Illinois Health and Hospital Association

Illinois Rural Health Transformation Program Information

The following information is intended to support Illinois' eligible rural hospitals as they navigate the Rural Healthcare Transformation Program (RHTP) and associated grant funding opportunities. More detailed guidance and resources can be found at the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network's (ICAHN) RHTP webpage, including informational webinar recordings, presentation materials, sample applications, budget worksheets and other practice tools to help eligible rural hospitals understand program requirements and strengthen grant applications.

EMS Funding Through IDPH: $16.5 Million

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) has released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the RHTP Emergency Medical Services (EMS) initiative. Of the $16.5 million allocated to IDPH in first-year funding, $13.5 million is available through a competitive grant opportunity for 15 Illinois-designated EMS Resource Hospitals, with each selected hospital to receive approximately $978,000.

Funding will support the expansion of mobile integrated health services, EMS workforce education and training, and improvements to EMS in rural communities. Eligible expenses include staffing, training, equipment, vehicles, IT infrastructure and innovative care delivery models. Approximately $207,000 of each award must be dedicated to training and education.

Eligible applicants are Illinois-designated EMS Resource Hospitals that are nonprofit or governmental entities. Funding is intended to support Health Resources and Services Administration rural-designated communities throughout Illinois. Applications must be submitted through IDPH's EGrAMS system by Dec. 3, 2026 at 5 p.m. CT. IDPH anticipates announcing awards by Dec. 15, 2026, with grant activities to be completed by June 30, 2027.

Click here to access the NOFO and grant listing, which provides additional information on eligibility, allowable expenses, application requirements and evaluation criteria.

IDPH will host an optional informational meeting on Nov. 12, 2026 from 2–3 p.m. CT to answer questions about the funding opportunity. Interested hospitals can join the meeting *here*.

Hospital Planning Grants: $28.2 Million

The Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) awarded the first round of hospital planning grants to support hospitals in conducting community health needs assessments, developing transformation plans, and identifying opportunities for regional collaboration. Some hospitals are still in the process of executing their grant agreements.

Associated hospital planning grants deadlines are:

- **Needs Assessment**: Due to HFS by Dec. 14, 2026
- **Transformation Plan**: Due to HFS by Feb. 1, 2027

Submission guidance has been provided by HFS. Following completion of the initial planning activities, eligible hospitals will have an opportunity to apply for additional funding to support regional collaboration initiatives. These initiatives are intended to encourage hospitals to work together to improve access to care, strengthen services, and support long-term sustainability.

ICAHN Funding: $50 Million

The Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) is administering funding for rural hospitals across three initiatives:

- **Chronic Disease Management: $14 Million**
  The application period has closed. According to ICAHN, funding awards are expected to be announced in November 2026.

- **Rural Workforce: $5 Million**
  The application period has closed. According to ICAHN, funding awards are expected to be announced in November 2026.

- **Technology: $31 Million**
  ICAHN is preparing to launch the next phase of the RHTP Technology Innovation project. Hospitals were required to complete an eligibility form through ICAHN to participate in the technology funding initiative.

ICAHN is in the process of selecting two vendors to conduct assessments of eligible hospitals, including a cybersecurity needs assessment and a technology needs assessment. These assessments will help identify technology gaps and investment priorities. Based on the findings, eligible hospitals will have an opportunity to apply for technology funding in spring 2027.