

NORTH CAROLINA
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

Rural Health Innovation Fund

November 5, 2026

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NCDIT NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Housekeeping

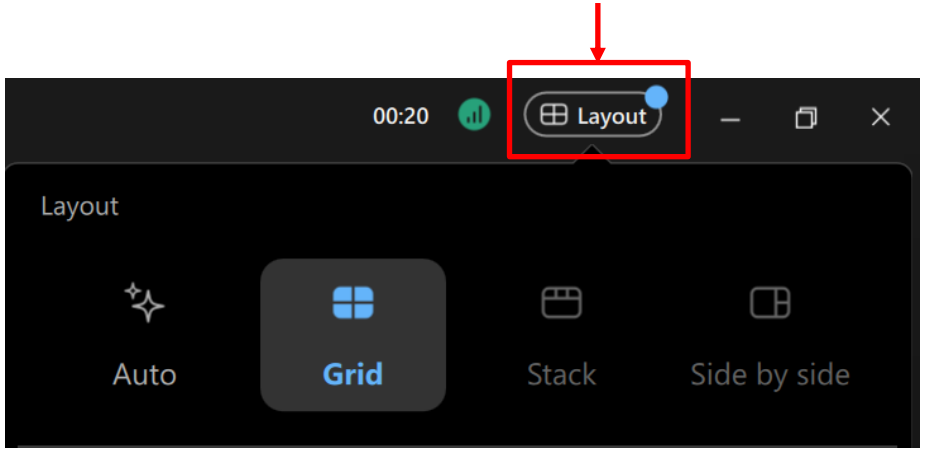
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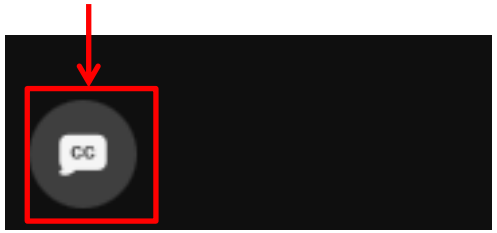
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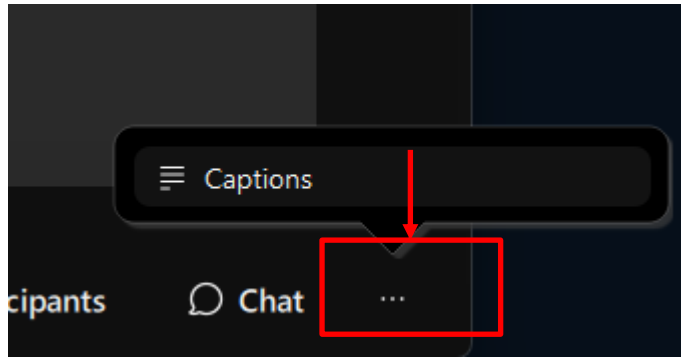
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A copy of today's slides and recording will be available on our website at ncdhhs.gov/rhtp.



Meet Our Presenters

Joseph Watkins, Director, Efficiency and Transformation (NCDHHS)

Kiya Edwards, Director, Office of Digital Opportunity (NCDIT)



Agenda

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The bigger picture and where technology fits

02 Application Deadline

03 Where We Are Now

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What to be aware of

Stevens Amendment Disclosure: This presentation is supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling $213,008,356.47 in budget period 1 with 100% funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Transforming Rural Health in North Carolina

Our focus:
Improve health care in rural communities, help people get better care and make sure rural health services are available for years to come.

North Carolina Awarded Over $213 Million

Funded by U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for the first year of the Rural Health Transformation Program.

Investing in the Building Blocks of a Stronger Rural Health Care System

#	Initiative
1	Build Rural Community Care Network “Hubs”
2	Expand Primary Care, Prevention and Chronic Disease Management
3	Expand & Integrate Behavioral Health and SUD Services
4	Build a Robust, Resilient Rural Workforce and Care-Team Models
5	Ensure Fiscal Sustainability Through Innovative Financial Models
6	Modernize Rural Care Delivery Through Digital-Forward Solutions

Using Technology to Make Rural Care Easier to Deliver and Access - Modernizing Rural Practices

North Carolina is investing approximately $20 million per year for up to five years to help rural providers use technology to:

- Improve patient care
- Strengthen operations
- Stay connected with patients

The Rural Health Innovation Fund (RHIF) is administered by the NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) in collaboration with NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)

Application Deadline

We Heard You

The application deadline has been extended!

New Date:

- Monday, December 7

*Reminder, the intake assessment is a prerequisite to the application, and it closed on October 31.

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Where We Are Now

RHIF By The Numbers *(as of Oct. 29, 2026)*

Intake Assessments
- 122

Counties Represented
- 61% (61 out of 100)

Top Three Areas of Expressed Investment Interest
- EHR
- AI-Enabled Tools
- IT Hardware

Total Value of All Preliminarily Eligible Applicants
- $17,877,600

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How We Are Preparing Applicants

Application Tutorial

- *Portal instructions are on the NCDIT Rural Health Innovation Fund landing page*

Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Support

- Applicant playbook
  - *Template which explains everything an applying organization needs to prepare*
- Vendor quote form
  - *Form to capture the respective quotes and to attach when applying*
- Vendor quotes outreach email template
  - *Email template to assist with outreach to vendors*
- How to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
  - *Instructions for organizations who do not have a UEI*
- Tailored Technologies
  - *Menu of technology options for those who need support*

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Year 2, Round 1

What is on the Horizon

Given the amount of interest, we will not have a Year 1, Round 2.

Year 2, Round 1 is anticipated to start March 2027

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Technical Assistance Center (TAC) Theme 1

Spending Timeline and Allowable Costs

- **All reimbursable and eligible RHIF costs must be completed between notification of award and July 31, 2027.**
- **Travel, salary, fringe are unallowable costs for Year 1, Round 1.**

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Tailored Technologies Recommendations

TAC Theme 2

- **This step exists to provide support. The recommendations and suggestions do not have to be followed.**
- **You are eligible for the technologies in your tier, below your tier and one tier above.**

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Application

TAC Theme 3

- **At least two quotes are required due to federal procurement guidance.**
- **The TAC applicant playbook prepares you for the various portions of the application .**

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RHIF Email Inbox Theme 1

How to Calculate Share of Rural Patients

A popular method to calculate the share of rural patients is by using RUCA-designated rural ZIP codes.

- You can conduct bulk lookup by visiting:
  - https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.

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RHIF Email Inbox Theme 2

Health System/Network Coordination

- **A parent organization may only have five simultaneous applications per round.**
- **A health system or network cannot submit an application on behalf of multiple facilities. Each facility must submit their own application.**
- **An individual facility's award can be used to support health system/network shared resources.**

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Third-Party Involvement

RHIF Email Inbox Theme 3

- **No third party can complete the intake assessment or application on the eligible organization's behalf.**
- **Any readiness support by a third party is not reimbursable if it occurred before award.**

How to Apply?

1. Complete the online intake assessment *(closed Oct. 31)*

2. Get support from Technical Assistance Center

3. Submit your application through the NCDIT grant portal

New application deadline: December 7, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

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What Makes a Strong Project?

Investments are intended to support solutions that:

Respond to Provider Needs:
Address a real need facing the provider or practice

Improve Care:
Help improve quality of care

Reduce Avoidable Costs:
Help make care delivery more efficient

Can Grow:
Have the potential to be scaled

Can Last:
Be sustainable beyond the initial investment

Key Dates

- **December 7, 2026**
  Applications due by 11:59 p.m.
- **January 2027**
  Awards anticipated
- **March 2027**
  Year 2 intake assessment opens
- **July 30, 2027**
  Year 1 projects must be completed



Reminder: Funding is reimbursement-based.

Questions or Need Help?

ncdhhs.gov/rhtp

