



**ALASKA**  
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION



## Recap: RHTP Letter of Interest Office Hours, February 17, 2026

The Alaska Department of Health hosted a Letter of Interest (LOI) Office Hours webinar to provide guidance and answer questions about the application process for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). The session focused on clarifying submission requirements, timelines, eligibility considerations, and expectations for Year One funding.

Commissioner Heidi Hedberg, Deputy Commissioner Emily Ricci, and RHTP Application Administrator Megan Cacciola walked participants through the process and addressed common points of confusion to ensure organizations are well-positioned to participate.

### **Purpose of the Office Hours**

The primary objective of the session was to:

- Walk organizations through the LOI registration and submission process
- Clarify documentation and registration requirements (including UEI)
- Reinforce that the LOI is a high-level screening tool, not a full proposal
- Help applicants determine whether their project is ready for Year One

Leadership emphasized that this is an early step in a multi-year transformation initiative, and applicants should focus on alignment and readiness rather than exhaustive detail.

### **Understanding the Letter of Interest (LOI)**

The LOI is designed to collect high-level information about proposed projects to determine eligibility and alignment with RHTP goals.

Key clarifications included:

- The LOI is not a fully developed application
- Character limits are intentional and should be respected
- The Department is assessing:

- Project alignment with RHTP goals
- Organizational readiness
- Capacity to execute within the required timeframe
- Approximate budget scale

Applicants were encouraged to be concise and strategic in their responses.

## Year One Considerations

Commissioner Hedberg stressed that RHTP is a **five-year initiative**, and Year One funding is limited in duration.

Important guidance:

- Year One is a shortened implementation window
- Organizations should not rush to submit projects that are not ready
- If a project is not prepared to launch within the required timeframe, it may be better suited for a future funding round
- Future opportunities will be available

Deputy Commissioner Ricci reinforced that this is about system transformation, not immediate expansion at unsustainable pace.

## UEI Registration Requirement

A recurring topic was the requirement for a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Clarifications provided:

- Organizations may begin drafting their LOI while awaiting UEI approval
- Submission cannot occur without a valid UEI entered in the portal
- Early registration is strongly encouraged to avoid delays

## Multiple LOI Submissions

Organizations may submit more than one LOI.

Guidance provided:

- There is no limit to the number of submissions
- However, organizations should carefully assess capacity before submitting multiple projects
- If projects are interdependent, they should be submitted together
- If projects can stand alone operationally and financially, they may be submitted separately

The Department emphasized thoughtful, realistic planning over volume.

## Budget and Financial Information

Applicants are asked to provide:

- Annual operating budget (current expenses)
- High-level funding request estimates

This is not the stage for detailed cost breakdowns. The purpose is to understand organizational scale and potential funding scope.

## Risk and Readiness

The Department encouraged transparency around risk.

Applicants were advised:

- Acknowledge implementation challenges honestly
- Demonstrate awareness of operational realities
- Show readiness to manage transformation responsibly

RHTP is a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and reporting and compliance requirements will evolve as CMS guidance is finalized. Templates and additional technical guidance will be shared when available.

## Key Themes from the Discussion

Several themes emerged during the Q&A portion:

1. **Pace and Sustainability** – Transformation requires sequencing and capacity assessment.

2. **Alignment Over Detail** – The LOI should clearly demonstrate how a project supports RHTP goals.
3. **Readiness Matters** – Not every project must be submitted in Year One.
4. **Transparency and Collaboration** – The Department is committed to open communication throughout the process.
5. **Future Engagement** – Additional informational sessions and guidance will be provided.

## What Comes Next

Organizations interested in participating should:

- Complete or confirm UEI registration
- Review RHTP goals and ensure project alignment
- Submit a concise, high-level LOI during the designated submission window (February 17 through March 11)
- Monitor communications for additional guidance, reporting templates, and future funding rounds

RHTP represents a long-term opportunity to strengthen healthcare access, sustainability, workforce capacity, and system performance across rural, remote, and frontier Alaska.

More information and updates can be found at: [alaska.health.gov/RHTP](https://alaska.health.gov/RHTP)

Additional informational sessions will be offered on February 24 and March 3 from 12-1 PM.