

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q 1: Who do I contact for technical assistance with my grant proposal and the application process?

A: Empire Health Foundation (EHF) staff provides technical assistance for the Washington State Rural Facilities Capital Grants Partnership Fund application process. This includes how to navigate the online application system (SMApply) and guidance for crafting a strong proposal. For technical assistance, please contact:

- Rocio Caravantes Wofford at rocio@empirehealthfoundation.org, 509-919-3046
- Jeri Rathbun at jeri@empirehealthfoundation.org, 509-919-3047

Q 2: What is the goal of the Washington State Rural Facilities Capital Grants Partnership Fund?

A: The Fund is intended to support the advancement of quality healthcare in under-resourced communities by making grants to hospitals, outpatient clinics, and other healthcare providers in rural areas of Washington State. Investments in the infrastructure of rural clinics can contribute to increased access to services and improved quality of care for patients by adding new technology or equipment that may have been previously unavailable.

Q 3: Is my organization eligible to receive funding?

Eligible organizations are defined as Critical Access Hospitals, Sole Community Hospitals, Community Health Centers, Tribal Clinics and Hospitals, Rural Health Clinics, Dental Clinics and Skilled Nursing Facilities in Rural Areas. In addition, the following guidance will help you determine if your organization is eligible to receive an award:

- Behavioral Health organizations are eligible, but projects that focus on integration with primary care will be prioritized.
- Residential SUD Treatment and Assisted Living Facilities do not currently meet eligibility criteria.
- If you are a health care provider not explicitly listed here or if you have questions regarding the eligibility criteria, please reach out to Rocio Caravantes Wofford, rocio@empirehealthfoundation.org, to discuss.

Q 4: Can I apply for this grant cycle if my facility was previously awarded?

A: No. A facility is currently eligible to receive funding only once. With this in mind, it is important to submit a proposal for the project of greatest need for your facility.

Q 5: Can I apply with two or more proposals in the same grant cycle?

A: We discourage applying with multiple proposals from the same organization in the same grant cycle, as organizations are eligible to receive only one award. It is always important to apply with your strongest proposal, and for organization's greatest need. Consider if it makes sense to bundle your requests under one proposal while keeping within the \$100,000 funding limit.

Q 6: Is there a minimum amount of money I can apply for?

A: Your funding request must be between \$25,000 and \$100,000. We recommend that you apply for the necessary amount of money you actually need for the capital project.

Q 7: Do the funds from a grant award have to be used by a certain date?

A: The funding timeline is a year and we specify a final report date in the grant agreement. We also ask that you specify the project timeline in the grant application. If you need more time beyond the final report date, you may apply for a no-cost extension.

Q 8: I am in a rural area, but not as defined by the USDA's definition of rural and/or the Rural Health Information Hub's 'Am I Rural' Tool. Does this mean that my organization is ineligible for this grant opportunity?

A: Not necessarily. Both tools are helpful for defining Eligible Organizations, however, we understand that some rural areas may not be eligible through these tools alone. Please contact us for more information.

- Rocio Caravantes Wofford at rocio@empirehealthfoundation.org, 509-919-3046

Q 9: Do you require that the project be funded by more than one source besides this Partnership Fund?

A: No. The project can be fully funded by the Rural Facilities Capital Grants Partnership, though we always appreciate seeing other partners and collaborators involved in a project, and in general, this can increase your chances of receiving funding through this grant cycle.

Q 10: Do you provide general operating support?

A: No. Grants will not support general operations, including staffing, administrative, indirect, or overhead costs. Other restricted uses include projects associated with core government functions, such as roads, utilities, and public safety; K-12 education; arts programming; deficits or debt reduction; endowments; scholarships; fund-raising events or sponsorships; or reimbursement for items already purchased.

Q 11: I have several capital project needs– which would you recommend?

A: If your organization has multiple ideas for capital projects, try to select one that is the most appropriate fit for the Rural Facilities Capital Grants Partnership Fund and that is the most feasible for your organization to complete as specified in the proposal. For further guidance, consider these general tips:

- Consider the readiness of your project. The strongest proposals are for projects that can start shortly after receiving funds and be completed within a year.
- Clearly articulate the need you are addressing. For instance, consider answering the following questions with your proposal:
 - What is the urgency of your project as related to patient care?
 - How will your project increase access to services or improve quality of care?
 - Are you serving an underserved or at-risk population?
 - Is your project helping overcome a barrier or providing an opportunity that would otherwise be unattainable for your community or organization?

- What will happen if you do not receive funding for your project?
- Clearly articulate targeted outcomes and the intended impact of the project. Use data whenever available. Tell us what success looks like, and how you plan to measure it. Frame your request in the context of the impact to community and for patient care versus revenue and referral generation. Revenue and referral generation, while important to business operations, is not the priority of this Fund and should not be the primary focus of your proposal.
- If relevant, talk about your plan to leverage internal and external funding and resources to support your project. Diversified funding strategies and community collaborations can help build a strong proposal.

Q 12: What criteria is used to evaluate proposals?

A: Proposals will be evaluated on criteria including, but not limited to the readiness of the project, the organization’s track record, fiscal management and capacity, active board and experienced staff, the facility’s level of financial need, sources of financial support, and the project’s benefit to the community that it serves. Preference will be given to projects that articulate an urgent and compelling need with the potential for positive community impact through increased access to services and improved quality of care.