

State of Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Health



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Rural Health Transformation Program: Rural Telehealth Services Center Needs Assessment

Swift ID: 2000018606

Date Posted: August 14, 2026

- Responses must be received not later than 12:00 PM Central Time, September 14, 2026
- Late responses will not be considered
- As of July 1, 2025, certain terms are unenforceable in state contracts. See Session Laws, 2025 Regular Session, [Chapter 39](#), Article 2, Sec. 45.

Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651.201.2402 or go to the Office of Equity in Procurement home page, at <https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/>.

SPECIAL NOTICE: This is a request for proposal. It does not obligate the State of Minnesota to award a contract or complete the proposed program, and the State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered in its best interest.

This Request for Proposal is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$193,090,618.14 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

This Solicitation requires proposals to be submitted through the SWIFT Supplier Portal. Please note the security changes below that may impact responders from submitting a timely response.

SWIFT SUPPLIER PORTAL SECURITY CHANGES

There are new security measures that the Minnesota Management and Budget implemented on October 16, 2022. It is a new multi-factor authentication (MFA) to enhance the security of the [State of Minnesota Supplier Portal](#). MFA is an authentication method that requires bidders and suppliers provide two verification factors to log into the SWIFT Supplier Portal. The goal of MFA is to create a layered defense that makes it more difficult for unauthorized system access to occur.

For information about these changes, please refer to the [SWIFT Supplier Portal Multi-Factor Authentication FAQ](#) document.

If you have not done so already, please make sure to log into the SWIFT Supplier Portal as soon as possible to get this authentication set up early so there are no issues when submitting a response to an RFP.

You are strongly encouraged to set your MFA during business hours of 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Central Time, Monday through Friday. You may experience delay setting your MFA after hours.

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Solicitation Attachments

- Attachment A: Responder Declarations
- Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Terms and Conditions
- Attachment C: Cost Detail
- Attachment D: Responder Form
 - Workforce and Equal Pay Declaration Page
- Attachment E: Work Samples

Sample Contract

- Exhibit A: Contract Terms
- Exhibit B: Insurance Requirements
- Exhibit C: Specifications, Duties, and Scope of Work
- Exhibit D: Pricing
- Exhibit E: Federal Award Compliance Requirements

SECTION 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDERS

Steps for Completing Your Response	Follow the steps below to complete your response to this Solicitation: Step 1: Read the solicitation documents and ask questions, if any Step 2: Write your response Step 3: Submit your response
Incomplete Submittals	A response must be submitted along with any required additional documents. Incomplete responses that materially deviate from the required format and content may be rejected.

STEP 1 – READ THE SOLICITATION DOCUMENT & ASK QUESTIONS, IF ANY

How to Ask Questions	The contact person for questions is: Zomi Bloom, State Program Administrator Principal Minnesota Department of Health grants.ruraltransformation.mdh@state.mn.us Questions should be emailed to the contact by September 2, 2026 Other personnel are not authorized to answer questions regarding this Solicitation.
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STEP 2 – WRITE YOUR RESPONSE

The Response Content section is in this link to [Section 4](#). Prepare a written response and supply all requested content. Responses should address the requested information and documents detailed in Section 4. **DO NOT INCLUDE** Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined in this link to [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#)).

Review, sign, and include the Responder Declarations with your response.

STEP 3 –SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE

Where to Send Your Response	All responses to this solicitation (termed an “Event” within SWIFT) must be submitted through SWIFT using the Supplier portal (https://mn.gov/supplier). Training and documentation on how to submit your response is available through the Supplier portal link above. Fax, e-mail, and printed responses will not be accepted or considered. All costs incurred in responding to this solicitation will be borne by the responder. Late responses will not be considered. Responses received after End Date above will not be considered, even if errors or delays were caused by issues outside of responders’ control. If you need assistance please contact the SWIFT Vendor Assistance Helpline at 651-201-8100, Option 1, and then Option 1. By submitting a response, your company is making a binding legal offer for the period of time set forth below in Section 6, Conditions of Offer.
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SECTION 2 – SUMMARY OF SCOPE

1. Procurement Overview and Goals.

The federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) was created by H.R.1 (Section 71401 of Public Law 119- 21) on July 4, 2025. It is a federal initiative to help state governments support rural communities in improving health care access, quality, and outcomes by transforming the health care delivery ecosystem. The RHTP focuses on promoting innovation, strategic partnerships, infrastructure development, and workforce investment in rural communities. The federal program will grant up to \$50 billion to states over five budget periods.

The Minnesota Department of Health (“MDH”) is requesting proposals to conduct a needs assessment and develop a design proposal for a potential Rural Telehealth Services Center (RTSC) in Minnesota. The needs assessment will identify gaps in services for rural providers in connecting with peers and patients via telehealth. The subsequent design proposal will outline options for a Minnesota-based RTSC or alternative models that meet the identified needs.

The RTSC could coordinate and support regional telehealth needs, potentially in partnership with existing local telehealth hubs or providers. Focus areas for the RTSC could include:

- Address fragmentation and gaps in services to rural healthcare facilities, emergency medical services, and communities
- Facilitate connections to specialty services so patients can receive care close to home
- Building structures to support operations, such as staffing; providers; pathways toward community buy-in and stakeholder engagement; credentialing; and compliance with state and federal laws, licensure boards, and healthcare organization policies.

This request for proposal will serve the State of Minnesota in exploring the feasibility, structure, and potential development of a telehealth services center. The selected vendor will be responsible for conducting the needs assessment, developing RTSC design options, and producing all deliverables described in this solicitation.

2. Tasks and Deliverables.

The recipient of this RFP will use funds to design a work plan, conduct project management, develop an interim needs assessment, produce a final report, and summarize findings and recommendations in a PowerPoint slide deck. Details on the deliverables are as follows:

Deliverable 1: Work Plan. The vendor will provide MDH with a comprehensive project work plan and timeline that includes a detailed schedule of all tasks.

Deliverable 2: Project Management. The vendor will:

- Participate in regular, virtual meetings with MDH, including a kick-off call within 5 days of contract execution and monthly project check-ins throughout the contract period.
- Submit written progress reports that will also serve as agendas for each check-in meeting.
- Provide ample time for MDH to provide input during the project period and review and provide feedback on the work plan, proposed methodology, and all draft content and deliverables. This includes at least 14 calendar days to review and provide feedback on the interim needs assessment, and 14 calendar days to review and provide feedback on the final report. The vendor should plan for an additional 14 calendar days to complete their edits in response to MDH feedback and return the deliverable by the deadline.

Deliverable 3: Interim Needs Assessment. The vendor will deliver an interim needs assessment at the six-month mark. Methods will be identified by the vendor and approved by MDH in advance during a project management meeting. The report will include:

- Identification of gaps in care that could be filled by the RTSC or coordinated by the RTSC
- Standardized equipment needed for rural providers to connect with one another
- Priority specialty service lines appropriate for telehealth delivery
- Challenges faced by rural healthcare providers in ensuring continuity of care
- Structural and regulatory barriers involved in providing services by telehealth, including but not limited to credentialing, regulatory environment, reimbursement, staffing needs, policies and procedures, organizational structure, and workflows
- Identification of sustainable collaboration models between rural providers and specialty services, including support for complex care locally when a patient cannot be moved

Deliverable 4: Final Report. At or before 12 months, the vendor will submit a written final report to MDH before final deliverables are approved for payment. Methods will be identified by the vendor and approved by MDH at a project management meeting. The report will include the following sections:

- Finalized needs assessment: this includes content from the interim needs assessment with edits and additional content as directed by MDH
- Proposal for a RTSC or alternative model of service delivery that could meet the identified needs. This section should include the following components:
 - Identification of regional and/or statewide partners for planning and operation of the RTSC
 - Proposed models for organizational structure with identification of strengths and weaknesses
 - Operational and capital investment costs for establishing the RTSC based on proposed organizational structure(s)
 - Barriers to creating a centralized set of programs and how to mitigate these

The final report should be written in plain language. The report should follow the RHTP style guide that will be provided by MDH and be in an accessible format per the State of Minnesota Standards found here: https://osp.admin.mn.gov/sites/osp/files/pdf/accessibility_standard.pdf.

Deliverable 5: Summary Presentation. The vendor will prepare and submit to MDH a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes findings and recommendations.

3. Desired Vendor Qualifications.

- Located in Minnesota or have demonstrated familiarity with Minnesota's health care telehealth landscape
- For-profit or not-for-profit entities that demonstrate extensive experience:
 - Conducting needs assessments and evaluations
 - Developing resources that support rural healthcare, especially in telehealth
 - Developing the structure for coalitions around service delivery
- Organizations with sufficiently developed capacity and infrastructure to achieve the deliverables

Applicants will be selected based on their ability to complete proposed projects and evidence of experience in the proposed subject matter.

SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Anticipated Contract Term.

The term of this contract is anticipated to be from September 2026 to September 2027, with the option to extend up to one additional year, determined by the State. .

2. Question and Answer Instructions.

All questions regarding this solicitation must be submitted in writing to the contact listed in Section 1 by the question due date and time. The State is not obligated to respond to questions submitted after the deadline. Only the person(s) identified in Section 1 are authorized to discuss this solicitation with responders. Contact with any other State personnel about this solicitation may result in disqualification. Only personnel listed above are authorized to discuss this solicitation with responders. Contact regarding this solicitation with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification. This provision is not intended to prevent responders from seeking guidance from state procurement assistance programs regarding general procurement questions.

If a Responder discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the solicitation, please immediately notify the contact person detailed above in writing of such error and request modification or clarification of the document.

3. Additional Tasks or Activities.

Responders are encouraged to propose additional tasks, activities, or goods above and beyond the scope of what is requested in this solicitation if they will substantially improve the results of this procurement. Any such items must be clearly labeled as “Additional” and priced separately in the cost proposal. Any costs associated with these additional tasks, activities, or goods should be clearly marked and separated from costs associated with the tasks, activities, or goods specifically requested under this solicitation. Because cost is a factor in the evaluation of responses to this solicitation, failure to separate costs for additional tasks, activities, or goods may result in those costs being included in a responder's cost proposal and result in a lower cost score for that proposal.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please submit the following information. Responses should be 12-point font and double-spaced and adhere to the page limits as indicated. Responses should be submitted as Microsoft Word or PDF files. All pages exceeding the page limit will not be reviewed nor evaluated. :

1. Project Overview and Methodology. (10 pages maximum) Responder should provide a summary of how they intend to complete the deliverables outlined in this RFP. Responder should identify the methods they will use to complete the needs assessment and the design proposal, and share rationale for selecting those particular methods. Additionally, responder should demonstrate their understanding of rural health needs and connect them to the project overview and methodology. Responder will share how they will collect, analyze, and interpret data, and explain how they intend to manage risk. This section should NOT list cost detail. If cost detail is included in this document, the State may disqualify the proposal as non-responsive.
2. Qualifications and Experience. (10 pages maximum) Responder should provide an overview of their qualifications and experience, and explain what makes them uniquely suited to this work.

Preferred qualifications include:

- Experience conducting at least two (2) needs assessments or program evaluations of healthcare-related programs
- Experience creating or developing at least one (1) proposal for an organizational structure or coalition to support healthcare delivery
- Experience evaluating or designing programs related to rural health
- Experience evaluating or designing programs related to telehealth
- Knowledge of and experience evaluating or supporting Minnesota-based healthcare providers

Responder should include a list of personnel who will conduct the project, detailing their training and work experience. Resumes or other information about project personnel should not, if possible, contain personal telephone numbers, home addresses, or home email addresses. If it is necessary to include personal contact information, please clearly indicate in the response that personal contact information is being provided. Resumes will not count towards the page limit.

3. Work Sample. (1 page maximum summary – work sample itself does not have a page limit) Responder should complete and submit “Attachment E: Work Samples” with their response. These work samples should reflect the quality of the deliverables they will provide to the State. Work Samples are ideally very similar to the services being requested in this RFP. Summary of the Work Sample will count toward the page limit, but submitted Work Sample will not.
4. Cost Detail. (Attachment, no page limit) Complete and submit Attachment C, “Cost Detail,” attached to this solicitation. This does not count toward the page limit.
5. Sample Transaction Documents. Prior to award, a potential successful Responder must submit samples of any transaction documents proposed for use under the resulting contract. The State will review the transaction documents to ensure they contain sufficient detail and to review additional terms and conditions contained therein, if any. The State reserves the right to request additional detail in the transaction documents or to reject additional terms and conditions within transaction documents. Once approved by the State, Contractor may not materially change transaction documents unless a change has been approved in writing by the Commissioner of Administration, as delegated to the Office of State Procurement. Any terms and conditions included in transaction documents but not approved by the State are voidable by the State. Any terms and conditions that are in conflict

with Minnesota law or in conflict with the terms of the State Contract are void. Failure to void a non-approved term or condition included in a transaction document does not waive the State's right to void any non-approved term or condition.

Submit all requested documentation, including, but not limited to, the following documents:

1. Technical Proposal
2. Attachment A: Responder Declarations
3. Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Standard Terms and Conditions
4. Attachment C: Cost Proposal
5. Attachment D: Responder Forms
 - a. Workforce and Equal Pay Declaration Page
 - b. Equal Pay Certificate Form

DO NOT INCLUDE Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37).

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

The State will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Solicitation. The evaluations will be conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Review responses for responsiveness and pass/fail requirements
- Phase 2 - Evaluate responses
- Phase 3 - Select finalist(s)

1. Phase 1 – Responsiveness and Pass/Fail Requirements

The purpose of this phase is to determine if each response complies with mandatory requirements. The State will first review each proposal for responsiveness to determine if the Responder satisfies all mandatory requirements. The State will evaluate these requirements on a pass/fail basis.

Mandatory Requirements. The following will be considered on a pass/fail basis:

- Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this RFP.
- Responses must include all content described in section 4 and Responder forms.

2. Phase 2 - Evaluate Responses

Only those responses found to have met Phase 1 criteria will be considered in Phase 2.

The factors and weighting on which responses will be evaluated are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Project Overview and Methodology | 300 points |
| 2. Qualifications and Experience | 200 points |
| 3. Work Sample | 200 points |
| 4. Cost Detail | <u>300 points</u> |
| | 1000 points |

3. Phase 3 - Select Finalist(s)

Only those responses that have been evaluated under Phase 2 shall be eligible for Phase 3.

The State will make its selection based on best value, as determined by this evaluation process. The State reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the State's standard terms and conditions. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the State reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring responder or take other actions as the State deems appropriate. If the State anticipates multiple awards, the State reserves the right to negotiate with more than one Responder.

It is anticipated that the evaluation and selection will be completed by September 20, 2026.

SECTION 6 – UNENFORCEABLE TERMS AND SOLICITATION TERMS

Unenforceable Terms

As of July 1, 2025, certain terms are unenforceable in state contracts. See Session Laws, 2025 Regular Session, [Chapter 39](#), Article 2, Section 45.

Unenforceable terms

- (a) A contract entered into by the state shall not contain a term that:
- (1) requires the state to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless another person or entity, unless specifically authorized by statute;
 - (2) binds a party by terms and conditions that may be unilaterally changed by the other party;
 - (3) requires mandatory arbitration;
 - (4) attempts to extend arbitration obligations to disputes unrelated to the original contract;
 - (5) construes the contract in accordance with the laws of a state other than Minnesota;
 - (6) obligates state funds in subsequent fiscal years in the form of automatic renewal as defined in section 325G.56; or
 - (7) is inconsistent with chapter 13, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
- (b) If a contract is entered into that contains a term prohibited in paragraph (a), that term shall be void and the contract is enforceable as if it did not contain that term.

Solicitation Terms

1. Competition in Responding

The State desires open and fair competition. Questions from responders regarding any of the requirements of the Solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Solicitation Administrator listed in the Solicitation before the due date and time. If changes are made the State will issue an addendum.

Any evidence of collusion among responders in any form designed to defeat competitive responses will be reported to the Minnesota Attorney General for investigation and appropriate action.

2. Addenda to the Solicitation

Changes to the Solicitation will be made by addendum with notification and posted in the same manner as the original Solicitation. Any addenda issued will become part of the Solicitation.

3. Joint Ventures

The State allows joint ventures among groups of responders when responding to the solicitation. However, one responder must submit a response on behalf of all the others in the group. The responder that submits the response will be considered legally responsible for the response (and the contract, if awarded).

4. Withdrawing Response

A responder may withdraw its response prior to the due date and time of the Solicitation. For solicitations in the SWIFT Supplier Portal, a responder may withdraw its response from the SWIFT Supplier Portal. For solicitations done any other way, a responder may withdraw its response by notifying the Solicitation Administrator in writing of the desire to withdraw.

After the due date and time of this Solicitation, a responder may withdraw a response only upon showing that an obvious error exists in the response. The showing and request for withdrawal must be made in writing to Solicitation Administrator within a reasonable time and prior to the State's detrimental reliance on the response.

5. Rights Reserved

The State reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all responses received;
- Waive or modify any informalities, irregularities, or inconsistencies in the responses received;
- Negotiate with the highest scoring Responder[s];
- Terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for the State;
- Consider documented past performance resulting from a State contract may be considered in the evaluation process;
- Short list the highest scoring Responders;
- Require Responders to conduct presentations, demonstrations, or submit samples;
- Interview key personnel or references;
- Request a best and final offer from one or more Responders;
- The State reserves the right to request additional information ; and
- The State reserves the right to use estimated usage or scenarios for the purpose of conducting pricing evaluations. The State reserves the right to modify scenarios, and to request or add additional scenarios for the evaluation.

6. Samples and Demonstrations

Upon request, Responders are to provide samples to the State at no charge. Except for those destroyed or mutilated in testing, the State will return samples if requested and at the Responder's expense. All costs to conduct and associated with a demonstration will be the sole responsibility of the Responder.

7. Responses are Nonpublic during Evaluation Process

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation will become property of the State. During the evaluation process, all information concerning the responses submitted will remain private or nonpublic and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge. Responses are private or nonpublic data until the completion of the evaluation process as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.591. The completion of the evaluation process is defined as the State having completed negotiating a contract with the selected responder. The State will notify all responders in writing of the evaluation results.

8. Trade Secret Information

8.1 Responders must not submit as part of their response trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37.

8.2 In the event trade secret data are submitted, Responder must defend any action seeking release of data it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the data, and any and all costs connected with that defense.

8.3 The State does not consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37.

8.4 A responder may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration with the State, if applicable.

9. Conditions of Offer

Unless otherwise approved in writing by the State, Responder's cost proposal and all terms offered in its response that pertain to the completion of professional and technical services and general services will remain firm for 180 days, until they are accepted or rejected by the State, or they are changed by further negotiations with the State prior to contract execution.

10. Award

Any award that may result from this solicitation will be based upon the total accumulated points as established in the solicitation. The State reserves the right to award this solicitation to a single Responder, or to multiple Responders, whichever is in the best interest of the State, providing each Responder is in compliance with all terms and conditions of the solicitation. The State reserves the right to accept all or part of an offer, to reject all offers, to cancel the solicitation, or to re-issue the solicitation, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

11. Requirements Prior to Contract Execution

Prior to contract execution, a responder receiving a contract award must comply with any submittal requests. A submittal request may include, but is not limited to, a Certificate of Insurance.