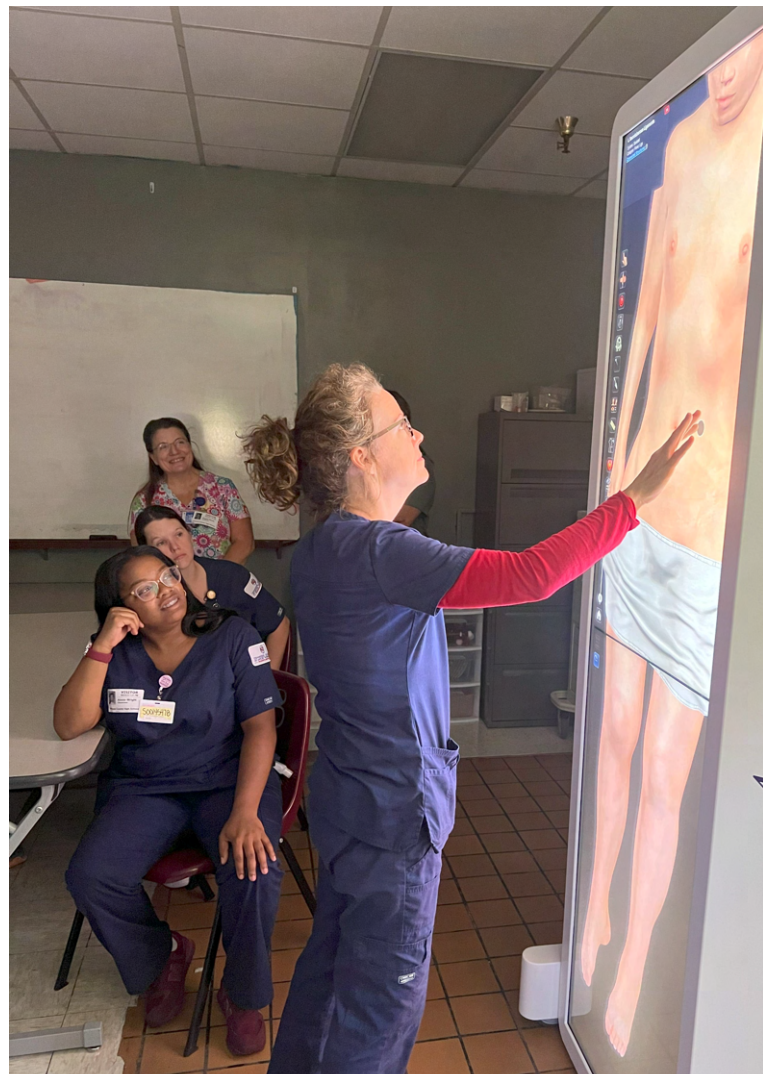


# RURAL HEALTH CARE PATHWAYS EXPANSION GRANT

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2025



THEC  TSAC



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## General Information & Overview

The Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant (RHCPE) is designed to develop strong, defined health care career pathway programs to enhance the health care workforce in Tennessee's rural communities. Training and recruiting rural students and providing employment opportunities are evidence-based strategies for growing this needed workforce in rural areas. Through data-driven and collaborative work, Tennessee can ensure that postsecondary institutions are enhancing opportunities to enter and transition into health care, behavioral health, and dental health professions.

The RHCPE program facilitates the creation or expansion of health care pathways in rural Tennessee through a \$50 million competitive grant process. These funds are available to local collaboratives through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC).

Grants of up to \$2 million will be available to local or regional collaboratives for periods of up to forty-eight (48) months to facilitate the creation of health care pathways or the expansion of existing rural health care pathways in high-demand occupations. Strategies should include increasing secondary student's exposure to health care careers, increasing transition opportunities into health science education and health care professions, and improving professional advancement programs. Proposals must identify and address local and/or regional gaps through one, or a combination, of the following four strategies.

1. Develop career pathway programs with documented articulation agreements. Additional information can be found in Appendix D.
  - a. Establish health care pathways for Tennesseans in rural areas which include dual enrollment opportunities for high school students and/or flexible options for adult learners.
  - b. Establish educational pathways which allow Tennesseans to earn health care credentials and practice in rural areas. Examples of pathways could include but are not limited to, Paramedic to Registered Nurse (RN) programs; Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to RN Programs; Associate of Nursing to Bachelor of Nursing programs; and accelerated Bachelor of Science to Doctor of Medicine programs, etc.
2. Develop and implement collaborative, meaningful, and structured work-based learning (WBL) experiences to include increasing awareness of health care fields at the secondary level. For the purpose of this RFP, WBL is defined as a proactive approach to bridging the gap between secondary and postsecondary education and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. Students and companies are partnered to reinforce academic, technical, and employability skills through work experience. WBL activities could begin as early as elementary school and continue through postsecondary. The purpose of a continuum of WBL experiences is to develop a pathway that provides students with concrete, coherent, relevant actions, and opportunities. WBL experiences should also culminate in credit-bearing capstones such as internships, co-ops, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and/or clinical experiences.

For more information and resources on offering high-quality WBL experiences, please visit: <https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education/work-based-learning.html>

3. Develop outreach programs targeted towards recruiting Tennesseans into rural health care jobs.
4. Provide student stipends for education-related costs (examples include: examination fees, licensure fees, supplies, and books) and completion grants for students enrolled in eligible health care programs serving in rural areas. THEC has identified four areas of need: food, housing, childcare, and transportation. If completion grants are part of a proposal, the proposal should detail the application, award, payment, and monitoring processes. Additional information can be found in Appendix E.

## What Constitutes a Collaborative?

Grant applicants must demonstrate the viability of a local/regional collaborative that includes the following mandatory partners:

1. Any public, private, or non-profit postsecondary institution may participate as a partner, but one institution must be identified to serve as the lead and the fiscal agent. To qualify, the institution must either be a public postsecondary institution, or a Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) member institution. The lead/fiscal Institution will execute a grant contract with THEC and be responsible for coordinating all grant activities, partner participation and collaboration, and managing contract monitoring, audit, and reporting.
2. Two or more health care employers located in rural communities; these employers should be seeking to employ credentialed graduates from the proposed program, and serve as clinical sites, and/or provide WBL opportunities.
3. At least one K-12, local administrator representing health care programs of study, including secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study and work-based learning.

## Eligible Programs

In order for an academic program or training program to be eligible:

- The instruction must be classified in the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code 51: Health Professions and Related Programs.
- The instruction and training will lead to an in-demand occupation that is classified as a Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes 29: Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations or 31: Healthcare Support Occupations.
- The instruction, training, or clinical placement must take place in a Tennessee county that is **not** listed below. For the purpose of this RFP, rural counties are defined as those having less than 50 percent of their population living within a 2020 Census Urbanized Area with a population of more than 50,000.

Anderson	Davidson	Loudon	Shelby	Williamson
Blount	Hamblen	Madison	Sullivan	Wilson
Bradley	Hamilton	Montgomery	Sumner	
Carter	Knox	Rutherford	Washington	

## Proposal Specifications

Applications will respond to the following criteria and present a detailed plan for achieving the outlined objectives. In Section 2, proposals should establish relevant baseline data to demonstrate a specific need within the targeted area. All additional sections should demonstrate how grant activities will support the gaps identified by the data in Section 1.

### Section 1: Program Narrative (5 Points)

Clearly identify which strategies will be selected from the list above and provide a brief narrative describing the plan for each strategy selected and how the rural county will be directly served by the strategy.

#### Essential Component:

- ***Brief narrative of the proposed project.*** Provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed project which includes a summary of each of the strategies selected, the associated outcomes, and the rural counties served.

### Section 2: Demonstration of need (25 Points)

Provide evidence of a local and regional workforce need for the proposed project.

Proposals will include a thorough overview of the collaborative area's workforce needs and will align with local and regional economic and labor-market opportunities in the rural counties served, as demonstrated by labor market data. Proposals must outline the proposed development/expansion of academic program(s)/pathways, industry certification(s) and/or WBL program(s); any requested equipment; and how the proposed initiatives will address demonstrated workforce needs in the rural counties being served by the proposal.

#### Essential Components:

- ***Localized data demonstrating the need for action.*** Demonstrate with data the health care needs of the local/regional workforce in the rural counties being served. Data sources should focus on anticipated or future needs that include, but are not limited to, projected job openings, labor market analysis, and predicted job growth. Preferred data sources are the following:
  1. [THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report](#)
  2. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development information available at [Jobs4TN](#)
  3. [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook](#).
  4. Data provided by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Center for Economic Research in Tennessee (CERT) such as: [TNECD County Profile Tool](#)
- ***Clear linkages between grant activities and local/regional needs.*** Successful proposals must identify existing health care programs in the local/regional area and highlight any

unmet workforce needs or skillset deficits. Additionally, proposals must thoroughly describe any relevant local/regional high-demand health care occupations.

- ***Proposed expansion of academic programs, work-based learning opportunities, and needed equipment.*** Clearly identify the academic programs and pathways that will be created or expanded, all proposed work-based learning opportunities, and any needed equipment. Provide narrative on how each of these will address demonstrated workforce needs in the counties being served by the proposal.
  - A Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) to Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) [crosswalk](#) must be included which verifies the alignment of the proposed academic programs and the workforce needs presented above.

### Section 3: Program Plan (25 Points)

Based on the data identified in Section 2, each proposal must include a detailed description of the planned project including a timeline, objectives, accountability plan, and detail the rural counties served.

#### Essential Components:

- ***Detailed summary of proposed program.*** Provide a detailed summary of the proposed program to include: how grant activities align with the workforce data, how grant activities will provide a clear pathway leading to a health care credential, and how the proposed program will increase the number of qualified health care professionals in the rural area. Describe how credentials earned in the proposed program are stackable with other existing credentials and include how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need.
- ***Detailed project timeline and overview.*** Provide a quarterly overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the identified program.
- ***Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.*** Detail the metrics to be used to continuously track project and associated student outcomes.
- ***Project governance and accountability plan.*** Clearly detail the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director employed at the lead entity; and identify project steering committee members who will maintain oversight throughout the project period. The project steering committee is required to meet at least quarterly throughout the grant contract period.
- ***Counties served.*** Provide a list of each county served by this proposal and a description of how the project will benefit each county.

## Section 4: Strength of Partnership (20 Points)

Proposals are required to provide a detailed description of each mandatory partner's (postsecondary, K-12, employers, etc.) role in the implementation of the identified program, the capabilities of each mandatory partner, and a signed partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the following essential components.

### Essential Components:

- ***Detailed description of each mandatory partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified project.*** Describe how each partner will carry out the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks for each of the mandatory partners; and identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project.
- ***Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement from local and area employers and partnering postsecondary institutions.*** Applicants must submit a signed MOU with at least two local/regional area health care employers citing the need and outlining benefits for their industry. At a minimum, a MOU included as part of this grant should establish an agreement among the partners of the collaborative that outlines each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs **must** be signed by **all** partners to earn points in the scoring rubric.

## Section 5: Budget Plan (15 Points)

Proposals will include a detailed financial plan and a completed budget using the template provided. Applicable "Grant Budget Line-Item Details" should be submitted **as a separate attachment with the completed budget** (see Appendix B).

Successful proposals will provide clear alignment between the funding requested and grant activities. All proposals must include a detailed financial plan and completed budget using the template provided. *If equipment is purchased*, the role of the proposed equipment request must be included. Explain how equipment purchases will specifically address local/regional labor market employment and/or training needs and provide a detailed description of equipment, the educational value of equipment in preparing the workforce, and the justification for purchase. Equipment purchases should help prepare students to enter a health care career in a local/regional industry while earning a postsecondary credential and/or industry certification. *If the proposal seeks indirect costs*, an explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant must be provided. Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

### Essential Components:

- ***Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities.*** Detailed discussion of how each line item of the budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the RHCPE grant.
  - ***Role of proposed equipment request.*** Required only for proposals seeking equipment purchases with RHCPE Grant funds. Explain how equipment purchases will specifically address local/regional labor market employment and/or training needs and provide a detailed description of equipment, the educational value of

equipment in preparing the workforce, and the justification for purchase. Equipment purchases should help prepare students to enter a career in a local/regional health care industry while earning a postsecondary credential and/or industry certification.

- ***Explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant.*** Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

## Section 6: Sustainability (15 Points)

Proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the 48-month grant period. Please note, securing another grant is not an acceptable sustainability plan.

### Essential components:

- ***Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 48-month funding period.*** Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles of each partner thereafter.
  - If applicable, provide a detailed description of the availability of long-term resources to house, maintain, and/or repair equipment.
  - If applicable, provide a description of how any related WBL programs and/or clinicals established or enhanced by the RHCPE grant will be maintained beyond the funding period.

## Submission Guidelines & Timeline

The application process consists of two steps: the submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit and the submission of the final proposal.

A [Notice of Intent to Submit](#) must be transmitted via Formstack no later than **12:00 p.m. (Central Time) on Friday, December 20, 2024**. The *Notice of Intent to Submit* must include the following:

- Lead Entity Information
- Project Director/Co-Director
- Project Director/Co-Director Phone Number(s)
- Project Director/Co-Director Email Address(es)
- Name of Higher Education Institution(s)/Fiscal Agent
- Title of Proposed Project
- Proposed Partners (All additional Mandatory Partners and Anticipated Workforce Partners)
- Proposed Funding Requested

The submission of the Notice of Intent to Submit is a mandatory step to submit a proposal for this grant program. Final proposals must be received electronically through Formstack by **Friday, January 31, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. (Central Time)**.

**SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**



### Link to Notice of Intent:

[https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/give\\_3\\_0\\_notice\\_of\\_intent\\_copy](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/give_3_0_notice_of_intent_copy)

### RFP TIMELINE:

- Release Date: Monday, November 18, 2024
- Technical Assistance Webinar: Tuesday, December 3, 2024
- Notice of Intent due: Friday, December 20, 2024
- Final proposal due: Friday, January 31, 2025
- Tentative Notification of Selection: April/May 2025
- Tentative Technical Assistance Webinar for Grantees: July 2025
- Tentative Contract Start Date: August 2025
- Tentative Contract End Date: August 2029

## Grant Application Procedures

All grant applications will be submitted via Formstack. After submitting the Notice of Intent, potential applicants will receive instructions for uploading documents through Formstack. Applicants will be able to upload all proposals and verify that their proposals were submitted on time through this process.

The application must include:

- Cover Sheet (see Appendix A)
- Table of Contents
- One-page Abstract/Project Summary
- Program Proposal: This section should be double-spaced, in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins.
- *Note: Maximum document length is **fifteen pages**, excluding the cover sheet, data list, and abstract, table of contents, budget, and appendices.*
- Budget with applicable line-item details (Appendix B)

### Notification

Once each proposal has been received, a confirmation notice will be generated by Formstack and received by the project director. **If you do not receive your confirmation notice within one hour of submitting your proposal, please call Mitch Currey at (615) 741-1072 or email the THEC Workforce Development Team at [Workforce.THEC@tn.gov](mailto:Workforce.THEC@tn.gov).** *It is the sole responsibility of the proposed project director to verify receipt of the proposal and notify project partners.*

One week after the proposal deadline, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will post all received proposals on the THEC website, accessible at [www.tn.gov/thec](http://www.tn.gov/thec). **If you have submitted a proposal but it is not listed, contact the THEC Workforce Development Team at [Workforce.THEC@tn.gov](mailto:Workforce.THEC@tn.gov) immediately.**

## Review and Award Process

The RHCPE grant proposals will be submitted to THEC and reviewed by a selection committee. Selection committee members will score proposals utilizing the standardized rubric which is included in the RHCPE Request for Proposals (RFP) as an appendix. The rubric will ensure that all grants are reviewed objectively, and selected proposals are in alignment with the state's workforce and education goals. Further detail on the scoring rubric is found in Appendix C. Final scoring from the committee members alone will determine the proposals that are approved for funding.

## Legal Information

### Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that federally assisted programs be free of discrimination. Should you feel you have been discriminated against, contact your local Title VI representatives. The Title VI Coordinator at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is Amber Walsh (615) 532-3500.

### Funding

Funder reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any of the proposals responding to the RFP, and to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if the selection committee determines that doing so is in the best interest of the State of Tennessee. In addition, the funder may consider geographic parity in awarding.

All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the applicant. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable from grant funds. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) reserves the right to withhold funding if at any point the program is not adhering to federal or state requirements or to the goals and objectives declared in this RFP. THEC staff reserve the right to attend any project activity or meeting to ensure the fidelity of this program, and to conduct regular monitoring of the project.

## APPENDIX A: Cover Sheet

NAME OF LEAD ENTITY

RHCPE GRANT [Program Title]  
[Lead Entity Name] [Fiscal Agent] IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

1. [Higher Education Institution(s)]
2. [LEA/School District Name]
3. [Employer Partners]

[Project Director Name, Mailing Address]

[Director's Telephone]

[Director's E-mail Address]

Funding requested:

**[\$Dollar Amount]**

X

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President of Higher Education Institution  
(Fiscal Agent)

X

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Project Director (Lead Entity)

## APPENDIX B: Budget

GRANT BUDGET				
Rural Health Care Pathways Expansion Grant				
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expense incurred during the following				
Applicable Period: BEGIN: END:				
POLICY 03 Object Line-item Reference	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY <sup>1</sup>	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE PARTICIPATION	TOTAL PROJECT
1. 2	Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00
4, 15	Professional Fee, Grant & Award <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
11. 12	Travel, Conferences & Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Interest <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00
14	Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Specific Assistance To Individuals	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Depreciation <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	Other Non-Personnel <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	Capital Purchase <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.00
22	Indirect Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	In-Kind Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	GRAND TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00

<sup>1</sup> Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, *Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Subrecipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A*. (posted on the Internet at: <https://www.tn.gov/finance/looking-for/policies.html>).

<sup>2</sup> Applicable detail follows this page if line-item is funded.



## GRANT BUDGET LINE - ITEM DETAIL

### **Line 1      Salaries and Wages**

On this line, enter compensation, fees, salaries, and wages paid to officers, directors, trustees, and full-time employees. An attached schedule may be required showing client wages or other included in the aggregations.

### **Line 2      Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes**

Enter (a) the institution's contributions to pension plans and to employee benefit programs such as health, life, and disability insurance; and (b) the institution's portion of payroll taxes such as social security and Medicare taxes and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance. An attached schedule may be required showing client benefits and taxes or other included in the aggregations.

### **Line 4      Professional Fees**

Enter the organization's fees to outside professionals, consultants, and personal-service contractors. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

### **Line 5      Supplies**

Enter the organization's expenses for office supplies, food and beverages, and other supplies. An attached schedule may be required showing food expenses or other details included in the aggregations.

### **Line 6      Telephone**

Enter the institution's expenses for telephone, cellular phones, FAX, E-mail, telephone equipment maintenance, and other related expenses.

### **Line 7      Postage and Shipping**

Enter the institution's expenses for postage, messenger services, overnight delivery, outside mailing service fees, freight and trucking, and maintenance of delivery and shipping vehicles.

### **Line 9      Equipment Rental and Maintenance**

Enter the institution's expenses for renting and maintaining computers, copiers, postage meters, and other office equipment used exclusively for this grant initiative.

### **Line 10     Printing and Publications**

Enter the institution's expenses for producing printed materials (not including posters, advertising, and other marketing materials), purchasing books and publications, and buying subscriptions to publications.

### **Line 11     Travel**

Enter the institution's expenses for travel, including transportation, meals, lodging, and per diem payments.

### **Line 12     Conferences and Meetings**

Enter the institution's expenses for conducting or attending meetings, conferences, and conventions. Include rental of facilities, speakers' fees and expenses, printed materials, and registration fees.

**Line 15 Grants and Awards**

Enter the institution's awards, grants, subsidies, and other pass-through expenditures to individuals and to other institutions, including travel and equipment allowances outside the institution (this includes WBL salary reimbursements). This classification includes items used in direct support of this initiative. (A detailed description is required in the Grant Budget Line-Item Detail if this line-item is funded.)

**Line 18 Other Non-personnel Expenses**

Enter the institution's allowable expenses for advertising, the institution's and employees' membership dues in associations and professional societies and licenses, permits, registrations, and testing fees.

**Line 19 Capital Purchases**

Enter the organization's purchases of fixed assets and purchases with a minimum life expectancy of one year. Include land, equipment, buildings, leasehold improvements, and other fixed assets.

**Line 22 Indirect Costs**

This amount is intended to cover costs associated with administrative functions including providing the required project reports, financial information, and information to support project evaluation. Not to exceed eight percent of the total budget.

**Line 24 In-Kind Expenses**

This amount is for reporting the value of contributed resources applied to the program. Approval and reporting guidelines for in-kind contributions will be specified by those contracting state agencies who allow their use toward earning grant funds.

**Line 25 Total Expenses**

Total Direct and Administrative Expenses, and Line 24, In-kind Expenses, goes on this line.

## APPENDIX C: Scoring Rubric

### Evaluation Guidelines

For each section, rubrics will be reviewed to determine which criteria have been addressed in the proposal and points will be assigned accordingly. For criteria with ranges, reviewers will select the statement that most closely aligns with the information provided in the proposal and award a score in the stated range. Criteria with set points are awarded on whether or not they are addressed in the proposal.

Each **essential component** of the proposal will be reviewed to determine which criteria have been addressed and points will be assigned accordingly. For **evaluation criteria** with ranges, reviewers will select the statement that most closely aligns with the information provided in the proposal and award a score within the stated range. For **evaluation criteria** with set points, reviewers will award points for evaluation criteria that are clearly addressed in the proposal.

### Section 1: Program Narrative (5 points)

Successful proposals should clearly identify which strategies will be utilized in the grant and provide a brief narrative describing the plan for each strategy selected and how the rural county will be directly served by the strategy.

Essential Component: *Brief narrative of the proposed project.* Provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed project which includes a summary of each of the strategies selected, and the associated outcomes, and rural counties served. (5 Points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not provide a clear and concise overview of the proposed project. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides a clear and concise overview of the proposed project but does not include a summary for **each** of the selected strategies and the associated outcomes. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides a clear and concise overview of the proposed project and includes summaries for **each** of the selected strategies and the associated outcomes, and clearly identifies which rural counties will be served. (4-5 points)

### Section 2: Demonstration of Need (25 points)

Successful proposals will include a thorough overview of the collaborative area's workforce needs and will align with local and regional economic and labor-market opportunities in the rural counties served, as demonstrated by labor market data. Proposals must outline the proposed development/expansion of academic program(s), industry certification(s) and/or work-based learning (WBL) program(s); any requested equipment; and how the proposed initiatives will address demonstrated workforce needs in the rural counties being served by the proposal.

Essential Component: *Localized data demonstrating the need for action.* Successful proposals will demonstrate with data the health care needs of the local/regional workforce in the rural counties being served. Data sources should focus on anticipated or future needs that include, but are not limited to, projected job openings, labor market analysis, and predicted job growth. (10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not provide general labor market data to justify grant activities. (0 points)

- ☐ Proposal provides general labor market data to justify grant activities from **one** of the preferred data sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook, and/or the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. (1-2 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides detailed state, regional, or local labor market data to justify grant activities from **two** of the preferred sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, US BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, and/or the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. (3-5 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides comprehensive and rigorous state, regional, and/or local labor market data to justify grant activities from at least **three** of the preferred sources, including TNECD County Profile Tool, Jobs4TN, US BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, and the THEC Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report. Data sources should focus on anticipated or future needs that include but are not limited to, projected growth and retirement metrics. (6-9 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes industry-specific data from local employers indicating explicit labor market needs aligning with the grant activities and credentials offered. The proposal provides additional supporting materials and resources illustrating industry-specific data (e.g., a letter or report from the local chamber of commerce that shows their own analysis of labor market trends and or specific needs identified by local employer(s) related to labor market data that are utilized to inform grant activities. (1 point)

Essential Component: *Clear linkages between grant activities and local/regional needs.* Successful proposals must identify existing health care programs in the local/regional area and highlight any unmet workforce needs or skillset deficits. Additionally, proposals must thoroughly describe any relevant local/regional high-demand health care occupations. (10 Points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not identify existing health care programs in the local/regional area and does not highlight any unmet needs or skillset deficits. Additionally, the proposal does not describe the relevant high-demand health care occupations. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal identifies existing health care programs in the local/regional area and highlights any unmet needs or skillset deficits but lacks details on how the proposed project will address these needs. Additionally, the proposal provides a limited description of the relevant high-demand health care occupations. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal identifies existing health care programs in the local/regional area and highlights any unmet needs or skillset deficits and describes how the proposed project will address these needs. Additionally, the proposal provides a description of the relevant high-demand health care occupations. (4-6 points)
- ☐ Proposal clearly identifies existing health care programs in the local/regional area and highlights, in detail, any unmet needs or skillset deficits and describes how the proposed project will address these needs. Additionally, the proposal provides a thorough description of the relevant high-demand health care occupations. (7-10 points)

Essential Component: *Proposed expansion of academic programs, work-based learning opportunities, and needed equipment.* Successful proposals will clearly identify the health care academic programs and pathways that will be created or expanded, all work-based learning opportunities, and any needed equipment. Narrative should be included on how each of these will address demonstrated workforce needs in the counties being served by the proposal. Lastly, a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) to Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) crosswalk must be included which verifies the alignment of the proposed academic programs and the workforce needs presented above. (5 Points)



Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not identify the health care academic programs and pathways that will be created or expanded, all work-based learning opportunities, any needed equipment, and/or a CIP to SOC crosswalk. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal identifies the health care academic programs and pathways that will be created or expanded, all work-based learning opportunities, any needed equipment, and a CIP to SOC crosswalk, but lacks sufficient detail. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal clearly identifies the health care academic programs and pathways that will be created or expanded, all work-based learning opportunities, any needed equipment, and a CIP to SOC crosswalk. (4-5 points)

### Section 3: Program Plan (25 Points)

Successful proposals will leverage data identified in Section 2 to provide a detailed description of the planned project including a timeline, objectives, accountability plan, and detail the rural counties served.

Essential Component: *Detailed Summary of Proposed Program*. Successful proposals will include a detailed summary of the proposed program to include: how grant activities align with the workforce data, how grant activities will provide a secondary to postsecondary pathway leading to a credential, and how the proposed program will increase the number of qualified health care professionals in the local area. Describe how credentials earned in the proposed program are stackable with other existing credentials and include how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal clearly aligns grant activities with workforce data. (1 point)
- ☐ Proposal describes how grant activities will provide a clear pathway leading to a health care credential. (1 point)
- ☐ Proposal demonstrates how the program will increase the number of qualified health care professionals in the rural areas served. (1 point)
- ☐ Proposal includes stackable credentials demonstrating the certificates/diplomas/degrees that students can pursue through the grant activities. (1 point)
- ☐ Proposal clearly articulates how the project will produce the appropriately credentialed job candidates possessing the skills employers need. (1 point)

Essential Component: *Detailed project timeline and overview*. Successful proposals will provide a quarterly overview of the critical convenings, activities, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the identified program. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not include a project timeline or an overview of the planned activities. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes a project timeline and an overview of the planned activities but lacks detail. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes a detailed project timeline with a quarterly overview of activities, critical meetings, and actions that will comprise the development and implementation of the project. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Identify key objectives for each phase of the project and describe how they will be measured.* Successful proposals will detail the metrics to be used to continuously track student outcomes. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not identify key objectives for each phase of the project. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal identifies measurable objectives for each phase of the project but does not demonstrate alignment with workforce needs. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes measurable objectives for each phase of the project that clearly align with workforce needs. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Project governance and accountability plan.* Successful proposals will clearly detail the plan for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure; identify a project director employed at the lead entity; and identify project steering committee members who will maintain oversight throughout the project period. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ A project plan is not presented. (0 points)
- ☐ A project plan is presented but lacks sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (1-3 points)
- ☐ A project plan is presented and includes sufficient details for governance, meetings, and decision-making structure. (4-5 points)

Essential Component: *Counties served.* Successful proposals will provide a list of each county served by this proposal and a description of how each county will benefit from the proposed project. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal did not include a list of counties served or a description of how each county will benefit from the proposed program. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides a detailed list of each county served but does not describe how each county will benefit from the proposed program. (1-3 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides a detailed list of each county served and describes how each county will benefit from the proposed program. (4-5 points)

## Section 4: Strength of Partnership (15 points)

Successful proposals must provide a detailed description of each mandatory partner's (higher education, K-12, industry, local/regional workforce, or economic development agency, etc.) role in the implementation of the identified program, the capabilities of each mandatory partner, and a signed partnership MOU.

Essential Component: *Detailed description of each mandatory partner's role and their capabilities in implementing the identified program.* Successful proposals will describe how each partner will carry out the grant project; provide a description of assigned tasks for each of the mandatory partners; and identify specific personnel and the roles they will play throughout the project. (10 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not include all required partners. (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal lists all required partners but does not incorporate the partners in a meaningful role. (1-3

- points)
- ☐ Proposal contains a detailed description of how each partner will carry out grant activities and tasks assigned to each partner. (4-6 points)
- ☐ Proposal demonstrates that learning experiences are collaboratively designed by education (secondary and postsecondary) and industry partners. (7-10 points)

Essential Component: *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the partnership agreement from local and area employers and partnering postsecondary institutions.* Successful proposals will include a signed MOU with at least two local/regional area health care employers citing the need and outlining benefits for their industry. At a minimum, an MOU included as part of this grant should establish an agreement among the collaborative partners that outlines each partner's respective benefits, roles, and responsibilities. MOUs must be signed by all partners to earn points in the scoring rubric. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not provide all the required signed MOUs (0 points)
- ☐ Proposal provides signed MOU(s) with at least two employers demonstrating support and commitment to the grant activities. (5 points)

## Section 5: Budget Plan (15 Points)

Successful proposals will provide clear alignment between the funding requested and grant activities. All proposals must include a detailed financial plan and completed budget using the template provided. *If equipment is purchased*, the role of the proposed equipment request must be included. Explain how equipment purchases will specifically address local/regional labor market employment and/or training needs and provide a detailed description of equipment, the educational value of equipment in preparing the workforce, and the justification for purchase. Equipment purchases should help prepare students to enter a health care career in a local/regional industry while earning a postsecondary credential and/or industry certification. *If the proposal seeks indirect costs*, an explanation of any anticipated indirect costs associated with the implementation and administration of the grant must be provided. Indirect costs are limited to eight percent (8%) of the total budget.

Essential Component: *Clear alignment between funding requests and grant activities.* A detailed discussion of how each line item of the budget supports the goals and stated outcomes of the RHCPE grant. (15 points)

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Budget is not included. (0 points)
- ☐ Budget is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal does not include a description of the role of the proposed equipment and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (1-5 points)
- ☐ Budget lacks sufficient detail, but expenditures are practical given the scope of the proposal. If required, the proposal provides a description of the role of any proposed equipment and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost but does not provide sufficient detail. (6-10 points)
- ☐ Budget is complete and accurately reflected, with sufficient justifications and detail listed for each line item. If required, the proposal provides a detailed description of the role of any proposed equipment and/or an explanation of any anticipated indirect cost. (11-15 points)

## Section 6: Sustainability (15 Points)

Successful proposals will include a commitment and detailed plan for sustaining grant activities beyond the 48-month grant period. *If the proposal includes equipment purchases*, a detailed plan including the availability of long-term resources for maintenance, repair, and housing equipment is included. *If the proposal includes a WBL program and/or clinicals*, a detailed plan describing how the WBL programs and industry partnerships will continue beyond the 48-month grant period is included.

Essential Component: *Detailed plan for sustaining the program beyond the 48-month funding period.* Describe how the work supported by this grant will continue beyond the grant period and outline the roles of each partner thereafter. (15 points)

Please note, securing another grant is not an acceptable sustainability plan.

Evaluation Criteria:

- ☐ Proposal does not include a sustainability plan, **or** the proposed sustainability plan involves securing other grant funding. (0 points)
- ☐ Sustainability plan is incomplete and/or impractical, given the scope of the project. The proposal included equipment purchases, WBL, or clinicals but a plan to sustain them was not provided. (1-5 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes a plan for sustaining the program and partnerships beyond the grant period but lacks sufficient detail. If the proposal included equipment purchases, WBL, or clinicals, a plan was provided but lacks sufficient detail. (6-10 points)
- ☐ Proposal includes a detailed plan for sustaining the program and partnerships beyond the grant period that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner. If the proposal included equipment purchases, WBL, or clinicals, a detailed plan was provided. (11-15 points)



## APPENDIX D: Career Pathway Programs

### Career Pathway Program Guidelines

To help address the challenges faced by rural areas and promote access to health care solutions tailored to local communities, proposals must create health care pathways that adhere to the following criteria:

1. Establish health care pathways for Tennesseans in rural areas which include dual enrollment opportunities for high school students and/or flexible options for adult learners.
  - a. Programs should consider how to incorporate dual enrollment for high school students into high-need health care pathways and/or ensure flexible programs that accommodate working adults.
  - b. Ideally, pathways will be built using stacked credentials<sup>1</sup> which allow students to earn short-term credentials along the way to degree completion and each credential should hold independent labor market value.
  - c. Pathways should ensure students do not experience any credit loss from one credential to the next or into the degree program.
  - d. Articulation agreements must be in place for transfer programs.
2. Establish health care pathways for those already in the health care field that can return and earn advanced credentials in rural areas.
  - a. Programs must bridge postsecondary programs to create a clear pathway from one credential to the next. Examples of programs could include but are not limited to, Paramedic to Registered Nurse (RN) programs; Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to RN Programs; Associate of Nursing to Bachelor of Nursing programs; and accelerated Bachelor of Science to Doctor of Medicine programs, etc.
  - b. Participating institutions must be in good standing with a programmatic accreditor, when applicable.
  - c. Participating pathway program(s) must fulfill all requirements for associated licensure, when applicable.
  - d. A Memorandum of Understanding or articulation agreement must be signed by all participating institutions which outline how each partner will participate in the pathway structure.

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<sup>1</sup> "A credential is considered stackable when it is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs." – US Dept. of Labor

## APPENDIX E: Student Stipends and Completion Grants

Student stipends and completion grants serve as a type of financial assistance intended to reduce the cost of a postsecondary education or to support students encountering unexpected financial obstacles.

### Student Stipends

A stipend is defined herein as a fixed amount of money that is paid to a student's account to help them cover various education related cost. Stipends are not considered compensation for work performed and are different from wages or salaries. Examples of appropriate stipends include examination fees, licensure fees, supplies, and books.

#### Student Stipends Minimum Requirements

1. To be eligible for a Student Stipend, the recipient must be enrolled in a RHCPE grant funded program and participating in course work or required work experiences (internship, clinical, co-op, etc.) within a rural county, as defined on page 2.
2. Student stipends must be awarded to all students in similar circumstances. For example, if a proposal intends to cover the cost of an examination fee in a specific course, all students in that course must be offered the stipend.
3. Student stipends must be credited to the student's account and not paid to the student.

### Completion Grants

Completion grants can be utilized to cover unexpected "life" situations such as issues related to food, housing, childcare, and transportation. If completion grants are part of a proposal, the proposal should detail the application, award, payment, and monitoring processes. Furthermore, the grantee must maintain a record of all applications, awards, and denials throughout the life of the grant, and the grantee must present those documents upon request from THEC. THEC will provide the grantee with a standard application that must be used by any funded project that includes completion grants.

#### Completion Grant Minimum Requirements

1. To be eligible for a Completion Grant, the recipient must be enrolled in a RHCPE grant funded program and be participating in course work or required work experiences (internship, clinical, co-op, etc.) within a rural county, as defined on page 2.
2. Program participants may receive up to One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.000) each semester for up to five (5) semesters at community colleges or universities, or Six Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$625.00) each trimester for up to eight (8) trimesters at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology.
3. Completion grant request must fall into one of four (4) categories.
  - a. Food: Program Participants may receive up to One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) per request via grocery card. The grantee will determine the merchant or provider for each grocery card.
  - b. Housing: Program Participants may receive up to the maximum amount each term as specified above in section 2. The grantee will pay housing providers directly.

- c. Transportation: Program Participants may receive One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) per request via gas card. The grantee will determine the merchant or provider for each gas card.
- d. Childcare: Program Participants may receive up to Seventy-Five percent (75%) of the of the maximum amount each term as specified above in section 2. The grantee will pay childcare providers directly.