



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

### Rural Communities Health Care Investment Program (RCHIP)

The Rural Communities Health Care Investment Program (RCHIP) is administered by the Texas State Office of Rural Health (SORH) at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). RCHIP utilizes funds from a permanent endowment established from the tobacco settlement for the State of Texas and authorized under TEX. GOV'T CODE Sec. 487.558. The authority for this program is provided in Texas Government Code Chapter 487, Subchapter M, and Texas Administrative Code Chapter 30, Subchapter B.

The SORH awards \$10,000 student loan repayment/stipends to eligible, non-physician, licensed healthcare providers in response to the recruitment and retention needs of medically underserved areas (MUA) in Texas. Selected participants must agree to work, and complete, a 12-month service obligation in a qualifying community to receive the student loan repayment/stipend.

#### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Licensed, non-physician healthcare providers practicing in a Texas county with a total population of 50,000 or less may apply.

#### **Who are eligible recipients for funding?**

Licensed, non-physician healthcare providers are eligible if they meet the requirements below:

1. Hold a Texas license, permit, or other form of authorization required by state law or regulation to work in a health care profession (herein collectively referred to as a "license"); and
2. Either:
  - a. Received their license in the field under which this application is submitted within the last 24 months [2 years] prior to the application deadline date; or
  - b. Practiced in a county with more than 150,000 people and has moved or will move to practice in a qualifying community in the field under which this application is submitted (applicant may not have been residing or practicing in the qualifying community for more than 12 months [1 year] prior to the application deadline); and
3. Agree to work for a 12-month service period at the eligible healthcare facility. Eligible healthcare facilities are those located in an MUA.

#### **What is considered an MUA?**

- A. A healthcare facility in a county with a population of 50,000 or less; or
- B. A healthcare facility that has been designated under state or federal law as:
  - a. a health professional shortage area (HPSA); or
  - b. a medically underserved area; or
- C. A healthcare facility that has been designated as a medically underserved community by SORH.

**How is the grant recipient selected?**

The application is scored and scoring criteria heavily weighs the county HPSA score in which the healthcare professional works. The highest overall scores will be selected.

**What type of healthcare professionals may apply?**

Prior awards have been granted to Nurses, Paramedics/EMTs, Healthcare facility administrators, Occupational therapists, Physical therapists, etc...

**Does telehealth fulfill service obligations?**

A health professional who participates in a program under this subchapter may not use telecommunication technology, including telemedicine, as the sole or primary method of providing services and may not use telecommunication technology as a substitute for providing health care services in person.

**When is the award received, and who receives it?**

The selected healthcare professional must complete a 12-month service obligation at a qualifying facility. Once the service obligation is completed, the facility will complete verification forms. Once received, TDA will issue the award funds directly to the healthcare professional.

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