



**RHODE ISLAND**  
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

# Rhode Island Rural Health Transformation Program

*March 2026*

# Acknowledgements

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# What is the Rural Health Transformation Program?

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In July 2025, Congress created the Rural Health Transformation Program as part of [H.R.1](#). RHTP is a partnership between the federal government and state governments to support rural communities across the country.

## Overview

RHTP was designed to help states create innovative solutions that address the unique health needs of their rural residents. The federal and state governments will work together to achieve this.

## Approach

- The program sets aside \$50 billion to distribute to states over the next five years (FFY26-FFY30).
- In order to get funds, each state had to submit an application in late 2025.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced award amounts for the first year of the program on December 29, 2025.
- Over the next year, states will begin to develop and implement projects that transform the delivery of care in rural communities. Future funding will be determined based on the progress they make, pending CMS review and approval.

Sources: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#); Notice of Award

CMS set clear guidelines about how states should use RHTP funds.

## What must these funds be used for?

- Investments in rural communities through three or more of the below funding categories:
  - Chronic disease prevention and management
  - Provider payments
  - Consumer technology solutions
  - Training and technical assistance
  - Workforce development and retention
  - IT advances
  - Appropriate care availability
  - Behavioral health
  - Innovative care models

## What is not allowed?\*

- New construction
- Independent research and development
- Duplicate billable services
- Currently funded investments (i.e., supplanting state or federal funds)
- EMR replacement over a 5% cap\*\*
- Administrative spending over the 10% cap (direct and indirect)

**Note: This is one time funding, which States are not allowed to use to fill current or potential budget holes.**

\* This is not exhaustive. CMS has final approval for all funding uses.

\*\*5% cap applies to upgrading EMRs that are HITECH certified.

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

RHTP is a cooperative agreement between the federal and state governments (defined in [2 CFR 182.620](#)), meaning they will work together to implement the program.

## Setting Expectations

The federal government set terms & conditions in their “Notice of Award” and a formal cooperative agreement. By participating, states agree to follow these.

## Monitoring

States will check in with CMS at least monthly and submit formal quarterly & annual reports. States are expected to meet milestones and outcomes identified in their applications.

## Approvals

CMS reviewed each state’s application and makes overall funding decisions. They must approve the state’s planned projects and use of funds.

## Consequences

If states do not meet expectations, CMS may require corrective action or even recover funds. Funding for future years depends on progress states make towards their commitments.

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

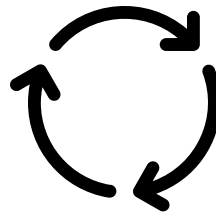
# Cooperative Agreement Detail

RHTP is a cooperative agreement between the federal and state governments (defined in [2 CFR 182.620](#)), meaning they will work together to implement the program.

The federal government sets terms & conditions of this award in their “Notice of Award” as part of the “cooperative agreement” established when they approve state budgets. In general, collaboration may look like:

## Federal Government (CMS):

- Sets overall strategic goals & framework
- Approves, rejects, or provides feedback on state’s proposed projects and awards funding to implement it
- Releases funding upon review and approval of submitted project and budget narratives
- Reviews progress, provides feedback, and determines future funding; may impose corrective action if deemed necessary



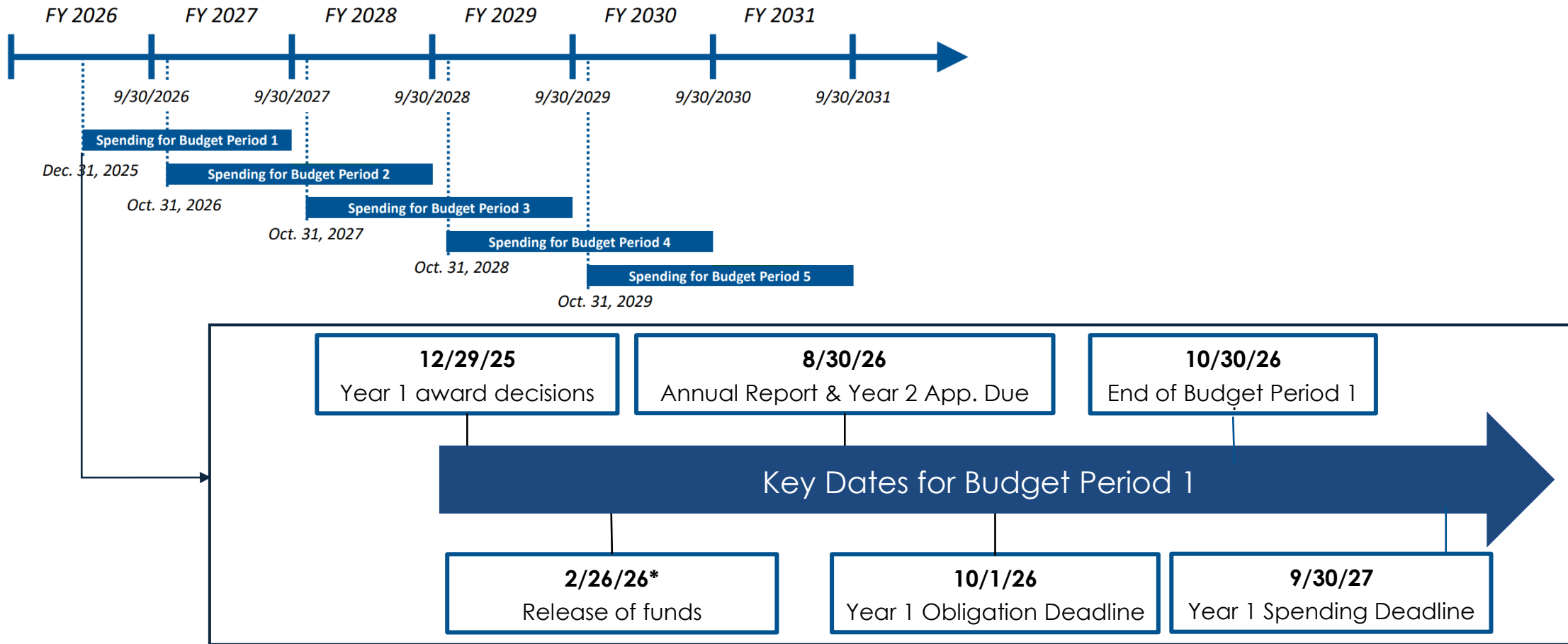
## State Government:

- Develops a set of projects to achieve these goals in their own state’s rural context
- Incorporates CMS feedback and submits a proposed budget based on awarded funds
- Implements projects (with identified partners); develops reports on progress & spending
- Makes program changes based on CMS feedback and implementation

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

# RHTP Overall Timeline

RHTP will be implemented over five years, from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 26-30, with key milestones throughout.



Sources: [CMS Webinar for Applicants](#); Notice of Award

\*RI's final amount was released on 3/13/26, but 99% of funds were released on 2/26/26.

# Applicable Regulations

There are several sources of rules and regulations that govern RHTP, including H.R. 1, the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and the Notice of Award.

## RHTP-Specific Requirements

[Public Law 119-21 \(H.R. 1\)  
Section 71401](#)

[RHTP Notice of Funding  
Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#)

RHTP Notice of Award  
(NoA)

[RHTP FAQ \(10/2025\)](#)

## General Federal Requirements

[2 CFR 200 \(Uniform  
Guidance\)](#)

[2 CFR 300 \(HHS Uniform  
Guidance\)](#)

[HHS Grants Policy  
Statement](#)

HHS Admin. & National  
Policy Requirements

All Anti-Discrimination  
Laws

## State-Specific Requirements

State Laws & Regulations

Medicaid State Plan &  
Waivers, as applicable

Municipal Laws, as  
applicable

Private Payors Rules &  
Regulations

Sources: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#); [RHTP FAQ](#); Notice of Award

# What does RHTP mean for Rhode Island?

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RI is working towards a connected, community-based system that ensures every rural resident has timely, coordinated, high quality care where they live. This marks a fundamental shift from top-down, state-driven approaches to building lasting infrastructure that empowers communities to lead their own health transformation.



## **RHTP is structured around five strategic goals that will help achieve this vision:**

1. Make Rural America Healthy Again - Improve the health of rural residents
2. Sustainable Access - Expand access to comprehensive, quality, low-cost care
3. Workforce Development - Strengthen the rural health care workforce
4. Innovative Care - Accelerate value-based & affordable care models
5. Tech Innovation - Integrate technology into rural practice

Note: This aligns with the five goals set in [H.R. 1](#).

Source: [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

Rhode Island continues to use RI 2030 (the State strategic plan) and the Health Care System Planning Foundational Report to work towards a world where everyone can access high quality, affordable health care. RHTP is a crucial investment to ensure the path forward will work for all people by providing targeted support to rural communities.



**RHTP goes hand-in-hand with Rhode Island's overall goals for improving health and transforming the healthcare system in the state.**

**RI 2030 and the Health Care System Planning Foundational Report identify priorities to transform health care, like:**

- Improve health outcomes by addressing lifestyle factors & determinants of health, behavioral health, and more
- Make it easier for people to access health care in their communities
- Strengthen the health care workforce to ensure that people receive the amount and quality of care they need
- Limit health care costs using innovative models of care
- Modernize the health care system by integrating technology into care

**RHTP provides an important investment to help RI continue working towards these goals in rural communities.**

# RHTP in Rhode Island

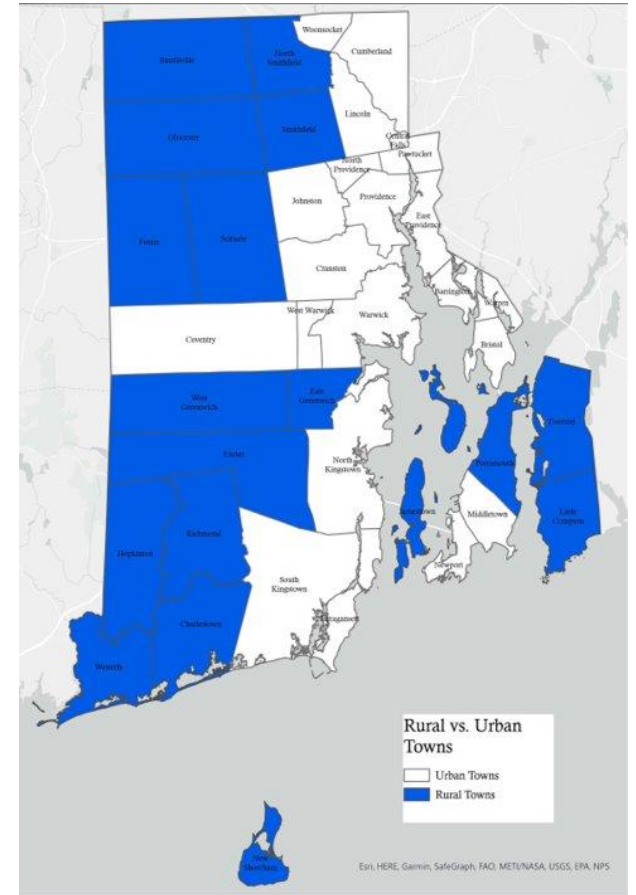
CMS awarded Rhode Island \$156.2 million to serve rural Rhode Islanders for the first year of RHTP.

CMS awarded Rhode Island **\$156.2 M** for the first year of RHTP (until 10/30/26).

These funds will be used to support residents of Rhode Island’s rural towns, which are [defined](#) as having fewer than 25,000 people and lower population density. This includes the following 18 towns:

- |                |                |                  |            |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------|
| Burrillville   | Charlestown    | East Greenwich   | Exeter     |
| Foster         | Glocester      | Hopkinton        | Jamestown  |
| Little Compton | New Shoreham   | North Smithfield | Portsmouth |
| Richmond       | Scituate       | Smithfield       | Tiverton   |
|                | West Greenwich | Westerly         |            |

Some funds will also support members of the **Narragansett Indian Tribe**.



# RHTP Partnerships & Community

Many people and organizations have been and will continue to be involved in RHTP in Rhode Island. The State will continue to prioritize rural voices to make sure that this project can support people the best they can.

## Agencies & Partner Organizations

The **Executive Office of Health & Human Services** will be leading the RHTP effort, but will collaborate with other State agencies & organizations. This group may grow:



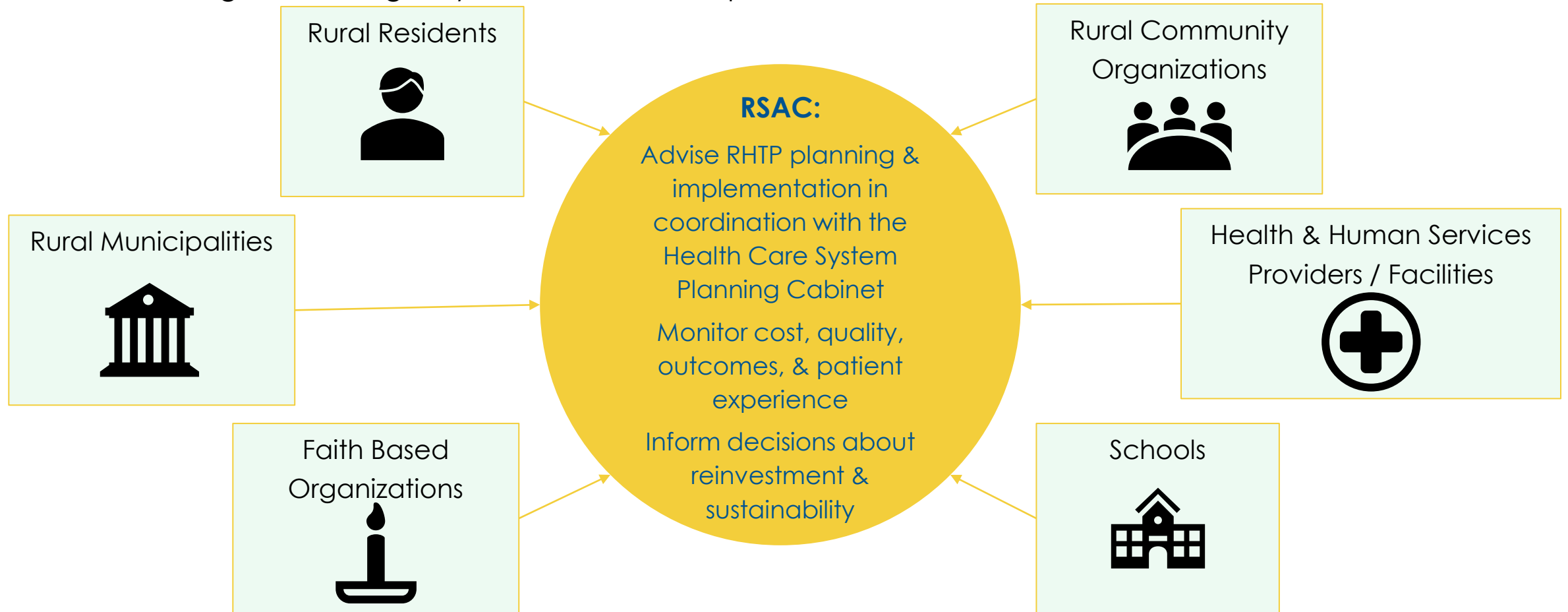
## Community Feedback & Engagement

- In fall 2025, the State collected feedback on what rural communities need and how best to address those needs. This feedback formed the basis of the State's RHTP proposal
- The State will establish a **Rural Stakeholder Advisory Committee** to help guide the project
- As the State starts to implement projects, community outreach will be key to make sure that they are working well for the people they serve

*Note: The State will continue to issue requests for proposals & contract vehicles to implement programs. The State will also open grant funds for rural communities and partners.*

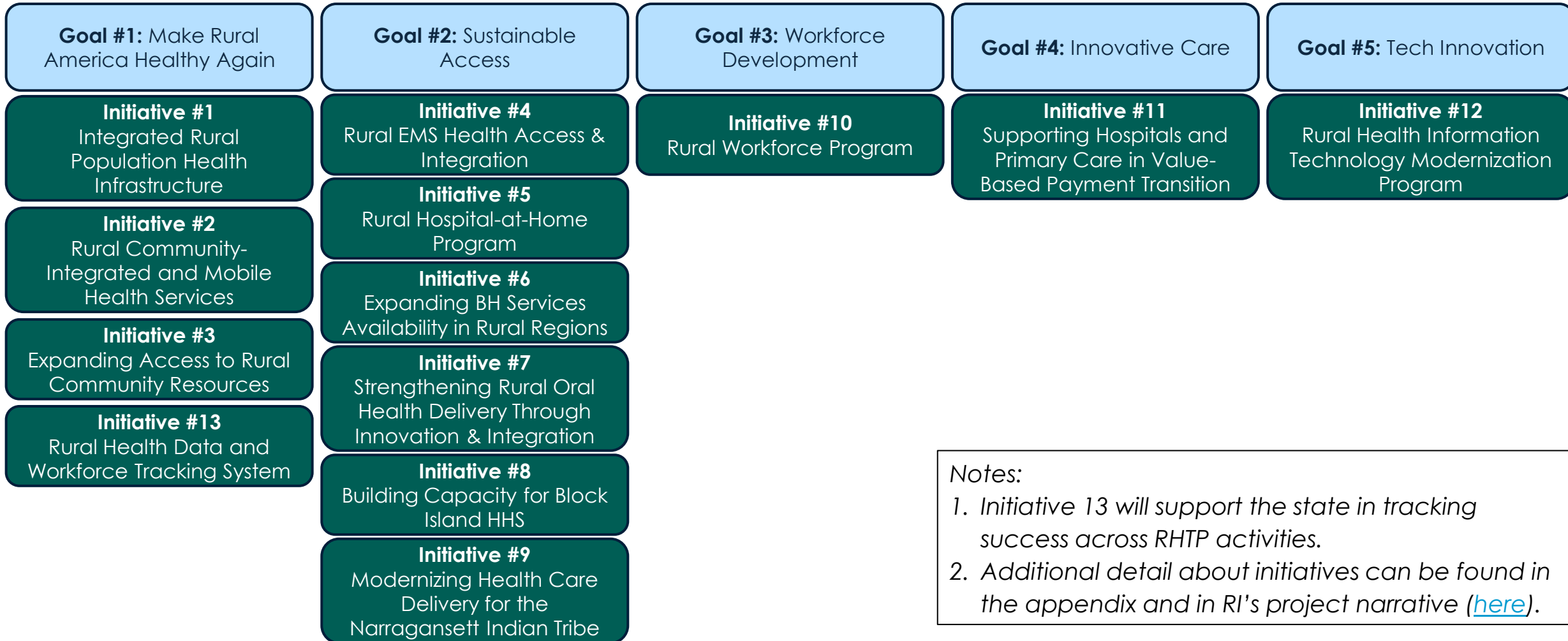
# Rural Stakeholder Advisory Committee (RSAC)

The State will create a Rural Stakeholder Advisory Committee to provide feedback on RHTP projects and inform implementation and planning. Information about how to get involved will be shared in the coming months as the charter, term-lengths, and eligibility criteria are developed.



# RHTP Initiatives

Rhode Island has developed 13 initiatives that will be used to achieve the five RHTP goals, which CMS has approved as part of the State's application.



Notes:

1. Initiative 13 will support the state in tracking success across RHTP activities.
2. Additional detail about initiatives can be found in the appendix and in RI's project narrative ([here](#)).

# What should we expect from RHTP going forward?

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# Next Steps

The State will begin implementing RHTP initiatives throughout the year and will continue to share information as it is available.

Additional information will be posted online: <https://eohhs.ri.gov/initiatives/rural-health-transformation-grant>

Please reach out to [OHHS.RIRHTP@ohhs.ri.gov](mailto:OHHS.RIRHTP@ohhs.ri.gov) with any questions or concerns you may have.

# Appendix

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# Goal 1 / Initiative # 1: Integrated Rural Population Health Infrastructure



**Goal:** 1. Make Rural America Healthy Again – Improve the Health of Rural Residents

## Overview:

- Establish a statewide rural population health infrastructure that connects Community Clinical Care Hubs with Rural Community Health Networks.
  - Hubs serve as the clinical backbone, delivering accessible, integrated care.
  - Networks mobilize local partners and resources to improve health outcomes and strengthen community wellness.

# Goal 1/Initiative #2: Rural Community Integrated and Mobile Health Services



**Goal:** 1. Make Rural America Healthy Again – Improve the Health of Rural Residents

## Overview:

- Expand access to care through community-based and mobile health delivery across Rhode Island's rural regions.
  - Enhance rural Community Learning Centers to include health, education, and telemedicine programs.
  - Launch mobile dental units to provide preventive and restorative oral health services.
  - Deploy mobile nutrition and maternal–child health units to expand WIC services, screenings, and counseling.
  - Integrate mobile outreach and telehealth for well-visits, chronic disease management, and specialist consultations.

# Goal 1/Initiative #3: Expanding Access to Rural Community Resources



**Goal:** 1. Make Rural America Healthy Again – Improve the Health of Rural Residents

## Overview:

- Conduct accessibility assessments and implement improvements to ensure rural clinics and community spaces are inclusive for older adults and people with disabilities.

# Goal 1/Initiative #13: Rural Health Data and Workforce Tracking System



**Goal:** 1. Make Rural America Healthy Again – Improve the Health of Rural Residents

## Overview:

- Establish an integrated rural data system to track health drivers, monitor workforce needs, improve coordination across community and clinical settings, and guide targeted RHTP investments

# Goal 2/Initiative #4: Rural EMS Access and Integration



**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Expand Rhode Island's Mobile Integrated Health–Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) model to all rural towns for in-home preventive and post-acute care.
- Establish a State EMS Academy to strengthen rural EMS education, training, and career pipelines.
- Modernize EMS equipment and technology, with targeted investments for Block Island and Prudence Island.

# Goal 2/Initiative #5: Rural Hospital-at-Home Program



**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Launch a scalable home-based hospital care model providing safe, high-quality acute-level care in rural homes as an alternative to inpatient hospitalization.

# Goal 2/Initiative #6: Expanding Behavioral Health Services Availability in Rural Regions



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**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Establish a new 24/7 behavioral health and crisis stabilization centers.
- Open a new Recovery Community Center offering peer-led supports, treatment referrals, and recovery services.
- Integrate hospital-based SUD bridge clinics with peer navigators to ensure care coordination across rural regions.

# Goal 2/Initiative #7: Strengthening Rural Oral Health Delivery through Innovation & Integration



**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Implement virtual dental triage to connect ED patients with licensed dentists via tele-dentistry.
- Transform Zambarano's dental facility into a specialized outpatient dental center serving patients with disabilities or complex needs.

# Goal 2/Initiative #8: Building Capacity for Block Island Health Services



**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Integrate rural Hub, EMS, HIT, and workforce strategies to strengthen island health infrastructure.
- Establish the island's first PACE partnership to support aging in place and expand community wellness & social support services.

# Goal 2/Initiative #9: Modernizing Health Care Delivery for the Narragansett Indian Tribe (NIT)



**Goal:** 2. Sustainable Access – Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care

## Overview:

- Partner with the Tribe to upgrade facilities, expand workforce capacity, and enhance care coordination.
- Deploy remote monitoring, diagnostic tech, & infrastructure improvements to advance access and chronic disease management.

## **Goal:** 3. Sustainable Access – Strengthen the Rural Health Care Workforce

### **Overview:**

- Launch a rural-focused Family Medicine Residency in partnership with Thundermist Health Center and Block Island Health Services.
- Expand rural clinical rotations and field experiences for medical, NP, and PA students in community-based settings, including FQHCs.
- Establish a centralized clinical placement system to streamline student placements and strengthen rural training partnerships.
- Expand early exposure in K-12 to health careers through Career and Technical Education programs in rural school districts.
- Support rural dental residency opportunities to expand access to oral health services through community health centers and mobile care units.
- Provide financial incentives—such as hiring bonuses, relocation stipends, and retention payments—to attract and retain clinicians and frontline staff (CNAs, home health aides, CHWs).

# Goal 4/Initiative #11: Supporting Adoption of Alternative Payment Models (APMs)



## Goal: 4. Innovative Care – Accelerate Value-Based and Affordable Care Models

### Overview:

- **Incentive Payments for APM Reporting & Performance** - Provide early incentive payments to help hospitals and primary care practices build reporting capacity needed for value-based care (starting Year 1).
  - Transition to pay-for-performance in FFY28, rewarding organizations serving rural communities for meeting cost and quality targets.
  - Establish a State approval process for Advanced Payment Models that include shared financial risk & quality-linked payments.
- **Targeted Technical Assistance (TA) Program** - Tailored, hands-on support for hospitals and primary care practice as they transition to State-approved APMs. Sample TA activities may include (but are not limited to):
  - Strengthening financial management, operations, cost accounting, and data analytics.
  - Supporting care delivery transformation and efficiency projects.
  - Training staff on value-based care and accurate cost/quality reporting.
- **Hospital & Primary Care Transformation Funds** - Competitive funding for projects that help providers implement value-based care. Eligible uses include minor capital improvements, equipment, staffing, and innovations in care delivery.

# Goal 5/Initiative #12: Rural Health Information Technology (HIT) Modernization Program



## Goal: 5. Tech Innovation – Integrate Technology Into Rural Practice

### Overview:

- **State-Sponsored EHR for Rural Providers** - Provide a shared, pre-configured EHR solution that meets all federal and state requirements. Leverage statewide purchasing power to reduce costs.
- **Rural HIT Infrastructure Grant Fund** - Support rural practices with targeted funds for practical, sustainable technology upgrades. Focus on interoperability, care coordination, and reducing administrative burden. Allowable uses may include (but are not limited to):
  - Enhancements to existing HIT systems
  - Telehealth and remote patient monitoring tools
  - Workflow and practice management technologies (e.g., ambient AI documentation)
  - Diagnostic, medication management, and care-coordination tools
- **Coordinated Technical Assistance & Alignment** - Provide hands-on TA to help practices assess needs and implement solutions.
  - Align awards with RHTP goals, rurality, readiness, and quality-improvement impact, coordinating with other initiatives.