



# Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program- Emergency Medical Services Competing Supplement Notice of Funding Opportunity

Technical Assistance Webinar  
*December 15, 2021*

Tahleah Chappel, MS  
Public Health Analyst  
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

**Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People**



# Agenda

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- Housekeeping Items
- NOFO Review
- Questions



# Housekeeping Items

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- Download today's slides
- Live questions at end of the call
- Use chat box for questions during the call
- Send an email to [Tchappel@hrsa.gov](mailto:Tchappel@hrsa.gov) to obtain a copy of the recorded session



# NOFO Review

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

# HRSA

Health Resources & Services Administration

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Hospital State Division

Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program-  
Emergency Medical Services Competing Supplement  
Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-22-063  
Funding Opportunity Type: Competing Supplement  
Assistance Listings (AL/CFDA) Number: 93.241

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year 2022

**Application Due Date: March 4, 2022**

*Ensure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations and passwords are current immediately!*

*HRSA will not approve deadline extensions for lack of registration.*

*Registration in all systems may take up to 1 month to complete.*

**Issuance Date: December 2, 2021**

Tahleah Chappel  
Project Officer, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy  
Telephone: (301) 443-0197  
Email: [TChappel@hrsa.gov](mailto:TChappel@hrsa.gov)

See [Section VI](#) for a complete list of agency contacts.

Authority: Title XVIII, §1820(g)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395-4(g)(2))



# Program Details

- **Grant Program Dates:** September 30, 2022 – August 31, 2024
- **Award Amount:** approximately \$300,000 per year\*
- **# of Awards:** up to 6 award
- **Applications Due:** March 4, 2022, no later than 11:59pm EST
- **Page Limit:** 40 pages
  - The page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments, and letters of commitment and support unless otherwise noted in the NOFO.
- The Flex program is authorized by Title XVIII, §1820(g)(2), of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-4(g)(2)), which authorizes funding “for the establishment or expansion of a program for the provision of rural emergency medical services.”



# EMS Supplement- Purpose

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The goal of this supplemental funding is to expand upon the current Flex program by encouraging rural EMS agencies to educate staff and leadership on the importance of accurate reporting, and how it drives quality improvement efforts at the agency level. Improving and/or adding quality improvement activities allows EMS agencies to enhance clinical care, and find efficiencies which has the potential to both expand their ability to care for patients, and allow them to expand needed services. Additionally these supplements will serve as examples to other EMS agencies interested in this topic.



# Eligibility Requirements

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- Eligible applicants must be current recipients funded under HRSA-19-024, Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program cooperative agreement. This competitive supplemental funding opportunity is only open to current award recipients of the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program cooperative agreement. Only states (current Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program award recipients in states with certified critical access hospitals) are eligible to apply for funding under this notice.



# HRSA Involvement

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- Collaborating with award recipients to review and provide input on the Work Plans in alignment with HRSA priorities, state needs, and changes in the rural EMS environment through such activities as identifying and prioritizing needs to be addressed using federal funds;
- Monitoring and supporting implementation of the Work Plan through progress report reviews; and
- Collaborating with technical assistance providers that are developing tools and resources for state Flex program use.





# Recipient Responsibilities

- Collaborating with HRSA on refining and implementing the Work Plan according to HRSA priorities, state needs, and changes in the rural EMS environment;
- Negotiating with HRSA to update Work Plans at least annually, or more frequently as needed (e.g., in response to identified challenges);
- Developing and implementing a state Flex EMS Supplement as described in this notice: HRSA-22-063;
- Participating in information sharing and program improvement activities coordinated by HRSA's designated Flex EMS Supplement technical assistance providers; and
- Participating in the national evaluation of the Flex EMS Supplement.



# Project Narrative – Introduction

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- Provide a brief overview of the purpose of the proposed project, the overall strategy and reasoning, and your projected outcomes and goals for the two-year period of performance. Explain the importance of the project. Describe how the measures chosen will be used to enhance quality improvement efforts at the agency level.



# Project Narrative – Needs Assessment

- Provide an environmental scan assessing rural EMS in the state, focused on the participating agencies and the problem your project will address;
- Clearly define the problem(s) that the project aims to address;
- Provide data in support of your assessment of the problem; consider how health disparities and health equity may contribute to the problem;
- Your chosen measures may affect only certain populations. If applicable, describe the implications for populations or subpopulations that have historically suffered from poorer health outcomes, health disparities, and other inequities compared to the rest of the target population. These populations may include, but are not limited, to homeless populations, racial and ethnic minorities, pregnant women, adolescents and youth, etc.
- Identify potential partners that you can engage; and
- Describe how the proposed project advances the overall goal of improving access to quality emergency medical care in rural communities.



# Project Narrative – Methodology

- Describe the methods you plan to use to address and improve your chosen EMS measures and related quality improvement activities. The methods should include how you intend to increase accurate EMS reporting while using the data to drive quality improvement at the agency level.
- Describe how you will educate/train EMS staff and leadership on the use of data and quality improvement efforts (including the importance of accurate reporting). Discuss the educational resources that will be the basis for your education/training and why you chose them.
- Discuss how you will account for applicable health disparities and health equity measures outlined in your needs assessment.
- Project proposals must include at least five rural EMS agencies. Critical access hospitals and/or other key stakeholders may also be included as appropriate. Letters of support (Attachment 6) to participate from at least five EMS agencies must also be included. Each letter must specify the EMS agency's willingness and intent to participate in the program for the entire duration of the project.
- Explain the plan for project support and sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. HRSA expects recipients to sustain key elements of their projects, e.g., strategies or services and interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and those that have led to improved outcomes for the target population.



# Work Plan

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- Describe the activities or steps that you will use to achieve each of the objectives proposed during the entire period of performance in the Methodology section. Use a time line that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff. Include your anticipated outputs and proposed outcome measures you are hoping to achieve. As appropriate, identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders in planning, designing, and implementing all activities. Provide a complete work plan that describes each of the activities to be conducted related to at least three identified rural EMS measures.
- Refer to the [Flex Program Funding Guidance](#) section of the Technical Assistance & Services Center website (TASC) for more information on the structure of the work plan.
- Include the work plan as **Attachment 1**.



# Resolution of Challenges

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- Provide details on the approaches that you will use to mitigate risks and resolve any challenges so the project can continue as planned. Describe how your management plan will promote accountability and an effective execution. You should discuss any challenges that could be encountered, especially related to keeping project participants, including EMS agencies and other partners, actively engaged for the duration of the project, including the completion of final reporting. Discuss approaches that you will use to resolve such challenges.



# Evaluation & Technical Support Capacity

## Project Monitoring and Evaluation Capability

- This section should show your capacity and ability to plan for effective program management for the duration of the proposed project.
- Describe current experience, skills, and knowledge base that will contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the proposed project, including individuals on staff, materials published, and previous work of a similar nature.
- Identify the three EMS measures you chose for your project; explain the process used to decide on the measures, and why they were chosen.
- Describe the goals/desired outcomes the project aims to achieve by the end of the two-year period of performance.
- Explain how you will use the identified baseline data to evaluate ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
- Describe the systems and processes that your organization will use to collect and manage data needed for accurate and timely performance reporting.



# Evaluation & Technical Support Capacity Cont'd

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## *Evaluation Plan*

- Describe how you will analyze and assess your data in a way that will increase the knowledge on accurate EMS reporting and quality improvement efforts at the agency level.
- Explain how the proposed evaluation plan will assess the effectiveness of the project. Describe your approach to disseminating project results.
- Describe how you will assess sustainability of the activities, and how you will determine whether further implementation is or is not recommended.





# Organizational Information

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Refer to the organizational chart in Attachment 4 and explain (as applicable) how the state Flex program fits within its larger parent organization.

- Describe the approaches (including staff, contracts, and subawards) you will use to achieve program objectives and how you will ensure coordination between staff, contractors, and subrecipients, as applicable. Describe how you will organize the project to use federal funds as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Describe relationships with partners or contracts and subawards that will help the state Flex program successfully implement and evaluate the proposed Flex EMS Supplement.
- Include a description of your monitoring and assessment processes for subrecipients, subawards, and/or contractors, if applicable.
- Refer to your Staffing Plan and Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel as Attachment 2 and 3 respectively, as needed, to justify the information presented in this section.



# Budget Narrative

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- The budget narrative should justify all requested costs for the supplemental award, including all contracts or subawards. It should be clearly explained how the costs were determined or estimated, and the specific contract deliverables for each contractor or subrecipient. Funds requested for the Flex EMS Supplement may not duplicate costs already provided under the primary Flex Program cooperative agreement award. The corresponding budget narrative must justify only funds to be used to support additional activities derived from the supplemental funds.



# Budget Narrative Cont'd

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- Note that supplemental funds can only be used to purchase equipment and supplies necessary to implement the project **and cannot be used to purchase equipment or supplies for general use**. As applicable, you must explain in the budget narrative how each equipment item will be used and how sustainability will be assured, including how the equipment will be inventoried, maintained, and used after the end of the supplemental funding. Supply purchases must also be listed and justified in the budget narrative.



# Budget – Allowable Uses of Funds

Allowable uses of funds under this notice include, but are not limited to, the following purposes:

- Salaries for project management personnel
- Training/education on accurate data collection and entry, system use, NEMESIS v3.5, quality improvement methodology
- Regional or state-wide EMS conferences that highlight EMS quality improvement initiatives
- Data collection tools including software and information technology devices such as computers or tablets and telehealth connection services or devices
- Reimbursement of EMS agency staff time, for data collection and reporting
- Additional budgetary guidance can be found on pages 10-12 of the NOFO



# Funding Restrictions

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You may request funding for a period of performance of up to 2 years, at no more than \$300,000 per year (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs).

**You cannot use funds under this notice for the following purposes:**

- For direct patient care services;
- To purchase ambulances and any other vehicles;
- To purchase or improve real property; or
- For any purpose which is inconsistent with the language of this NOFO or Section 1820(g)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i-4(g)(2)).



# Attachments

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## Attachment 1: Work Plan

- Attach the work plan for the proposed project that includes all information detailed in Section IV. ii. Project Narrative. . Include output and outcome measures for the Flex EMS Supplement.

## Attachment 2: Staffing Plan (see Section 4.1.vi. of HRSA’s SF-424 Application Guide)

- Include a staffing plan and provide a justification for the plan that includes a rationale for each award-funded staff position. Include position descriptions with the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of proposed project staff. Keep each position description to one page in length or less.

## Attachment 3: Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel

- Include biographical sketches for Key Personnel, less than one page in length per person. In the event that a biographical sketch is included for an identified individual not yet hired, include a letter of commitment from that person with the biographical sketch. Key Personnel are the Principal Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD) and other individuals who contribute to the programmatic development or execution of a project or program in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the award.



# Attachments Cont'd

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## **Attachment 4: Project Organizational Chart**

- Provide a one-page figure or diagram that depicts the organizational structure of the project. Include sub-recipients and contractors that are integral to the success of the project in the figure

## **Attachment 5: Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NOT counted in page limit)**

- If applicable, provide the current federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement used to substantiate indirect costs in the proposed budget.

## **Attachment 6: Letters of Support**

- Provide letters of support from at least five rural EMS agencies that specifies the agency's willingness and intent to participate in the program for the entire duration of the project. Letters of support must be dated and specifically indicate a commitment to the project/program (in-kind services, dollars, staff, space, equipment, etc.).

## **Attachments 7–15: Other Relevant Documents**

- Include here any other documents that are relevant to the application.



# Reporting Requirements

Review the Reporting Requirements listed under section VI. Award Administration Information (starting on page 23)

## 1) Progress Report(s)

The recipient must submit information related to the competing supplement as part of their Flex Program report narrative. Refer to HRSA-19-024 for additional details on the Non-Competing Continuation Renewal Submission. Further detail will be provided by your project officer.

The recipient must submit a progress report at the end of year one to HRSA with the Flex NCC renewal. Further detail will be provided by your project officer.

## 2) Final Report

The recipient must submit information related to the competing supplement as part of their Flex Program final report. Refer to HRSA-19-024 for additional details. Further detail will be provided by your project officer.





# Review Process

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- Application reviews conducted by outside review panel
  - Look at “Review Criteria” section to see how the “Narrative” sections will be reviewed and scored
- Acceptance and non-acceptance letters sent out prior to award date
- Notice of Award sent out prior to September 1, 2022 start date



# EMS Supplement Program – Contact Information

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## **Program Contact:**

Tahleah Chappel

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy – Hospital State Division

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email: [Tchappel@hrsa.gov](mailto:Tchappel@hrsa.gov)

Phone: 301-443-0197

## **Grants Management (Fiscal/Administrative) Contact:**

Bria Haley

Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email: [bhaley@hrsa.gov](mailto:bhaley@hrsa.gov)

Phone: 301-443-3778



# Questions

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