



Health Resources and Services Administration: Health Professions Programs

A. Funding Table

The spending plan for the use of the \$200 million for Health Professions Programs in Recovery Act funding is currently under review; therefore, no funding table is available at this time. The Recovery Act provides for 0.5% of the total appropriated amount to be used to support the administrative costs of implementation; this totals \$1 million across the two years of implementation.

B. Objectives

The objective of the Health Professions Programs as supported through the Recovery Act is to direct resources to programs that can address health professions workforce shortages through a range of programs: programs authorized in Titles VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, such as the primary care medicine and dentistry program, the public health and preventive medicine program, and scholarship and loan repayment programs; the fostering of cross-State licensing agreements; and grants to training programs for equipment. The program efforts that will be funded by the Recovery Act awards support Objective 1.4 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Strategic Plan: recruit, develop, and retain a competent health care workforce.

C. Activities

The general types of activities to be funded are the support of health professions students and training programs as well as provision of loan repayment awards for health professionals serving in underserved areas. The spend plan is under development. Specific activities will be announced once a spending plan is finalized.

D. Characteristics

Specifics will be announced once a spending plan is finalized.

E. Delivery Schedule

Once a spending plan is finalized, announcements of funding opportunities will be available on the grants.gov website within four weeks; details of project and budget periods and reporting requirements will be included in the guidance associated with each funding opportunity. Applications will be due 30 days after the announcements are posted. All grants will be subject to an objective review process which involves groups of nonfederal reviewers who assign scores based on the merits of each application; this process takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete. The highest scoring grants will be selected for funding with awards made by September 1, 2009. The first quarterly reports, using the OMB-approved quarterly reporting format, will be due in October. All loan repayment awards will be made in FY 2009.



F. Environmental Review Compliance

HRSA is working with HHS and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to establish protocol and procedures that ensure all activities funded under the Recovery Act will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and related statutes.

HRSA has reviewed this activity in accordance with the HHS GAM 30 and discussed the program with the HHS Environmental Program Manager. From this review, HRSA has concluded that it qualifies for a Category 2.a. Function Exclusion and there are no additional extraordinary circumstances that may cause significant effects. HRSA will maintain written documentation of all environmental reviews and they will be reported on the Section 1609(c) report.

G. Measures

All recipients, excluding loan repayment awards made to individuals, of Recovery Act funds will be required to complete the standard OMB-developed quarterly reporting form for information such as financial data, sub-recipients, and jobs created/retained as appropriate. For most of the program performance measures, grantees will report to HRSA through normal reporting systems. Data will be consolidated and reported by HRSA to a Recovery Act central system. For most of the activities supported with the Recovery Act Health Professions funds, the outputs relate to the numbers of students supported and the associated outcomes involve increasing diversity or the completion of training. Commitments of support to students occur once each year so establishing milestones or requiring reporting more than annually would impose an unnecessary burden on grantees and would not result in more useful information on implementation. The outputs and outcomes are the same ones that are regularly collected through the ongoing performance reporting system and information is only collected annually. Additionally, the measures will reflect performance for the period July 1 to June 30 of the next year. This period corresponds closely with the academic year at most educational institutions. For loan repayment programs, such as the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program, data will be reported at the aggregate level since these awards are made to individuals, Output data will be reported quarterly and outcome data will be reported annually.

H. Monitoring and Evaluation

All Recovery Act programs will be assessed for risk and to ensure that appropriate internal controls are in place throughout the entire funding cycle. These assessments will be consistent with the statutory requirements of the Federal Manager's Financial Integrity Act and the Improper Payments Information Act, as well as OMB's circular A-123 "Management's Responsibility for Internal Control."

Monitoring and evaluation of grants will follow existing HRSA grants management processes which includes a financial integrity assessment prior to award (i.e., review of HRSA alert lists and A-133 audit reports to ensure organizations are viable entities). All applications will be subject to an objective review and receive a score in accordance with existing HRSA policy. Upon award, conditions and terms will be associated with awards to ensure compliance with financial and performance



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reporting requirements. Both grants management as well as program staff will monitor awards to ensure compliance with requirements.

For loan repayment programs, HRSA requires Office of the General Counsel review of all application materials associated with the Recovery Act, completion of employment verification forms, and is taking steps to modify and compete contracts that will allow HRSA to uniquely report on Recovery Act activities. HRSA program staff work closely with the HRSA budget and finance organizations associated with managing and monitoring Recovery Act expenditures.

I. Transparency

HRSA will be open and transparent in all of its contracting and grant competitions that involve spending of Recovery Act funding, consistent with statutory requirements and OMB guidance.

HRSA will ensure that recipient reporting required by Section 1512 of the Recovery Act and OMB guidance is made available to the public on Recovery.gov by October 10, 2009. HRSA will inform recipients of their reporting obligations through standard terms and conditions, grant announcements, contract solicitations, and other program guidance. HRSA will provide technical assistance to grantees and contractors and fully utilize Project Officers to ensure compliance with reporting requirements.

Every Recovery Act funded program in HRSA is being structured so that HRSA can track all Recovery Act financial and performance information as required by the Recovery Act and associated OMB guidance. Financial and performance data will be reported through the HHS website as well as through the government-wide website.

J. Accountability

To ensure that managers are held to high standards of accountability in achieving program goals under the Recovery Act, HRSA will build on and strengthen existing processes. Senior HRSA Health Professions and Clinician Recruitment and Service officials will meet regularly with senior Department officials to ensure that projects are meeting their program goals, assessing and mitigating risks, ensuring transparency, and incorporating corrective actions. The personnel performance appraisal system will also incorporate Recovery Act program stewardship responsibilities for program and business function managers.

The HRSA business process and enterprise-wide system provides for the capturing of milestone dates throughout the grants process. These data will be used to ensure all actions occur in a timely fashion from the release of the funding opportunity through the application and awards process as well as the capturing of quarterly data. HRSA's Office of Federal Assistance Management as well as program offices will be held accountable to ensure the timely awarding and management of funds, and, as appropriate, HRSA Performance Management and Assessment Plans may be modified to incorporate the stewardship of Recovery Act funds. HRSA has implemented senior level governance boards, and a thorough and comprehensive A-



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123 internal controls testing and evaluation process, which tests, and ensures appropriate internal controls are in place throughout the entire funding cycle. The Clinician Recruitment and Service program is also subject to a complete improper payments risk assessment on a regular basis, with the last one performed during FY 2008.

K. Barriers to Effective Implementation

Overall Recovery Act implementation is not compromised by any regulatory impediment. Available resources will be sufficient to complete the awarding and monitoring activities associated with the Recovery Act. However, to help ensure that HRSA meets established timelines and monitoring requirements, additional staff may be needed. HRSA is working to address their hiring needs through the federal hiring process. To decrease the hiring timeframe for Recovery Act positions, HRSA worked closely with the Rockville HR Center (RHRC) to make one announcement to cover approximately 100 vacant positions. HRSA is also meeting weekly with RHRC to ensure selections meet OPM requirements and job offers are made in a timely manner.

For loan repayment program, the time required to comply with all program support contracting requirements is challenging and directly impacts the timeliness of the award process. Applications must be processed for completeness, eligibility, financial need ranking, and funding preference determination. Recovery Act funding will be used for additional staff to assist in processing these applications.

L. Federal Infrastructure

Not applicable