 **NC DHHS Notice of Funding Availability**

Reporting Form

DHHS Division/Office issuing this notice: NC Office of Rural Health

Date of this notice: September 14th, 2020

Working title of the funding program: Rural Hospital Flexibility Project

Purpose:

The Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex Program) is a federal cooperative agreement program directed to State Offices of Rural Health to support:

* Improving the quality of health care provided in communities served by Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)
* Improving the financial and operational performance of CAHs
* Developing collaborative regional and local delivery systems in CAH communities to improve population health

The purpose of these Flex Program funds is to improve the quality of care provided by CAHs by focusing on financial and operational implementation, quality metrics, and management of population health according to performance measures as defined by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. Specifically, these funds will support a hybrid technical assistance model that includes both group and individual CAH support.

Description:

This one-year grant will be awarded to an organization or organizations that:

* Conduct, manage, and facilitate meetings of CAH executives to share best practices, receive technical assistance on quality, financial and operational areas of interest, population health and investigate primary care capacity, innovative model ideas and workforce concerns. Project anticipates up to six (6) statewide and/or regional meetings per year.
* Develop individualized projects with select CAHs or groups of CAHs to identify opportunities for and initiate improvement in quality, financial and operational performance, and population health.
* Conduct ongoing productivity, financial and operational benchmarking performance reports? and educational opportunities for CAHs.
* Engage CAHs in submitting quality performance data as required by the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP).
* Organize collaborative networks for CAHs to share best practices and work together on various quality initiatives.
* Support ongoing network needs and activities by providing technical assistance when necessary.

The aforementioned activities will be performed with the intent to improve CAH performance in the following areas:

* Key financial indicators identified by the Flex Monitoring Team (FMT)
* Improvement of Population Health Management
* Inpatient core measures as defined by MBQIP
* Outpatient core measures as defined by MBQIP
* Patient satisfaction/Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores

During the grant period, the Office of Rural Health will monitor and provide technical assistance to the grantee to support the activities mentioned above.

The grantee will receive up to $332,000 during the grant period. ***The maximum total grant award cannot exceed $332,000.*** All funding must be expended by August 31, 2021.

Eligible applicants must demonstrate organizational capacity to manage the projects, including the ability to employ or contract with professionals credentialed in hospital financial, operational, quality and/or population health improvement, as applicable to the grant proposal scope. Applicants may focus on one area of improvement if applicable.

How to Apply: The Office requires applicants for this funding opportunity to apply by completing the “SFY 2021 Rural Hospital Flexibility Program” request for applications as posted on the Office website (<https://ncruralhealth.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dm7Qb3Vok9vQG0t>). Using the link provided, you will enter your contact information and a personalized link to the application will be sent to the e-mail address provided.

Deadline for Submission: Grant applications must be electronically received by 5:00 PM Friday, September 18, 2020. Only electronic copies will be accepted. **Incomplete applications and applications not completed in accordance with the following instructions will not be reviewed. Applications received after the 5:00 PM deadline on Friday, September 18, 2020 will not be reviewed.**

How to Obtain Further Information:

Questions regarding the grant application may be directed to Nick Galvez at nick.galvez@dhhs.nc.gov. No phone calls will be fielded for questions, only in writing by email.