

Request for Application (RFA)

RFA Information Summary

Application Title:

Expanding Nursing Programs to Increase Rural Nurses in Washington

Estimated Funding:

\$100,000 per year

Funding Period:

Up to 3.5 years; dependent on annual renewal application

Expected Number of Awards:

Up to two (2)

Eligible Applicants:

Accredited nursing programs in Washington

Summary of Grant:

The Department of Health (DOH) seeks accredited nursing programs to prepare students to meet the unique demands of rural nursing, including obstetrical labor and delivery care. The goal of this funding is to increase the number of registered nurses working in rural areas of Washington.

Informational Calls:

December 5, 2024, 1 to 2 p.m. PST.

December 10, 2024, 11 a.m. to noon PST.

Application Due:

Submit applications to waperinatalcollaborative@doh.wa.gov by
January 6, 2025, 8 a.m. PST.

RFA Coordinator:

Talia Horacek, talia.horacek@doh.wa.gov

Direct all communication about this RFA to the RFA coordinator listed above. Use “Rural Nursing RFA” in your subject line.

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Section 1. Application Instructions

Section 1.1 Introduction to the RFA

Introduction and Purpose

The Department of Health (DOH) announces up to a 3.5-year funding opportunity for 1 or more approved nursing programs focusing on training rural students. These programs will include a rural nursing concentration that leads to licensure for registered nurses.

This opportunity is funded by the [Maternal Health Innovations \(MHI\) program](#) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The MHI program has 3 goals:

- Identify existing or new strategic priorities for the next 3 years to improve maternal health in Washington.
- Improve perinatal health data capacity and products.
- Explore and use new strategies to address gaps in maternal health care.

The WA MHI Taskforce identified the following priority areas through a process of strategic planning and prioritization from the [2023 Maternal Mortality Review Panel Report](#) recommendations:

- **Expand rural access to care**
- Support access to community birth workers
- Address substance use disorder and mental health
- Improve obstetrics care quality

Priorities

This funding seeks to increase the number of nurses practicing in rural hospitals. Rural nurses require a wide range of skills, including obstetrical labor and delivery care, to meet the unique demands of their facility. By training and prioritizing students from rural areas, programs can help create an equitable workforce that reflects the communities it serves. Creating more opportunities for students to stay in their communities during training effectively prepares nurses for rural practice.

Challenges in Rural Maternity Care

Rural areas experience higher rates of illness and complications before, during, and after pregnancy. This is often due to limited resources and access to care compared to urban areas. At least 3 rural Washington hospitals closed their labor and delivery services in 2023, with the possibility of more to follow. Key issues contributing to these closures include:

- Low number of deliveries
- Difficulty maintaining skill level
- High costs and low Medicaid reimbursements,
- Workforce shortages

These challenges prompted the creation of a statewide Rural Access to Safe Deliveries workgroup in January 2023. This group is led by the WA Department of Health’s Perinatal Unit and Office of Rural Health, Washington State Hospital Association, Health Care Authority, and The Rural Collaborative.

Collaborative Efforts

In May 2024, the [Washington State Perinatal Collaborative](#) launched the Rural OB Provider workgroup, which includes rural physicians, medical directors and other hospital staff. This group meets monthly to develop strategies and solutions and provide community input and recommendations to the Rural Access workgroup. This workgroup has proposed strengthening the rural nursing workforce through academic institutions offering rural nursing education as one of the primary solutions for better perinatal outcomes.

Implementation Examples

DOH seeks to fund accredited nursing programs to effectively prepare rural students through nursing education. Below are examples of program implementation:

- Recruiting students from rural communities and providing support like scholarships for rural students.
- Developing an immersive experience where students can spend summers experiencing rural settings.
- Offer a combination of remote and rural nursing school opportunities so rural students can remain in their communities.

What is Rural?

The Rural Health Information Hub (RHlhub) [Am I Rural?](#) tool can be used to determine whether a specific location is considered rural based on various definitions of rural, including definitions that are used as eligibility criteria for federal programs. Schools can decide how they want to verify student rurality, but this tool must be referenced when recruiting and enrolling rural students.

Eligibility for Funding

Applicants must:

- Be a Washington State Board of Nursing-approved nursing program offering ADN and BSN degrees.
 - Check the list of [Approved Nursing Programs in the State of Washington](#)

- Be programs leading to students being able to pass the NCLEX-RN.
- Have established capacity to improve nursing education for students living in rural communities.
- Be committed to creating a sustainable workforce in rural health care and increasing the supply of Registered Nurses (RN) in rural areas with labor and delivery experience.

Section 1.2 Funding

Application Timeline

Note: The schedule below is subject to change at the discretion of the Washington State Department of Health. Project work should begin immediately following contract approval and end about 3.5 years from the contract approval date. Every year there will be a renewal application based on the progress of the previous year. The anticipated project completion date is September 29th, 2028, but will depend on the actual date of contract approval.

RFA Release Date	December 4, 2024
Application Due Date	January 6, 2025, 8:00 a.m. PST
Application Review	January 7 to February 6, 2025
Notification of Contract Awards	Late February 2025
Contract Fully Executed by	April 1, 2025
Expected Period of Award	April 1, 2025 to September 29, 2028
Estimated Annual Funding Range	\$100,000 per nursing program per year (max. 2)

Fiscal Requirements

The funds for this opportunity come from a grant DOH received from the federal government. Since DOH was initially awarded this grant, and is now granting it to other organizations, grantees are known as “subrecipients.”

Subrecipient funding has stricter expenses and reimbursement guidelines than state or private funding. At a minimum, organizations must have a budget large enough to pay for services before reimbursement. They must also have specific financial controls and tracking systems in place so they can invoice properly.

1. If you receive this grant, DOH will set up subrecipient contracts for cost reimbursement. This means you will submit invoices for allowable costs upfront and will then be reimbursed by invoicing DOH.

- a. Allowable expenses include salaries, benefits, goods and services, supplies for labs, and contractual services. Documented travel costs related to activities required in the statement of work like transportation and lodging expenses plus per diem and mileage at [state rates](#) are also included.
2. Invoices must include background documentation, including but not limited to:
 - a. A detailed general ledger report for employee salaries and wages.
 - b. Copies of receipts for transactions over \$2,500.
 - c. Pre-approval for out-of-state travel.
 - d. Documentation of gift card distribution (including recipient name and date distributed).
3. Subrecipients must submit invoices to DOH each month.
4. Invoices take a minimum of 2-3 weeks to process.
5. Financial requirements include:
 - a. Washington Unified Business Number, Federal Tax, and Statewide Vendor numbers are required to contract with DOH and receive payment.
 - b. The State of Washington prefers using electronic payment in its transactions. A statewide vendor number allows contractors to receive payments from all participating state agencies by direct deposit.

Subrecipients are required to submit regular reports to DOH. Given the flexibility of this funding, subrecipients will work with the DOH contract manager and program evaluator to determine exact reporting requirements. See Appendix A for the anticipated statement of work. At a minimum, the subrecipient can expect to:

- Submit quarterly reports to DOH program staff by email.
- Participate in quarterly meetings with DOH program and evaluation staff.
 - Meetings may be more frequent in the first 6-12 months to support new subrecipients with contracting, invoicing, and other technical assistance needs.

Year 1 Budget

The contract year 1 will include a focus on planning and curriculum development. Funding for this period is estimated to be between 6 and 9 months of program work. DOH will negotiate with awardees to develop an adjusted budget based on their ability to complete the work. Years 2 and 3 will cover 12 months of program work.

Section 1.3 Application Support

Information Calls

DOH will hold 2 informational calls for interested applicants. These calls offer an opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the RFA and application process. You don't



need to prepare in advance or have your application completed to join the information calls. The calls will be recorded and posted to the [Washington State Perinatal Collaborative webpage](#). Please register using the links below to receive a confirmation email with information about joining the call.

When: December 5, 2025, 1 to 2 p.m. PST
[Register](#) in advance for this informational call

When: December 10, 2024, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. PST
[Register](#) in advance for this informational call

Office Hours

Applicants can email waperinatalcollaborative@doh.wa.gov with application questions. DOH staff will also hold office hours throughout the application period to provide support and any questions that arise from applicants.

When: December 12, 2024, 10 to 11 a.m. PST
December 17, 2024, 12 to 1 p.m. PST
January 3, 2025, 1 to 2 p.m. PST

Where: All Office Hours will use the [Office Hours Zoom Link](#). You don't need to register for these office hours. Office hours will operate on a drop-in basis. For confidentiality purposes, we will admit one applicant to the Zoom room at a time.

Section 1.4 Application Submission Process

1. Email your completed application materials in PDF format to waperinatalcollaborative@doh.wa.gov by **Monday, January 6, 2025, 8 a.m. PST**.
2. A committee of DOH staff and external partners from state organizations and educational facilities will score applications. External reviewers on the selection committee **cannot** work or otherwise be professionally connected to a state accredited nursing program applying for funding.
3. Funding decisions will be announced in **February 2025**.

Application Checklist

- All applications must include the following materials, there are templates provided in Section 2 (Application Materials):

- Applicant Information Sheet
- Letters of Support
- Project Planning Questions
- Project Budget

Section 1.5 Application Evaluation Criteria

Selection Criteria	Max Score
<p>Eligibility and Information Sheet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application is complete and includes all required elements from the checklist. • A Washington State Board of Nursing approved nursing program. • Programs lead to students being able to pass the NCLEX-RN. 	<p>20 pts</p>
<p>Project Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All answers to the planning questions are detailed and complete. • Expresses established organizational capacity to increase preparedness for rural practice. • Demonstrates a commitment to building a sustainable workforce in rural health care to increase supply of Registered Nurses (RN) in rural communities. • Includes proposed project with milestones and due dates. 	<p>50 pts</p>
<p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itemized budget aligned with goals in the project letter. • The total project budget is reasonable and adequate for the proposed project scope. 	<p>15 pts</p>

Section 2. Application Materials

The application materials are described below. Templates for each form are provided on the [Washington State Perinatal Collaborative](#) website.

Section 2.1 Applicant Information Sheet

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	
ADDRESS	
PROJECT MANAGER	
TITLE	
TELEPHONE	
EMAIL	
TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (TIN)	
WA UBI number **	
Statewide Vendor **	
Unique Identifier **	
PROPOSED BUDGET YEAR 1	
PROPOSED BUDGET YEAR 2	

Print Name of Authorized Signatory

Signature of Authorized Signatory

Title/Date

** If you do not have these numbers at the time of your application, you will need to apply **and receive them** before having a contract in place with WA DOH. Allow at least 30 days to get these numbers.

You can use the following links to request these numbers:

- WA UBI: [Registrations and filings required for businesses | Washington Department of Revenue](#)
- Statewide Vendor Number: [Vendor Payee Registration | Office of Financial Management \(wa.gov\)](#)
- Follow this link for more support applying for this number: [Apply for a Statewide Vendor Number](#)
- Unique Identifier: [Unique Entity Identifier Update | GSA](#)

Year 1 budget considerations: Contract year one is estimated to be between six and nine months of program work. DOH will negotiate with successful applicants to develop an adjusted year one budget. Year two and three will be 12 months of program work.

Eligibility

1. Do you represent a Washington State Board of Nursing approved nursing program?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Will the program lead students to be able to pass the NCLEX-RN?
 - Yes
 - No

Letters of Support

Letters of support are optional. A maximum of 3 letters of support can be submitted with the application. These letters can be from partner organizations, community members, students, or rural hospitals or facilities.

Section 2.2 Project Plan

Planning Questions

1. Describe your organization's capacity to implement education for nursing students living in rural communities. Include details about your staff and their roles.

2. Tell us about your commitment to creating a sustainable workforce with diverse skills and from different communities. How will your program help increase the supply of Registered Nurses in rural Washington?

3. Share your plan for preparing nursing students to meet the unique needs of working in rural communities. Describe how you'll recruit students, guide them through the program, and help them succeed. Include a high-level timeline with key steps and activities.

4. Describe how you'll deliver rural practice nursing concepts to students, including classroom, lab, and clinical training. How will you give students exposure and experience to rural settings, including labor and delivery?

5. List any existing relationships you have with hospitals and health systems. Please explain how you will work with these partners in the educational process to develop curriculum, offer clinical placements, and give students experience in rural obstetrics care.

6. How will you track student participation and progress in the program. What methods will you use to measure and report the program impact?

Section 2.3 Project Budget

Please fill out the budget summary for the proposed years 1 and 2. Include a description of how you plan to use the grant funds. For more information on allowable costs, please see the [MHI Allowable Costs Guidance](#).

Budget Category	Year 1 Budget	Year 2 Budget	Budget Description
A. Salaries and Wages			
B. Fringe Benefits			
C. Travel			
D. Equipment			
E. Supplies			
F. Contracts			

G. Other			
Total Direct Costs			
H. Indirect Costs*			
Total			

***Please note:** Indirect costs can include administrative expenses to do business. Follow the federally approved indirect rate agreement. If you don't have an agreement in place, use the 10% de minimus rate for indirect charges. All indirect costs are subject to approval by the Washington State Department of Health before contract implementation.

Appendix

A. Anticipated Statement of Work

Purpose: This funding supports Washington Nursing Programs in training more students from rural communities. Programs can focus on developing educational initiatives to support the needs of rural students. The goals are to increase the number of nursing students from rural communities and boost the supply of nurses in rural areas of Washington.

Task Number and Description	Deliverables
<p>1. Program Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a nursing education program tailored to the needs of rural students that leads to RN licensure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A roster of enrolled students with home zip codes. • Sample curriculum highlighting rural nursing education or a program design that supports rural student needs
<p>2. Collaborate with Community Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with rural hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and other health care facilities to engage them in the educational process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief report summarizing your partnership development and the partners' role in curriculum development.
<p>3. Use Simulation Education Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate simulation-based education methods for on-site training to provide practical, hands-on experience in a controlled environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief report describing how simulation labs were used and delivered in the program.
<p>4. Clinical Rotations and Field Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Placements: Offer experience in rural hospitals, clinics, and community health centers. • Rural Obstetric Placements: Create opportunities for students to observe rural obstetrics care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief report listing student placements and describing their experiences in rural hospitals, nursing facilities, and other facilities.
<p>5. Loan Repayment and Job Recruitment Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Health, Office of Rural Health Workforce to create presentations about loan repayment and job opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule presentations for nursing students and provide a list of attendees, date, and time of presentations.

DOH December 2024

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.