

Rural Health Transformation Plan

Community Health Worker Specialized Certificate Information Session

July 16, 2026



Agenda



Opening Remarks

Introduction to Kentucky's Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Plan

Expanding Kentucky's CHW Workforce

CHW Specialized Certificate Funding Opportunity

Next Steps

Facilitated Q&A

Agenda for this session



Understand **Community Health Worker (CHW) specialized certificates** and their role in Kentucky's Rural Health Transformation (RHT)



Explore the funding opportunity to **develop CHW specialized certificates**



Learn how to **prepare and submit your application** for funding to develop CHW specialized certificates

Introduction to Kentucky's RHT Plan



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



TEAM 
KENTUCKY®
CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

RHTP: Opportunity to Think Differently

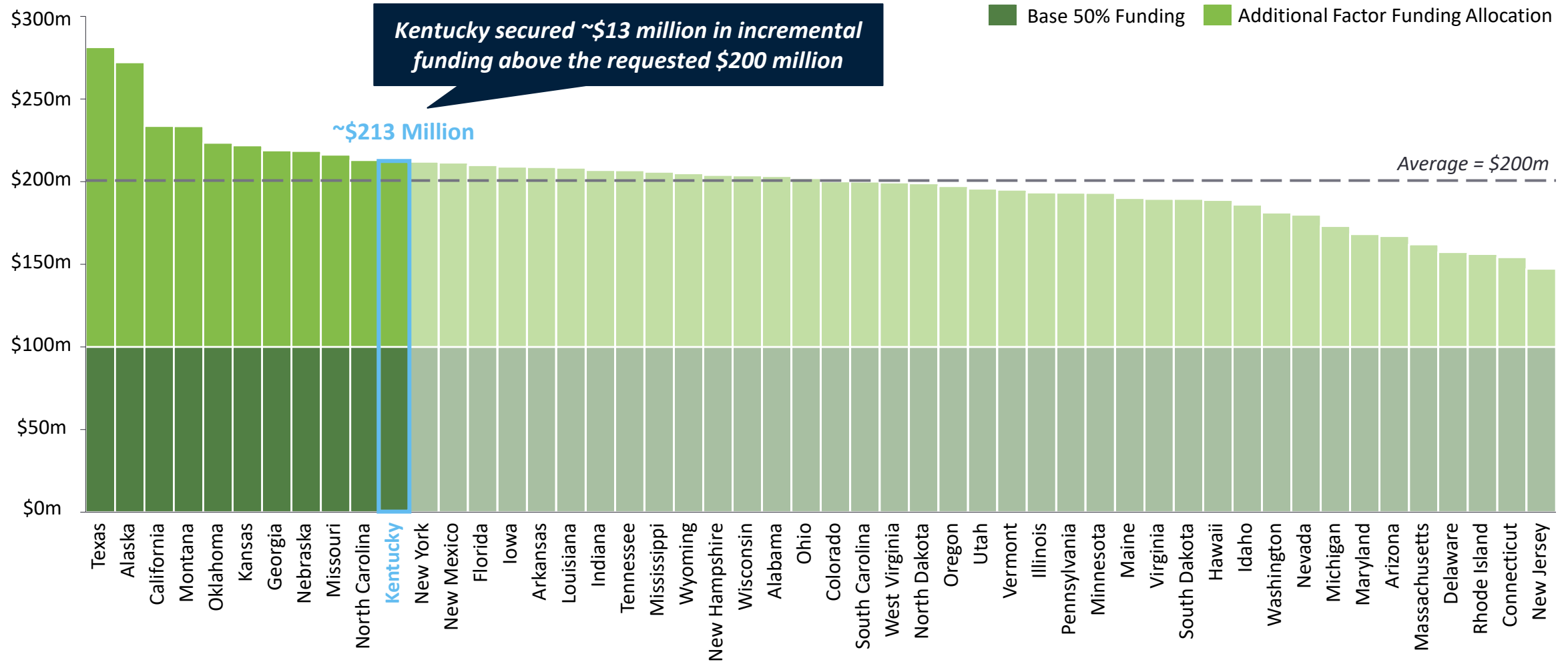
Focused Priorities

- ✓ Emphasizes **system transformation**
- ✓ CMS wants **big, innovative ideas** that are **evidence-based**
- ✓ A **5-year transformation**
- ✓ **Early wins** are critical
- ✓ State is **at risk to pay back funding**

What RHTP is NOT

- X Not** meant for ideas that are **unsustainable**
- X Not** meant for ideas that are **“more of the same”**
- X Cannot** be used to **replace or duplicate funding** or to **change fee schedules**

First Year Funding Awards



Kentucky's RHTP Programs



POWering Rural Maternal & Infant Health

Increase perinatal and infant care in maternity care deserts through coordinated, telehealth-enabled teams



From Crisis to Care: Integrated EMS & Trauma Response

Enhance skills and resources for pre-hospital care and on-site interventions



Rapid Response to Recovery: EmPATH Model & Mobile Crisis

Expand integrated, technology-enabled crisis care from community response to long-term support



Rooted in Health: Rural Dental Access Program

Improve rural access to preventive dental care and treatment through expanded training and mobile, portable services



Rural Community Hubs for Chronic Care Innovation

Reduce obesity and diabetes rate through evidence-based, community-led strategies



Impact: Reimagine Rural Health Care to Achieve Effective, Sustainable Health and Vitality for All

Expanding Kentucky's Specialized CHW Workforce



RHT's vision of a better equipped CHW workforce

How RHT Defines CHWs in This Funding Opportunity



Trusted community members who serve as the **bridge** between individuals and health and social systems



Improve access, quality and cultural relevance of care, especially in rural communities



Operate across health, social, and community systems to address the **full set of needs** impacting outcomes

Why CHWs are Central to RHT's Vision



Kentucky is investing in a community-driven strategy to **expand access and improve rural health outcomes**



CHWs are critical in addressing **chronic, maternal, behavioral, oral, and EMS rural health needs**



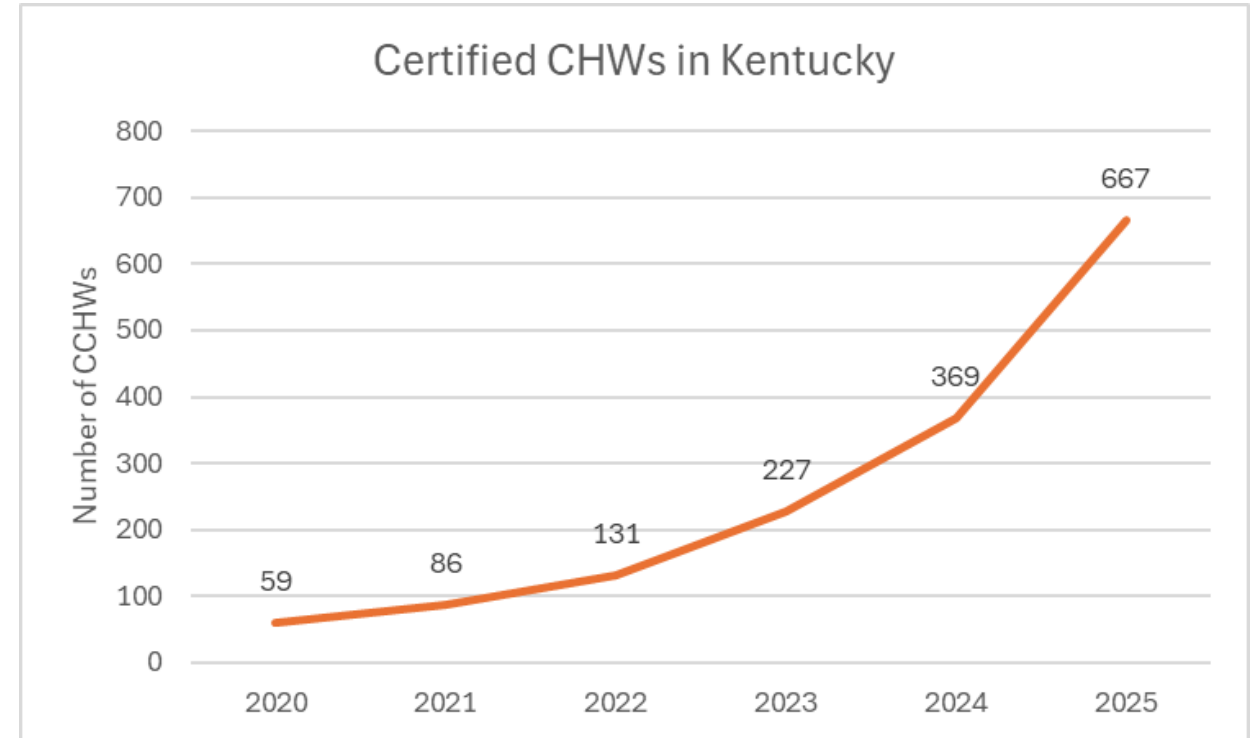
A stronger CHW workforce enables a more **integrated, accessible, and locally responsive health system**



Your expertise and leadership are essential, let's partner together to achieve this vision!

Landscape and growth of the CHW workforce in Kentucky

- Kentucky has seen significant growth of the profession and CCHWs since 2020.
- There are almost 700 Certified CHWs in Kentucky
 - Most counties in Kentucky have at least one CHW program
- CHWs are employed by a variety of organizations, including:
 - Federally qualified health centers and rural health centers
 - Local health departments
 - Hospitals
 - Behavioral health organizations
 - Community pharmacies
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Dentists
 - Universities



The need for CHW specialized certificates

- In 2023, the Certification Sub-Committee was re-established based on requests from CHWs wanting to advance their professional skills and opportunities.
- A needs assessment survey was developed and administered through the KOCHW Connection and at the 2023 KYACHW Conference
 - CHWs overwhelmingly indicated that they are interested in specialized certificates
 - Priority topics included: behavioral health, maternal health, and diabetes

RHT has several strategies related to CHWs, with this session focused on specialized certificates

Key RHT CHW Areas of Focus



CHW Recruitment and Pipeline Expansion



CHW Deployment and Professional Expansion



CHW Specialized Certificates



CHW Economic Sustainability

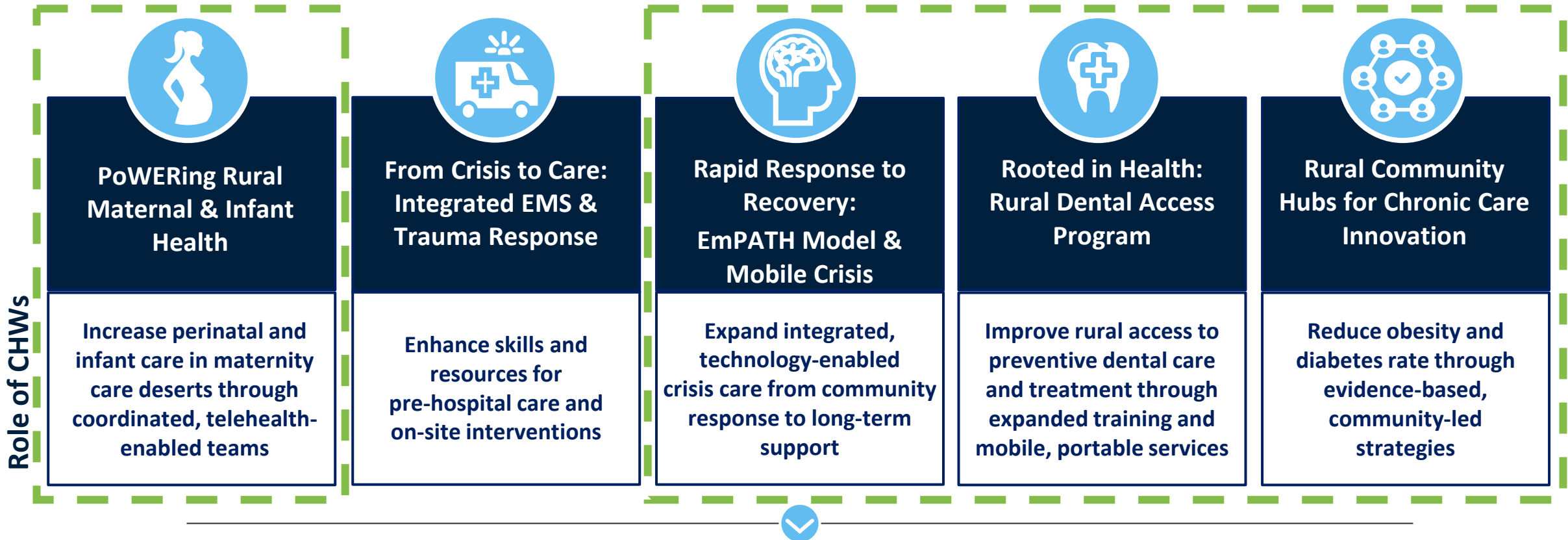
CHW Specialized Certificates

- Kentucky is one of a handful of states that have implemented **specialized certificates**, based on a statewide needs assessment with the CHW Advisory Workgroup, in partnership with CHWs and allies
- Specialized certificates help to **expand CHW service capabilities**, allowing CHWs to make a more meaningful impact across rural health programs
- The first specialized certificate approved is **Care of the Older Adult**, developed by the UofL Trager Institute, with more on the horizon

Development Process

- Organizations must submit their application, curriculum, and fee **through The Kentucky Office of Community Health Workers (KOCHW) for approval:**
 - Curriculum must be a minimum of 15 hours
 - Must be asynchronous
 - Must touch on each of the 8 CHW Core Competencies
 - Must include both a course evaluation and a learning assessment

Four RHT programs currently need CHW specialized certificates



RHT is looking for training organizations to develop CHW specialized certificates for these programs

Funding for CHW Specialized Certificates



RHT will provide funding to support the development of CHW specialized certificates



CHW Specialized Certificate Funding

Purpose	One-time funding to develop CHW specialized certificate training programs that build a more specialized CHW workforce
Qualifications	Kentucky-based non-profit training organizations (e.g., colleges/universities, health departments, AHECs ¹ , professional associations, etc.) experienced with KOCHW standards
Format	Competitive Request for Application (RFA)
Funding	Total of ~\$800k available (~\$200k for each of the four certificates), but awards may vary depending on the proposed budget provided
Uses	Personnel, subject matter experts, marketing and recruitment, learning equipment, teaching supplies, fees (licensed technology, translation, accessibility, evaluation, KOCHW application)

1. Area Health Education Center

Specialized certificates should train CHWs across four priority health areas



Healthy Lifestyle Management

- Lifestyle factors and SDoH influencing health outcomes
- Population-specific risks and disparities
- Culturally relevant education and behavior change support
- Connection to local resources and services
- Ongoing follow-up to reinforce behavior change



Perinatal & Infant Health

- Perinatal care journey and key clinical risks
- Common maternal and infant conditions
- Social, behavioral, and safety-related needs
- Escalation thresholds and care team coordination
- Postpartum planning and wraparound supports



Mental & Behavioral Health

- Common mental and behavioral health conditions
- Early warning signs, crisis response, and de-escalation
- Behavioral health systems and referral pathways
- Trauma-informed, culturally responsive communication
- Recovery supports and connection to community resources



Oral & Dental Health

- Preventive care and basic dental concepts
- Oral health risks and age-specific needs
- Dental terminology and oral structures
- Navigation of local dental services and resources
- Referral coordination and follow-up care

An RFA for funding available October 7, 2026, is now open

The RFA solicits applications from Kentucky-based training organizations to develop CHW specialized certificates and assess readiness to implement training aligned to RHT priorities

Application Instructions

Submit one proposal per specialized certificate

- **Application Narrative** (Should not exceed 10 pages)
 - ☑ Description of certificate purpose and audience
 - ☑ Overview of curriculum and delivery approach
 - ☑ Alignment to CHW competencies/KOCHW standards
 - ☑ Outline of sample curriculum module
 - ☑ Evaluation plan (enrollment, completion, outcomes)
 - ☑ Implementation timeline (Sept 2026 – June 2027)
- **Supporting Documentation** (not included in page limit)
 - ☑ FY27 budget based on a provided attachment



Application Logistics

Application Scope & Eligibility

- Applicants should submit one proposal per certificate area, and may apply for up to all four areas
- Prior approval through KOCHW is not required to apply, but programs must be approved by KOCHW before delivery

Program & Certificate Requirements

- Trainings must be asynchronous and delivered through the TRAIN learning platform
- Applicants need to provide a curriculum outline and sample module, not full training materials
- CHWs must be meaningfully involved in curriculum development

Program Expectations

- Training must be offered at no cost to CHWs

Awards will prioritize programs ready to execute the work from October 7, 2026, through August 31, 2027

The funding supports certificate development from
October 7, 2026 - June 30, 2027

- Funding is distributed through **milestone-based payments** issued upon completion of deliverables and required reporting
- Milestones include **curriculum development, enrollment, training delivery, and certificate completion**
- Applicants must propose a **cost per certificate** as part of the budget
- Costs must align to **allowable uses** as discussed in previous slides

Funding Period Timeline	
Phase	Date
August 26, 2026	Notification of Award to Grantees
September 30, 2026	Deadline for grantees to submit their application to become an approved training organization ¹
October 7, 2026	Anticipated Funding Period Begins ²
June 30, 2027	Deadline for Specialized Certificates to Be Finalized and Approved by KOCHW

1. Any organization that wishes to develop specialized certificates must be approved by KOCHW as a training organization. Once notified of award, grantees that are not already approved must submit their application to KOCHW

2. Training organizations will be required to report on RHT implementation progress periodically throughout the funding period. Additional reporting guidance will be provided as CMS requirements are further determined.

Next Steps



Deadline for funding opportunity proposals is August 5, 2026

Today's Session



CHW Specialized Certificate Information Session

July 16, 2026

Public information session providing program overview, eligibility details, and application guidance

RFA Submission Deadline

August 5, 2026

Final deadline for submission of complete applications for consideration by 5 PM ET

RFA Release

July 15, 2026

Official release of the RFA to solicit applications from interested Kentucky-based non-profit organizations

RFA Office Hours

July 21, 2026

Optional drop-in session for applicants to ask questions and receive technical assistance on the RFA and application requirements

RFA Notification of Awards

By August 26, 2026

Formal notification of funding decisions issued to selected Kentucky-based training organizations who responded to the RFA

Next steps for applying



Visit our website at ruralhealthplan.ky.gov

- 1** Access the CHW Specialized Certificates RFA and Information Session PowerPoint presentation on the Funding Opportunities page of the ruralhealthplan.ky.gov website
- 2** Attend CHW Specialized Certificates RFA office hours on **July 21** for technical assistance with completing and submitting the application
- 3** Submit an application by the **August 5** deadline by **5 PM ET** to be considered for funding



Questions?



Facilitated Q&A

Questions	Answers
1 Are we allowed to apply to all four of the specialized certificates?	Yes, you may apply to as many specialized certificates as you wish, but each one will require a separate proposal to be submitted
2 Do we need to meet all the requirements listed in the specialized certificate standards section in the RFA?	Yes, applicants must prove that their proposed approach addresses all the listed requirements for each specialized certificate in the RFA
3 What should be the length of the curriculum? How many modules do we need to develop?	The minimum length of the curriculum is 15 hours. While there is no minimum number of modules, applicants must prove that their proposed approach addresses all the listed requirements
4 Are we allowed to own the specialized certificate content and profit from it once it is approved and delivered?	No, you are not allowed to own or profit off the specialized certificate content once delivered
5 How detailed does the proposed approach need to be?	In addition to including an outline of a sample curriculum module, the approach must be deep enough to demonstrate confidence of understanding on how to train the topic to CHWs

Please put any additional questions in the chat and we will address them in a released FAQ document

The Rural Health Transformation Program is a cooperative agreement between CMS and the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Rural Health Transformation Program

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has been awarded funding through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Fund (RHTF). This investment will empower Kentucky to launch and implement its Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) — a community-driven strategy to expand access and improve health outcomes for rural residents across the Commonwealth. [Read Governor Beshear's press release.](#)

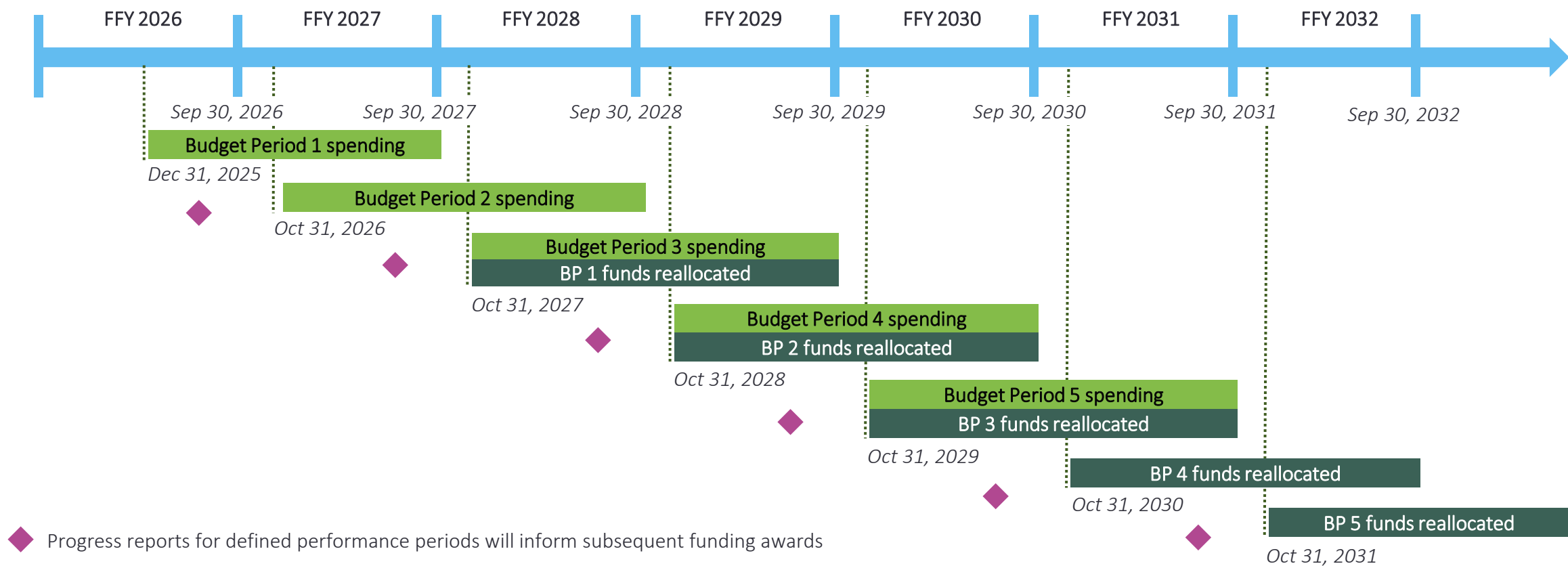
About the Program

This project is 100% funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for a total of \$212.9 million in budget year 1 with 100% by CMS/HHS. The RHTF grant spans five budget periods aligned with federal fiscal years (FY2026–FY2030). Funding is disbursed annually by CMS based on achievement of performance metrics. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government. [View the Notice of Funding Opportunity from CMS.](#)

Appendix



Overview of CMS Budget Timeline



Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Proposals will be scored primarily on program readiness, rural reach and impact, and quality of proposed approach

Category	Description
Application Parameters	Assess whether the application meets basic submission requirements, including completeness, organization, and adherence to required formats and templates
Program Readiness	Evaluates the organization's overall preparedness to deliver the proposed training, including relevant expertise, experience designing educational content, operational capacity, and strength of partnerships that support successful implementation
Rural Reach and Impact	Assesses how well the proposed training addresses the unique needs, challenges, and context of rural Kentucky communities, including alignment with local systems, workforce needs, and barriers to care
Quality of Proposed Approach	Evaluates the strength, relevance, and effectiveness of the proposed training approach, including alignment with required competencies and standards, quality of curriculum design, level of innovation, and feasibility of the development timeline
Budget Development	Assesses whether the proposed budget is clear, reasonable, and aligned with the scope and goals of the program