

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Bureau of Health Workforce
National Center for Health Workforce Analysis

Health Workforce Research Center Cooperative Agreement Program

Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-18-028
Funding Opportunity Type: New, Competing Continuation

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 93.300

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year 2018

Application Due Date: April 12, 2018

MODIFIED 3/30/2018 – update to incorporate new SAM.gov registration requirements (page 25) and enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (pages 22 and 25).

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

Issuance Date: January 12, 2018

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Authority: Health Equity: Section 761(c) of the Public Health Service Act; Behavioral Health Workforce: Section 509, 516, and 520A of the Public Health Service Act.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is accepting applications for the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Health Workforce Research Center Cooperative Agreement Program. The purpose of this program is to support and disseminate rigorous research that strengthens evidence-based policy and enhances understanding of issues and trends in the health workforce. HRSA anticipates that two (2) Health Workforce Research Centers (HWRCs) will be funded under this notice:

- One (1) HWRC will focus on health equity in health workforce education and training. HRSA expects that this HWRC will be funded solely by HRSA.
- One (1) HWRC will focus on the behavioral health workforce. HRSA expects that this HWRC will be funded through a partnership between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and HRSA.

Funding Opportunity Title:	Health Workforce Research Center Cooperative Agreement Program
Funding Opportunity Number:	HRSA-18-028
Due Date for Applications:	April 12, 2018
Anticipated Total Annual Available FY2018 Funding:	\$1,350,000
Estimated Number and Type of Award(s):	Up to 2 cooperative agreements
Estimated Award Amount:	Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training: Up to \$450,000 per year Behavioral Health Workforce: Up to \$900,000 per year
Cost Sharing/Match Required:	No
Project Period/Period of Performance:	September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2022 (4 years)
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible applicants include: a State; a State workforce investment board; a public health or health professions school; an academic health center; or an appropriate public or private nonprofit entity. See Section III-1 of this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), formerly known as the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), 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](http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf424rrguidev2.pdf), available online at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf424rrguidev2.pdf>, except where instructed in this NOFO to do otherwise. A short video explaining the *Application Guide* is available at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/>.

Technical Assistance

The following technical assistance webinar has been scheduled:

Webinar

Day and Date: Thursday, February 8, 2018

Time: 2 – 3:30 p.m. ET

Call-In Number: 1-888-769-8713

Participant Code: 3760192

Web link: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/nofo_hrsa_18_028/

Playback Number: 1-888-566-0132

Passcode: 5136

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I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

1. Purpose

This notice solicits applications for the Health Workforce Research Center (HWRC) Cooperative Agreement Program. Under this notice, applications are being sought for two separate HWRCs: (1) one focused on health equity in health workforce education and training and will be funded under HRSA's Title VII authority; and (2) one focused on the behavioral health workforce, and will be funded under SAMHSA's Title V authority and jointly administered via an Interagency Agreement with HRSA.

Program Purpose

The overarching purpose of the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program is to:

- A. Collect, analyze, and report health workforce program data to the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis and to the public; and
- B. Provide technical assistance to local and regional entities on the collection, analysis, and reporting of health workforce data.

Through these efforts, the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program supports and disseminates rigorous and timely research that strengthens evidence-based policy and enhances government's and the public's understanding of issues and trends in the health workforce. In this way, HWRC projects help inform health workforce planning and policy at all levels.

Program Requirements

HRSA expects that each award recipient funded under this notice will have expertise in the following:

- A broad, comprehensive, national-level understanding of the current U.S. health workforce.
- Experience in working with health workforce data.
- Expertise in analytical methods and tools appropriate for health workforce research.
- Awareness of emerging topics, issues, and trends related to the health workforce.

Successful applicants will demonstrate their expertise as well as the potential impact of their work through the publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals; presentations at national and international conferences and meetings; and publication of policy briefs, fact sheets, articles, blogs, etc. that are available in the public domain.

Program Priorities

Under this notice, the award(s) will provide support for the establishment of up to two HWRCs. Successful applicants will demonstrate broad, national-level research expertise in one of the following HWRC topic areas:

(1) Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine define health equity as “[T]he state in which everyone has the opportunity to attain full health potential, and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or any other socially defined circumstance.”¹

To achieve and support this vision, the National Academies stress the need for health workforce education and training to evolve in ways that not only incorporate a more robust “understanding of the social determinants of health across the learning continuum” but also encourage sustained partnerships among academic institutions, communities, and organizations.² These broad themes are the focus of programs associated with the authorizing legislation for the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program, including:

- Providing educational assistance in health professions for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (42 USC §293c.).
- Supporting health workforce research related to the development, evaluation, and dissemination of curricula and other tools to increase cultural competency in the health workforce and strengthen the workforce’s ability to address health disparities (42 USC §293e(a)(1)).
- Providing continuing education to the health workforce, including to providers in underserved communities (42 USC §294b).
- Conducting studies to better understand the distribution of the health workforce and factors that determine the ability of the health workforce to serve minority groups (42 USC §295k(b)(2)).

The successful applicant in this topic area will conduct research to examine a range of issues related to health equity in health workforce education and training. The encompassing goal of this Center’s research will be to strengthen the evidence base for effective education and training programs that can enable and empower a health workforce capable of fostering health equity.

Examples of research areas related to this topic include:

- Looking across a range of health care professions and providers to develop a comprehensive picture of how current health workforce education and training

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *Communities in action: Pathways to health equity* (Page 1). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. *A framework for educating health professionals to address the social determinants of health* (Page 69; Figure 4-1). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

programs incorporate consideration of health equity, including social needs, social determinants of health, and related elements, into their programs.

- Developing measures to assess and track consideration of health equity and related elements into health workforce education and training programs.
- Evaluating health workforce education and training programs to understand whether and how a program's incorporation of health equity considerations, including consideration of social needs and social determinants of health, may improve health care delivery, with respect to factors such as: increasing access to primary care; mitigating provider shortages in underserved areas; delivering integrated primary, behavioral, and oral health care; addressing health workforce diversity; and strengthening community/provider partnerships.

Applicants may suggest other research topics that directly relate to health equity in health workforce education and training.

HRSA expects that the successful applicant in this topic area will conduct national-level research that spans a range of current and emerging topics related to health equity in health workforce education and training. HRSA also expects that the successful applicant will demonstrate a strong capability to develop and maintain a research portfolio that considers a mix of health professions and health providers.

(2) Behavioral Health Workforce: The successful applicant in this topic area will conduct research that addresses current and emerging behavioral health workforce challenges. The behavioral health workforce includes practitioners who provide care and services related to the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and mental illness. Behavioral health practitioners include professionals³ and paraprofessionals (e.g., peer providers, community health workers).

Examples of research areas related to this topic include:

- Strengthening the behavioral health workforce to address the consequences and impact of substance use disorders and mental illness:
 - Improve behavioral health workforce training, planning, and policy to address severe substance use disorders (e.g., opioid addiction) and serious mental illness (SMI) through a better understanding of demographics, unemployment rates, unfilled jobs, and other socioeconomic factors.
 - Develop evidence-based strategies for strengthening the behavioral health workforce to provide care and treatment for individuals and populations with severe substance use disorders and mental illness, including serious mental illness (SMI).

³ Psychiatrists; psychologists; clinical social workers; advanced practice registered nurses (behavioral health nurse practitioners); behavioral health physician assistants; licensed professional counselors; addiction counselors; school counselors; marriage and family therapists.

- Addressing behavioral health workforce shortages and maldistribution:
 - Strengthen behavioral health workforce development and planning to meet future behavioral health workforce demands and address provider shortages.
 - Identify methodologies for improving demand and supply projection estimates across multiple behavioral health professions.
 - Implement and utilize minimum datasets (MDS) to improve behavioral health workforce planning and projections.
 - Identify strategies and practices to strengthen behavioral health workforce training, recruitment, and retention, especially in rural and underserved areas.
 - Assess the use of incentives to attract and retain behavioral health providers, especially in rural and underserved geographies and in meeting the needs of vulnerable and at-risk populations (e.g., American Indians/Alaska Natives, young adults).

- Improving service delivery and reimbursement:
 - Identify new and evolving models of behavioral health services delivery.
 - Identify competency-based initiatives that may be incorporated into training programs so that future behavioral health providers are ready to work within new service delivery models that utilize evidence-based practices and provide culturally competent care.
 - Improve behavioral health practitioners' understanding and implementation of telehealth and related technology-assisted care models to better reach underserved areas and populations by enabling virtual diagnosis, care, and monitoring.
 - Assess behavioral health integration into primary care.
 - Develop methods for evaluating workforce practices in new and evolving models of care, including continuum of care models.
 - Identify reimbursement models and billing practices that may be currently in use or that may be appropriate for adoption by behavioral health providers.

Applicants may suggest other research topics that directly relate to current and emerging behavioral health workforce topics.

HRSA expects that the successful applicant in this topic area will conduct national-level research that spans a range of current and emerging behavioral health workforce topics. HRSA expects that the successful applicant will demonstrate a strong capability to develop and maintain a research portfolio that considers a mix of behavioral health professions and paraprofessions.

Other Guidance

Consortium Model (OPTIONAL)

To ensure that your HWRC will have the necessary breadth to comprehensively address a wide range of issues related to your selected HWRC topic area (from Section I.1 of this notice), you may propose to utilize a consortium model. Under a consortium model, members of your consortium would represent a purposeful group of organizations and staff who will work together on research studies related to your selected HWRC topic area. The HWRC consortium would not simply be a group of loosely affiliated individual researchers, and the HWRC cannot act as an entity whose sole purpose is to disburse funds to individual researchers who are working independently, either in the same or in a different geographical location as the applicant.

If you propose to utilize a consortium model, all members of your consortium must meet the eligibility requirements listed in Section III.1 of this notice. Also, if you are proposing to use a consortium model, your application must include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from each anticipated consortium partner. In developing these MOUs, please recognize that the successful HWRC applicants will be ultimately responsible for the quality and accuracy of all research submitted to the Federal Government; supervision and administrative activities; and overall management of federal funds awarded under this NOFO.

Partnership (OPTIONAL)

You may propose to partner with other stakeholders, including foundations, public organizations, and private organizations who will work with you to conduct and disseminate research related to your selected HWRC topic area from Section I.1 of this notice.

Partners do not need to meet the eligibility requirements listed in Section III.1 of this notice. However, if you do elect to partner with a foundation or organization that is engaged in work related to your selected HWRC topic area, you must describe how the partnership will strengthen the conduct and dissemination of your research. HRSA funding must not be distributed to the partner organizations, either directly or as a subaward.

2. Background

The Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training component of the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program is authorized by Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, Section 761(c). This program provides funding to eligible entities for the purposes of conducting and disseminating research on health workforce topics related to the Public Health Service Act's Title VII programs. Findings from HWRC-funded projects help to inform health workforce educators, planners, and policy makers, as well as HRSA's National Center for Health Workforce Analysis (NCHWA) and other audiences interested in health workforce issues. The HWRCs are overseen by HRSA/BHW's National Center for Health Workforce Analysis (NCHWA).

The Behavioral HWRC is authorized by Sections 509, 516, and 520A of the Public Health Service Act. Because the Behavioral HWRC is a joint initiative between SAMHSA and HRSA, it receives guidance and direction from both SAMHSA and HRSA.

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that leads public health efforts to address the behavioral health needs of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of mental illness and substance use disorders on America's communities. SAMHSA provides national leadership in promoting the provision of quality behavioral health services. SAMHSA works to address mental illness and substance use disorders through:

- Increasing awareness and understanding
- Strengthening prevention
- Improving access to care and the quality of evidence-based treatments
- Supporting recovery

HRSA seeks to improve the health of the nation's underserved communities and vulnerable populations by developing, implementing, evaluating, and refining programs that strengthen the nation's health workforce and connect skilled health professionals to communities in need. HRSA's programs holistically support a diverse, culturally competent workforce by addressing:

- Education and training
- Recruitment and retention
- Financial support for students, faculty, practitioners, and supporting institutions
- Health workforce data collection and analysis
- Evaluation and coordination of health workforce activities

NCHWA, a division within BHW, oversees and participates in research and evaluation initiatives that help inform policy decisions related to the health workforce.

Currently, six HWRCs are funded through August 31, 2022. These six HWRCs focus on a range of topics, including the allied health workforce, the long-term care workforce, the oral health workforce, emerging health workforce topics, and technical assistance related to the health workforce. In addition, one HWRC is currently focused on the behavioral health workforce and is funded through August 31, 2018. Information about the work supported through the current HWRC cooperative agreements is available via HRSA's Health Workforce Research Centers website:

<http://bhw.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/researchcenters/index.html>.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Application and Award

Types of applications sought: New applications; Competing Continuation applications

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

In addition to the usual monitoring and technical assistance provided under the cooperative agreement, **HRSA program involvement will include:**

- Participating in the planning and development of each HWRC's annual research portfolio and in the selection of each HWRC's annual research studies.
- Reviewing, and, if necessary, commenting on each HWRC's plans and methodologies presented in their study proposals.
- Reviewing each HWRC's work products, including each study's methodology, analysis, results, policy implications, and format, prior to public dissemination.
- Providing consultation, as appropriate, to each HWRC to design strategies for disseminating HWRC work in order to target multiple audiences interested in health workforce issues. Dissemination products may include policy briefs; peer-reviewed journal articles; invited presentations; responses to inquiries from health policy programs and health policy researchers; webinars; presentations at national, regional, state, and local conferences; and other appropriate vehicle(s) for sharing rigorous, policy-oriented research.
- Participating, as appropriate, in meetings, training activities, or workgroups conducted during the project period.
- Hosting periodic conference calls with all of the HWRC Principal Investigators (PIs).

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, per Section 2.2 of the [R&R Application Guide](#) (**Acknowledgement of Federal Funding**).
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with other HRSA-funded HWRCs as well as with health workforce stakeholders.
- Submitting research study proposals with relevant timelines and milestones to the NCHWA Project Officer for review.

- Participating in the planning and development of each HWRC's annual project portfolio and in the final selection of research studies.
- Conducting research studies, and synthesizing the results into reports or other work products developed for both technical and non-technical audiences.
- Preparing and submitting a 250-word abstract and a 2-page brief for each completed study *in addition to* the study's primary work product(s) (e.g., full policy brief, report, journal manuscript, monograph, etc.).
- Submitting work products (e.g., abstracts, 2-page briefs, full policy briefs, reports, manuscripts, monographs, etc.) for NCHWA review, generally within 180 days of the end of each budget period. The time line for submitting specific work products may be extended by the Project Officer on a case-by-case basis.
- Publishing HWRC research findings in peer-reviewed journals.
- Posting completed work products to the HWRC's publicly available website. Note: In certain cases, exceptions may be made for posting peer-reviewed journal articles, if posting a published article is prohibited by the journal.
- Responding to the Project Officer's comments, questions, and requests (including executing short-term, rapid-response qualitative or quantitative analyses to assist in answering health workforce planning and policy questions) within five to ten business days. Note: The time line for responding to rapid response requests or other requests from the Project Officer may be extended by the Project Officer on a case by case basis.
- Designing and implementing strategies to disseminate the HWRC's research studies to multiple audiences interested in health workforce issues. Dissemination products may include policy briefs; peer-reviewed journal articles; invited presentations; responses to inquiries from health policy programs and health policy researchers; webinars; presentations at national, regional, state, and local conferences; and other appropriate vehicle(s) for sharing rigorous, policy-oriented research.
- Implementing and maintaining a publicly available website with information about the health workforce, current HWRC projects funded under this cooperative agreement, and completed projects funded under this cooperative agreement. The recipient's website will also include the acknowledgement and disclaimer information required on all products supported by HHS award funds.
- Attending and presenting at periodic HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program meetings at HRSA's headquarters in Rockville, Maryland or in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
- Participating in periodic NCHWA-hosted conference calls with other HWRCs.

2. Summary of Funding

Approximately \$1,350,000 is expected to be available annually to fund up to two (2) recipients.

- If you are applying under the HWRC topic area related to Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training, you may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$450,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year.
- If you are applying under the HWRC topic area related to the Behavioral Health Workforce, you may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$900,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year.

The actual amounts available for both awards will not be determined until enactment of the final FY 2018 federal appropriation. 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, applications can be processed, and funds can be awarded in a timely manner. During a given fiscal year, additional supplemental funds may be provided for additional activities or work products.

The project period is September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2022 (4 years). Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds, 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

An eligible applicant for the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program is a State, a State workforce investment board, a public health or health professions school, an academic health center, or an appropriate public or private nonprofit entity. Faith-based and community-based organizations, Tribes, and tribal organizations may apply for these funds, if otherwise eligible. Foreign entities are not eligible for this award.

2. Cost Sharing/Matching

Cost sharing/matching is not required for this program.

3. Other Information

Ceiling Amount

Applications that exceed the ceiling amounts of \$450,000 for the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area or \$900,000 for the Behavioral Health

Workforce topic area will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this NOFO.

Deadline

Any application that fails to satisfy the deadline requirements referenced in *Section IV.4* will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this NOFO.

Multiple Applications

Multiple applications from an organization are allowable under two conditions.

First, for a selected HWRC topic area (from Section I.1 of this notice), you can submit only one application per campus. A campus is defined as a division of a university that has the same name yet is separate with its own grounds, buildings (e.g., school of nursing) and faculty; a single department or agency of a state or local government; or other separate legal entity. For example, the University of ABC – Springfield and the University of ABC – Goldboro can each submit an application for the same HWRC topic area under this program.

Second, you can submit only one application per campus for each of the two HWRC topic areas identified in Section I.1. For example, the University of ABC – Springfield can submit one application for the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area AND one application for the Behavioral Health Workforce topic area. Alternatively, the University of ABC – Springfield can submit one application for the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area, and the University of ABC – Goldboro can submit one application for the Behavioral Health Workforce topic area.

If for any reason (including submitting to the wrong funding opportunity number or making corrections/updates), an application is submitted more than once from a single campus for the same center 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.

Failure to include all required documents as part of the application may result in an application being considered incomplete or non-responsive.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

HRSA **requires** you to apply electronically through Grants.gov. You must use the SF-424 Research and Related (R&R) application package associated with this NOFO following the directions provided at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

Effective December 31, 2017 - You **must** use the [Grants.gov Workspace](#) to complete the workspace forms and submit your application workspace package. After this date, you will no longer be able to use PDF Application Packages.

HRSA recommends that you supply an email address to Grants.gov on the grant opportunity synopsis page and when accessing the NOFO (also known as “instructions” on Grants.gov) or application package. This allows Grants.gov to email organizations that supply an email address in the event the NOFO is changed and/or republished 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 [Find Grant Opportunities](#) 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 [SF-424 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. Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in 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 **80 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.

Biographical Sketches **DO** count in the page limit. Standard OMB-approved forms that are included in the application package **DO NOT** count in the page limit. Indirect Cost Rate Agreements and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) also **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 any of the statements in this certification, an explanation shall be included in Attachment #7: 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), please include the following:

i. Project Abstract

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

The Abstract must include:

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

The Abstract must be clear, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The Abstract must also include the following elements:

1. Applicant's name
2. Applicant's address
3. HWRC Topic Area (from the topics listed in Section I.1 of this notice)
4. Principal Investigator (PI) information: Name, degree(s), email address, and phone number
5. Contact person's name and email address, if different from the PI
6. Anticipated consortium model members, if applicable
7. Anticipated partner(s), if applicable
8. Applicant's web site, if applicable
9. A summary of the research studies proposed for Budget Year 1

ii. Project Narrative

This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It should be succinct, self-explanatory 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 Project Narrative:

- *PURPOSE AND NEED -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #1*
In this section, you must:
 - Identify one (1) topic area from the two (2) HWRC topic areas outlined in Section I.1 of this notice as the focus of your HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program activities.
 - Demonstrate a comprehensive, national-level understanding of the current composition and state of the health workforce, including education and training, as it relates to your selected HWRC topic area.
 - Clearly articulate current and emerging issues and challenges related to your selected HWRC topic area.
 - Describe challenges related to research in your selected HWRC topic area.
- *RESPONSE TO PROGRAM PURPOSE -- This section includes three sub-sections — (a) Methodology/Approach; (b) Work Plan; and (c) Resolution of Challenges — which correspond to Section V's Review Criteria #2 (a), (b), and (c).*
- *(a) METHODOLOGY/APPROACH -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #2 (a).*

Applicants for the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training Topic Area:

You must propose six (6) research questions and develop a study proposal for each. Your proposed research studies must also meet the following requirements:

- Each study must address a relevant, national-level planning or policy research question related to your selected HWRC topic area.
- Collectively, your six (6) proposed studies must address a mix of health practitioners.
- At least four (4) of your six (6) proposed studies must use a predominantly quantitative methodology.
- Your six (6) proposed studies must be feasible to complete within approximately one (1) year.

Post award, HRSA will select four (4) of the successful applicant's six (6) proposed research studies for completion in Budget Year 1. If necessary, the selected Budget Year 1 studies will be refined collaboratively between the successful applicant and HRSA. This process may include additional input from HRSA on possible alternative proposals and suggested proposal modifications.

Applicants for the Behavioral Health Workforce Research Topic Area:

You must propose ten (10) research questions and develop a study proposal for each. Your proposed research studies must also meet the following requirements:

- Each study must address a relevant, national-level planning or policy research question related to the behavioral health workforce.

- You must propose at least one (1) behavioral health workforce research study related to each of the three (3) broad priorities listed in Section I.1. These priorities are:
 1. Strengthening the behavioral health workforce to address the consequences and impact of substance use disorders and mental illness.
 2. Addressing behavioral health workforce shortages and maldistribution.
 3. Improving service delivery and reimbursement.
- You may focus your remaining seven (7) proposals on the three priorities listed above, or on other behavioral health workforce issues, or on any combination of these three priorities and other topics.
- Your proposed studies do not need to address each priority equally.
- Collectively, your ten (10) proposed studies must address a mix of behavioral health practitioners.
- At least six (6) of your ten (10) proposed studies must use a predominantly quantitative methodology.
- Your ten (10) proposed studies must be feasible to complete within approximately one (1) year.

REMINDER: Both new and competing continuation applicants must propose work that does not duplicate previous or current HWRC work. However, applicants may propose work that builds on or updates previously funded HWRC studies. Information on previous and current HWRC studies is available here: <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/health-workforce-analysis/research/research-centers>.

Post award, SAMHSA and HRSA will select eight (8) of the successful applicant's ten (10) proposed research studies for completion in Budget Year 1. If necessary, the selected Budget Year 1 studies will be refined collaboratively among the successful applicant, SAMHSA, and HRSA. This process may include additional input from SAMHSA and HRSA on possible alternative proposals and suggested proposal modifications.

All Applicants:

Depending on available funding in subsequent years, recipients will be required to propose additional research studies for Budget Year 2, Budget Year 3, and Budget Year 4. It is expected that these subsequent budget year efforts will build on the recipient's Budget Year 1 work to culminate in a comprehensive body of research and work products. State and regional studies may be considered in Budget Year 2 through Budget Year 4.

You must present your Budget Year 1 research study proposals using the format outlined below. Limit each research proposal to a maximum of two (2) pages total.

Research Study Proposal (maximum 2 pages total)

- Title
- Stand-alone, two-sentence description of the research study
- Statement of purpose and program/policy relevance:
 - Describe the purpose of the proposed study.

- Explain how the results can be used to inform health workforce programs and policies related to your selected HWRC topic area.
- Design and analysis:
 - State the proposed study question(s) or study hypothesis(es).
 - Describe the study design.
 - Discuss the proposed approach for data analysis, and explain the rationale for selecting the proposed approach.
 - Briefly discuss the limitations of the proposed methods.
- Data sources:
 - Identify proposed data sources.
 - If applicable, include information on data availability, cost, and schedule for obtaining and preparing the data for analysis.
 - For primary data: discuss the data collection plan, including sampling methods, estimated sample size, expected response rate, data collection schedule, etc.
 - For secondary data: describe your experience in accessing and using these data, and indicate whether utilization of the data will require a data use agreement or similar vehicle.
- Human subjects research: Provide answers to the questions below.
 - Are human subjects involved?
 - If activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed study, indicate YES, even if the proposed work is exempt from Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects.
 - Indicate NO if no activities involving human subjects are planned.
 - If the answer is YES, indicate whether the Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is pending or completed.
 - If the IRB review has been completed and the work has been approved, provide the approval date.
 - If the proposed work is exempt from IRB approval, indicate the exemption relied upon and a short description corresponding to one or more of the exemption categories. See 45 CFR part 46.
 - For the Human Subject Assurance Number, provide the IRB approval number or the approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA), Multiple Project Assurance (MPA), Single Project Assurance (SPA) or Cooperative Project Assurance Number (CPA) that you have on file with the Office of Human Research Protections, if available.
 - If the study has not yet been reviewed by IRB and you believe the research is exempt, provide a justification for the exemption(s) with sufficient information about involvement of human subjects to allow a tentative conclusion by HRSA staff that the claimed exemption(s) seem(s) appropriate.

REMINDER: Non-exempt research involving human subjects cannot be conducted under a HHS-sponsored award unless you provide verification of the justification for the research per HHS regulations. Documentation of IRB review when it is completed and its exemption or approval must be sent to the Project Officer. This

IRB certification must include the grant number, title of the study, name of the appropriate IRB which has reviewed and exempted or approved the proposed activity, name of the principal investigator/ program director, date of IRB exemption or approval, and appropriate signatures.

- *(b) WORK PLAN -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #2 (b).*
You must describe the activities or steps proposed to effectively manage your HWRC workload, including research studies and Rapid Response Requests.

REMINDER: Rapid Response Requests

In addition to conducting research studies, the successful applicant in the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area must be able to respond to as many as four (4) Rapid Response Requests in each budget year. The successful applicant in the Behavioral Health Workforce topic area must be able to respond to as many as six (6) Rapid Response Requests in each budget year.

Rapid Response Requests are generally small-scale tasks with a turnaround time of five (5) to ten (10) business days. The time line for addressing rapid response requests may be extended by the Project Officer on a case-by-case basis.

You must include the following in your *Work Plan*:

- **Project Management Plan:** You must present a Project Management Plan to ensure that all work, including research studies and rapid response requests, stays on track throughout Budget Year 1.
 - **General Work Plan:** You must include a General Work Plan for Budget Year 2 – Budget Year 4. The General Work Plan does not need to identify specific research studies that will be conducted during those years but it must describe general HWRC activities that span all four (4) years of the project period.
- *(c) RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #2 (c)*
You must discuss challenges (e.g., data availability, data cost, IRB approval, etc.) that you anticipate you are likely to encounter in designing and implementing the work proposed in the *Methodology Section*, as well as challenges you anticipate may be associated with performing the activities described in the *Work Plan Section*.

If you are proposing to use a consortium model, please include challenges you foresee that may be associated with working with the HWRC consortium members.

You must also describe approaches you will use to address all identified challenges.

- *IMPACT -- This section includes two sub-sections — (a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity; and (b) Project Sustainability — which correspond to Section V's Review Criteria #3 (a) and (b).*

- *(a) EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #3 (a)*

In this section, you must describe your plan for self-monitoring progress on each of the budget year research studies, as well as any Rapid Response Requests received during each budget year.

You must also describe your quality control processes, including an explanation of how you will ensure data quality and the quality of the products produced under this cooperative agreement.

- *(b) PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #3 (b)*

In this section, you must present a plan for disseminating products produced under this cooperative agreement. At a minimum, your dissemination plan must include:

- Anticipated products and venues for dissemination of completed work.
- Target audiences for the anticipated dissemination products.
- Methods for ensuring the dissemination products' quality and accessibility.
- Plans for publishing HWRC work in peer-reviewed journals.
- Development and maintenance of a website dedicated to the HWRC that will house your completed HWRC work. As part of developing and maintaining this website, you must:
 - Provide your HRSA Project Officer with a link to your website.
 - Post completed HWRC products to your website, including links to abstracts or full manuscripts for all peer-reviewed journal articles that describe work funded under this cooperative agreement.
 - Alert visitors to your website of new HWRC products.

You must also describe how you will track and report on the frequency that each product posted on your HWRC website is accessed or downloaded, as well as your plan to track journal citations, conference presentations and posters, speaking engagements (including webinars), and press inquiries/communications.

- *ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #4*

In this section, you must describe your expertise in health workforce research. You must also demonstrate the organizational capability and resources necessary to conduct and disseminate complex, policy-relevant research in a 12 to 18-month time period.

Applicants must provide both organizational information and a staffing plan, as described below:

- Organizational Information: You must describe how the applicant's organization has the ability to implement the proposed work and meet the

requirements and expectations of this cooperative agreement. You must also:

- Provide information on your organization's current mission and structure, relevant experience, and current activities.
- Describe your organizational capacity to effectively manage the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative aspects of your proposed work.
- Include an HWRC organizational chart, as requested in Section IV.2.v, Attachment 1.
- Consortium Model Information: If you are proposing to use a consortium model, you must describe the HWRC consortium members, and you must also:
 - Include a brief discussion of each consortium member's mission, and how their mission will contribute to the success of the HWRC.
 - Describe the research and policy expertise that each consortium member brings to the HWRC, and explain how that expertise will contribute to the design, conduct, and dissemination of the HWRC's research.
 - Discuss how your anticipated consortium members will communicate regarding the conduct and dissemination of HWRC research.
 - Include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from each anticipated consortium partner, as requested in Section IV.2.v, Attachment 4.
- Partnership Information: If you are proposing to partner with a foundation, public organization or private organization, you must describe your proposed partner(s), and you must also:
 - Include a brief discussion of each partner's mission, and how their mission will contribute to the success of the HWRC.
 - Describe the research and policy expertise that each partner brings to the HWRC, and explain how that expertise will contribute to the design, conduct, and dissemination of the HWRC's research.
 - Discuss how your anticipated partner(s) will communicate regarding the conduct and dissemination of HWRC research.
- Staffing Plan: You must present a staffing plan that describes the education, experience, and rationale for the amount of time requested for each key staff member. Key staff members are: the Principal Investigator; the Deputy Principal Investigator; and the Core Project Team. The Principal Investigator and the Deputy Principal Investigator cannot be the same person, and co-Principal Investigators are not permitted.
 - Principal Investigator requirements:
 - Have a doctoral degree.
 - Devote at least 25 percent of his or her time to the HWRC.
 - Lead the development and execution of the HWRC's research portfolio.
 - Serve as lead investigator on at least two (2) of the HWRC's research studies in each budget year.
 - Have the ability and authority to review draft work products to assure their relevance, quality, and accessibility.
 - Be responsible for the administrative aspects of the HWRC and the review of all draft products.

- Have national expertise.
 - Have at least five (5) years of experience specific to health workforce research.
 - Have at least five (5) peer-reviewed health workforce publications.
- Required information for the Principal Investigator:
 - Experience, role, and responsibilities in managing research teams.
 - Experience, role, and responsibilities in conducting and disseminating policy-relevant health workforce research.
 - Experience informing/educating national, state, and community decision-makers, especially those concerned with health workforce issues related to your selected HWRC topic area.
 - A list of relevant articles that the Principal Investigator has published in peer-reviewed journals.
- Deputy Principal Investigator requirements:
 - Devote at least 20 percent of his/her time to the proposed HWRC.
 - Serve as the lead investigator on at least one (1) of the HWRC's research studies in each budget year.
 - Have national expertise.
 - Have at least three (3) years of experience specific to health workforce research.
- Required information for the Deputy Principal Investigator:
 - Experience, role, and responsibilities in conducting and disseminating policy-relevant health workforce research.
 - Experience informing/educating national, state, and community decision-makers, especially those concerned with health workforce issues related to your selected HWRC topic area.
- Core Project Team requirements:
 - The Core Project Team must have the education, research, and professional experience necessary to support the research studies proposed in your application.
 - The Team may include individuals with clinical or nonclinical backgrounds in relevant disciplines (e.g., behavioral health, biostatistics, demography, economics, epidemiology, geography, health communication, health information technology, medicine, nursing, political science, public health, psychology, sociology, statistics, etc.).
- Required information for the Core Project Team:
 - An explanation of how the Core Project Team's disciplines relate to your proposed research.
 - A discussion of how the experience of the Core Project Team supports the execution and dissemination of your proposed work.
 - A list of relevant articles that Core Project Team members have published in peer-reviewed journals.

OPTIONAL: Editor, Technical Writer, Website Developer, Social Media Specialist, etc.

You may include an editor, technical writer, website developer, social media specialist or other staff member(s) whose main/partial responsibility will be to review draft products to ensure high quality and accessibility. The(se) individual(s) should be identified in your line item budget. Note: These positions are not requirements. HRSA leaves it to each applicant's discretion as to whether such staff will strengthen their HWRC products.

REQUIRED: POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND STAFF LOADING CHART

Position descriptions for key staff members must be included in **Attachment 2**. You must also include a staff loading chart that presents the number of hours or Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) devoted to the proposed HWRC for each key staff member (Principal Investigator, Deputy Principal Investigator, and Core Project Team), and the total number of hours or FTEs for all staff members (**Attachment 3**).

REQUIRED: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Biographical Sketches must be uploaded in the SF-424 RESEARCH & RELATED Senior/Key Person Profile form. This form can be accessed in the Application Package under "Mandatory."

Biographical Sketches are required for the Principal Investigator, the Deputy Principal Investigator, and each member of the Core Project Team. In the event that a Biographical Sketch is included for an individual who is not yet hired, you must include a letter of commitment from that person, as requested in Section IV.2.v, Attachment 4.

Biographical sketches, not exceeding two pages per person, should include the following information:

- Senior/key personnel name
- Position title
- Education and training: Begin with baccalaureate or initial professional education, such as nursing, and include postdoctoral training and residency training, if applicable:
 - Institution and location
 - Degree (if applicable)
 - Date of degree (MM/YY)
 - Field of study
- **Section A (required) Personal Statement.** Briefly describe why the individual's experience and qualifications make him/her particularly well suited for his/her role (e.g., PD/PI) in the project that is the subject of the award.
- **Section B (required) Positions and Honors.** List in chronological order previous positions, concluding with the present position. List any honors. Include present membership on any Federal Government public advisory committee.
- **Section C (optional) Peer-reviewed publications or manuscripts in press (in chronological order).** You are encouraged to limit the list of selected peer-reviewed publications or manuscripts in press to no more than 15. Do not include manuscripts submitted or in preparation. The individual may

choose to include selected publications based on date, importance to the field, and/or relevance to the proposed research. Citations that are publicly available in a free, online format may include URLs along with the full reference (note that copies of publicly available publications are not acceptable as appendix material).

- Section D (*optional*) **Other Support**. List both selected ongoing and completed (during the last 3 years) projects (federal or non-federal support). Begin with any projects relevant to the project proposed in this application. Briefly indicate the overall goals of the projects and responsibilities of the Senior/Key Person identified on the Biographical Sketch.

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>
Purpose and Need	(1) Purpose and Need
Response to Program Purpose: (a) Methodology/Approach (b) Work Plan (c) Resolution of Challenges	(2) Response to Program Purpose (a) Methodology/Approach (b) Work Plan (c) Resolution of Challenges
Impact: (a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity (b) Project Sustainability	(3) Impact: (a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity (b) Project Sustainability
Organizational Information, Resources and Capabilities	(4) Organizational Information, Resources and Capabilities
Budget and Budget Narrative (Section IV.2.iii, below)	(5) 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. Please follow the instructions included the *R&R Application Guide* and, *if applicable*, the additional budget instructions provided below. A budget that follows the *R&R Application Guide* will ensure that, if the application is selected 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.

In addition, the HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program requires the following, which corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion #5:

The maximum annual budget for this cooperative agreement is up to \$450,000 per budget year for the successful applicant in the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area, and up to \$900,000 per budget year for the successful applicant in the Behavioral Health Workforce topic area. Since only a subset of the successful applicant's proposals will be selected, you should, to the best of your ability, submit a budget where any combination of your proposals would not exceed the applicable ceiling, based on your selected HWRC topic area.

You should also bear in mind that over the course of the award, you may be required to respond to rapid response requests. The Project Officer will work collaboratively with successful applicants post award to address any budget issues that arise during the proposal selection process. The successful applicant may be asked to submit individual study budgets for each proposal post award to aid in this process.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L.115-141), Division H, § 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." Please see Section 4.1.iv Budget – Salary Limitation of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) for additional information. Note that these or other salary limitations may apply in FY 2019, as required by law.

iv. Budget Justification Narrative

See Section 4.1.v. of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#). In addition, the HWRC cooperative agreement program requires the following:

HRSA understands that individual research studies will vary in terms of their budgets and this may impact an applicant's overall budget.

If you are applying under the Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training topic area, you should attempt to create a budget that allows for necessary variation across your proposed research studies, and does not exceed the expected award amount of \$450,000, regardless of which four of your six proposed studies are selected.

If you are applying under the Behavioral Health Workforce topic area, you should attempt to create a budget that allows for necessary variation across your proposed research studies, and does not exceed the expected award amount of \$900,000, regardless of which eight of your ten proposed studies are selected.

Consultant Services: If you are planning to use consultant services, list the total costs for all consultant services. In the budget justification, identify each consultant, the services he/she will perform, the total number of days, travel costs, and the total estimated costs.

v. Attachments

Please 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. **Each attachment must be clearly labeled.**

Attachment 1: HWRC Organizational Chart

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

Attachment 2: Position Descriptions for Key Personnel

See Section 4.1.vi. of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#). Keep each position description to one page in length if possible. For each position description, describe the individual's role, responsibilities, and qualifications.

Attachment 3: Staff Loading Chart

Summarize the total FTE commitment of each key staff member in Budget Year 1.

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

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

Attachment 5: Tables, Charts, etc.

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

Attachment 6: Progress Report

**(FOR COMPETING CONTINUATIONS ONLY –
HWRC Topic Area: Behavior Health Workforce)**

Past performance is a predictor of future success by an applicant, particularly within the same competitive program. HRSA may award an additional five (5) priority points to the current recipient of funding for HWRC Topic Area: Behavioral Health Workforce, based on their ability to demonstrate progress on program-specific goals.

Identify your current grant number, include the most important objectives from your approved application (including any approved changes), and document overall program accomplishments under each objective over the entire period of

performance. Where possible, include the proposed and actual metrics, outputs, or outcomes of each project objective. HRSA program staff will review the progress report after the Objective Review Committee reviews your competing continuation application. See [Section V.2 Review and Selection Process](#) for further explanation of the past performance funding priority.

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

- (1) The period covered (dates).
- (2) Specific Objective: Briefly summarize the specific objectives of the project as actually funded.
- (3) Results: Describe the program activities conducted for each objective. Include both positive and negative results or technical problems that may be important.

Attachment 7: Other Relevant Documents

Include here any other document that is relevant to your application.

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

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

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

The Grants.gov registration process requires information in three separate systems:

- Dun and Bradstreet (<http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>)
- System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://www.sam.gov>)
- Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>)

For further details, see Section 3.1 of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

ALERT from SAM.gov: If you are registering a new entity in [SAM.gov](#), you must now provide an original, signed [notarized letter](#) stating that you are the authorized Entity Administrator before your registration will be activated by SAM.gov. Please read [these FAQs](#) to learn more about this process change. Applicants registering as a new entity in SAM.gov should plan for additional time associated with submission and review of the notarized letter. This change is effective March 23, 2018. Entities already registered in SAM.gov are advised to log into SAM.gov and review their registration information, particularly their financial information.

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 April 12, 2018, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

See Section 8.2.5 – Summary of emails from Grants.gov in HRSA’s [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) for additional information.

5. Intergovernmental Review

This cooperative agreement is not 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 project period of up to 4 years, at no more than \$450,000 per year (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs) if you are applying under the topic area related to Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training, and at no more than \$900,000 per year (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs) if you are applying under the topic area related to the Behavioral Health Workforce. 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.

Funds under this notice may not be used for purposes specified in HRSA’s [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

The General Provisions in Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141) 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 may apply in FY 2019, 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 award 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.

V. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

Procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications have been instituted to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist you in understanding the standards against which your application will be judged. Critical indicators have been developed 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. Review criteria are 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 HWRC Cooperative Agreement Program has five review criteria:

Criterion 1: PURPOSE AND NEED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Purpose and Need

The extent to which your application demonstrates a comprehensive, national-level understanding of the current composition and state of the health workforce, including education and training, as it relates your selected HWRC topic area.

The extent to which your application articulates current and emerging issues and challenges related to your selected HWRC topic area.

The strength of your application in describing challenges related to research in your selected HWRC topic area.

Criterion 2: RESPONSE TO PROGRAM PURPOSE (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Response to Program Purpose Sub-section (a) Methodology/Approach, Sub-section (b) Work Plan and Sub-section (c) Resolution of Challenges

Criterion 2 (a): METHODOLOGY/APPROACH (20 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Response to Program Purpose Sub-section (a) Methodology/Approach

The extent to which your proposed research studies demonstrate a strong, national-level understanding of available health workforce data resources, recent

health workforce research, and current health workforce policies related to your selected HWRC topic area.

The extent to which your proposed research studies address current needs or gaps in the current health workforce landscape, as it relates to your selected HWRC topic area.

The extent to which your proposed research studies are methodologically sound and appropriately detailed, including information describing your study hypotheses, study designs, data analyses, and Human Subjects Research requirements.

The extent to which, collectively, your proposed studies address a mix of health practitioners.

The extent to which your proposed research studies use quantitative methodologies.

The extent to which your proposed research studies are feasible to complete within approximately one (1) year.

For Behavioral Health Workforce topic area applicants only: The extent to which at least one (1) of your proposed research studies addresses each of the three (3) broad priorities listed in Section I.1 of this notice. These priorities are:

- Strengthening the behavioral health workforce to address the consequences and impact of substance use disorders and mental illness.
- Addressing behavioral health workforce shortages and maldistribution.
- Improving service delivery and reimbursement.

Criterion 2 (b): WORK PLAN (5 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Response to Program Purpose Sub-section (b) Work Plan

The extent to which your Project Management Plan and General Work Plan demonstrate your ability to effectively manage the HWRC work load, including research studies and rapid response requests, and ensure that HWRC products are delivered in a timely manner over the course of the four (4) year project period.

Criterion 2 (c): RESOLUTION OF CHALLENGES (5 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Response to Program Purpose Sub-section (c) Resolution of Challenges

The extent to which your application demonstrates an understanding of potential obstacles and challenges that may arise during the project period, including challenges related to working with the HWRC consortium members, if applicable.

The strength of your approaches for addressing potential obstacles and challenges.

Criterion 3: IMPACT (20 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Impact Sub-section (a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity, and Sub-section (b) Project Sustainability

Criterion 3(a): EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Impact Sub-section (a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity

The strength of your plan for self-monitoring progress on each of your research studies in each budget year, as well as any Rapid Response Requests received during each budget year.

The strength of your processes for ensuring data quality and the quality of products produced under this cooperative agreement.

Criterion 3 (b): PROJECT SUSTAINIBILITY (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Impact Sub-section (b) Project Sustainability

The extent to which your strategy for disseminating findings and information pertaining to your selected HWRC topic area is reasonable, feasible, and likely to reach multiple types of health workforce stakeholders and audiences.

Criterion 4: ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Organizational Information, Resources and Capabilities

The extent to which your application describes your organization’s mission, structure, relevant experience, and current activities.

The extent to which your application explains how your organization’s capabilities will contribute to your ability to effectively manage the programmatic, fiscal, and administrative requirements of this cooperative agreement.

If you are proposing to utilize a consortium model:

- The extent to which your application describes the research and policy expertise provided by your anticipated HWRC consortium members.
- The extent to which your application explains how each consortium member’s mission, together with their research and policy expertise, will contribute to the design, conduct, and dissemination of HWRC research.
- The extent to which your application describes how your anticipated consortium members will communicate regarding the conduct and dissemination of HWRC research.

If you are proposing to partner with a foundation, public organization, or private organization:

- The extent to which your application clearly explains how the partnership will contribute to the conduct and dissemination of research in your selected HWRC topic area.

The extent to which the Principal Investigator, Deputy Principal Investigator and Core Project Team are qualified by their education, research, and experience to implement and carry out the proposed work. [This will be evaluated both through your project narrative and through information included in your Attachments].

The extent to which the Principal Investigator, Deputy Principal Investigator and Core Project Team meet the specific requirements outlined in Section IV.2.ii.

Criterion 5: SUPPORT REQUESTED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Budget Justification Narrative and SF-424 R&R budget forms

The reasonableness of your proposed budget for each year of the project period, in relation to the objectives, activities, and anticipated work products described in your application.

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

The strength of your budget justification in documenting logically and in adequate detail how each line item request (e.g., personnel, travel, equipment, supplies, etc.) supports the objectives and activities described in the application.

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. In addition to the ranking based on merit criteria, HRSA approving officials may also apply other factors in award selection, (e.g., geographical distribution), if specified below in this NOFO. HRSA may also consider assessment of risk and the other pre-award activities described in Section 3 below.

This program includes a funding priority for past performance for Competing Continuation applicants (HWRC Topic Area: Behavioral Health Workforce). A funding priority is defined as the favorable adjustment of combined review scores of individually approved applications when applications meet specified criteria. An adjustment is made by a set, pre-determined number of points. In considering past performance as a predictor of future success by an applicant, HRSA staff will review the required Progress Report and may award an additional five (5) priority points. These priority points will be in addition to the possible score of 100 total points as outlined in the review criteria. More specific information can be found under Attachment 6 requirements.

Please note that only one cooperative agreement will be awarded for Health Equity in Health Workforce Education and Training and one cooperative agreement will be awarded for Behavioral Health Workforce.

Please 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](#)).

Applications receiving a favorable objective review are reviewed 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. You may be asked 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 an award will be made. Following review of all applicable information, the HRSA’s approving and business management officials will determine whether an award can be made, 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 by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205 HHS Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

A determination that an applicant is not qualified will be reported by HRSA to FAPIIS ([45 CFR § 75.212](#)).

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

HRSA anticipates issuing/announcing awards prior to the start date of September 1, 2018.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

HRSA will issue the Notice of Award prior to the start date of September 1, 2018. See Section 5.4 of HRSA’s [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) for additional information.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See Section 2.2 of HRSA’s [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

Human Subjects Protection:

Federal regulations (45 CFR part 46) require that applications and proposals involving human subjects must be evaluated with reference to the risks to the subjects, the adequacy of protection against these risks, the potential benefits of the research to the subjects and others, and the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained. If

research involving human subjects is anticipated, you must meet the requirements of the HHS regulations to protect human subjects from research risks as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 – Public Welfare, Part 46 – Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR part 46).

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. HRSA will verify that approved and funded applicants' proposed objectives are accomplished during each year of the project.

The Progress Report has two parts. The first part demonstrates recipient progress on program-specific goals. Recipients will provide performance information on project objectives and accomplishments, project barriers and resolutions, and will identify any technical assistance needs.

The second part collects information providing a comprehensive overview of recipient overall progress in meeting the approved and funded objectives of the project, as well as plans for continuation of the project in the coming budget period. The recipient should also plan to report on dissemination activities in the annual progress report.

Further information will be provided in the award notice.

- 2) **Final Program Report.** A final report is due within 90 days after the project period ends. The Final Report must be submitted online by recipients in the Electronic Handbook system at <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/home.asp>.

The Final Report is designed to provide HRSA with information required to close out an award after completion of project activities. Recipients are required to submit a final report at the end of their project. The Final Report includes the following sections:

- Project Objectives and Accomplishments - Description of major accomplishments on project objectives.
- Project Barriers and Resolutions - Description of barriers/problems that impeded project's ability to implement the approved plan.
- Summary Information:
 - Project overview.
 - Project impact.
 - Prospects for continuing the project and/or replicating this project elsewhere.
 - Publications produced through this cooperative agreement activity.
 - Changes to the objectives from the initially approved cooperative agreement.

Further information will be provided in the award notice.

- 3) **Federal Financial Report.** A Federal Financial Report (SF-425) is required according to the schedule in the [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#). The report is an accounting of expenditures under the project that year. Financial reports must be submitted electronically through the EHB system. More specific information will be included in the award notice.
- 4) **Other required reports and/or products.**

Proposals. Pending available funding, the award recipient will be required to submit approximately eight (8) two-page research study proposals to the Project Officer for deliberation for each noncompetitive year (Budget Year 2 through Budget Year 4).

Briefs/Reports. The award recipient will be required to submit a comprehensive brief or report for each research study to the Project Officer. These should generally be submitted no later than 180 days after the end of each budget year. If the recipient is aware that it is not likely to meet this deadline, the award recipient must communicate the reasons for the delay to the Project Officer and provide a strategy for finalizing and submitting the brief(s)/report(s) as soon as possible.

For each brief/report, the award recipient will also be required to submit a short abstract (250 words or less) and a two-page brief summarizing the work. The abstract and two-page brief are required to be submitted in addition to the full brief or report described in the preceding paragraph. The Project Officer will provide templates for the abstract and two-page brief to the award recipient following award.

All products submitted to the Project Officer for review must be submitted in a Word Document compatible with Track Changes to allow for efficient and effective review. PDF versions for review are not acceptable except for final publication to the recipient's website.

The award recipient is required to work collaboratively with the Project Officer to come to a resolution on all editorial comments.

The award recipient must submit at the end of each budget year an electronic compendium of all abstracts, briefs, reports, and manuscripts (one copy per project) to the Project Officer.

Rapid Response Requests. The award recipient will be required to respond to Rapid Response Requests via a variety of products that may include short reports, memoranda, tables, or other product. Deadlines for responses will be provided by the Project Officer and will usually range from five to ten business days from the date of request.

Publications. The award recipient may submit findings from HWRC research studies to peer-reviewed journals for publication under the following conditions. The attribution statement specified below must also be included in every publication.

The award recipient is allowed to defer publication of information to the award recipient's website of only one research study in each budget year, and only in the case where: (1) a recipient intends to submit a manuscript related to that work to a peer-reviewed journal, and (2) the delay is caused by the journal's peer review and acceptance policies.

In these cases, the award recipient will be allowed twelve additional months to complete the journal publication process for this one specific research study. If the research study is not accepted for publication within the twelve-month period, the award recipient must submit it promptly (i.e., within one month) for publication on the recipient's website. The award recipient may submit one or more of the remaining budget year research studies for journal publication, but these briefs/reports must be posted immediately upon their completion. No delay caused by the journal publication process will be allowed to impede publication on the recipient's website for the remaining briefs or reports.

Attribution. You are required to use the following acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced by HRSA funds:

"This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number and title for grant amount (specify grant number, title, and, if applicable, the percentage financed with nongovernmental sources). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."

Similarly, you are required to use the following acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced by SAMHSA and HRSA funds:

"This project is/was supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number and title for grant amount (specify grant number, title, and, if applicable, the percentage financed with nongovernmental sources). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by SAMHSA, HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."

The recipient is required to use this language when issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other HHS supported publications and forums describing projects or programs funded in whole or in

part with HHS funding, including websites. Examples of HHS-supported publications include, but are not limited to, manuals, toolkits, resource guides, case studies and issues briefs.

VII. Agency Contacts

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

Gerly Sapphire Marc-Harris
Senior Grants Management Specialist
Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Mailstop 10SWH03
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 443-2628
Fax: (301) 443-6343
Email: SMarc-harris@hrsa.gov

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

Robin Streeter, PhD, MPH
Special Assistant to the Director, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis
Bureau of Health Workforce, HRSA
5600 Fishers Lane, Room11N78
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 443-1304
Fax: (301) 443-6380
Email: RStreeter@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, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 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:

The following technical assistance webinar has been scheduled:

Webinar

Day and Date: Thursday, February 8, 2018
Time: 2 – 3:30 p.m. ET
Call-In Number: 1-888-769-8713
Participant Code: 3760192
Web link: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/nofo_hrsa_18_028/
Playback Number: 1-888-566-0132
Passcode: 5136

IX. Tips for Writing a Strong Application

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

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found on the program website, and are often updated during the application process.

In addition, a number of recorded webcasts have been developed with information that may assist you in preparing a competitive application. These webcasts can be accessed at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/write-strong/>.