



Office of Rural Hospital Finance and Coordination: How Can We Help You?

A. General

1. What is the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Rural Hospital Finance and Coordination?

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) established the Office of Rural Hospital Finance and Coordination (RHFC) to provide financial and technical assistance to help preserve rural hospitals' continued participation in the delivery of health care services to Texans.

More information on the office can be found on the [HHSC Rural Hospital Finance and Coordination webpage](#).

B. Financial Assistance

1. What types of financial assistance does HHSC offer rural hospitals?

The Texas Legislature appropriated \$50 million to HHSC for fiscal years 2024-2025 to establish a grant program for rural hospitals. The grants will target the following needs: financial stabilization, maternal care operations, and alternative payment Model (APM) readiness. The grant funding is provided by House Bill 1, 88th Legislature, Regular Session 2023, Article II, Rider 88, Rural Hospital Grant Program.

The first of these grants provided financial stabilization assistance to Texas Rural Emergency Hospitals (REHs) in October 2023. These grants were meant to provide time-limited financial support to the REH hospitals for their operational costs as

they transition to improved long-term financial solvency and sustainability in their new role as an emergency hospital.

Additional information will be forthcoming about upcoming grant opportunities including the eligibility criteria, award amounts and application process for distributing the remainder of the grant funding. Information will be posted on the [HHSC Rural Hospital Finance and Coordination webpage](#) by early summer 2024.

2. Can HHSC provide my rural hospital a loan?

Texas recognizes that rural hospitals are a vital part of the Texas health care delivery system and has established it has an interest in sustaining and supporting rural hospitals' operations; however, HHSC is not authorized to provide loans to Texas hospitals. HHSC provides various types of support to rural hospitals, specifically through the RHFC.

C. Technical Assistance

1. What kinds of technical assistance does HHSC offer rural hospitals?

RHFC acts as the "front door" to the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) system (including HHSC and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)) for rural hospitals. It provides dedicated technical assistance for rural hospitals and can be the first point-of-contact for them when seeking assistance for HHS and/or Medicaid-related questions. The RHFC team augments communication efforts between HHSC and rural hospitals, conducts analysis of rural hospital participation in Medicaid payment programs, including assessing barriers to their participation, and provides technical assistance to rural hospitals wanting to participate in [Medicaid directed and supplemental payment programs](#) for which they may qualify.

Examples of technical assistance inquiries include: confirming Texas Incentives for Physicians and Professional Services (TIPPS) reporting information based upon an old and new National Provider Identifier (NPI) for a rural hospital that experienced a change of ownership; Comprehensive Hospital Increase Reimbursement Program (CHIRP) participation and reporting requirements; and whether a Rural Emergency Hospital may be reimbursed by Medicaid for providing Obstetrics services.

2. How can my rural hospital submit a technical assistance request to HHSC and what should I expect of the process?

Rural hospitals may request help from the RHFC team by emailing HHSCRuralHospitalFinance@hhs.texas.gov. Upon receiving a request, the team will confirm receipt of email and identify whether the inquiry is of standard or urgent priority. For all inquiries, an RHFC staff member will respond within one business day and offer a contact phone number and an initial meeting to discuss the question(s). RHFC staff will then follow-up every two business days on urgent inquiries and every five business days on standard inquiries until the question is resolved.