



Alaska Rural Health Transformation Program

Project Application Evaluation Framework - Spring 2026

This evaluation framework is designed to support a consistent assessment of each project application submitted for funding under Alaska’s Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). Applications will be first evaluated based on the below weighted criteria, which reflect the State’s goal to invest in projects that help make health care work better for Alaskans by improving access and prevention, expanding workforce, leveraging technology, and creating long-lasting changes that help people stay healthy.

The project application evaluation framework is designed to assess the strength of each project on its own merits. Projects meeting quality and merit criteria will be further considered in the context of the full portfolio of fundable projects as per the Portfolio Analysis Framework. Because anticipated requests exceed available funding, final decisions will also consider the full set of projects to make sure RHTP investments help all Alaskans, support all of the State’s RHTP initiatives, maximize impact, and stay within federal funding limits. Projects must meet a minimum score threshold of 3 or higher in each category to advance to portfolio-level review. All projects must support [Alaska’s RHTP initiatives](#) and are subject to review and approval by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

In order to be considered for funding, projects must meet minimum administrative requirements as outlined in the federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the State of Alaska Rural Health Transformation program, including permissible uses of funds and administrative cost limits. Projects that do not meet these requirements will not be considered for funding. Additionally, projects will be reviewed for budget justification, expenditure rationale, and compliance with federal cost principles.

	Description	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
Alignment with State & Federal RHTP Goals and Alaska RHTP initiatives (20%)	Alignment with Federal CMS RHTP goals and initiatives and State of Alaska’s approved RHTP initiatives .	The project is not aligned with State and federal RHTP goals and initiatives or Alaska’s RHTP initiatives and/or predominantly includes activities or requested uses of funds that are impermissible under CMS requirements.	Alignment with State and federal RHTP goals and Alaska RHTP initiatives is weak or superficial and predominantly includes activities for which there is limited or unclear justification of permissibility under CMS requirements.	The project broadly aligns with State and federal RHTP goals and Alaska RHTP initiatives, and requested uses of funds appear permissible; however, the proposal may not meaningfully or sufficiently drive impact.	The project shows clear alignment with State and federal RHTP goals and Alaska RHTP initiatives, with well-supported justification that proposed activities and requested uses of funds are permissible under CMS requirements and advances Alaska’s	The project demonstrates strong, explicit alignment with State and federal RHTP goals and initiatives, clearly advances one or more initiatives, and includes a well-substantiated and compliant use of funds that reflects a strong

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	Description	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
					intended purpose for the program.	understanding of CMS requirements and Alaska’s intended purpose for the program.
Demonstrated Need Aligned with Intervention (10%)	Alignment of proposed activities with need and the strength of supporting documentation or justification. Need may be described and demonstrated through multiple forms of information, including local data, documented community or Tribal input, practitioner experience, planning documents and emerging or other evidence.	Need is not demonstrated. The proposal does not describe the problem to be addressed or why it matters for the intended community/region.	Need is minimally described but not supported with data, community input, or credible rationale, and it is unclear why this project is a priority for the community/region.	Need is reasonably described and supported by some evidence or justification (e.g., limited data, local context, or stakeholder input), but the magnitude, root causes, or target population are not fully clear or compelling. The intervention proposed to address the need appears appropriate, but the connection is weak or unclear.	Need is clearly demonstrated using strong justification which may include community or Tribal input, with linkage between identified needs, target population(s), and the proposed intervention.	Need is compellingly demonstrated through a well-rounded picture that may draw on multiple sources such as data trends and documented community/regional planning input) where applicable and accessible. The proposal clearly articulates why the proposed approach is the right solution for this community or region, and reflects alignment with local and regional priorities.
Outcomes (15%)	Alignment of outcomes with project and population served. Impact should be considered in proportion to community size, baseline conditions, and project scope. Outcomes may include direct clinical outcomes, access improvements, avoided emergency	No concrete project outcomes are identified.	Project outcomes are unclear or not measurable. Outcomes are not appropriate for the project or population served and may not clearly advance RHTP goals.	Project outcomes are reasonable and specific, and measurable using feasible methods, and reflect meaningful changes for the population or community served, and are related to	Project outcomes are clear, specific and measurable using feasible and reliable methods. Outcomes are well-aligned and appropriate for the project and	Project outcomes are ambitious, clear, specific and measurable using feasible and reliable methods. Outcomes clearly advance State RHTP goals, targeted outcomes



	Description	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
	utilization, workforce or system capacity gains, continuity improvements, or other measurable changes that advance RHTP goals.			State RHTP goals, targeted outcomes, or metrics.	population served and drive progress towards State RHTP goals.	or metrics, and are well matched to the project and population served.
Rural Impact (15%)	Rural impact will be assessed in proportion to the applicant’s service environment, baseline capacity, and the significance of the change for the affected community or region. For the purposes of RHTP, all areas outside of Anchorage are considered rural. Organizations located across the state are eligible for RHTP funding if projects can demonstrate impact on rural health care delivery systems.	Unclear how the project and outcomes impact rural residents.	Impact of projects and outcomes for rural residents is limited or indirect.	Impact of projects and outcomes for rural residents is moderate. The explanation of impact may lack sufficient evidence, clarity, or connection to the community served.	Impact of projects and outcomes for rural residents is meaningful relative to the community or population served. The explanation is clear.	Impact of projects and outcomes for rural residents is significant relative to the community or population served. The explanation of impact is clear and compelling.
Transformation Potential (10%)	Transformation is considered in terms of context-specific change relative to the starting point of the community, region or system improvements. In some communities, establishing access where none existed, reducing patient travel, stabilizing and developing workforce pipelines, improving referral coordination, or building core infrastructure may constitute meaningful transformation relative to the local baseline.	Proposed activities would not lead to change or are at risk of resulting in harmful changes to existing health care system and facilities.	Proposed activities would lead to small, incremental changes to the community or existing health care system, with limited reach or durability of impact.	Proposed activities would modestly support measurable changes to the community or existing health care system, but are limited in scope, reach, or degree of system-level change.	Proposed activities demonstrate significant transformative potential for the community or health care delivery system, demonstrating clear improvements within the applicant’s service area or target population, relative to the community’s baseline.	The proposed activities represent a well-designed plan to meaningfully transform rural health care delivery, relative to the community or regional baseline, with impact that extends beyond the applicant organization and may align with or amplify other awarded projects.



	Description	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
Strength of Partnerships and Coordination (10%)	Where partnerships are proposed, applications should demonstrate documented evidence, identify partner roles, expected contributions, coordination methods, and how the partnership strengthens implementation, integration, or sustainability. Integration with existing systems, coordination across providers and community organizations, and interdisciplinary care models are considerations.	The proposal does not document partnerships; describe meaningful coordination with relevant partners, systems, or the community; or does not explain why coordination and partnership would not be needed.	The proposal mentions some partnership or coordination activities, but these are not documented, and roles, relationships, or community connections are unclear, informal, or poorly described; or the rationale for proceeding without partnership is insufficient.	The proposal includes documented evidence of partnerships and demonstrates appropriate coordination with partners, systems, or the community, with some defined roles or integration strategies; or provides a reasonable explanation for why the project can succeed without formal partners. Coordination has been initiated, but may be in various stages of development.	The proposal includes documented evidence of partnerships, shows intentional coordination with partners, existing systems, and/or the community to avoid duplication and strengthen local or regional impact; or clearly explains why formal partnerships are not necessary and demonstrates a coordinated approach with relevant systems, stakeholders, or communities.	The proposal includes documented evidence of partnerships, demonstrates robust, well-integrated coordination and defined partner contributions that meaningfully strengthen the broader local or regional system. Partnerships (if used) are well-defined and accountable, or the project clearly operates as a strong standalone model that is deeply connected to community needs, systems, and outcomes.
Sustainability (10%)	Sustainability beyond the RHTP project period may be financial, operational, workforce-based, reimbursement-based, or system-based. Examples include reimbursement pathways, operational integration, workforce retention strategies, federal match opportunities, cost and/or utilization avoidance, braided funding, or other realistic	Sustainability is not sufficiently supported or plausible.	Sustainability is somewhat plausible, but without a plan.	Sustainability is plausible, based on reasonable assumptions, with a basic plan.	Sustainability is planned in detail or clearly justified as not necessary given the nature and time-limited purpose of the initiative.	Sustainability is robustly demonstrated, with a clear plan and justification; and meaningfully supports the sustainability of other projects, organizations, or system-level efforts.



	Description	1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent)
	approaches suited to the project type and setting.					
Project Approach, Workplan and Monitoring (10%)	Project approach and workplan must include clear activities or milestones, reasonable monitoring, identified risks, and a practical plan for adjustment over time, but may be phased or scaled to fit rural implementation realities.	Workplan, activities, and milestones lack clarity or feasibility, making it difficult to determine whether the project can be successfully implemented as described.	Workplan, activities, and milestones are generally clear, but present material risks to timely implementation; limited consideration of how challenges would be addressed; and/or have questionable relevance to the desired outcomes.	Workplan, activities, and milestones reflect serious thought about obstacles and potential delays and are clearly relevant to target outcomes, but mitigation strategies and monitoring approaches are limited or not fully developed.	Workplan, activities, and milestones reflect a considered, thoughtful operating and strategic framework with clear and feasible timelines and milestones, including defined approaches to risk management, progress tracking, and course correction.	Workplan, activities, and milestones include clear and effective approaches to efficient implementation and tangible impact within the RHTP timeframe, with strong monitoring, learning, and adaptive management practices.