

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Health Resources and Services Administration**

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy  
(FORHP)

***Rural Policy Analysis Program***

**Announcement Type: New  
Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-17-003**

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) No. 93.155**

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Fiscal Year 2017

**Application Due Date: November 14, 2016**

*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: September 14, 2016 (date posted to/available on Grants.gov)**

**Modified: September 26, 2016- (corrected/updated contact information for program officer)**

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Federal Office of Rural Health Policy is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2017 Rural Policy Analysis Program. The purpose of this program is to support research and analysis of key policy issues affecting rural communities that informs policy makers.

Funding Opportunity Title:	Rural Policy Analysis Program
Funding Opportunity Number:	HRSA-17-003
Due Date for Applications:	November 14, 2016
Anticipated Total Annual Available Funding:	\$225,000
Estimated Number and Type of Award(s):	Up to 1 grant(s)/cooperative agreement(s)
Estimated Award Amount:	Up to \$225,000 per year
Cost Sharing/Match Required:	No
Project Period:	July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021  (four (4) years)
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible organizations may include State, local, and Indian tribal governments; institutions of higher education; other non-profit organizations (including faith-based, community-based, and tribal organizations); and hospitals.  [See <a href="#">Section III-1</a> of this 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 Research and Related (R&R) Application Guide*, available online at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/sf424rrguide.pdf>, except where instructed in this FOA to do otherwise. A short video for applicants explaining the *Application Guide* is available at <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/applicationguide/>.

## **Technical Assistance**

A technical assistance call will be held on September 22, 2016 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm EST. Conference Call Number: 888-566-5774 Passcode: 2770054

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# I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

## 1. Purpose

This funding opportunity announcement solicits applications for the Rural Policy Analysis Program. The purpose of this program is to support research and analysis of key policy issues affecting rural communities that informs policy makers. The program is national in scope and looks at cross-cutting rural health and human services issues in order to identify trends and challenges. Funded projects should focus on the changing rural environment and products should achieve the following:

- (1) facilitate public dialogue on key rural policy issues by tracking emerging rural health and human services policy issues and quickly synthesizing them in a manner that provides for easy consumption by rural community leaders, with particular emphasis on rural health care providers and systems;
- (2) identify opportunities for integrating health and human services in rural policy, program, and evaluation in a local community context;
- (3) identify opportunities to demonstrate broad community impact of policies and programs in rural health and human services, consistent with policy goals related to rural revitalization and sustainability of rural regions.
- (4) provide timely analysis of policies and regulations that helps optimize positive impacts on rural health systems and communities in the form of policy briefs, reports, and oral presentations.
- (5) These activities should educate and inform rural decision makers and policy leaders, including the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services (NACRHHS) and organizations focused on improving health and human services in rural communities, such as State Offices of Rural Health, State Rural Health Associations.

## 2. Background

The Rural Policy Analysis cooperative agreement is authorized [by Section 711 \(b\) of the Social Security Act \(42 U.S.C. 912 \(b\)\)](#). The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) 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. For additional information about FORHP, please see <http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/index.html>.

Rural America faces significant challenges in ensuring access to needed health and human services. Like the U.S. population as a whole, the rural population is aging. This has implications for health care and human services provision. Rural residents face widening disparities in life expectancy and also report poorer health and more

physical limitations than urban residents. Rural residents may experience greater financial and geographic barriers to access, with the non-metro population being less likely to have health insurance coverage than the metro population. The range of health care providers and services in rural communities is narrower than in metro areas, especially due to declining rates for family medicine residency match, the redistribution of J1 Visa waivers, and the continued shortage of allied and other health care professions workforce.

Amid these demographic challenges, there are also significant changes taking place in terms of federal and state policies. The implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) and Medicare Access and CHIP reauthorization Act of 2015 has had a profound impact on rural communities and the U.S. healthcare system.

There is a need for a mechanism to help quickly synthesize and understand the implications of policy changes in rural health and human services delivery within the larger context of rural America for public policy makers, providers, leaders, and decision maker.

## **II. Award Information**

### **1. Type of Application and Award**

**Type of application sought is: New**

Funding will be provided in the form of a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement, as opposed to a grant, is an award instrument of financial assistance 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 responsibilities shall include:**

- (a) consultation and guidance in planning, operation and evaluation activities, including the identification and selection of policy issues and the analysis of key information sources from which to draw upon for the synthesis analysis;
- (b) guidance and assistance in identifying key organizations through which to share key information on emerging policy issues;
- (c) participation, as appropriate, in the planning and implementation of any meetings, training activities or workgroups conducted during the project period;
- (d) consultation in the identification of targets of opportunity for disseminating information about programs that coordinate both health and human services; and

- (e) review, provision of comments, recommendations, and approvals for documents, curricula, and other work policy briefs and reports created under the cooperative agreement prior to printing, dissemination or implementation.

**Requirements and Obligations of the cooperative agreement recipient shall include:**

- (a) Creation and distribution of at least 2 policy briefs, reports, and accompanying 1-page highlights and webinars per year that will inform public policy makers, providers, leaders, and decision makers on timely issues in the area of rural health policy;
- (b) facilitate public dialogue on key rural policy issues by tracking emerging rural health and human services policy issues and quickly synthesizing them in a manner that provides for easy consumption by rural community leaders such as members of the NACRHHS with particular emphasis on Medicare, Medicaid, human services, rural health care providers, and systems;
- (c) identify opportunities for integrating health and human services in rural policy, program, and evaluation in a local community context;
- (d) identify opportunities to demonstrate broad community impact of policies and programs in rural health and human services, consistent with policy goals related to rural revitalization and sustainability of rural regions; and
- (e) provide timely analysis of policies and regulations that optimize positive impacts on rural health systems and communities in the form of policy briefs, reports, 1-page highlights, webinars, and oral presentation for both technical and non-technical audiences and stakeholders such as NACRHHS.
- (f) Adherence to HRSA guidelines pertaining to acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced by HRSA award funds.

**2. Summary of Funding**

This program will provide funding during federal fiscal years 2017 - 2021. Approximately \$225,000 is expected to be available annually to fund one awardee. You may apply for a ceiling amount of up to \$225,000 per year. The project period is four years. Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds for the Rural Policy Analysis program in subsequent fiscal years, grantee satisfactory performance, and a decision that continued funding is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

Effective December 26, 2014, all administrative and audit requirements and the cost principles that govern federal monies associated with this award are subject to the Uniform Guidance [2 CFR part 200](#) as codified by HHS at [45 CFR part 75](#), which

supersede the previous administrative and audit requirements and cost principles that govern federal monies.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants include domestic public or private, non-profit or for-profit organizations. Eligible organizations may include State, local, and Indian tribal governments; institutions of higher education; other non-profit organizations (including faith-based, community-based, and tribal organizations); and hospitals.

Eligible applicants must be national in scope and have well- established relationships with each of the following constituencies: rural clinical service networks; frontier residents; rural hospitals and community health systems; rural medical and health care provider educators; rural health clinics; State Rural Health Associations (SRHA) and State Offices of Rural Health (SORHs).

You must have experience identifying emerging rural health care policy issues and promptly providing feedback to office inquiries regarding those issues. Eligible applicants must demonstrate experience conducting policy research in the areas of access to health care services, Medicare and Medicaid policies, and development of rural delivery systems and public health. You should also have the capacity to quickly synthesize and disseminate policy analysis that informs policy makers of the needs of rural health care delivery systems in the design and implementation of health care policy. Finally, you must demonstrate past experience in, and the ability to communicate results and implications of national health policy analyses for rural health services and delivery to a variety of audiences in a number of settings, including meeting presentations and panel discussions. Applications that fail to show such experience will not be considered.

#### **2. Cost Sharing/Matching**

Cost Sharing/Matching is not required for this program.

#### **3. Other**

Applications that exceed the ceiling amount will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this announcement.

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 announcement.



## IV. Application and Submission Information

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

HRSA **requires** applicants for this FOA to apply electronically through Grants.gov. You must download the SF-424 R&R application package associated with this FOA following the directions provided at <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

### 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. All applicants are responsible for reading and complying with the instructions included in HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) except where instructed in the FOA to do otherwise.

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 FOA. Standard Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms that are included in the application package are NOT included in the page limit (Exception: Biosketches in Appendix A of the *R&R Application Guide* **do** count in the page limit). Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) will not be counted in the page limit. **We strongly urge applicants to take appropriate measures to ensure the 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 the announcement.**

#### **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) Where the prospective recipient is unable to attest to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective recipient shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

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

#### **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.

Use the following section headers for the Narrative:

- *INTRODUCTION & NEED -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion1 (Introduction & Need)*  
This section should briefly describe and demonstrate purpose and need for research and analysis of key policy issues, with particular emphasis on Medicare, Medicaid, human services, rural health care providers, and systems affecting rural communities. The target population and its unmet health and human service needs must be described and documented in this section. Demographic data should be used and cited whenever possible to support the information provided. This section should help reviewers understand how rural decision makers and policy leaders will be served by the proposed project.
- *RESPONSE -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion2 (Response)*  
Propose methods that you will use to quickly analyze cross-cutting rural health and human services issues, with particular emphasis on Medicare, Medicaid, human services, rural health care providers, and systems, to identify trends and challenges facing rural communities. Activities proposed should focus on the changing rural environment and outline how they would achieve the following:
  - (1) facilitate public dialogue on key rural policy issues by tracking emerging rural health and human services policy issues and synthesize them in a manner that provides for easy consumption by rural community leaders, with particular emphasis on rural health care providers and systems;
  - (2) identify opportunities for integrating health and human services in rural policy, program, and evaluation in a local community context;
  - (3) identify opportunities to demonstrate broad community impact of policies and programs in rural health and human services, consistent with policy goals related to rural revitalization and sustainability of rural regions; and

- (4) provide prompt analysis of policies and regulations that helps optimize positive impacts on rural health systems and communities.

Describe the activities or steps that you will use to achieve each of the activities proposed throughout the project period. Use a time line that includes each activity, identifies responsible staff, and covers the entire four-year span of the proposed project. Discuss challenges that you are likely to encounter in designing and implementing the activities described and approaches that you will use to resolve such challenges. Demonstrate ability to respond to feedback to Office inquiry.

- *IMPACT -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion 3 (Impact)*  
Provide examples of your experience identifying emerging issues and conducting rural health and human services research and analysis at a national level, as well as your past experience working with policy leaders in health and human services. Demonstrate your understanding of the implications of rural policy issues in the areas of health care, human services, and economic development and the interplay between these issues in rural communities coupled with your ability to make that information available to varied audiences in a variety of mediums.
- *EVALUATIVE MEASURES-- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion4 (Evaluative Measures)*  
As appropriate, describe your data collection strategy to collect, analyze and track data to measure process and impact/outcomes of produced products and explain how you will use the data to inform program development. Propose a feasible and effective method to monitor and evaluate your project results.
- *RESOURCES/CAPABILITIES -- Corresponds to Section V's Review Criterion5 (Resources/Capabilities)*  
Provide information on your organization's current mission and structure, including the quality and availability of facilities and personnel to fulfill needs and requirements of proposed project, scope of current activities, and an organizational chart, and describe how these all contribute to the ability of your organization to conduct the program requirements and meet program expectations. Provide information on your program's past experience working in cross-disciplinary teams and current resources and capabilities to analyze rural health and human services issues at a national level and to understand the broad implications of rural policy issues in health care, human services, and economic development. Demonstrate past experience and current capability to communicate complex public policy, emerging issues rural issues, and key rural concerns within broader issues to a wide variety of audiences and mediums. Demonstrate ability to understand the impact of public policy on rural people and places and the impact on those forces on quality of life and cross-sector dynamics in rural policies designed to build and sustain healthy rural communities

## **NARRATIVE GUIDANCE**

In order to ensure that the Review Criteria are fully addressed, this table provides a crosswalk between the narrative language and where each section falls within the review criteria.

<b><u>Narrative Section</u></b>	<b><u>Review Criteria</u></b>
Introduction & Need	(1) Introduction & Need
Response	(2) Response
Impact	(3) Impact
Evaluative Measures	(4) Evaluative Measures
Resources/Capabilities	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Support Requested	(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](#) differ from those offered by Grants.gov. Please follow the instructions included in the *R&R Application Guide*.

**Reminder:** The Total Project or Program Costs are the total allowable costs (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs) incurred by you to carry out a -HRSA-supported project or activity. Total project or program costs include costs charged to the award.

### **iv. Budget Justification Narrative**

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

### **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: Work Plan*

Attach the Work Plan for the project that includes all information detailed in Section IV. ii. Project Narrative.

*Attachment 2: Staffing Plan and Job Descriptions for Key Personnel (see Section 4.1.vi. of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#))*

Keep each job description to one page in length as much as is possible. Include the role, responsibilities, and qualifications of proposed project staff.

*Attachment 3: Letters of Agreement 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 agreements should clearly describe the roles of the contractors and any deliverable. Letters of agreement must be dated.

*Attachment 4: Project Organizational Chart*

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

*Attachment 5: Tables, Charts, etc.*

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

*Attachment 6: Other Relevant Documents*

Include here any other documents that are relevant to your application, including letters of support. Letters of support must be dated.

**Include only letters of support which specifically indicate a commitment to the proposed project/program (in-kind services, dollars, staff, space, equipment, etc.). List all other support letters on one page.**

### **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 you are 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://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>)
- 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](#).

**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 FOA is *November 14, 2016 at 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time.*

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

#### **5. Intergovernmental Review**

The Rural Policy 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 project period of up to four (4) years, at no more than \$225,000 per year. 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 announcement may not be used for other Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) Programs.

The General Provisions in Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113) 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 2017, 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 the all federal funding requirements and prohibitions such as lobbying, gun control, abortion, etc. 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 each 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 the application. The entire proposal will be considered during objective review.

Review Criteria are used to review and rank applications. The Rural Policy Analysis Program has *six (6)* review criteria:

#### *Criterion 1: INTRODUCTION & NEED (10 points) –Corresponds to Section IV's Introduction & Need*

The extent to which the application:

- Describe and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs of target populations of the communities served as well as an understanding of the type of analysis necessary to routinely assess and improve rural communities.
- Exhibits a strong understanding of the issues facing rural communities and health care providers with specific emphasis on the challenges resulting from federal health care policy development and implementation, and the interaction with state policy and activities involving commercial insurers and community health systems.

- Provides clear focus on information national policy makers need, in particular, and State and local decision makers as well, who are concerned with rural health care services

*Criterion 2: RESPONSE (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Response*

The extent to which the proposed project:

- Responds appropriately to the “Purpose” included in the program description which is to support research and analysis of key policy issues affecting rural communities that informs policy makers.
- Effectively monitors emerging rural health and human services policy issues.
- Proposes a method to quickly synthesize complex legislative and regulatory issues for easy consumption by rural community leaders and policy makers.
- Identify opportunities for integrating health and human services in rural policy, programs within a rural community context.
- Identify feasible methods to demonstrate the broad community impact of national policies and programs on rural health and human services.
- Will provide valuable and timely policy analysis that focuses on continually improving the health and human services available to rural communities.
- Provides a reasonable work plan that describes the activities or steps that will be used to achieve each of the evaluation activities proposed.
- Demonstrates the thoroughness with which the applicant presents and discusses the challenges that are likely to be encountered in designing and implementing the activities, as well as approaches that would be used to address such challenges.
- Demonstrate ability to respond to feedback to Office inquiry.

*Criterion 3: IMPACT (10 points) –*

*Corresponds to Section IV’s Impact*

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the following:

- Demonstrates ability to identify emerging issues in rural health and experience with rural health and human services research and analysis at a national level, as well as past experience working with policy leaders in health and human services, and should provide examples of this experience within the application.
- Understands the broad implications of rural policy issues in the areas of health care, human services, and economic development and the interplay between these issues in rural communities coupled with the ability to make that information available to the public in a variety of mediums.
- Demonstrates prior experience in communicating complex public policy issues to varied audiences in ways that identify the key rural concerns within the broader issue.
- Understands the impact of public policy on rural people and places and the impact of those forces on quality of life and an ability to translate that to rural citizens.



- Understands of cross-sector dynamics in rural policies designed to build and sustain health rural communities.

*Criterion 4: EVALUATIVE MEASURES (5 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Evaluative Measures*

The extent to which the application:

- Proposes a feasible and effective method to monitor and evaluate the project results.
- Proposes an evaluation plan that is logical, technically sound and practical, and able to yield meaningful findings about key areas of project process and outcome.
- Details the relevance, substantive importance, and practicality of the project-specific performance measures.

*Criterion 5: RESOURCES/CAPABILITIES (35 points) – Corresponds to Section IV's Resources/Capabilities*

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the following:

- Project personnel are qualified by training and/or experience to implement and carry out the projects.
- The capabilities of the applicant organization, and quality and availability of facilities and personnel to fulfill the needs and requirements of the proposed project, are described in detail and appropriate.
- Prior experience working in cross-disciplinary teams of experts to analyze how public policy affects a variety of key rural service sectors and the ability to translate that into useful information for rural citizens.
- Experience with rural health and human services research and analysis at a national level, as well as past experience working with policy leaders in health and human services, and should provide examples of this experience within the application.
- Understands the broad implications of rural policy issues in the areas of health care, human services, and economic development and the interplay between these issues in rural communities coupled with the ability to make that information available to the public in a variety of mediums.
- Demonstrates prior experience in communicating complex public policy issues to varied audiences in ways that identify the key rural concerns within the broader issue, such as at stakeholder meetings and meetings of deliberative bodies such as MedPAC, and NACRHHS.
- Understands the impact of public policy on rural people and places and the impact of those forces on quality of life and an ability to translate that to rural citizens.
- Understands of cross-sector dynamics in rural policies designed to build and sustain healthy rural communities.

- Demonstrates ability to identify emerging issues in rural health and respond with feedback to Office inquiries.

*Criterion 6: SUPPORT REQUESTED (10 points) –  
Corresponds to Section IV's Support Requested*

The reasonableness of the proposed budget for each year of the project period in relation to the objectives, the complexity of the research activities, and the anticipated results. This includes the extent to which costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable given the scope of work.

## **2. Review and Selection Process**

Please see Section 5.3 of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

This program does not have any funding priorities, preferences or special considerations.

## **3. Assessment of Risk and Other Pre-Award Activities**

The Health Resources and Services Administration 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 that HRSA is considering for funding are reviewed for other considerations. These include, as applicable, cost analysis of the project/program budget, assessment of your management systems, ensuring your continued eligibility, and compliance with any public policy requirements, including those requiring just-in-time submissions. You may be asked to submit additional programmatic or grants 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 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 \(FAPIIS\)](#). Your organization may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered. HRSA will consider any comments by your organization, in addition to other information in [FAPIIS](#)

in making a judgment about the your organization's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by your organization as described in [45 CFR § 75.205 HHS Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

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

#### **4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

It is anticipated that awards will be announced prior to the start date of July 1, 2017.

### **VI. Award Administration Information**

#### **1. Award Notices**

The Notice of Award will be sent prior to the start date of July 1, 2017. 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 of HRSA's [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#).

#### **3. Reporting**

If you are successful under this FOA, you 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)**. You must submit a progress report to HRSA on an **annual** basis. Further information will be provided in the award notice.

### **VII. Agency Contacts**

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

Kimberly Dews  
Grants Management Specialist  
Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane Rm. 11A-02  
Rockville, MD 20857  
Telephone: (301) 443-0655  
Fax: (301) 594-6096

E-mail: [kdews@hrsa.gov](mailto:kdews@hrsa.gov)

Additional information related to the overall program issues and/or technical assistance regarding this funding announcement may be obtained by contacting:

Amy Chanlongbutra  
Deputy Director, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy  
Attn: Funding Program  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane Rm. 10-64  
Rockville, MD 20857  
Telephone: (301) 443-5843  
Fax: (301) 443-2803  
E-mail: [achanlongbutra@hrsa.gov](mailto:achanlongbutra@hrsa.gov)

You may need assistance when working online to submit your application forms electronically. You should 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, seven days a week, excluding federal holidays at:

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

If you are a successful in competing for this funding, you 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:

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

## **VIII. Other Information**

### **Helpful Websites:**

For HRSA: <http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html>

For FORHP: <http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/>

## **IX. TIPS for Writing a Strong Application**

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