



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is the Rural Health Transformation program?

The Rural Health Transformation (RHT) program was authorized by the Working Families Tax Cuts legislation (Section 71401 of Public Law 119-21) and previously known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act to empower states to strengthen rural communities across the country by improving healthcare access, quality, and outcomes by transforming the healthcare delivery ecosystem. States had to apply for RHT funding by November 5, 2025. On December 29, 2025, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded Texas \$281.3 million for the first year of the 5-year RHT program.

## 2. What is the *Rural Texas Strong* program?

The *Rural Texas Strong* (RTS) program is the name of Texas' program at the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) that will implement and distribute the federal RHT funding in Texas. It is also the name of Texas' approved application for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's Rural Health Transformation program (RHT).

## 3. What are *Rural Texas Strong* Initiatives?

There are six *Rural Texas Strong* Initiatives. These initiatives identify how Texas will use RHT funding to invest in rural health care and improve health outcomes for rural Texans and are described in Texas' RHT application. The initiatives were created based on input from stakeholders to HHSC during the RHT application period. To learn more information about the initiatives, review the [project narrative](#) in the Texas RHT application.

## 4. Has HHSC received any RHT funding yet? If not, does HHSC know when that money will be provided?

No funding has been received to date. CMS required all states to use a hypothetical award amount of \$200 million per budget period in the submitted application. After CMS announced the award amounts, states must resubmit their RHT budget to reflect their actual award amounts by January 30, 2026. During this post-award budget reconciliation process, states have an opportunity to rescale their initiatives to match the amount awarded. State budgets must be approved before they receive funds. HHSC will be working with the CMS Office of Rural Health

Transformation (ORHT) to align the proposed application and plan with the updated funding amount of \$281.3 million.

## **5. How will the RHT funding be distributed to rural communities?**

Each of the six initiatives will begin and operate under separate timelines. For implementation plans, please see the [Rural Texas Strong – Project Narrative on the HHSC website](#), starting on page 22. HHSC will be working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Office of Rural Health Transformation (ORHT) to align the proposed application and plan with the updated funding amounts.

## **6. What entities are eligible for RHT funding? How will applicants be selected?**

Entity eligibility is not final yet. A final determination about eligibility, definitions that will be used to evaluate eligibility, and entities that meet the eligibility criteria will be a contracting and procurement function. Procurement details will be finalized as HHSC staff work through the approval processes for our project design with CMS and then the internal HHSC procurement and contracting processes. So that HHSC can maintain fairness for all interested potential applicants and protect future procurements related to the *Rural Texas Strong* program, HHSC is not identifying eligibility information until it is finalized.

## **7. As a rural health care provider, how can I apply for RHT funding?**

At this time, HHSC is not meeting with potential grant applicants so that we can maintain fairness for all interested entities and protect future procurements related to the *Rural Texas Strong* program.

If you are interested in applying for funding from the *Rural Texas Strong* program, please review the [HHSC resource web page for contracting with HHS](#). It provides information about state procurement process and can prepare organizations for future contracting opportunities.

HHSC will issue public notices related to the program including announcing any future procurement opportunities related to the Rural Texas Strong Program via Gov Delivery; to subscribe to Gov Delivery notifications for Rural Texas Strong please sign up [here](#). You may also monitor and the [HHSC Request for Applications Grants web page](#) (<https://resources.hhs.texas.gov/rfa>) for grant opportunities and the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) site (<https://www.txsmartbuy.gov/esbd>) for *Rural Texas Strong* program procurement opportunities.

## 8. As a vendor, how can I apply for RHT funding?

At this time, HHSC is not meeting with potential vendors so that we can maintain fairness for all interested vendors and protect future procurements related to the *Rural Texas Strong* program.

If you are interested in bidding for services related to the *Rural Texas Strong* program, please review the [HHSC resource web page for contracting with HHS](#). It provides information for doing business with HHSC and can prepare entities for future contracting opportunities.

HHSC will issue public notices related to the program including announcing any future procurement opportunities related to the Rural Texas Strong Program via Gov Delivery; to subscribe to Gov Delivery notifications for Rural Texas Strong please sign up [here](#). You may also monitor the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) site (<https://www.txsmartbuy.gov/esbd>) for *Rural Texas Strong* program procurement opportunities.

## 9. What is the difference between RHT funding and grants from the Office of Rural Hospital Finance at HHSC?

*Rural Texas Strong* (RTS) grants are sourced from federal funding from the Working Families Tax Cut legislation (Section 71401 of Public Law 119-21). RTS is time limited funding and will only be available from 2026 -2030.

Grants originating from HHSC's [Office of Rural Hospital Finance](#) are sourced from state General Revenue. These include the following: (1) Financial Stability, (2) Innovation, (3) Pediatric-TeleConnectivity, (4) Rural Hospital Support and (5) Emergency Hardship grants. The 89<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 2025, enacted the *Rural Health Stabilization and Innovation Act*, [House Bill 18](#) to create these state grant programs. These grant programs are continuing as long as legislative funding is continued. They were codified in law in the [Texas Government Code Section 526.0322](#).

Rural hospitals and certain rural health clinics are eligible to apply for the Office of Rural Hospital Finance grants. More information, including eligibility information for these grants can be found on the [HHSC web site](#).

## 10. How can stakeholders stay up to date on RTS developments?

[Sign up](#) to receive email notifications for updates about *Rural Texas Strong*. Regularly check the [Rural Texas Strong webpage](#) for updates. Questions can be sent to: [HHSC Rural Texas Strong](#).

## **Stevens Amendment**

HHSC is required by CMS to include the Stevens Amendment language below which acknowledges the federal support for the *Rural Texas Strong* program.

*Rural Texas Strong*, is supported by CMS of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHHS) as part of a financial assistance award with 100 percent of funding by CMS/HHS. The contents of this document are those of HHSC and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.