



Stellar Designation Program & State Office of Rural Health Collaboration

Rural Health Project Proposal

The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) is requesting a proposal from each finalist region in the current Stellar Designation Program planning period in regards to the Rural Health Project portion of the program. The availability of grant funds comes through a collaboration between the SORH and OCRA under the Health Resources & Services Administration federal grant H95RH00136-27-00. The SORH operates under this funding to provide five core functions, all of which lead to improved health in rural parts of our state.

Project Focus

The purpose of developing this collaboration with Stellar and the availability of grant funding, is to require the regions applying for Stellar Designation to include health-related activities into the ongoing growth and success of their communities. This funding supports projects and/or programs that will have valuable impact on the health of these regions for years to follow. SORH supports rural health focused initiatives that keep the following approaches in mind:

- ✓ Regional community input should be driving the conversations around health-related issues
- ✓ Involve a health professional to provide expertise and guidance
- ✓ Encourage and foster cooperation among municipalities, organizations and agencies
- ✓ Build lasting collaborative partnerships within the region, as well as statewide, in ways that will promote and sustain a dedication to improving health in rural communities

Grant Award Specifications & Requirements

The region awarded the Stellar Designation Program will receive a grant award of \$75,000 to be used for their specific Rural Health Project. Each designee will be asked identify a fiscal agent who will be responsible for budget management, match fund commitments and the development of a sustainability plan to ensure the project continues through the end of the designation and beyond. This project will require the region to match the funding on a 1:1 basis, totaling \$75,000 over the four year designation.

The SORH funding will be distributed in full to the Regional Stellar designee in July of 2020 but does not have to be utilized in its entirety during Year 1. The regional plan should reflect each year's budget from both the match and program award.

Project Proposal

Each finalist region will need to submit a proposal for their specific Rural Health Project(s) and should include the following sections: assessment, project/program development plan, implementation plan,

Assessment:

Regions are asked to include a section of their proposal showing how a need has been identified and the target population being served. This should include at least one or more of the following:

- ✓ Analysis of collected data such as the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment identifying a rural health need in the region - this information can be utilized through a local hospital or a county public health department
- ✓ Research completed through an outside expert such as the CDC, NIH, or other reputable sources
- ✓ Utilization of information on County Health Rankings or ISDH sponsored initiatives
- ✓ Recent input from community members through surveys, town hall meetings, focus group discussion forums, etc.

Project Development Plan:

SORH encourages all finalist regions to look at how others have approached the particular rural health issue identified in the assessment section. This should include one or more of the following activities:

- ✓ Be innovative. Develop a project that is unique to the region represented by thinking outside the box and taking modern approaches.
- ✓ Look locally. Ask the health experts in the region for ideas of projects and programs that they would like to do but haven't been able to or what's been done before that worked but wasn't sustained. However, the funding offered through this program is not intended to supplement an existing program unless there are expansion plans or innovative additions.
- ✓ Look nationally. There are a number of resources available to the regions teaming with projects and programs rural specific that have been implemented and sustained over time. Two suggested resources:
 - <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/evidence-levels>
 - <https://www.naccho.org/resources/model-practices/database>.

Implementation Plan:

In this section, it will be important to discuss how the region will work together to ensure that the project is fulfilled as outlined above. Regions should include action steps, person(s) responsible, and a rough timeline of the project. All communities in the region should be participating at some level in the implementation of the project.

Outcome Measures:

Throughout the Stellar Designation Program, the awarded region will be required to provide information to OCRA about how their project is impacting their community. In this section, it will be important to stress what will be measured to show that impact. In other words, how does the region know that the project was successful or not? Outcome measures should come from a variety of sources such as personal stories of the person(s) served, a statistical improvement, knowledge increases, lessons learned, measuring changes, improved/decreased rates, number of participants/completion rates, etc.

Budget:

Clearly identify how the funding will be utilized in the attached spreadsheet format for all four (4) years of the Stellar Designation Program for both sources of funding (SORH & Match).

The following costs are **unallowable** for SORH funding:

- Direct health care services
- Indirect costs
- Purchase of medical equipment, ambulances and any other vehicles or major communications equipment
- Purchase or improvements to real property
- Conducting activities regarding a certificate of need
- Research

In addition, funding cannot be used to pay for existing programs, projects, staff or administrative costs. The SORH funding should be utilized for items that *increase capacity* if there is expansion of an existing program or adding a *new, innovative approach* to addressing an identified healthcare issue within the region.

REMEMBER: SORH is available to provide technical assistance at every stage as the regions work through this process and proposal. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

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