



Texas State of Office of Rural Health

2023-2024 Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program (SHIP)

Grant Information & Application Completion Instructions

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INFORMATION FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATION

The application procedures for the 2023-2024 Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant (SHIP) are included in this Application Guide. The procedures in this application guide supersede those published in all previous SHIP application guides.

The deadline for all 2023-2024 SHIP applications is 5:00 p.m. CT on **October 18, 2022**. The application form in the TDA GO! grant management system must be completed and submitted by the deadline date for an applicant to be considered for funding. Instructions for completing the application in the TDA GO! system begin on Page 7.

Ensure the information provided in the *TDA GO! Applicant Contact Information* and *Application Form* is accurate and complete before submitting. Only one application per applicant/facility is allowed.

The 2023-2024 SHIP online application form can be accessed using the following link:

[TDA GO!](#) - if you are unable to get in using CHROME try pasting the URL into a different browser such as Microsoft Edge. See Important Information section on page 7.

The application contains the guidelines for completing the grant request. **Please read all materials and the application before preparing and submitting the grant application in the TDA GO! system.** Applications must provide all the requested information. Please read all questions and accurately answer each as it pertains to the applicant.

Any questions regarding the 2023-2024 SHIP program, the TDA GO! application form, application information and/or Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) requirements can be directed to the State Office of Rural Health Regional Coordinators. For immediate assistance, please call (512) 463-0018 or email RuralHealth@TexasAgriculture.gov.

South Region - Eva Cruz	Eva.Cruz@TexasAgriculture.gov
Panhandle Region – Vacant	RuralHealth@TexasAgriculture.gov
West Region - Kathy Johnston:	Kathy.Johnston@TexasAgriculture.gov
East Region - Trish Rivera:	Trish.Rivera@TexasAgriculture.gov
North Region - Robert Shaw:	Robert.Shaw@TexasAgriculture.gov
Central/Gulf Region - Shari Wyatt:	Shari.Wyatt@TexasAgriculture.gov

Failure to follow the instructions and requirements described in these guidelines may result in the disqualification of the application.

PROGRAM RULES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

This application guide contains the requirements that all applicants are required to meet to be eligible for funding. Failure to conform to these requirements may result in the disqualification of the application. Each applicant is solely responsible for the preparation and submission of the online application form in accordance with the instructions in these guidelines.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of SHIP is to assist small rural hospitals of 49 beds or less with their quality improvement (QI) efforts and with their adaptation to changing payment systems through investments in hardware, software, and related trainings. SHIP funded investments include:

- 1) activities that support improved data collection to facilitate quality reporting and improvement;
- 2) activities that support the development or basic tenets of ACOs or shared savings programs; and/or
- 3) activities that improve hospital financial processes.

Eligibility

The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) (within TDA) will be the official grantee of record and act as a fiscal intermediary for all hospitals applying for SHIP funding. Applications will be screened for eligibility and completeness. SORH will compile all eligible applications and submit one SHIP application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Eligible applicants are small hospitals located in a rural area. For the purpose of this program:

- 1) “small hospitals” is defined as a non-Federal, short-term general acute care hospital that: (i) is located in a rural area as defined in 42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d) and (ii) has 49 available beds or less, as reported on the hospital’s most recently filed Medicare Cost Report;
- 2) “located in a rural area” is defined as either: (1) located outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA); (2) located within a rural census tract of a MSA, as determined under the Goldsmith Modification or the Rural Urban Commuting Areas (RUCAs); or (3) is being treated as if being located in a rural area pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395(d)(8)(E); and
- 3) Eligible hospitals may be for-profit or not-for-profit, including faith-based. Hospitals in U.S. territories as well as tribally operated hospitals under Titles I and V of P.L. 93-638 are eligible to the extent that such hospitals meet the above criteria.

Award Amount

Awards are subject to the availability of funds. If funds are not appropriated or collected for this program, applicants will be informed accordingly. The estimated maximum budget of **\$13,011** should be used to support and implement eligible activities.

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds

Applicant hospitals must select activities outlined in the federally prescribed application. Eligible activities include:

- Value-Based Purchasing
- Accountable Care Organizations or Shared Savings
- Payment Bundling/PPS

Click here for: [SHIP Allowable and Unallowable Investments Search Tool](#) & [Allowable and Unallowable Investment Activity Examples](#)

Responsibilities and Accountability of a Grantee

The grantee has fully responsibility for the conduct of the project and for the results achieved. Each grantee shall monitor the day-to-day performance of the grant project to assure adherence to statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions. The grantee will carry out the activities described in the scope of work to achieve project goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. The grantee will be accountable for all grant funds and must ensure all funds are used solely for authorized purposes.

The grantee must ensure:

- Funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project.
- Funds are not used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of applicable statutes.
- The final project completion report is submitted in a timely manner with all required documents.

Each grantee must ensure they have an adequate accounting system in place and good internal controls to ensure expenditures and reimbursements are reported and records are maintained for a minimum of three (3) years after the conclusion of the project.

Reporting: Grantees may be required to submit periodic performance reports. Specific reporting timelines will be provided in the grant agreement. As part of TDA's ongoing monitoring of grant funds, grantees must show both a strong progress of work completed on all projects as well as financial progress. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in the withholding of a request for reimbursement and/or termination of the award.

Reimbursement: Grantees are encouraged to complete their SHIP project(s) and utilize all SHIP grant funds. Failure to complete the SHIP project(s) and utilize all awarded SHIP funding may jeopardize the eligibility status for applying for future SHIP funding by a grantee. Grantees will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis. Grantees are required to submit a project completion report when their project is complete reflecting the status of the project. Copies of invoices, purchase orders, proof of payment such as canceled checks, bank statements, or other supporting documentation including spreadsheets must be submitted along with the completion report before grant funds will be released. Once submitted, the project completion report shall be reviewed, approved, and grant funds will be disbursed.

General Information

TDA reserves the right to reject all applications and is not liable for costs incurred by an applicant in the development, submission, or review of the application; or costs incurred by a selected applicant prior to the effective date of grant agreement.

TDA reserves the right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if TDA deems any such action to be in the best interest of TDA and of the State of Texas. The decision of TDA will be administratively final in this regard.

Applicants are responsible for clearly designating any portion of the application that contains proprietary or trade secret information and must state the reason(s) the information is designated as such. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire application is protected from disclosure because it contains proprietary or trade secret information is not acceptable, and shall make the entire application subject to release under the Texas Public Information Act. In the event that a public information request for the application is received, TDA shall process such request in accordance with Section 552.305 of the Texas Government Code. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel regarding disclosure issues and to take appropriate precautions to safeguard trade secrets or any other proprietary information.

All applications submitted under this program are subject to release as public information, unless the application or specific parts of any such application can be shown to be exempt from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.

Conflict of Interest

Applicants are required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to this grant program. Failure to disclose any such relationship may result in the disqualification of an application or termination of agreement.

General Compliance Information

1. Grantees must comply with TDA's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the Grantee to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by TDA and shall not relieve the Grantee of its responsibilities to TDA for their performance.
2. All grant awards are subject to the availability of federal funding, and appropriations and authorizations by the Texas Legislature.
3. Grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses, as applicable.
4. Grantees must keep separate records and a bookkeeping account (with a complete record of all expenditures) for grant funds and activities. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years after the completion of grant activities, or as otherwise agreed upon with TDA. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the three-

year retention period, then all records and accounts must be retained until their destruction is authorized by TDA. The federal awarding agency, TDA, and the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the grant, including all electronic records, at any time throughout the duration of the agreement until all litigation, claims, negotiations, audits or other action pertaining to the grant is resolved, or until the expiration of the three-year retention period, whichever is longer. The federal awarding agency, TDA, and the SAO shall have access to: all electronic data or records pertaining to the grant; the physical location where records are stored; and all locations related to grant activities.

5. If the Grantee has a financial audit performed during the time the Grantee is receiving funds from TDA, upon request TDA shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, any schedules, and the final report or result of such audit.
6. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management; the Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS); 2 CFR part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; and 45 CFR part 75, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards, if applicable.