

from the Rural Health Network Development Grant Program at a future time but are not required to do so. Applicants are not required to provide matching funds for the grant but are encouraged to engage the proposed network partners to participate in cost-sharing as demonstration of mutual commitment to the network.

Authorization

Awards will be made under the program authority of section 330A of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. 254c.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a grant under this program, an applicant must be a rural public or rural non-profit private entity. To ascertain rural eligibility, please refer to <http://ruralhealth.hrsa.gov/funding/eligibility.htm>. The applicant must include letters of support from at least three or more health care providers that may be nonprofit or for-profit entities, that together intend to develop a rural health network. Under the President's initiative, faith-based and community-based organizations that are otherwise eligible and believe they can contribute to HRSA's program objectives are urged to apply to this program.

Funding Level/Project Period:

Contingent upon funding, approximately \$1,000,000 in FY 2004 will be available to support the award of 10 to 15 grants for a one-year project period. Award amounts will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 each.

Review Criteria

Applications that are complete and responsive to the guidance will be evaluated by an objective review panel specifically convened for this solicitation and in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. Applications for this grant program will be reviewed using the following criteria:

I. Statement of Need (30 Points)

A. The applicant demonstrates the need for Federal funding to support network development activities by describing the environment in which the network will develop and the appropriateness of applying for Federal funding at this point. The applicant provides evidence of the health care needs/problems in the community that the network proposes to address. The applicant utilizes appropriate data sources (e.g., local, state, federal) in their analysis of the environment in which the network is functioning.

If the purpose of the network is to strengthen health providers' ability to serve their community(ies), please include data that demonstrates the providers' needs for greater support in remaining healthy and sustainable.

B. The applicant clearly describes the primary goals and problems/issues to be addressed by the network. The applicant describes how the local community or region to be served will benefit from and be involved in the activities carried out by the network. If the network's primary goal is to strengthen health providers in the community, the applicant describes how providers will benefit from and be involved in the activities carried out by the network.

C. The applicant describes how the local community or region to be served will experience increased or more stable/consistent access to quality health care services across the continuum of care as a result of the integration and coordination of activities carried out by the network.

II. Identification of Potential Network Partners (30 Points)

A. The applicant provides a list or table listing each potential network partner. The table should include each partner's organization name, address, primary contact person, current role in the community/region, and current annual operating expenditure.

B. The applicant explains why these are the appropriate collaborators and why other organizations are not included as part of the formative network at this time. It is recognized that the purpose of the grant is to support development of the network; therefore, discussion could include identification of organizations not yet engaged but that might be candidates for collaboration should the grant be awarded.

C. The applicant describes any history of informal collaboration between the potential partners of the network and provides information regarding the impetus for the network's creation.

D. The applicant provides a map that shows the locations of potential network partners, and/or describes the geographic area that will be served by the network and any other information that will help reviewers visualize and understand the scope of the proposed project.

E. The applying entity must include a letter of support from each of the potential partners of the formative network. These letters should confirm each organization's interest in becoming part of a rural health network and indicate in their own words the

organization's understanding of the benefits that the network would bring to itself and the community encompassed by the network. The letter should also include a statement indicating that the potential partner understands that the grant funds would be used for the development of a health care network and are not to be used for the exclusive benefit of any one network partner.

F. The applicant identifies the key person who will be accountable for ensuring grant-funded activities will be carried out. This person will serve to facilitate/convene potential network partners, set meeting agendas, assign and track tasks, etc.

G. The applicant includes a resume for the key person identified in II.E.

H. The applicant identifies the name and affiliation of the person(s) who wrote and prepared the grant application.

III. Statement of Project Workplan (25 Points)

A. The applicant includes a detailed workplan that describes how the grant funds will be used:

Part One: The applicant provides a matrix that carefully integrates goals, strategies, activities, and measurable outcomes and process measures. The matrix outlines the individual responsible for carrying out each activity and includes a timeline for the duration of the project. A sample matrix template will be provided in the application instructions.

Part Two: The applicant explains how the goals and activities outlined in the matrix will be accomplished in narrative format.

B. The applicant's workplan should either include a task that addresses each of the following four areas (or describes how each area is being addressed):

(1) Identifies potential collaborating network partners in addition to those already named in the grant application that provided letters of support.

(2) Convenes potential collaborating network partners.

(3) Conducts planning activities:

a. Conducts a needs assessment to ensure a complete understanding of the health care and provider-related challenges faced by the community/region to be served, and by the potential network partners.

b. Identifies the needs of potential network partners.

c. Identifies factors that will lead to the network's sustainability. This could include:

- Examining the benefits that may accrue to network members and the community they serve as a result of