

Rural Provider Access and Affordability Stimulus Grant Program

Reviewer Guide

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COLORADO

Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your support in reviewing grant applications for the Rural Provider Access and Affordability Stimulus Grant Program. Per the implementing regulation, the Advisory Committee will review grant applications and recommend awards to the Department's executive director. Given limited funds and the intention to serve as many communities as possible, the Committee will recommend a diverse and broad community footprint and prioritize reaching as many regions of the state as possible. If there is not sufficient funding to award grants to all eligible applicants, priority will be given to distributing the available funding across as many of the represented regions as possible.

This document will serve as a guide to support your review of proposals.

2. SCORING

Scoring items are based on the information requested in the application form and a point scale of 0-5 points (0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest) will be used where a score will be assigned. Such items will be given a weighted score. In some cases, a point scale will not be used for scoring, rather a “met” or “not met” score. When evaluating each scored item, please use the following framework to guide your evaluation of weighted scoring questions:

Score	Label	Description
1	Unacceptable	No response or does not comply with legislative requirements in all or nearly all respects. Not expected to succeed.
2	Poor	Proposal does not comply with legislative requirements in many respects, requiring major response rewrites to conform to requirements. Very limited understanding of the requirement. Inadequate proposal quality. Serious questions about the ability to complete the project on time. High risk of either unacceptable or late performance.
3	Marginal	Proposal complies in most respects with legislative requirements, although some deficiencies or ambiguities remain that require clarification and discussions, although major response rewrites are probably not necessary. Demonstrates a basic understanding of the requirement that is likely adequate for successful performance, but the proposal does not demonstrate more than surface comprehension. The proposal is of moderate quality. Marginally adequate ability to successfully perform a project of this magnitude on time. Moderate risk of unacceptable or late performance; likely would require significant amounts of State involvement to achieve successful completion.
4	Acceptable	Proposal shows a sound approach that meets most requirements, requiring only clarification of minor ambiguities, but requiring no significant response revisions to conform to legislative requirements. Sound quality of the proposed solution. Clearly able to successfully perform a project of this magnitude on time. Low risk of unacceptable and late performance; State involvement may exceed normal contract administration and require frequent guidance.
5	Superior	Proposal shows a superior approach that meets most, if not all requirements and exceeds most requirements in tangible ways, requiring minor or no clarifications and minor or no response revisions to conform to legislative requirements. Superior, comprehensive understanding of requirements. Superior quality of the proposed solution. Exceeds ability to successfully perform a project of this magnitude on time. Minimal or very low risk of unacceptable and late performance; State involvement likely will not exceed normal contract administration.

3. WEIGHTED SCORING METHODOLOGY

The weighted scoring methodology below will be used by reviewers when evaluating each proposal. As outlined below, the total score possible is 10 points. The greatest weight has been given to the Impact to Affordability and Access portion of the application which emphasizes justification of need and how successfully an applicant’s project will address the need in the community.

Budget/Financials/Engagement			Met/Not Met
A. Budget <i>A minimum \$100,000 and a maximum \$650,000</i>			Met
B. Hospital financial position <i>Patient revenue and fund balance/reserves, age of plant for capital projects</i>			Met
C. Partner engagement/support/collaboration			N/A
Quality of Application	Score (1-5)	Weight	Weighted Score
A. Completeness of response	5	0.10	0.50
B. Ability to execute and complete project	5	0.25	1.25
C. Reasonableness of timeline	5	0.20	1.00
D. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	5	0.10	0.50
Impact to Affordability and Access	Score (1-5)	Weight	Weighted Score
A. County Medicaid/Medicare Casemix	5	0.10	0.50
B. Statement of need	5	0.10	0.50
C. Sustainability of project	5	0.40	2.00
D. Impact to Affordability and/or Access	5	0.75	3.75
Total Score			10.00

4. DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS ON USING THE SCORING WORKBOOK

Detailed instructions for each sheet of the Scoring Workbook are provided below to support your review and scoring of key elements of each application:

1) Scoring Guide

This sheet provides the same information as the scoring guide [above](#).

2) Applicant Information & Weighted Score

Reviewers should select an applicant from the dropdown list to auto-populate certain fields. Entering an application number is suggested as there may be multiple applications per applicant.

Select the applicant	Application Number
SELECT AN APPLICANT FROM THE APPLICANT LIST	

The weighted scoring results are also displayed on this sheet.

3) Quality of Application

1. Technical Response Review/Completeness of Response

A technical review will be the first evaluation conducted to ascertain that the application was received on time, was complete, and submitted in the format requested.

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed	Yes or No
Technical response review	n/a	Submitted by deadline--date and time of day	No
	Section B, Part I	Application Information Worksheet is complete	No
	Section B, Part II	Project Summary Worksheet is complete	No
	Section B, Part III	Affirmation and Signature is complete	No
	Section B, Part IV	Program design, scope of project, services and goals questions are complete	No
	Section B, Part V	Budget is complete and submitted in the correct format	No
	n/a	Written responses are within the page limits for each question	No

2. Completeness of Response

This item will be scored on a 1-5 scale and be weighted 10% of the overall score.

- If all technical response review questions are answered “yes”, the application should receive a score of 5 (Superior).
- If no elements of the technical response are considered acceptable, this should receive a score of 1 (Unacceptable).
- The range between 1 and 5 should be assigned based on the completeness of the response: Poor (2), Marginal (3), and Acceptable (4).

The score for this review will be included in the Weighted Scoring Methodology “Quality of Application” section. 10% of Quality of Application section’s score is attributed to the completeness of the response so the score from the “Technical Response” review shall be recorded in this section.

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed	Score 1-5
Completeness of response	n/a	Based upon the technical response review and guidance above.	

3. Quality of Application

Using the 1 to 5 scoring framework shared on Page 1 of this document, reviewers will analyze responses to the other sections below, with an emphasis on determining whether the applicant’s responses are clear and responsive to the questions asked. Assessing whether the proposal provides a clear understanding of the intended project with realistic goals and timelines is fundamental to the review of this section. This section is worth 3.25 maximum points (of 10 possible).

The scorecard reviewers use is on the following page:

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed	Score 1-5
Completeness of response		Based upon the technical response review and guidance above.	
Ability to execute and complete project	Section B, Part IV, Q1-4	The project framework and proposal details appear realistic and achievable with clear goals, objectives, and activities.	
Reasonableness of timeline	Appendix B Project Summary	The proposed project timeline appears realistic for the proposed project framework and complies with ARPA requirements (to be expended by December 31, 2026).	
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Section B, Part IV, Q6	The applicant has provided information regarding its DEI strategy and indicated how diverse community needs are met by the project.	

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4) Budget, Financials, Engagement

For this section, reviewers will be assessing whether a proposal has met or not met the basic budget and financials requirements as outlined in the application.

Using a prepopulated field based on the applicant selected, the workbook is set up to identify which table within the sheet to use for scoring applicants.

- If an applicant is prequalified based on their financial position, reviewers score using the table on rows 4, 5, and 6.
- If an applicant is not prequalified based on their financial position, reviewers score using the table on rows 10, 11, 12, and 13.

1. Hospital financial position

For applicants listed in Appendix D as prequalified based on their financial position, the table will automatically populate as Met.

For applicants not listed in Appendix D as prequalified based on their financial position, reviewers will be asked to review supporting information to justify meeting the financial need requirement. Note that for capital investment projects, the applicant must provide detailed information regarding the current equipment/plant age and a justification for the need for the upgrades. If this is not complete, the reviewer should select “not met” for “Hospital financial position”.

2. Partner, engagement, support, and collaboration

Applicants have been asked to include the names of partners engaged in or supporting this proposal and their role. If providing this information is applicable to the proposal and the proposal has this information, the reviewer will select “met”.

3. Budget

Applicants have been asked to submit a budget between \$100,000 and \$650,000 per project. If the proposal is within this range the reviewer will select “met”.

- Note that applicants may submit more than one project or submit a joint project with another partner therefore total funds an applicant may receive may exceed the \$650,000 cap (but individual proposals are scored on budget only).

The scorecard reviewers use is on the following page:

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For applicants listed in Appendix D

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed	Met?
Hospital financial position		The applicant is in the bottom 40% of net patient revenues for the three-year average of 2016, 2017, and 2018 or the bottom 6% fund balance for 2019 as determined by the Department's review of CMS 2552-10 Medicare Cost Reports. age and a justification for the need for such upgrades	Not Met
Partner engagement, support, and collaboration	Section B, Part IV, Q5	The applicant included the names of partners engaged in or supporting this proposal (if applicable) including the role they will play in the project.	Not Met
Budget	Section B, Part V and Appendix E	The applicant has included responses to Q9-14 as applicable and provided a completed budget worksheet, requesting funds between \$100,000 and the \$650,000 cap.	Not Met

For applicants NOT listed in Appendix D

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed	Met?
Hospital financial position if the applicant does not meet the financial need requirement	Section B, Part IV, Q8	The applicant has submitted sufficient additional financial supporting information (such as low patient revenues and/or cash reserves) to justify meeting the financial need requirement.	Not Met
	Section B, Part IV, Q2	For age of plant or equipment for capital investment projects only. The applicant has provided detailed information regarding current equipment/plant age and a justification for the need for such upgrades.	
Partner engagement, support, and collaboration	Section B, Part IV, Q5	The applicant included the names of partners engaged in or supporting this proposal (if applicable) including the role they will play in the project.	Not Met
Budget	Section B, Part V and Appendix E	The applicant has included responses to Q9-14 as applicable and provided a completed budget worksheet, requesting funds between \$100,000 and the \$650,000 cap.	Not Met

4. Impact to Affordability and/or Access

As mentioned, this section is worth the largest portion of points (6.75 maximum possible of 10 total points) and emphasizes an evaluation of how impactful a proposal will be in serving the community and aligning with the intent of the implementing legislation.

1. County Medicaid/Medicare Case Mix as a Percentage of Population

Using a prepopulated field based on the applicant selected, this field is pre-populated.

2. Statement of Need, Impact to affordability and/or access, Sustainability of project

For the other responses, using the [scoring framework](#) reviewers will assess how well the applicant has explained the community need and how the project will address the need, as well as how sustainability requirements will be met.

The scorecard reviewers use is on the following page:

Title	Application Location	What is being reviewed		Score 1-5
County Medicaid/Medicare	n/a	Casemix as a percentage of population: 67% and above = 5 points, 54-66% = 4 points, 47-53% = 3 points, 31-45% = 2 points, and 30% and below = 1 point.		<i>pre-populated</i>
Statement of need	Section B, Part IV, Q1	The applicant has described the need in the community and how the proposal seeks to address this need, clarifying the problem in terms of resources and/or capacity challenges. If appropriate, the applicant has identified specific populations that are supported by the proposal and how. The expected change anticipated as a result of the project and community impact are specified.		
Impact to affordability and/or access	Section B, Part IV, Q3	The overall proposal demonstrates an ability to impact	Access to specialty care. The applicant described how the project will increase access to specialty care (if applicable).	
	Section B, Part IV, Q4	affordability and/or access in the community including addressing the following as applicable:	Care coordination. The applicant provided information on how the project will improve care coordination including how it ensures the community has access to care locally (if applicable) and included the names of the organizations they will collaborate with.	
Sustainability of project	Section B, Part IV, Q7	The applicant included a description of how the project's goals and objectives will be sustained for a minimum of five years after the Rural Stimulus Grant funds has been expended.		