

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

COLORADO RURAL HEALTH CARE GRANT PROGRAM

Supporting Health Infrastructure in Colorado's Rural Communities

Date Issued: March 6, 2008

Letter of Intent Due: March 18, 2008

Closing Date: May 15, 2008

The Colorado Rural Health Care Grant Council is accepting applications for State fiscal year (FY) 2008-09 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) for projects that support the health infrastructure in Colorado's rural health facilities and communities. The Council is planning to award a minimum of up to \$1 million per year, for the next five years, through a scheduled grant cycle.

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Contact

Callie Preheim
Colorado Rural Health Center
225 East 16th Avenue, Suite 1050
Denver, Colorado 80203
(303) 407-0410
From rural Colorado (800) 851-6782
cp@coruralhealth.org
www.coruralhealth.org

I. Background

Rural communities in Colorado have limited access to resources to enhance their health care infrastructure. This solicitation focuses on supporting the rural health infrastructure and strengthening the capacity of rural entities to provide primary care services now and in the future. Colorado's Governor, Bill Ritter, Jr., recently issued an Executive Order (B 007 07) creating the Colorado Rural Health Grant Council. The Council is responsible for developing and providing oversight for a new grant program funded by the UnitedHealth Group. In 2006, the UnitedHealth Group committed to donate \$7,500,000 over six years to the State of Colorado to remedy deficiencies in access to health care for rural and underserved Coloradans. The Executive Order states that grant funds will be available beginning in 2008 through 2012. The Council is planning

to award a minimum of \$1 million per year, for the next five years, through scheduled grant cycles.

The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC), Colorado's State Office of Rural Health, has been appointed to serve as administrator of the grant program. CRHC has had a longstanding interest in identifying and addressing rural health issues. As Colorado's State Office of Rural Health, CRHC's general purpose is to help rural communities build health care delivery systems. Created in 1991 by the Colorado Rural Health Consortium, a group of volunteers that included representation from most major health organizations, the legislature, and local foundations, CRHC is one of three State Offices of Rural Health in the country that are structured as non-profit organizations.

CRHC will utilize its existing relationships with rural health care facilities, communities, and partner organizations to assist the Colorado Rural Health Care Grant Council in coordinating its activities and administering the grant program funded by the UnitedHealth Group. CRHC has extensive experience in meeting coordination and facilitation, grants management, and marketing and outreach. CRHC is highly dedicated and committed to addressing enhanced access to health care.

II. Eligibility

The Colorado Rural Health Center, in partnership with the Colorado Rural Health Care Grant Council, is issuing this request for applications from organizations providing outpatient primary care services in rural Colorado (exclusive of emergency care), including medical, oral, and mental health services. The purpose of this grant program is to fund projects that support the rural health infrastructure and strengthen the capacity of rural entities to provide outpatient primary care services. For purposes of this grant program, infrastructure includes but is not limited to: equipment, construction, physical plant improvements, vehicles and transportation, information technology, and staff training or education. Although facility improvements or expansions are a viable use of the funds, projects must be completed within one year of the award. Therefore, long-term construction projects are generally not eligible.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Short-term or one-time facility improvements or expansion projects
- Equipment and supplies
- Physical plant improvements
- Vehicles and transportation
- Information technology
- Staff training or education
- Other projects that meet the intent of the program

Grants will not be awarded for:

- The delivery of direct health care services
- Support of day-to-day operations or staffing

General Preferences:

Grants will only be awarded for one year. Applicants may apply in subsequent years, but it is not the intent of the program to fund long term projects. While all applicants must meet the basic eligibility and grant application requirements, preference in the first year of funding will be given to applications that:

- Demonstrate collaboration with other organizations in the delivery of services;
- Demonstrate leveraging, but not duplication, of other available resources; and/or
- Are from counties with limited primary care access.

Location:

The applicant seeking an award must be located outside of Colorado's Urbanized Areas (UA's) as defined by the United States Census Bureau. The Census Bureau classifies UA's through a complex formula, which includes denoting Urban Areas as regions with 50,000 or more people. The Census Bureau does not identify or classify entire counties as urban or rural. Geographic entities such as places, counties, metropolitan areas, etc., are often split between urban and rural territory. Therefore, for purposes of this grant program, a "rural" area is an area located outside of a Census Bureau designated Urbanized Area.

The Rural Assistance Center (RAC) has a resource that can help determine whether an entity is located in a rural area as defined by various grant programs. RAC's website contains a "rural locator" where providers and staff can enter a proposed clinic address and search the location:

To access the features of this valuable resource:

1. Log on to: <http://maps.rupri.org/circ/racrural/amirural.asp>
2. Enter the prospective entity's address, city, state and zip code
3. Clinic on "Next"
4. Click on "CMS-Rural Health Clinics Program" (which also uses Urbanized Area as "rural.")
5. Clinic on "Am I Rural"

If the entity location exists outside of the Census Bureau defined Urbanized Area and is considered rural, a "YES" message will appear.

If assistance is needed in determining whether or not a community is located outside of a UA, please contact the Colorado Rural Health Center at 800-851-6782.

Organization Type:

Applicant entities must provide outpatient primary care – medical, oral, or mental health services – to underserved people in rural Colorado. Recognizing that a wide variety of entities may provide services to the underserved in rural Colorado, an applicant may be private non-profit, public/government, or private for-profit.

Definition of Primary Care:

For the purposes of this grant program, "Primary Care" is defined as follows:

"Outpatient primary care services are considered to be the basic, entry level care (medical, oral and mental) provided by clinicians. This care is generally provided in an outpatient clinic or medical office setting."

Patient Population:

For the purposes of this grant program, “underserved” will include people who cannot afford care, the uninsured, and those covered by Medicaid or the CHP+ program. Each applicant entity will be asked to describe the types and amounts of service provided to underserved people.

III. Review Process

Grant applications will initially be reviewed for completion by staff from the Colorado Rural Health Center to ensure that basic requirements are met. Then, multiple reviewers will be assigned to review and score each application. Review Committee members may include Council members, staff and/or board members from CRHC, and community volunteers. The Council will make final award decisions based on the scores of each application, community impact, geographic distribution, diversity of projects, and applicant type.

IV. Application Components

Application Format:

Narrative portions of the application should be single-spaced, with at least one inch margins, and 12 point font. Applicants should include the required attachments listed below only. Additional attachments will not be accepted. Unnecessarily elaborate applications are not desired.

In preparing applications in response to this RFA, applicants should ensure that the following components are included:

A. Application Form:

Completed one-page Colorado Rural Health Care Grant Program application form (attached to this application packet).

B. Project Narrative: This section must be no more than 5 pages, excluding required attachments. Please use the following outline and headings:

1. **Provision of Primary Care** – Describe the services provided by the applicant and how they align with the definition of primary care noted previously.
2. **Service to Underserved Population** – Describe activities the applicant has in place to care for the underserved. The underserved will include people who cannot afford care, the uninsured, and those covered by Medicaid or the CHP+ program. Documentation of the percentage of the applicant’s patient population that is uninsured or low income must be provided on the attached Patient Population Questionnaire form (see Required Components and Attachments).
3. **Amount Requested** – Clearly state the amount requested for the project. The maximum award amount is \$50,000. Requests for greater than \$50,000 will not be accepted. Applicants are not required to match the amount of grant funds awarded; however, any matching funds available should be described in this section of the narrative and listed in the budget. The match may be cash or in-kind, and will be considered favorably.
4. **Proposed Use of Funds** – Describe the proposed project and how the funds will be utilized to address the applicant or community need. Proposals may include one major

project or a variety of projects combined to accomplish an overall goal or related objective(s). Additional detail may be provided in the Work Plan attachment.

5. **Community Impact** – Explain how this project will improve access to health care and strengthen the infrastructure of the applicant, community and/or region; and, explain its long-term impact. Be sure to include detail on how it will impact care for the underserved.
6. **Alignment and Grant Program Preferences** – Describe how the project aligns with and or all the grant program preferences. Preference will be given to applications that:
 - Demonstrate collaboration with other organizations in the delivery of services;
 - Demonstrate leveraging, but not duplication of, other available resources; and/or
 - Are from counties with limited primary care access.
7. **Timeline** – Describe the general timeline along which the project will be undertaken and completed. Additional detail will be provided in the Work Plan attachment. Projects must be completed within one year of the award.
8. **Evaluation** – Describe the information the applicant will provide to demonstrate expanded capacity. Grantees will be asked to provide documentation to demonstrate evidence of the project’s results and impact after project completion. This may include completion of an evaluation form, statistics, demographics, spreadsheets, photos, testimonials, maps, etc.

C. Budget:

Outline the total expected cost of the project. For those costs not covered by the grant request, explain how the additional costs will be covered. The budget section must include the Budget Worksheet, and a budget justification narrative with line item expenses and descriptions to justify all expenses, including contracts and purchase of equipment and supplies. The budget justification narrative must be limited to one page.

D. Required Components and Attachments: The application must include the following items in this order:

1. **Application Form**
2. **Project Narrative (no more than 5 pages)**
3. **Budget Narrative and Budget Worksheet** – Complete the attached Budget Worksheet form to correspond with the budget narrative.
4. **Work Plan** – Utilize the attached Work Plan spreadsheet to describe the goals, objectives, activities and timeline for the project.
5. **Patient Population Questionnaire** – Complete the attached Patient Population Questionnaire to demonstrate the percentage of the applicant organization’s patient population that is uninsured or low income.

V. Letter of Intent and Application Deadline

Letter of Intent:

Potential applicants are asked to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) stating the intent to apply, briefly describing their entity and proposed project, and stating an approximate amount to be requested. The LOI process will allow the Council and staff members to monitor statewide outreach, prepare adequately for the number of applications that might be received, and contact any potential

applicant whose entity or project might not meet eligibility requirements. **Interested applicants should submit their LOI's by March 18, 2008.**

The letter of intent should include the following information:

- Contact person's name, entity name, address, email, and telephone number
- Brief description of the proposed project
- Amount of request

Applicants will not be deemed ineligible if they do not submit the LOI before the deadline; they are, however, encouraged to do so, even after the deadline, in order to develop a communication link with the Colorado Rural Health Center in the event that additional information is made available. Depending on the response to the first round of awards, a second round may be held in the fall of 2008. Letters of Intent may be submitted by email, mail or fax, and should be sent to:

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Application Deadline:

Applications must be submitted by 3:30pm Mountain Time (MT) or postmarked on or before, May 15, 2008. Applications may be submitted in hard copy or electronic format; however, electronic submissions are preferred. Electronic applications must be submitted in Microsoft Word or PDF format. All elements of the application must be received by the deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. CRHC will verify receipt of application to application contact person by email within two days of receiving the completed application. If verification is not received, applicants should notify CRHC to insure that the application was received. The review and recommendations will be finalized by July 2008. All applicant organizations will be notified of the outcome of the RFA.

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