

**COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH & EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION FOR TEXAS
RURAL HEALTH CLINICS**

Date Issued: 1/20/2023

The application process is open and rolling until April 28, 2023.

Submitted applications will be evaluated and grants will be awarded while funding is available, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Submit completed application to

COVIDRHCGRANT@torchnet.org

Instructions and Submission Information for COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach & Education Grant for Texas Rural Health Clinics

1. BACKGROUND

On December 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L. 116-260). On March 11, 2021, the President signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2). Both laws include supplemental funding for coronavirus vaccine activities to support broad-based distribution, access, and vaccine coverage. In mid-December 2022, the death rate from COVID-19 disease for individuals residing in non-metropolitan areas was 419.94 per 100,000, and in metropolitan areas, the death rate was 311.2 per 100,000¹. The funds included in this opportunity are intended to help reduce health disparities and increase access to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine by those individuals who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 disease. Populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19 include individuals living in non-metropolitan areas, who may experience reduced access to healthcare systems, transportation limitations, or low adult vaccination rates.

TORCH Foundation, a 501(c)3 affiliate of the Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals (TORCH), is contracted by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunizations and Vaccines for Children program to develop and administer a funding program for Texas Rural Health Clinics (RHC) to help reduce health disparities in their communities and to increase access to COVID-19 vaccine for rural residents.

2. PURPOSE OF GRANT

TORCH Foundation, in coordination with the Texas Association of Rural Health Clinics (TARHC), is accepting applications from qualified Texas Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) for the COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach & Education Grant. The purpose of this funding is to support targeted outreach and education to increase awareness, accessibility and uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations. Funding may be used to

- (1) Support staffing of qualified medical personnel to conduct and coordinate community/patient outreach and education activities related to the COVID-19 vaccinations, and to administer the COVID-19 vaccine; and
- (2) Support clinic operations and services to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccination sites and appointments through extended clinic hours and/or through mobile clinic(s). Vaccination sites may include, but is not limited to, healthcare facilities, pharmacies, community-based sites, and mobile sites.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible Applicants for the COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach & Education Grant must be a current, operating Medicare certified Rural Health Clinic in Texas.

Organizations awarded under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant award number NH23IP922616 issued to Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Awardees under NH23IP922616 include, but are not limited to: local health departments, city or county governments (through DSHS Immunization Section), awardees of the Texas Vaccine and Education Grant Program (through Texas A&M

¹ [CDC COVID Data Tracker: Cases and Deaths by Urban/Rural Status and Social Factors](#)

University Health Science Center), and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) Open Enrollment (OE) HHS0011960 (through Texas Health and Human Services) are not eligible for this opportunity.

4. FUNDING LEVELS

The COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach & Education Grant program offers two funding levels. Each Applicant RHCs may apply for only one level of funding. The scope of work for the funding levels are described below.

(1) **Tier-1 Funding – Applicants eligible to receive up to \$70,000 per grant; up to 94 grants may be awarded under Tier-1**

- Applicants may apply for up to \$70,000 per RHC to pay for the staffing cost (salaries and benefits) of one or more existing and/or new healthcare staff who are able to administer primarily a COVID-19 vaccine. The minimum request (budget) for Tier-1 application must be at least \$50,000 (not to exceed \$70,000). Funded Applicant (Subcontractor) must submit timesheets and other necessary documentation monthly for each designated staff to show the amount of time and activities performed through this grant (see Attachment 3 to Subaward Agreement, Budget Template). Tier-1 funding may be used to:
 - Provide outreach, education and information sharing to patients, community members, trusted messengers, and populations served by the clinic to increase COVID-19 vaccine awareness, accessibility, and uptake
 - Support triage services and surge support for or in response to COVID-19
 - Administer the COVID-19 vaccine at vaccination sites, including, but not limited to the RHC's physical location, on-site pop-up vaccination sites, mobile clinics, or other locations in coordination with community-based organizations. If clinically appropriate, staff hired with COVID-19 funds may co-administer non-COVID-19 Advisory Committee Immunization Program (ACIP-) approved child and adult vaccinations. For questions about ACIP recommendations, see the [ACIP Vaccine Recommendations | CDC](#).
 - Reimburse travel expenses for any healthcare staff assigned to this grant to attend the TORCH Fall Conference in September 2023. Travel reimbursement is capped at \$1,600 per clinic. When travel expenses is authorized by the Subcontractor Agreement, all such expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the rates set by the COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach and Education Grant Travel Reimbursement Policy (see Attachment 6 to Subaward Agreement).

(2) **Tier-2 Funding – Applicant eligible to receive up to \$180,000 per grant; up to 35 grants may be awarded under Tier-1**

Applicants may apply for up to \$180,000 per RHC to pay for the staffing and incremental operational cost of operating extended clinic hour(s) and/or mobile clinic(s) to offer COVID-19 outreach, education and vaccination. Minimum request for Tier-2 funding must be no less than \$100,000 (and not to exceed \$180,000). Applicant may request tier-2 grant funding to

- Deliver one or more of the Tier-1 activities/services (describe above); AND
- Operate extended clinic hour(s) and/or operate mobile clinic(s) to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines. Extended clinic hours may be the existing extended clinic hour(s) currently operated by the RHC, provided that during those extended clinic hour(s) COVID-19 outreach, education and/or vaccination services are offered. Clinics are not required to offer only COVID-19 vaccines and may administer other vaccinations (such as influenza vaccination) and offer other clinical services. Tier-2 grant funds may be used also to support the operation of mobile clinic(s). The lease of mobile vaccination units, lease of space to park the mobile unit, and/or lease of space to administer after-hour clinic services are allowable costs. **However, lease-to-own agreements and purchase of vehicles, mobile units and buildings or capital assets are not allowed and will not be reimbursed.**

- Reimburse travel expenses for one or more healthcare staff assigned to this grant to attend the TORCH Fall Conference in September 2023. Travel reimbursement is capped at \$1,600 per clinic. When travel expenses is authorized by the Subaward Agreement, all such expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the rates set by the COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach and Education Grant Travel Reimbursement Policy (see Attachment 6 to Subaward Agreement).

5. GRANT DISBURSEMENT

Subcontractor will be reimbursed for actual, allowable and documented costs, as set forth below and in the Subaward Agreement, incurred by the Subcontractor in performing the approved Statement of Work. Allowable costs must be incurred by Subcontractor prior to claiming reimbursement and within the applicable term of the Subaward Agreement to be eligible for reimbursement. Subcontractor must submit monthly payment invoice (see Attachment 4 to the Subaward Agreement) and timesheet (see Attachment 5 to the Subaward Agreement) along with any supporting documentation and receipts of direct expenses requested by TORCH Foundation, in accordance with section 3 and 4 of the Subaward Agreement. TORCH Foundation, in conjunction with DSHS will determine whether costs submitted by Subcontractor are Allowable Costs and eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Costs are restricted to costs that are included in the statement of work and budget template submitted by Subcontractor and authorized under Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards (TxGMS) and applicable state and federal rules and laws, and the criteria for Allowable Costs as set forth in Attachment 2 to the Subaward Agreement, COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach and Education Grant Program Contract Affirmations and Uniform Terms and Conditions (the "Project Grant"). TORCH Foundation will reimburse Subcontractor for actual, allowable, and allocable costs incurred by Subcontractor in performing the Project Grant, provided the costs are sufficiently documented. Subcontractor must have incurred a cost prior to claiming reimbursement and within the applicable term to be eligible for reimbursement. At its sole discretion, TORCH Foundation will determine whether costs submitted by Subcontractor are allowable and eligible for reimbursement. Subcontractor and all payments received by Subcontractor are subject to applicable cost principles, audit requirements, and administrative requirements, including applicable provisions under 2 CFR 200, 48 CFR Part 31, and TxGMS. In the event that any payments are disallowed by DSHS, Subcontractor shall repay TORCH Foundation, on demand, the amount of any disallowed items or, at the discretion of TORCH Foundation, TORCH Foundation may deduct such amounts from subsequent payment to be made to the Subcontractor. Travel Costs of Subcontractor shall be reimbursed in accordance with Attachment 6 to the Subaward Agreement, the COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach and Education Travel Reimbursement Policy.

6. DISALLOWABLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funding may not be used in whole or in part by Subcontractor for any of the following activities:

- To purchase any vaccines or syringes for administration. Costs associated with time spent reading COVID-19 test results are also disallowed.
- To purchase or use for the acquisition of any capital assets, equipment, devises, vehicles and computers.
- Any lease to own arrangement is not allowed or eligible for reimbursement.
- To conduct any research.
- To support any political activities, directly or indirectly, including lobbying, advocating for legislation, campaigning for, endorsing, contributing to, or otherwise supporting political candidates or parties, and voter registration campaigns.

- To pay the salary or expenses of any grant or contract recipient, or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative act, or executive order proposed or pending before any legislative body.
- To employ, in any capacity, a person who is required by Chapter 305 of the Texas Government Code to register as a lobbyist.
- Grant-funded employees may not use official authority or influence to achieve any political purpose.
- To pay outstanding organizational debt or payment recoupments.
- Purchase of Real estate or existing space lease rental payments.

7. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Subcontractor is required to comply with the Subcontractor Agreement's terms and conditions, including submitting:

- (1) Monthly invoice using Attachment 4 to the Subaward Agreement and monthly timesheet using Attachment 5 to the Subaward Agreement with any supporting documentation and all receipts showing costs incurred for consideration of reimbursement and all other documentation reasonably requested by TORCH Foundation.
- (2) Monthly reports for the required reporting performance measures. TORCH Foundation will send Subcontractor the link for this reporting monthly.
- (3) Final project report describing the completion of the Statement of Work. Specific guidance will be provided closer to the end of the project.

8. APPLICATION REVIEW AND NOTICE OF FUNDING AWARDS

The application for this program is open until April 28, 2023. Submitted applications will be evaluated and considered for funding on a first-come, first-served basis, while funding is available. TORCH Foundation reserves the right to reject any and all applications.

Notice of funding awards (NOFA) will be announced within two weeks after confirmed receipt of the completed submitted application. All approved grant expenses must be incurred no sooner than the effective date of the executed Subcontractor Agreement and no later than June 30, 2024, when this program will expire.

9. APPLICATION INQUIRIES AND SUBMISSION

Submit questions and the completed application to COVIDRHCGRANT@torchnet.org.

COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH & EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Rural Health Clinic _____

Physical Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Mailing Address (if different) _____

Organization's EIN _____ Clinic CCN# _____

Clinic is (check one) Provider-based (PB) Independent/freestanding

Clinic participates in (check all applicable)
 Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) Texas Vaccines for Adult Safety Net (ASN)

Name of Clinic Administrator/Director _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Name of Hospital CEO (if clinic is PB) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Is the Applicant a facility providing women's health services? Yes No

If "Yes" and if Applicant is funded as a Subcontractor, it must certify that it meets the eligibility requirements defined in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 1, Part 15, Chapter 382, Subchapter A, Healthy Texas Women. Specifically, Subcontractor must meet the requirements under 1 TAC § 382.17(b)-(d).

COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH & EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION

II. SCOPE OF WORK – PROJECT NARRATIVE & BUDGET
(To be completed for Tier 1 and Tier-2 Applications)

Check level of funding request: Tier-1 (up to \$70,000) Tier-2 (up to \$180,000)

1. Describe your project based on the selected funding level above. Include the following in your project narrative (attach additional pages as needed):
 - (a) Description of any community partner(s), organization(s) or trusted messenger(s) with whom the Applicant will work or coordinate outreach, education and vaccination events, services or activities.
 - (b) Complete the Budget Template Section A to identify each healthcare personnel (name; functional title; code (existing or proposed), position, allocation of time to project, duration, total salary wage, and fringe benefit (Section B), if employed. Complete Budget Template, Section C for in-state travel (note: only for personnel identified in Section A to attend the 2023 TORCH Fall Conference). Requested funding is not to extend beyond June 2024. If project personnel is contracted, complete Section E of the Budget Template.

COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH & EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION

II. SCOPE OF WORK – PROJECT NARRATIVE & BUDGET (To be completed for Tier-2 Applications Only)

Describe how the Applicant RHC plans to ensure increased and flexible access to COVID-19 vaccine outreach and education. If the Applicant RHC is requesting grant funds to support extended clinic hour(s), describe the number of hour(s), which day(s) of the week, and how many months you plan to operate the extended clinic. You must also complete the following:

- (1) Budget Template, Section A to identify the healthcare personnel who will provide services during the extended clinic hour(s); their functional titles and code (existing or proposed), along with their position, description of activities, allocation of time to project, duration, salary wage rates, and fringe benefit rates (Section B), if staff is employed. Requested funding is not to extend beyond June 2024. Complete Budget Template, Section C for in-state travel (note: only for personnel identified in Section A to attend the 2023 TORCH Fall Conference). Complete Budget Template, Section D Supplies to show any basic office supplies or medical supplies to support the extended clinic hours. Complete Budget Template, Section F Other to show any other expenses not identified (ex: telephone, internet service, postage, or other such costs). Transportation vouchers for patients are an allowable, reimbursable cost. Note: direct costs associated with operating the extended clinic hours are the best use of grant funding. Indirect costs are not allowed.

If the RHC Applicant is requesting funds to operate one or more mobile clinics (vehicles), the project narrative should include:

- (a) Description of the operation of the mobile clinic(s), including the healthcare personnel who will operate the mobile clinic(s);
- (b) Description of the area(s)/communities to which the mobile clinic(s) will travel, as well as frequency of the outreach. RHC Applicant must provide justification for why that area was chosen (example: high COVID-19 incidence, low vaccine uptake, etc.); and
- (c) Description of the types of services to be provided.

Complete Budget Template Section A (Personnel), B (Fringe Benefits), C (Travel), D (Supplies), E (Contractual), and F (Other). Examples of Contractual costs may include lease of vehicles (note: Grant funding through this program may not be used to purchase vehicles, including any lease to own arrangement. True lease agreements are allowed. If maintenance is required, include associated costs in the lease agreement) or lease storage/space (lease space must be new space), and contract staffing. Examples of Other costs may include mobile clinic gas, internet service, and telephone service.

COVID-19 VACCINE OUTREACH & EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION

IV. CERTIFICATIONS & AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL SIGNATURE

By signing below, Applicant

- (1) Certifies all information provided in this application is true and correct, and acknowledges any misrepresentation or false statement made by Applicant, or an authorized agent of Applicant, in connection with this application, whether intentional or not, will constitute grounds for denial of this application;
- (2) Certifies that Applicant is not in bankruptcy or delinquent on any State or Federal debt; and
- (3) By submission of this application, Applicant acknowledges that as a condition of receipt of grant funds under this program that Applicant agrees to requirements and expectations established herein and the Subaward Agreement

Name of Authorized Official Representative

Title:

Signature of Authorized Official Representative

Date: