

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Policy and Research Division

Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis

Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-19-065
Funding Opportunity Type: New
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 93.155

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year 2019

Application Due Date: March 27, 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: December 27, 2018

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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 fiscal year (FY) 2019 for the Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program. The purpose of this Program is to increase public and stakeholder awareness of the economic impacts of rural health care sectors on rural, state, and national economies. Additionally, the Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program seeks to quantify the impact of rural health care and conduct analyses of the link between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities.

Funding Opportunity Title:	Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis
Funding Opportunity Number:	HRSA-19-065
Due Date for Applications:	March 27, 2019
Anticipated Total Annual Available FY 2019 Funding:	\$225,000
Estimated Number and Type of Award:	1 cooperative agreement
Estimated Award Amount:	Up to \$225,000 per year dependent on the availability of appropriated funds
Cost Sharing/Match Required:	No
Period of Performance:	September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022 (3 years)
Eligible Applicants:	<p>Eligible applicants include domestic public or private, non-profit and for-profit entities. Domestic faith-based and community-based organizations, tribes, and tribal organizations are eligible to apply. Eligible entities may include, but are not limited to, public and private institutions for higher education, public or private health research organizations, and foundations.</p> <p>See Section III-1 of this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for complete eligibility information.</p>

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 <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf-424-rr-guide-v2.pdf>, except where instructed in this NOFO to do otherwise.

Technical Assistance

HRSA has scheduled the following technical assistance:

Webinar

Day and Date: Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Time: 1 – 2 p.m. ET

Weblink: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/ta_webinar_rural_health_economic_development/

Call-In Number: 888-282-0376

Participant Code: 9697018

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I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

1. Purpose

This notice solicits applications for the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program. The purpose of this Program is to increase public and stakeholder awareness of the economic impacts of rural health care sectors on rural, state, and national economies as well as the relationship between community economic development¹ and the health outcomes of rural residents. Additionally, the Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program seeks to quantify the impact of rural health care, conduct analyses of the link between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities, and assist rural stakeholders in performing these analyses.

The program will disseminate findings on the economic impact of health services in rural communities for rural stakeholders. Topic areas for this program may include sustainability of services and minimum population requirements as it relates to the economic vitality of the rural community, as well as other topics determined in coordination with HRSA. HRSA will work closely with the award recipient on areas of concern such as the impact of hospital closures on local economies, the benefits of different types of health care providers on care and sustainability of services, use of telehealth, new models for provision of services, and impact of bypass of local rural services and other emerging issues. The award recipient's work will help improve the understanding of spillover effects of rural health care. The award recipient, in coordination with HRSA, will offer training and technical expertise to public or private entities including state and local governments, hospitals, Rural Health Clinics and other provider groups, and faith-based and community-based organizations in the use of tools for analyzing the economic impact and sustainability of health care services.

2. Background

This program is authorized by Section 711(b) of the Social Security Act, (42 U.S.C. 912(b)), as amended. HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) 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 access to and the quality of health care in rural areas.

The impact of rural health services on the economies of rural communities is not widely understood, even within rural communities. Many rural communities are facing hospital closures^{2,3} which lead not only to reductions in health services but also decreasing

¹ For the purposes of this NOFO, economic development refers to activities that create a net gain of money into a community and improvement in standards of living for local residents.

² <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health/rural-hospital-closures/>

³ <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/assets/827-2682/rural-hospital-closures-recap.pdf>

hospital employment opportunities⁴. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the impact of job loss can spread far beyond the hospital with other health care providers choosing to leave the rural community due to the lack of inpatient and outpatient services. Related health care suppliers, such as pharmacies and medical equipment vendors, may also cease operations upon closure of a local hospital.

Conversely, the addition of new health care providers and services can boost local economies and either maintain or increase health care spending within rural communities, providing economic opportunities that would not otherwise be available.

The health of residents within rural communities is not only dependent on the availability of health care but on the economic vitality of the community as well. For instance, hospital closures damage the local economy, causing the loss of the well-paid jobs that are part of the health care infrastructure. As a result, rural residents may experience poorer economic conditions or poverty, which is strongly associated with poor health outcomes. Increased access to local health care benefits the community not only through the direct provision of care but also through improving local economics.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Application and Award

Type of applications sought: New

Funding will be provided 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 shall include:

- Assisting the award recipient in the identification of new and emerging issues in rural health and economic development;
- Collaborating in the planning and development of technical assistance publications and web resources on rural health and economic development;
- Assisting the award recipient in the identification of key contacts in the rural health and economic development policy arena including leading federal, state, and community leaders, researchers, and technical assistance providers;
- Assisting the award recipient in the identification of key national, regional and state meetings on rural health and economic development;
- Assisting the award recipient in the identification of rural communities in need of technical assistance on rural health and economic development.

⁴ The Effect of Rural Hospital Closures on Community Economic Health. George M Holmes, Rebecca T Slifkin, Randy K Randolph, Stephanie Poley. Health Serv Res. 2006 Apr; 41(2): 467-485. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1702512/>

The cooperative agreement recipient's responsibilities shall include:

- Identifying and developing health impact and health care service sustainability tools which identify health care's critical role in rural development and quantify their economic impact on rural communities;
- Conducting analyses and examining the relationship between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities;
- Disseminating research findings on the economic impact of health services in rural communities for HRSA and other rural stakeholders such as health care facility administrators or local, county and state officials;
- Expanding public and stakeholder awareness of the importance of the economic impact of the rural health care sectors on rural, state, and national economies;
- Developing and maintaining a website to disseminate findings and distribute health care service sustainability tools;
- Responding to HRSA and public requests, comments, and questions on a timely basis;
- Systematically seeking out resources such as economic studies or health services research on a range of issues relevant to rural health and economic development;
- Assisting HRSA and other rural health stakeholders, on an annual basis, in quantitatively understanding the economic impact of key rural facilities and workforce;
- Producing reports during each year of the period of performance, which may include the following topics that will be determined in consultation with HRSA: direct and indirect costs to local and state economies associated with hospital closure; economic impact of programs placing providers in rural areas and relationships between economic status and health outcomes;
- Conducting webinars for rural stakeholders each year that highlight the work of the award recipient.

2. Summary of Funding

HRSA expects approximately \$225,000 to be available annually to fund one recipient. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$225,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year. The period of performance is September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022 (3 years). Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds for the Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis 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 and for-profit entities. Domestic faith-based and community-based organizations, tribes, and tribal organizations are eligible to apply. Eligible entities may include, but are not limited to, public and private institutions for higher education, public or private health research organizations, and foundations.

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](http://www.grants.gov) using the SF-424 Research and Related (R&R) workspace application package associated with this NOFO following the directions provided at <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

If you're reading this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) (also known as "Instructions" on Grants.gov) and reviewing or preparing the workspace application package, you will automatically be notified in the event HRSA changes and/or republishes 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 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 may not exceed the equivalent of **70 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 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. Biographical sketches **do** count in the page limitation. 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) The prospective recipient certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is 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 the prospective recipient is unable to attest to the statements in this certification, an explanation shall be included in **Attachment #4: Other Relevant Documents**.

See Section 4.1 viii of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) for additional information on all certifications.

i. Project Abstract

See Section 4.1.ix of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

The Project Abstract must be single-spaced and limited to one page in length.

Please include the following:

- A brief overview of the project as a whole
- Specific, measurable objectives that the project will accomplish
- A description of how the proposed project for which funding is requested will be accomplished, i.e., the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of the project.

Please place the following information at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Organization Name
- Address
- Project Director Name
- Project Director's Phone Number(s)
- E-Mail Address
- Website Address, if applicable

ii. *Project Narrative*

This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of your 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

Briefly describe the purpose of your proposed project.

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

Describe the impact of health services on rural communities and economies with specific emphasis on the challenges resulting from hospital closures and the impact of the provision of new services. Economic data should be used and cited whenever possible to support the information provided. This section should help reviewers understand how rural communities, rural health care providers, rural policy makers, and other rural stakeholders will be served by the proposed project and tools.

METHODOLOGY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion 2

Propose methods to meet the described program requirements and expectations in this notice of funding opportunity. Activities should be national in scope and emphasize the changing rural environment. Proposed activities may include but are not limited to:

- Developing health impact and health care service sustainability tools for public use.
- A plan for conducting analyses and quantifying the relationship between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities.
- A plan to disseminate research findings on the economic impact of health services in rural communities to rural stakeholders.

- A plan for development and maintenance of a 508 compliant website.
- A plan to disseminate the tools developed under this cooperative agreement and provide technical assistance to the public on their use.
- A plan to respond to HRSA and public requests, comments, and questions on a timely basis.
- A plan to produce publishable reports during each year of the cooperative agreement on the current state of knowledge of economic impacts of rural health sectors, including a summary of all relevant data points.

WORK PLAN -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criteria 2 and 4

Describe the activities or steps that you will use to achieve each of the objectives proposed during the period of performance (September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022) in the Methodology section. Include the following information:

- A timeline that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff. Describe the timeframes, deliverables, and key partners required to address each of the needs described in the *Introduction* and *Need* sections above.
- Activities or steps you will use to achieve each of the objectives proposed during the entire period of performance identified in the *Methodology* section and to identify the impact of health services on rural communities and economies and how the proposed project will be effective.
- Explain how the work plan is appropriate for the program design and how the targets fit into the overall timeline of implementation of the cooperative agreement.
- Identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders in planning, designing, and implementing all activities.
- Specific steps to effectively disseminate the tools/reports developed under this cooperative agreement.

RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion 2

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.

EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion 3

- Describe a feasible and effective method to monitor and assess the project results. This includes monitoring ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
- Describe a plan for conducting analyses and quantifying the relationship between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities.
- Describe a plan to disseminate research findings on the economic impact of health services in rural communities to rural stakeholders.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion

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- Describe current and past experience, skills, and knowledge, including individuals on staff, materials published, and previous work of a similar nature. Demonstrate your experience responding to requests for rural and economic data analysis. Also, demonstrate your experience communicating research findings and providing technical assistance to a broad audience.
- Succinctly describe your capacity to effectively manage the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative aspects of the proposed project.
- Provide information on your organization's current mission and structure, including an organizational chart, relevant experience, and scope of current activities. Describe how these elements all contribute to the organization's ability to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations.
- Provide a list of examples of published materials and work applicable to the program.

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.	
<u>Narrative Section</u>	<u>Review Criteria</u>
Introduction	(1) Need
Needs Assessment	(1) Need
Methodology	(2) Response
Work Plan	(2) Response and (4) Impact
Resolution of Challenges	(2) Response
Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity	(3) Evaluative Measures
Organizational Information	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Budget and Budget Narrative (below)	(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 R&R Application Guide](#). Please note: the directions offered in the [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) may differ from those offered by Grants.gov. Follow the instructions included in the [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) and the additional budget instructions provided below. A budget that follows the [SF-424 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 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 R&R 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: Staffing Plan and Job Descriptions for Key Personnel (see Section 4.1.vi. of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#)) (Required)

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

Attachment 2: Letters of Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding, and/or Description(s) of Proposed/Existing Contracts (project-specific) (Optional)

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 3: Project Organizational Chart (Required)

Provide a one-page figure that depicts the organizational structure of *the project* (not the applicant organization).

Attachment 4: 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 it 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 R&R Application Guide](#).

UPDATED [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. Read the [updated FAQs](#) to learn more.

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 *March 27, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time*. HRSA suggests submitting applications to Grants.gov at least **3 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 R&R Application Guide](#) for additional information.

5. Intergovernmental Review

The Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program is a program subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, as implemented by 45 CFR part 100. See Executive Order 12372 in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#).

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 3 years, at no more than \$225,000 per year for the full period of performance (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs). Awards to support projects beyond the first budget year will be contingent upon 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) 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 FY 2019, as required by law.

You cannot use funds under this notice for the following purposes: ongoing support for resident training, including resident stipends.

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 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 of applications 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. See the review criteria outlined below with specific detail and scoring points.

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 Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program has six (6) review criteria:

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

The extent to which:

- The purpose of the proposed project is clearly described.
- The application demonstrates a strong understanding of the impact of health services on rural communities and economies.
- The application shows familiarity with the challenges resulting from rural hospital closures and the impact of provision of new health services.
- Data, preferably economic data, are effectively used and cited to support the project activities.

Criterion 2: RESPONSE (35 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Methodology, Work Plan, and Resolution of Challenges

Methodology (15 points)

- The extent to which the proposed project thoroughly responds to the “Purpose” included in the program description.
- The strength of the proposed goals and objectives and their relationship to the identified project.

Work Plan (10 points)

- The extent to which the work plan provides a succinct overview of the cooperative agreement’s goals, objectives, activities, staff responsible, timeframe, including meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders during planning and implementation. The extent to which the applicant clearly describes approaches for conducting the data analyses, tool development, technical assistance, dissemination and responding to requests by and others in the timeframe required under this award.

Resolution of Challenges (10 points)

- The extent to which the applicant discusses relevant challenges that they may encounter when creating and implementing the activities described as in the

proposed work plan and the extent to which the applicant discusses possible solutions that would be implemented to resolve such challenges.

Criterion 3: EVALUATIVE MEASURES (5 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity

- The extent the applicant discussed plans for monitoring performance, including the methods to be employed by project staff to ensure that proposed activities are being successfully documented and completed, based on the overall work plan.
- The extent the applicant discussed a plan for conducting analyses and quantifying the relationship between the health of the economy in a rural community and the health outcomes of the residents of those communities.
- The extent the applicant discussed a plan to disseminate research findings on the economic impact of health services in rural communities to rural stakeholders.

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

- The extent to which the proposed project objectives and activities can identify the impact of health services on rural communities and economies and how the proposed project will be effective, if funded.
- The feasibility and effectiveness of plans for dissemination of project reports, tools, and/or impact of technical assistance.
- The extent to which project results are national in scope.

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

- The extent to which project personnel are qualified by training and/or experience to carry out the programmatic and management requirements of the proposed project.
- The extent the applicant demonstrates experience communicating research findings to a broad audience.
- The capabilities of the applicant organization and the qualifications of personnel to fulfill the needs and requirements of the proposed project.
- The extent to which the applicant clearly describes how the organization has the capacity to carry out the work. A list of examples of published materials and work of a similar nature should be included.

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

- 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.
- The extent to which key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project objectives.

2. Review and Selection Process

The independent 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 and Other Pre-Award Activities

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 ([45 CFR § 75.212](#)).

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

HRSA anticipates issuing/announcing awards prior to the start date of September 1, 2019.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

HRSA will issue the Notice of Award prior to the start date of September 1, 2019. 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 Notice of Award (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.

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 on an **annual** basis describing how the federal investment can be quantified in terms of the number of: tools made available, communities accessing the tools, communities and/or organizations receiving technical assistance in using tools, reports produced, etc. Further information will be available in the award notice.
- 2) **Quarterly Tracking Reports.** The award recipient must submit a tracking report to HRSA on a quarterly basis. Further information will be provided in the award notice.
- 3) **Final Report.** A final report is due within 90 days after the period of performance ends. The final report collects program-specific goals and progress on strategies; core performance measurement data; impact of the overall project; the degree to which the award recipient achieved the mission, goals and strategies outlined in the program; award recipient objectives and accomplishments; barriers encountered; and responses to summary questions regarding the award recipient's overall experiences over the entire period of performance.
- 4) **Integrity and Performance Reporting.** The Notice of Award will contain a provision for integrity and performance reporting in [FAPUIS](#), 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
Fax: (301) 443-6343
Email: jpadgett@hrsa.gov

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

Steven Hirsch
Program Analyst, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
Attn: Rural Health and Economic Development Analysis Program
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, 17W59D
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 443-7322
Fax: (301) 443-2803
Email: shirsch@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 the following technical assistance:

Webinar

Day and Date: Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Time: 1 – 2 p.m. ET

Weblink:

https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/ta_webinar_rural_health_economic_development/

Dial-in: 888-282-0376

Participant Code: 9697018

Tips for Writing a Strong Application

See Section 4.7 of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).