

Rural Population Health Incubator Program

2026-2027 Rural Population Health Incubator Program FAQ

General

Q: How many grants are available?

A: ORH is offering a total of seven \$10,000 grants

- Three grants are set aside for Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), CAH-owned clinics or organizations partnering with a CAH or CAH-owned clinic (a letter of support must be supplied if in partnership with a CAH). This funding is through the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex), a Federal grant awarded to ORH by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP).
- The rest of the grants are open to rural clinics, public health departments, EMS and other community-based organizations (CBOs).
- There is a possibility of funding more programs through our partnership with the Roundhouse Foundation, which will be decided during the application review period.

Q: Can applicant organizations charge their normal indirect rate?

A: Yes, Incubator funds can be used for indirect costs, but they must be limited to 15% of the total budget or less.

Application

Q: There's space to upload one supporting document on the online submission form.

What if I have more than one letter of support?

A: You can combine the PDFs into one document and upload that one document. Please try to limit the number of pages in your supplemental document.

Q: Can organizations apply for multiple projects?

A: Yes, you can submit multiple grant applications for different projects.

Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to apply for the Incubator?

A: Rural hospitals, clinics, public health departments and CBOs are eligible to apply for the Incubator. Urban-based entities are eligible if the program exclusively serves a rural area and has an established partnership with a rural organization. Partnerships must be demonstrated through a letter of support, which can be uploaded as supplemental material on the application. Rural is defined by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. Find out if your area is rural by using the [Am I Rural? Tool](#).

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Q: Are private rural clinics eligible?

A: Yes, private rural clinics are eligible.

Q: Can an urban organization apply for the Incubator if they are serving a rural area?

A: Yes, an urban organization can apply if they have a partnership with and experience in working with a rural hospital, clinic, public health, EMS or CBO. This partnership must be demonstrated by uploading a letter of support in the supplemental documents section of the application.

Budget

Q: Can salaries be supported through the Incubator?

A: Yes, salaries can be supported if the program aligns with the Incubator program goals. ORH encourages you to limit salaries attributed to the grant to 20% so more funds are spent on direct program costs. However, if you propose using grant funds to exclusively support salaries, please include a strong sustainability plan for the position to continue after the grant period.

* Please note that salaries for direct patient care cannot be supported by Incubator funds. For example, the \$10,000 cannot be spent on a nurse's salary at your hospital.

Q: What costs are ineligible to be covered by the Incubator funds?

A: Applications that propose using funds solely for medical devices for direct patient care will not be approved. However, purchasing supplies and equipment that support your overarching population health program and goals is allowable.

For example:

- Allowable: A hospital who requests grant funds to support their programming for older adults and would like to use Incubator funding to purchase gym equipment that is needed for their weekly mobility classes.
- Unallowable: A clinic applies for funding to buy 100 blood pressure cuffs.

Grant funds cannot be spent on food or drink. Fund cannot support salaries for direct patient care.

Grant Period

Q: What are the details and expectations around attending cohort meetings and workshops?

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A: Grantee cohort meetings will be held virtually once per quarter of the grant cycle in May, July, October and March. These meetings are casual spaces for grantees to share about their programs and learn from one another. Workshops will be held during the grant cycle, dates TBA. Grantees are expected to prioritize attendance at these meetings.

In addition to cohort meetings and workshops, ORH staff may ask to visit your program in person. These visits will happen in June or July after the grant cycle has ended.

Q: How long is the grant period?

A: The grant period runs from April 15, 2026, to April 14, 2027

Reporting

Q: What are the reporting requirements?

A: Grantees are required to submit a midpoint report in mid-October, as well as a final report due at the end of April. Templates and instructions will be provided at least one month ahead of time. These reports are not meant to be overly burdensome but to provide a succinct overview of the project's progress, successes and challenges, overall impact, and grant expenses.

Grantees are also expected to complete short surveys throughout the grant cycle to help ORH staff improve and report on the Incubator program.