and tracking related data to assist in measuring the success of this cooperative agreement and the RHRC cooperative agreements.

2. Summary of Funding

HRSA estimates approximately $145,000 to be available annually to fund one recipient. The actual amount available will not be determined until enactment of the final FY 2021 federal appropriation. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to $145,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year. 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 appropriately. The period of performance is July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026 (five years). Funding beyond the first year is subject to the availability of appropriated funds for the Rural Health Research Dissemination Program 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 or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations. Eligible organizations may include state, local, and tribal governments; institutions of higher education; other non-profit organizations (including faith-based, community-based, and tribal organizations); and hospitals.

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.

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 Research and Related (R&R) 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 select "Subscribe" and provide your email address for each NOFO you are reviewing or preparing in the workspace application package in order to receive notifications including modifications, clarifications, and/or republications of the NOFO on Grants.gov. You will also receive notifications of documents placed in the RELATED DOCUMENTS tab on Grants.gov that may affect the NOFO and your application. *You are ultimately responsible for reviewing the For Applicants page for all information relevant to this NOFO.*

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Section 4 of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* provides instructions for the budget, budget justification, staffing plan and personnel requirements, assurances, certifications, and abstract. You must submit the information outlined in the *R&R 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 R&R 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 *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for the Application Completeness Checklist.

Application Page Limit

The total size of all uploaded files included in the page limit may not exceed the equivalent of **60 pages** when printed by HRSA. The page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments including biographical sketches (biosketches), and letters of commitment and support required in HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* and this NOFO. Standard OMB-approved forms that are included in the workspace application package do not count in the page limit. Biographical sketches **do** count in the page limitation. Please note: If you use an OMB-approved form that is not included in the workspace application package for HRSA-21-025, it may count against the page limit. Therefore, we strongly recommend you only use Grants.gov workspace forms associated with this NOFO to avoid exceeding the page

limit. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) do not count in the page limit. **It is therefore important 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.

Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion Certification
1) You certify on behalf of the applicant organization, 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 7-15: Other Relevant Documents*.

See Section 4.1 viii of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R 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 R&R Application Guide* (including the budget, budget justification, 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 R&R Application Guide*.

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. You should provide a brief overview of how your proposed project aligns with the purpose of this cooperative agreement, which is to disseminate FORHP-funded rural health services research to diverse audiences, such as decision makers and rural stakeholders at national, state, and community levels, with the goal of informing and raising awareness of key policy issues important to rural communities.

- *NEEDS ASSESSMENT -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #1 Need*

  Describe and clearly demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of why rural stakeholders and decision makers need access to rural focused, health services research. You should also describe the unique dynamics affecting rural populations compared to urban populations from a health care service, payment and provider point of view, and why rural residents are considered an underserved population. You should demonstrate an understanding of the relevance of this cooperative agreement to the mission of the RHRC program and the goals of FORHP.

- *METHODOLOGY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #4 Impact*

  This section should discuss how the information provided under WORK PLAN will lead to the cooperative agreement's goal of increased awareness of the Rural Health Research website and the research conducted by the RHRCs. Clearly indicate how the work plan will create awareness and reach rural health stakeholders on a national level. Include a description of any innovative methods that you will use to address the stated needs. Lastly, discuss how the work plan will fill information gaps that can inform rural health policy.

- *WORK PLAN -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #2 Response*

  This section should propose the work plan that will be used to meet the program needs and expectations/requirements in this funding opportunity notice. The work plan should cover the first year of funding in detail but less detail may be used for years two through five. You should demonstrate an understanding of the need to use a variety of strategies, media and tools to increase awareness of RHRC publications. At minimum, this section should discuss:

  - Developing, maintaining and updating a Rural Health Research website which will serve as an electronic portal and "one stop shop" for new and archived publications and research efforts funded by FORHP[1];
  - Functionality of the existing or proposed Rural Health Research website, including search capabilities by (at minimum) keyword, topic, researcher, date of funding, and RHRC;
  - Receiving feedback from customers including the RHRCs and external users of the website;
  - Developing, maintaining, updating and expanding an automated electronic mailing list (listserv) to ensure that rural stakeholders are

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[1] The website developed by the award recipient will be the property of the recipient; however, because this project is funded through a cooperative agreement rather than a grant, substantial involvement is anticipated between HRSA and the recipient during performance of the contemplated project. The FORHP-funded research products disseminated by the award recipient will remain the property of the authors of the research products and/or their respective organizations. At the end of the period of performance (June 2026), the recipient will work with FORHP to transfer relevant content to the next award recipient.

notified when new FORHP funded research from the RHRCs is released to the public;
- Developing and maintaining a presence on relevant social media platforms;
- Coordinating with the RHRCs to develop research alerts that will be disseminated through the listserv and social media platforms;
- Identifying appropriate national meetings at which to exhibit at each year;
- Providing technical assistance to RHRCs to create press releases, infographics, and other forms of advanced publicity and dissemination when major studies from the RHRCs are released to the public;
- Coordinating with existing rural-focused information clearing houses, such as RHIhub (https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/) to expand dissemination reach;
- Developing brief (1-2 page) summaries of research findings from RHRC products on key topic areas (e.g., workforce, quality, post-acute care);
- Hosting and promoting webinars that feature FORHP funded research; and
- Identifying target audiences (such as policymakers, state and national associations, and State Offices of Rural Health) relevant to specific FORHP funded research projects.

The work plan should also describe in detail the steps that will be followed for the following activities:
- Developing and disseminating research alerts, including a process for obtaining FORHP approval to disseminate the research product
- Obtaining regular updates from the RHRCs on the status of funded research products
- Collaborating with FORHP and the RHRCs to determine appropriate webinar topics
- Collaborating with FORHP and the RHRCs to determine the topic area and content of brief (1 to 2 page) research summaries intended for a general public audience

Provide a schedule of proposed major milestones for each year of the project and identify responsible staff. At minimum, major milestones should include:
- Adding new RHRC research projects when they are funded by FORHP each September
- Hosting webinars
- Regular communication with FORHP and the RHRCs
- Exhibiting at national conferences
- Regular updates and maintenance to the Rural Health Research website

- *RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #3 Evaluative Measures*

  This section should discuss challenges that are likely to be encountered in designing and implementing the activities described in this application and approaches that will be used to resolve such challenges. This discussion should include any potential copyright and/or coordination of research release issues that may be encountered.

- *EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #3 Evaluative Measures*

  This section should describe the approach for establishing evaluation metrics and tracking related data to assist in measuring the success of this cooperative agreement and the RHRC cooperative agreement. At a minimum, these metrics should cover:

  - Website "hits" (both to the website in general and to specific research studies and subsections within the website)
  - Frequently searched or accessed topics areas
  - Social media reach
  - Outcomes of exhibiting at national conferences (for example: number of conference attendees that sign up for the listserv while visiting the exhibition booth for the Rural Health Research website)

  This section should include a discussion about how goals, baselines, and/or benchmarks will be determined.

  You should describe how the collected data and information will be conveyed to FORHP and the RHRCs as well as how the information will be used to inform your future year budget activities and updates to the rural health research website (e.g., improved functionality, usability and aesthetics of the site).

- *ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #5 Resources/Capabilities*

  Succinctly describe your organization's current mission, structure, and scope of current activities, and how these elements all contribute to the organization's ability to implement the program requirements and meet program expectations. Describe how your organizational capabilities will successfully execute the activities of this cooperative agreement; include previous experience conducting similar work for rural-centric audiences. The description should include:

  - Organizational structure, staff roles and responsibilities, and chain of command to attain project objectives
    - Include an organizational chart in Attachment 4 (required)

- Availability of facilities and organizational supports to fulfill the requirements of the proposed project
- Evidence of an established relationship with a variety of FORHP funded RHRCs and national rural health services researchers
- Previous experience of the organization and its staff in developing equivalent websites and conducting the activities outlined in the methodology and work plan
- Previous experience, skills and knowledge relevant to evaluating a rural-centric research dissemination website

This section should also include a specific discussion about the qualifications and experience of the principal investigator. The principal investigator should have:
- A master's or professional degree (Ph.D. preferred)
- Experience conducting rural health services research
- Experience with managing a website that specifically serves as a warehouse for research products
- Skills necessary to manage, improve, and implement change as it relates to the Rural Health Research website and other forms of media already specified in this notice

iii. *Budget*

The directions offered in the *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* may differ from those offered by Grants.gov. Follow the instructions in Section 4.1.iv of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* and the additional budget instructions provided below. A budget that follows the *R&R 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, may 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) you incur to carry out a -HRSA-supported project or activity. Total project or program costs include costs charged to the award and costs borne by you to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement, as applicable.

The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-194), Division A, § 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 fiscal years, as required by law.

iv. *Budget Narrative*

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

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	(4) Impact
Work Plan	(2) Response
Resolution of Challenges	(3) Evaluative Measures
Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity	(3) Evaluative Measures
Organizational Information	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Budget and Budget Narrative	(6) Support Requested

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. **Clearly label each attachment**.

Attachment 1: Staffing Plan and Job Descriptions for Key Personnel (see Section 4.1. of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide) (required)*
 Keep each job description to one page in length as much as is possible. Include the role, responsibilities, and qualifications of proposed project staff.

Attachment 2: Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel (required)
 Include biographical sketches for persons occupying the key positions described in *Attachment 1*, 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 3: Letters of Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, and/or Description(s) of Proposed/Existing Contracts (required if applicant proposes to execute a contract with another entity under this award)
 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 4: Project Organizational Chart (required)
Provide a one-page figure that depicts the organizational structure of the project.

Attachment 5: Publications, Invited/Accepted Presentations, Posters (required)
Provide a list of publications, invited/accepted presentations and posters authored or co-authored by the principal investigator that are relevant to this funding opportunity notice and demonstrate experience disseminating, marketing and conducting rural focused health services research.

Attachment 6: Progress Report
(FOR COMPETING CONTINUATIONS ONLY)

A well-documented progress report is a required and important source of material for HRSA in preparing annual reports, planning programs, and communicating program-specific accomplishments. The accomplishments of competing continuation applicants are carefully considered; therefore, you should include previously stated goals and objectives in your application and emphasize the progress made in attaining these goals and objectives. HRSA program staff reviews the progress report after the Objective Review Committee evaluates the competing continuation applications.

The progress report should be a brief presentation of the accomplishments, in relation to the objectives of the program during the current period of performance. The report should include:

(1) <u>The period covered (dates).</u>

(2) <u>Specific objectives</u> - Briefly summarize the specific objectives of the project.

(3) <u>Results</u> - Describe the program activities conducted for each objective. Include both positive and negative results or technical problems that may be important.

Attachments 7–15: Other Relevant Documents (optional)
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 Transition to the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)**

You must obtain a valid DUNS number, also known as the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and provide that number in the application. Beginning in December 2020, the *DUNS number will be replaced by the UEI, a "new, non-proprietary identifier" requested in, and assigned by, the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). For more details, visit the following: <u>Planned UEI Updates in Grant Application Forms</u> and <u>General Service Administration's UEI Update</u> page.

You must also register with 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)).

If you are chosen as a recipient, HRSA would not make an award until you have complied with all applicable DUNS (or UEI) and SAM requirements and, if you have not fully complied with the requirements by the time HRSA is ready to make an award, you may be deemed 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.

*Currently, 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 R&R 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.

In accordance with the Federal Government's efforts to reduce reporting burden for recipients of federal financial assistance, the general certification and representation requirements contained in the Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, and the Standard Form 424D (SF-424D) – Assurances – Construction Programs, have been standardized federal-wide. Effective January 1, 2020, the forms themselves are no longer part of HRSA's application packages and the updated common certification and representation requirements will be stored and maintained within SAM. Organizations or individuals applying for federal financial assistance as of January 1, 2020, must validate the federally required common certifications and representations annually through SAM located at SAM.gov.

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 *November 17, 2020 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 Rural Health Research Dissemination Program is not 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 R&R Application Guide* for additional information.

6. Funding Restrictions

You may request funding for a period of performance of up to five years, at no more than $145,000 per year (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs). 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 appropriately. 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 A of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94) apply to this program. Please see Section 4.1 of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for additional information. Note that these or other restrictions will apply in the following fiscal years, as required by law.

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, except for the progress report submitted with a competing continuation application, which will be reviewed by HRSA program staff after the objective review process.

Review criteria are used to review and rank applications. The Rural Health Research Dissemination Program has six review criteria. See the review criteria outlined below with specific detail and scoring points.

Criterion 1: NEED (15 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Introduction and Needs Assessment

The extent to which:
- The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the relevance of this program to the mission of the FORHP and the goals of the RHRC cooperative agreement.

- The project proposed by the applicant aligns with the purpose of the cooperative agreement

- The applicant clearly articulates the issues and challenges facing rural communities and health care providers as well as the associated factors that contribute to those challenges

- The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of how rural health services research can be used by stakeholders to inform policy decisions

Criterion 2: RESPONSE (25 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Work Plan

The extent to which:
- The activities proposed in the application to develop and maintain a Rural Health Research website meet or exceed the requirements in the funding opportunity notice, including:
  - Inclusion of new and archived publications and research efforts funded by FORHP
  - Functionality (including search capabilities)

- The application includes an appropriate social media plan that increases the visibility of the RHRC work

- The applicant has experience writing brief (1 to 2 page) research summaries for a general public audience

- The applicant's proposed approach for developing, maintaining and expanding the required listserv is reasonable

- The applicant has proposed effective methods for communicating and coordinating with the RHRCs and the FORHP on tasks including:
  - Crafting the content for the research alerts
  - Providing technical assistance related to publicity and dissemination
  - Drafting research summaries intended for a general public audience
  - Hosting and promoting webinars that feature FORHP funded research

- The schedule of proposed major milestones is logical and demonstrates clear project organization

- The applicant's plan for exhibiting at national meetings (in person or virtually) is well reasoned and will allow the applicant to reach relevant stakeholders

- The overall work plan is well organized, logical, and clearly explains the applicant's approach to conducting the activities proposed in the application

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

The extent to which:
- The applicant identifies potential challenges in implementing the proposed project activities and offers reasonable solutions to mitigate those challenges

- The dissemination strategies proposed take into account any potential copyright and/or prohibition of prior released research issues that may be encountered

The extent to which:
- The application proposes evaluation metrics that are reasonable and will assist in measuring the success of this cooperative agreement and the RHRC cooperative agreement

- The application proposes a reasonable and effective approach for determining goals, baselines and/or benchmarks

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

The extent to which:
- The proposed work plan will lead to the cooperative agreement's goal of increased awareness of the Rural Health Research website and the RHRC publications, particularly to rural health stakeholders

- The applicant's work plan will reach a national audience including relevant targeted audiences

Criterion 5: RESOURCES/CAPABILITIES (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Organizational Information

The extent to which:
- The principal investigator meets the qualifications and experience outlined in the NOFO including:
  - A master's or professional degree (Ph.D. preferred)
  - Experience conducting rural health services research
  - Experience with managing a website that specifically serves as a warehouse for research products
  - Previous experience, skills and knowledge relevant to evaluating a rural-centric research dissemination website

- The applicant demonstrates an established relationship with the FORHP funded RHRCs and other rural health services researchers

- The organizational structure and staffing is appropriate for the activities proposed by the applicant

- The applicant has previous experience in developing an equivalent website(s) and conducting the activities proposed in the application

- The applicant has prior experience, skills, and knowledge relevant to evaluating a research dissemination website

- The applicant has access to the facilities and organizational supports necessary to successful conduct the activities proposed in the application

- Includes a clear and detailed description of specific examples of past experience conducting similar work at a national level (from any funder)

Criterion 6: SUPPORT REQUESTED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Budget and Budget Narrative

The extent to which:
- Costs, as outlined in the budget and budget narrative, are reasonable given the scope of work for the cooperative agreement

- Key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve the objectives of the cooperative agreement

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 R&R 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.

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 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 July 1, 2021. See Section 5.4 of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for additional information.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See Section 2.1 of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R 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, and it is the recipient's responsibility to monitor the compliance of all funded subrecipients. 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 grant-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 copyright license and data rights.

3. Reporting

Award recipients must comply with Section 6 of HRSA's *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* **and** the following reporting and review activities:
  1) **Progress Report**(s). The recipient must submit a progress report to HRSA annually. 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:

James Padgett
Grants Management Specialist
Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Mailstop 10SWH03
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 443-0207
Email: jpadgett@hrsa.gov

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

Jennifer Burges
Research Coordinator
Attn: Rural Health Research Dissemination Program
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, 17N172B
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 945-3985
Email: jburges@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 the 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: Thursday, October 1, 2020
Time: 12 – 1 p.m.
Call-In Number: 1- 800-369-2096
Participant Code: 9160956
Weblink: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/trcp/
Playback Number: 1-866-372-3815

Tips for Writing a Strong Application

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