



# Rural Health Transformation Committee

*Quarterly Meeting  
September 10, 2026*

# Agenda

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- Welcome
- Progress Updates for Budget Period 1
- Planning Updates for Budget Period 2
- Committee Discussion and Next Steps
- Opportunity for Public Comment

# Notice of Recording & Transcription

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# Platform Logistics - Google Meet

A screenshot of the Google Meet interface with a dark background. A green circle highlights the menu icon (three dots) in the bottom toolbar. A white menu is open, showing options: Whiteboard, Record meeting, Change layout, Full screen, Switch camera, Change background, Captions, Use a phone for audio, Report a problem, Report abuse, Troubleshooting & help, and Settings. Red arrows point from text boxes to specific controls: 'Mute' points to the mute icon, 'Camera' points to the camera icon, 'Raise hand (for Q&A)' points to the raise hand icon, 'Change view' points to the 'Change layout' menu item, 'Call into the meeting' points to the 'Use a phone for audio' menu item, and 'Chat' points to the chat icon in the bottom toolbar. The bottom toolbar also includes icons for mute, camera, raise hand, full screen, and a red phone icon. The bottom left shows the time '3:03 PM' and a name placeholder. The bottom right shows icons for help, participants, chat, and a settings gear.

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Mute

Camera

Raise hand  
(for Q&A)

Change view

Call into the  
meeting

Chat

Maryland  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# Public Comment and Questions

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To be collected via Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/EhSkd3JGb4WKev3j6>

# RHTP Support

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The Maryland Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$168,180,837.61 (Budget Period 1) with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents of this meeting 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.

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# Governance Updates

# Governance Updates 1

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- Staffing/ Hiring
- Formal Partner Agreements
- Policy/ Procedure Establishment

**Partner  
Agreements in  
place for 19 of 19  
initiatives.**

## **Governance Updates 2**

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- CMS Engagement and Peer Networks
  - Bi-weekly CMS calls with Project Officer
  - CMS Transforming Rural Health Learning Series
  - RHTP Leadership Network and affinity groups
  - National Association of Medicaid Directors Health Access Interest Group
  - National Rural Health Association Meeting
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - RHTP website - one location for all updates and information, including competitive funding opportunities
  - Listserv launched; 852 unique sign ups
  - Created vendor list; 344 entries to date
  - Community engagement activities - roundtables, presentations, webinars, etc.

# Governance Updates 3

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## CMS Reporting/ Application Requirements

- First Annual Report: Due 8/31/2026
- Non-competing Continuation Application: Due 8/31/2026
- Site Visit: Scheduled for 10/13 - 14/ 2026
- Ad hoc Requests: Initiative Information Report (Performance Metrics), Communications Plan, etc.

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# **Progress Updates for Budget Period 1**

## **February 25, 2026 - October 30, 2026**

# Maryland RHTP Framework

Budget Period 1 (BP1):  
**\$168,180,837.61**

## PILLAR 1

**Transform the  
Rural Health  
Workforce**



**\$26 million  
(15.3% of Year 1 award)**

## PILLAR 2

**Promote Sustainable  
Access and  
Innovative Care**



**\$126 million  
(74.9% of Year 1 award)**

## PILLAR 3

**Empower Rural  
Marylanders to  
Eat for Health**



**\$15 million  
(9.1% of Year 1 award)**

**Governance  
\$1 million  
(0.7% of Year 1  
award)**

### PART 1 - IMMEDIATE IMPACT FUNDS

Quickly provide resources to expand “shovel-ready” activities in rural areas.

### PART 2 - TRANSFORMATION FUNDS

Competitive opportunities for transformational initiatives in rural areas.

# Overview of Budget Period 1 Progress

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- Maryland has obligated 99% of \$168M award
- On track to obligate 100% of award by 10/30/2026
- Obligation is essential to maintain Maryland's funding and prevent CMS recoupment and reallocation of funds to other states
- CMS approved refined metrics, baseline values, and targets
- Annual report submitted to CMS on 8/28/2026

# CMS Reporting Structure/ Expected BP1

## Performance

| CMS Stage and Checkpoint                                                       | Pillar 1^                                                         | Pillar 2 | Pillar 3 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Stage 0 – Planning: 0.1 Establish governance                                   | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |
| Stage 0 – Planning: 0.2 Submit project plan to CMS                             | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |
| Stage 1 – Project Preparation: 1.1 CMS approval of project plan                | Prelim approval expected 8/24, final approval expected after 8/31 |          |          |
| Stage 1 – Project Preparation: 1.2 Launch initiative                           | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |
| Stage 2 – Early Implementation: 2.1 Continue initiative activities             | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |
| Stage 2 – Early Implementation: 2.2 Achieve at least one post-launch milestone | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |
| Stage 2 - Early Implementation: 2.3 Establish metric reporting methodology*    | ✓                                                                 | ✓        | ✓        |

14 ^ MD uses “pillars” as initiatives. While there are many initiatives or projects per pillar, the plan is structured around MD implementing 3 large initiatives.

\* BP1- States can’t advance beyond 2.3 checkpoint

# Refined Metrics, Baselines, Targets

| Pillar | Metric                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Enrolled participants in RHTP-funded healthcare and public health pipeline programs                                                                                                                                |
| 1      | Enrolled participants in RHTP-funded healthcare and public health training and education programs                                                                                                                  |
| 1      | RHTP-funded participants who received a healthcare or public health credential + RHTP-funded participants who obtained unsubsidized healthcare or public health employment in the field in which they were trained |
| 1      | The number of institutionalized infrastructure improvements related to workforce transformation efforts                                                                                                            |
| 2      | Net new or expanded primary care practices and/or sites and/or services funded by RHTP                                                                                                                             |
| 2      | Net new or expanded behavioral health practices and/or site providing BH services and/or new BH services funded by RHTP                                                                                            |
| 2      | Net new HIE connectivity by practices in rural areas                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2      | The number of rural provider practices adopting advanced care models with RHTP support                                                                                                                             |
| 3      | Number of participants receiving RHTP-funded nutrition education                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3      | Number of newly initiated or expanded projects to improve infrastructure funded by RHTP                                                                                                                            |
| 3      | Number of newly initiated or expanded projects to strengthen distribution funded by RHTP                                                                                                                           |
| 3      | Number of newly initiated or expanded projects to strengthen local health purchasing funded by RHTP                                                                                                                |
| 151-3  | Number of people served (across all 3 initiatives)                                                                                                                                                                 |

# Overview of BP1 Competitive Funding

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- Maryland's competitive funding opportunities:
  - Elevate expertise of rural communities
  - Invest in the most promising, innovative, and impactful projects
- All competitive funding opportunities saw robust response – demand exceeded available funds
- To-date, \$110M in competitive funding award offers



## Pillar 1 Highlights

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- **Funding opportunities have advanced to the award stage:** RFAs have closed and award decisions are underway for the Workforce Clearinghouse, Pathways to Health Careers, and Rural Incentives for Strengthening Employment in Healthcare funding opportunities.
  - Pathways to Health Careers received \$8,973,774 in requests across two projects; Rural Incentives for Strengthening Employment in Healthcare received \$18,052,390 in requests across two projects.
- **Workforce Data System development is moving forward:** A support team and subject matter experts have been recruited and are beginning work to develop the online platform for healthcare workforce development applications.
- **Area Health Education Center initiatives are gaining momentum:** Summer health careers pathway programs were successfully completed, and foundational work is progressing to establish a new Southern Maryland AHEC.



# Updates on Pillar 1 Competitive Funding

| Initiative                                                                                                                             | Partner  | Amount | Status                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Budget Period 1 Closed Opportunities</b>                                                                                            |          |        |                                                                                                                |
| <b>1.2 Workforce Data Clearinghouse</b>                                                                                                | MDH      | RFP    | Opened: 7/29<br>Closed: Extended to 8/26<br>Expected start: 10/1                                               |
| <b>1.4 Pathways to Health Careers</b><br>1. Apprenticeship Expansion<br>2. RAMP Expansion for Allied Health                            | MD Labor | \$3.5M | Opened: 7/10<br>Closed: 8/9<br>Proposals under review: 31<br>Expected Award date: 9/15<br>Expected start: 10/1 |
| <b>1.5T Workforce Pipeline Programs</b><br>1. Pipeline Training Programs<br>2. Provider Training, Recruitment and Retention Strategies | MD Labor | \$15M  | Opened: 7/10<br>Closed: 8/9<br>Proposals under review: 36<br>Expected Award date: 9/15<br>Expected start: 10/1 |



## Pillar 2 Highlights

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- **First Round Awards Announced:** Pillar 2 Partners have announced \$80 million in grant funding to be awarded across 41 grant recipient organizations.
- **Rural Telehealth Strengthening:** On 6/30, CRISP launched their Rural Health Connectivity Program (RHCP) incentive, and closed their RFP for a Telehealth Blueprint Assessment vendor
- **Breaking Down Institutional Silos:** The Prevention and Health Promotion Administration (PHPA), Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC), and Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) are actively executing award agreements for the “Rooted and Resilient” funding opportunity
- **Expanding Primary Care:** The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) will soon be awarding RHTP funds to 8 primary care facilities to support the expansion of services



# Updates on Pillar 2 Competitive Funding

| Initiative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Partner                          | Amount | Status                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Budget Period 1 Closed Opportunities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                  |        |                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>2.1 Expand Access to Primary Care</b><br>Primary Care Practice Creation and Expansion<br><i>*MDH reviewing current BP1 surplus (e.g. salary savings among partners due to later than anticipated CMS unrestriction of funds) to potentially provide funding for additional awards due to demand/quality of proposals.</i> | MHCC                             | \$6.3M | Opened: 5/4<br>Closed: 6/1<br>Proposals received: 45<br>Award offers to 8 entities: 8/6<br>Agreement execution in progress<br>Expected start: 9/1 |
| <b>2.2 Increase Efficiency of Local Agency Operations</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue Cycle Management and Billing Technical Assistance for Rural LHDs and AAAs</li> <li>Insurance Contracting and Credentialing for Rural LHDs</li> </ol>                                                                | Garrett County Health Department | RFP    | Opened: 4/20<br>Closed: 5/31<br>Proposals received: 6<br>Contract with 1 entity for 2 projects<br>Expected start: 9/30                            |
| <b>2.5 Telemedicine and HIT Optimization</b><br><br>20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | CRISP                            | RFP    | Opened: 5/6<br>Closed: 6/29 (extended)<br>Award date: 8/28<br>Expected start: 9/1                                                                 |



# Updates on Pillar 2 Competitive Funding Cont'd

| Initiative                                                                                                     | Partner                                                                                                                                                                                     | Amount | Status                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Budget Period 1 Closed Opportunities</i></b>                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>2.6T, 2.8T, 2.9T</b><br>Service Expansion, HIT Advances,<br>Behavioral Health Expansion, Innovative<br>Care | MDH, BHA, HSCRC                                                                                                                                                                             | \$73M  | Opened: 4/21<br>Closed: 5/26<br>Proposals received: 81<br>Award offers to 33 entities: 8/5<br>Agreement execution in progress<br>Expected start: 9/1 |
| <b><i>Revised Opportunity</i></b>                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>2.7T Mobile Health: PHPA (LHDs), \$23M</b>                                                                  | Counties determined individual approach for BP1 instead of regional.<br>Will shift to regional for BP2. Associated Local Health Department<br>budgets in-hand based on local need/approach. |        |                                                                                                                                                      |



## Pillar 3 Highlights

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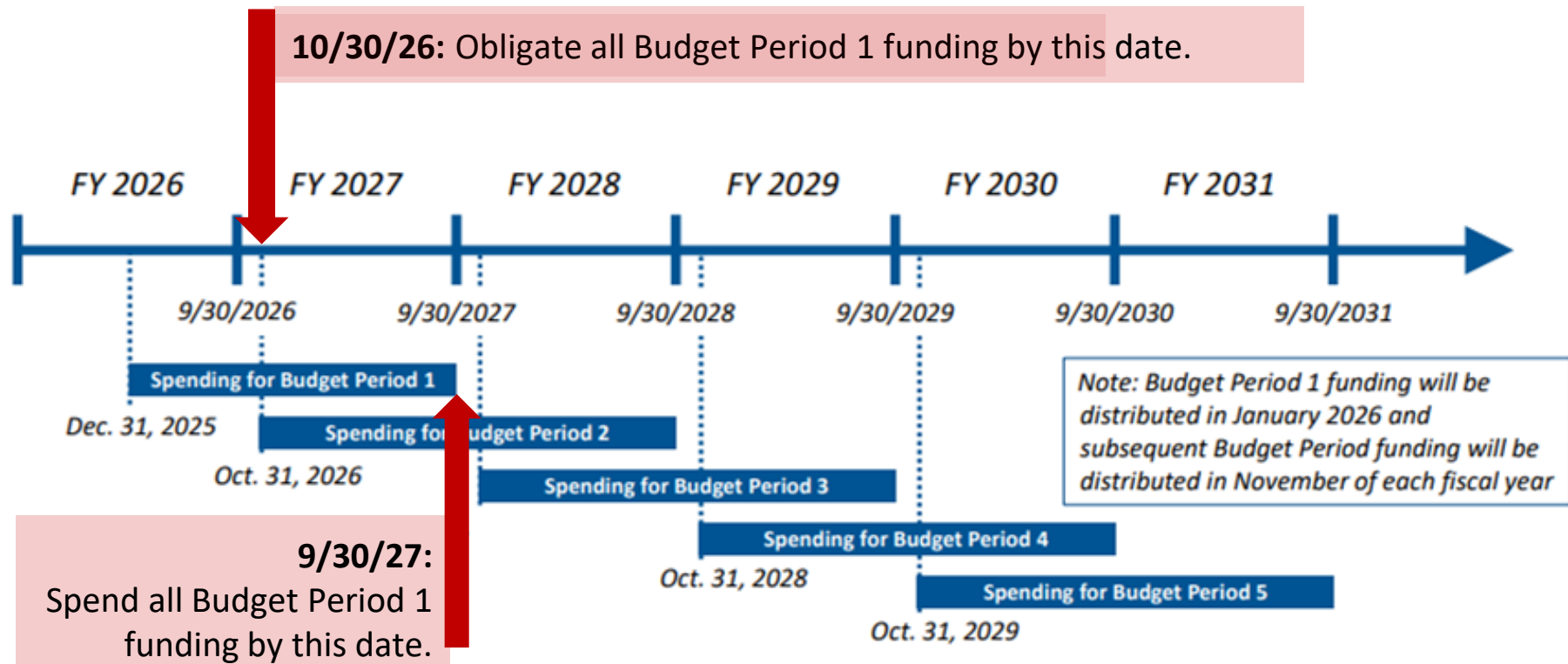
- **Grant Award Process Underway:** Partner agencies (DHCD, MDA, RMC) are in the final stages of reviewing and approving awardees.
- **Cross-Agency Program Coordination:** MDH is aligning efforts with existing grants to maximize resources through local health departments.
- **Regional Capacity Building:** Onboarding four Regional Food Resilience Coordinators in September to empower local food councils with planning toolkits and state-level resources.

# Updates on Pillar 3 Competitive Funding

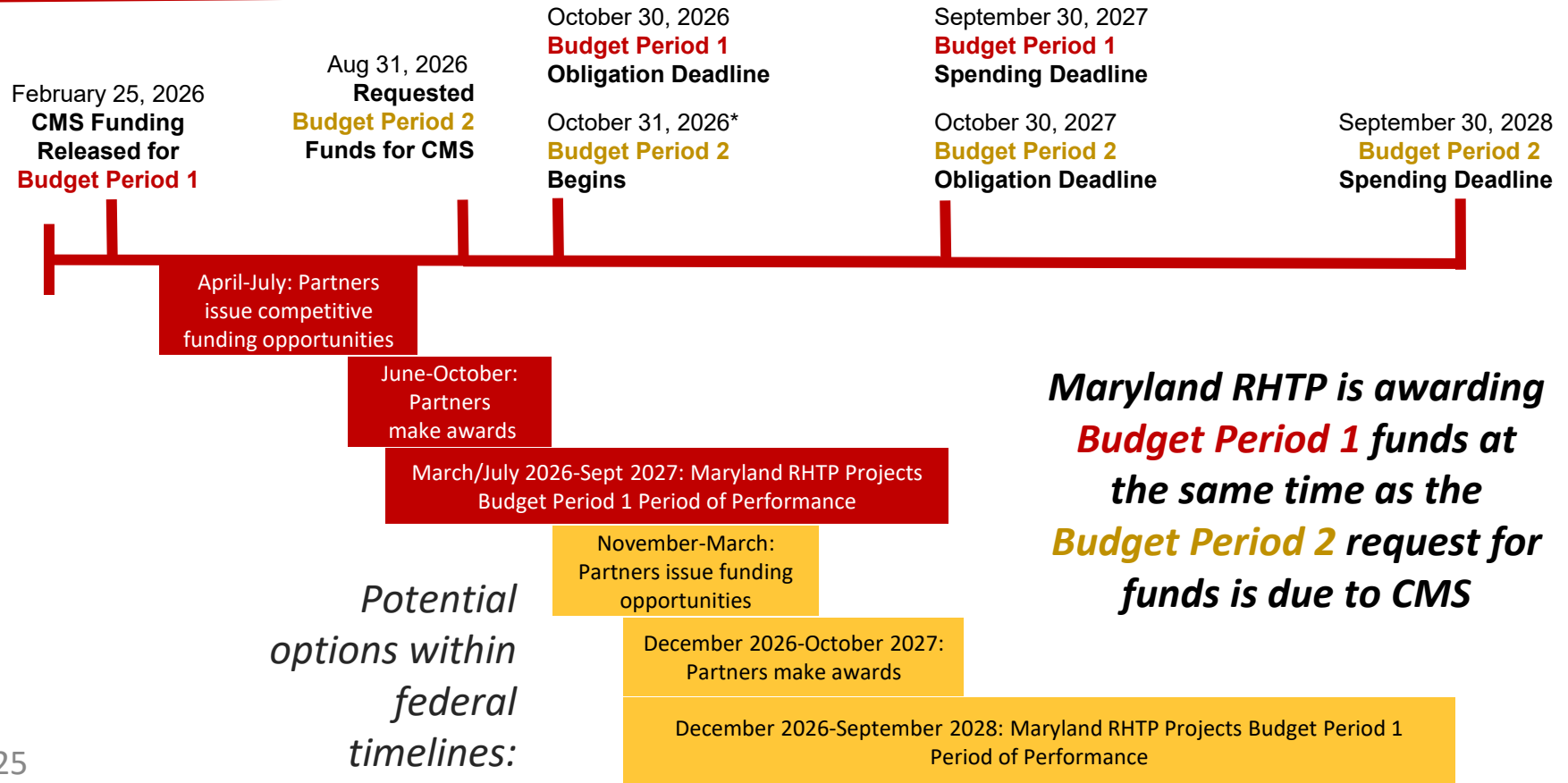


| Initiative                                                                                                       | Partner | Amount            | Status                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Budget Period 1 Closed Opportunities</i></b>                                                               |         |                   |                                                                                                             |
| <b>3.1 Post Harvest Infrastructure:</b><br>Post Harvest Infrastructure: Cold Storage for Producers               | MDA     | \$3.6M            | Opened: 5/15<br>Closed: 6/15<br>Proposals received: 92<br>Expected Award date: 9/15<br>Expected start: 10/1 |
| <b>3.2 NourishMD Expansion:</b><br>NourishMD Expansion: Small Grocers & Mobile Markets                           | DHCD    | \$1.6M<br>Awarded | Opened: 1/20<br>Closed: 2/20<br>RHTP-funded award offers to 33 entities: 7/27<br>Expected start: 8/2026     |
| <b>3.5T Healthy Food Aggregation:</b><br>Food System Aggregation and Hubs & Local Foods<br>Purchasing Strategies | RMC     | \$4.7M            | Opened: 4/20<br>Closed: 5/15<br>Proposals received: 33<br>Expected Award date: 9/15<br>Expected start: 10/1 |

# Federal RHTP Timeline



# Budget Periods 1 and 2 Timeline



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# **Planning for Budget Period 2**

## **October 31, 2026 - October 30, 2027**

# Non-Competing Continuation (NCC) Application

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- CMS: Use BP1 approved funding amount as a placeholder budget amount for BP2 (10/31/2026 - 10/30/2027)
- Required “marked-up” BP1 narrative, BP2 budget/justification
- NCC submitted to CMS on 8/28/2026
- No changes to budgets for overall Pillars
  - Continued partnership with Partners
  - Continued competitive funding opportunities in BP2
- CMS aims for BP2 Notice of Award ~10/15/2026

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## Committee Discussion and Next Steps

# Committee Discussion

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Community  
Engagement

- Is there current community interest in RHTP progress beyond known stakeholders/ potential awardees and vendors?
- Best routes to hearing directly from rural communities about their needs, strengths, and desired RHTP solutions on an on-going basis?
- Any additional routes for Committee updates beneficial to inform your engagement?

## **RHT Committee Next Steps**

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- Future Meeting Dates; 10:00 a.m.
  - December 10, 2026
  - March 25, 2027
  - June 24, 2027
  - September 23, 2027
  - December 16, 2027
- Consistent structure for meetings/agendas to support monitoring
- Meeting recordings and materials posted on [RHTP website](#) as soon as available
- Will continue to outreach between meetings via email as appropriate

## **Staying Connected**

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- **Dedicated public-facing email:**  
[mdh.transformruralhealth@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.transformruralhealth@maryland.gov)
- **RHTP listserv sign up:**  
[https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural -Health-Transformation-Program.aspx](https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural-Health-Transformation-Program.aspx)
- **Webpage:** [https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural -Health-Transformation-Program.aspx](https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Pages/Rural-Health-Transformation-Program.aspx)

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# Committee Comments and Questions

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# Public Comment

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## Appendix: Pillar and Initiative Updates

# Pillar 1: Transform the Rural Health Workforce

Expand existing and implement new efforts to develop, recruit and retain a strong health workforce in rural communities, addressing multiple types of health care clinicians and allied health professionals.

## Immediate Impact

**1.1 Workforce Data System:** Create an online platform for healthcare workforce development applications. (MDH/Office of Population Health Improvement)

- Two staff have been hired and are onboarding with Office of Enterprise Technology for the project.
- Project Charter and the Governance Charter are nearing completion, with final leadership review underway.
- MDH subject matter experts have been identified and assigned to each workflow; workflow meetings launching.
- Weekly and semi-weekly meetings have been established to drive coordination and implementation.

# Pillar 1: Transform the Rural Health Workforce

Expand existing and implement new efforts to develop, recruit and retain a strong health workforce in rural communities, addressing multiple types of health care clinicians and allied health professionals.

## Immediate Impact

**1.2 Workforce Clearinghouse:** Implement a Maryland Health Workforce Data Clearinghouse. (MDH/Office of Population Health Improvement)

- Project team is on-board!
- OPHI released an RFA on July 29 for the Maryland Healthcare Workforce Data Clearinghouse: Phase 1 Requirements Analysis and Future Planning; Multiple proposals are eligible for review.
- Award decision will be made by the end of September.

# Pillar 1: Transform the Rural Health Workforce

Expand existing and implement new efforts to develop, recruit and retain a strong health workforce in rural communities, addressing multiple types of health care clinicians and allied health professionals.

## Immediate Impact

**1.3 Area Health Education Centers (AHEC):** Expand the capacity of existing AHEC programs and open a new AHEC in Southern Maryland. (University of MD, Baltimore/AHEC)



### Health Careers Pathway Programs

Two successful ECHO (Exploring Careers in Health Occupations) Summer residential programs have been completed; @ Frostburg State University (FSU) and University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), 40 rural students reached with immersive, hands on health careers exploration activities and field trips, to increase awareness and interest in health careers.

### Building a Southern Maryland AHEC

Partner building going well; with connections to Southern Maryland Health Officers, St. Mary's County Superintendent, and UM Charles Regional Medical Center. Charles Regional to serve as host/fiscal agent for the new Southern Maryland Regional AHEC until the 501c3 is established.

# Pillar 1: Transform the Rural Health Workforce

Expand existing and implement new efforts to develop, recruit and retain a strong health workforce in rural communities, addressing multiple types of health care clinicians and allied health professionals.

## Immediate Impact

**1.4 Pathways to Health Careers:** Increase recruitment and training opportunities for healthcare and public health professionals. (MD Labor)

- MD Labor released a competitive solicitation on July 10 for Pathways to Health Careers funding, which included two projects: Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers - Allied Health (RAMP-AH) and Rural Health Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries.
- 23 applications requesting a total \$4,435,288 were received for RAMP-AH
- 11 applications requesting a total of \$4,538,486 were received for Rural Health RA Intermediaries
- Award decisions will be made in early September

# Pillar 1: Transform the Rural Health Workforce

Expand existing and implement new efforts to develop, recruit and retain a strong health workforce in rural communities, addressing multiple types of health care clinicians and allied health professionals.

## Transformation Fund

### **1.5T Workforce Pipeline Programs and Provider Training, Recruitment, and Retention:**

Expand training, recruitment and retention strategies for rural Maryland physicians and advanced practice professionals. (MD Labor)

*(aka as Rural Incentives for Strengthening Employment in Healthcare (RISE))*

- MD Labor released a competitive solicitation on July 10 for RISE funding, which included two projects: Rural Health Talent Pipelines and Rural Health Advanced Provider Pathways.
- 18 applications requesting a total \$8,395,062 were received for Rural Health Talent Pipelines.
- 19 applications requesting a total of \$9,657,328 were received for Rural Health Advanced Provider Pathways.
- Award decisions will be made in early September

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Immediate Impact

**2.1 Expand Access to Primary Care:** Expand new primary care sites in rural communities and provide electronic health record upgrades. (MDH/ MD Health Care Commission)

- Issued a Notice of Intent to Fund 8 awardees
- Drafted grant agreements (work in progress)
- Met with the potential grantees that received Notice of Intent to Fund
- Provided SORH with additional applicants for potential awards in the event surplus funding exists

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Immediate Impact

**2.2 Increase Efficiency of Local Agency Operations:**  
Strengthen rural LHD and AAA revenue capture and self sufficiency by hiring a contractor to support coding, billing and revenue cycle management TA. (Garrett County Health Department)

- GCHD has solicited two RFP's - Revenue Cycle Management, and Insurance Credentialing and Contracting
- A single vendor has been chosen to administer both programs for a holistic viewpoint on the current processes and challenges
- Work is scheduled to begin in Sept/Oct 2026

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Immediate Impact

**2.3 Whole Blood Network:** Pilot pre-hospital Blood Transfusion Program with rural EMS. (MD Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems)

- 13 local jurisdictions have begun implementation of Budget Period 1 funded activities.
- Planning for Budget Period 2 is underway and proposed budgets have been collected to expand to 13 EMS jurisdictions

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Immediate Impact

**2.4 Expand School-Based Health Center Capacity:** Support the expansion of hours, services and services areas and the procurement of mobile units. (MDH/Prevention and Health Promotion Administration)

- **Expanding Clinical Access:** Strategic growth plans to extend SBHC services, hours, physical sites, and geographic reach across MD's rural counties.
- **Phased Program Expansion:** BP1 currently funds six existing sponsoring organizations through September 2027. Plans for BP2 are to introduce an RFA to finance new healthcare providers looking to establish school-based health centers in high-need rural counties.

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Immediate Impact

#### 2.5 Telemedicine and HIT Optimization:

Increase rural provider connectivity, pilot AI technology to improve clinical workflows, connect closed loop referral tools and support CBO billing. Develop a centralized telehealth technical infrastructure. (CRISP)

- **Telehealth:** Vendor selection expected announcement on Aug 28
- **Connectivity:** n=52 applicants, n=3 ineligible, n=5 MOUs signed (06/30/26-08/18/26)
- **Community Based Organization (CBO) Billing:** RFP release is currently on hold pending MDH policy guidance regarding reimbursement and sustainability considerations.
- **Closed Loop Referrals:** Ongoing enhancement work on CRISP referral infrastructure to support referral tracking, completion monitoring, and outcome reporting.
- **AI Technologies:** Developing the foundational technical and governance framework for AI-enabled solutions. Anticipate launching a limited user-group pilot of Smart Search in late fall to evaluate usability, value and workflow integration.

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Transformation Fund - “Rooted & Resilient MD” RFA

#### **2.6T Sustainable Access Through Service Expansion and HIT**

**Advances:** Expand services to meet current demand and build long-term capacity to improve health outcomes and deploy technology-enabled chronic disease management. (MDH/PHPA)

**2.8T Behavioral Health Services Expansion:** Increase sustainable access to priority services across the full continuum of behavioral health care in rural areas. (MDH/BHA)

**2.9T Innovative Care:** Prepare rural providers to participate in innovative, value-based care models. (HSCRC)

- **Strategic Collaborative:** Representatives from **PHPA, BHA, and HSCRC** actively braided clinical, financial, and preventive strategies to eliminate silos and **drive true system-level transformation.**
- **Funding & Scale:** Obligated **\$73M** to address sustainable access, behavioral health, and innovative care across 18 MD rural counties.

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Transformation Fund - “Rooted & Resilient MD” RFA (cont.)

#### **2.6T Sustainable Access Through Service Expansion and HIT**

**Advances:** Expand services to meet current demand and build long-term capacity to improve health outcomes and deploy technology-enabled chronic disease management. (MDH/PHPA)

**2.8T Behavioral Health Services Expansion:** Increase sustainable access to priority services across the full continuum of behavioral health care in rural areas. (MDH/BHA)

**2.9T Innovative Care:** Prepare rural providers to participate in innovative, value-based care models. (HSCRC)

- **Status of Awards:** The primary goal of the “Rooted & Resilient MD” RFA is long-term system transformation. Out of 81 proposals, **33 received award offers**.
- **Geographic Equity:** Maintained a “big picture” focus to guarantee **balanced regional coverage** from Eastern Shore to Western MD.
- [Governor's Office Press Release](#)

## Pillar 2: Promote Sustainable Access and Innovative Care for Rural Marylanders

To achieve a world-class health system for rural Marylanders, we will expand existing and implement new efforts to bring health care services into rural communities.

### Transformation Fund

**2.7T Mobile Health:** Support regional mobile health programs, including chronic disease management, partnerships with EMS for community paramedicine and mobile health integrated health models and community-based care teams. (MDH/ PHPA)

- **FY27 Launch:** Initiated the funding cycle for 18 rural LHDs following successful budget and narrative submissions.
- **Regional Collaboration:** LHDs are implementing tailored, county-specific projects based on local community needs while collaborating to ensure these efforts benefit the broader region.
- **Accountability & Insight:** Establishing quarterly progress tracking while LHDs prepare to submit individual FY27 work plans that must include at least one community listening session.

## Pillar 3: Empower Rural Marylanders to Eat for Health

Invest in infrastructure to support Marylanders' access to nutritious, locally grown and raised Maryland foods.

### Immediate Impact

#### 3.1 Postharvest

**Infrastructure:** Locate cold storage infrastructure within rural communities to expand food aggregation and distribution capacity for small farms to supply local markets with fresh foods and enhance cold storage for food banks to enable distribution of fresh foods. (MD Department of Agriculture)

MDA announced the availability of \$3.7 million in grant funding on 05/15/26, with the deadline of 06/14/26.

The program received 90 applications requesting over \$16.1 million. Eligibility evaluations identified 80 qualified projects requesting over \$13.5 million in support.

The Postharvest Infrastructure Grant Review Committee members consisted of 8 members from state agencies, agriculture and seafood industries. Committee made recommendations for approval to MDA. MDA will forward 37 applications to MDH for final approval.

# Pillar 3: Empower Rural Marylanders to Eat for Health

Invest in infrastructure to support Marylanders' access to nutritious, locally grown and raised Maryland foods.

## Immediate Impact

### 3.2 NourishMD Expansion:

Provide small grocers and mobile access points with funds for equipment purchases, minor renovations, technology infrastructure and marketing to create a sustainable business. (Department of Housing and Community Development)

- NourishMD Program Manager started 1 July
- RHTP Budget Justifications and Grant Agreements awarded by August 31 to 29 recipients
- Celebrated Round 1 grantees at DHCD event July 27 with over half of the 29 recipients attending; speakers included Secretaries Day, Atticks, Seshamani, and Deputy Director Charlie Rixey.



Farm to School Frederick's grant funds the purchase of mobile vans to provide locally grown produce to the Route 40 corridor in Frederick County



## Pillar 3: Empower Rural Marylanders to Eat for Health

Invest in infrastructure to support Marylanders' access to nutritious, locally grown and raised Maryland foods.

### Immediate Impact

#### 3.3 Create Demand for Healthy Foods:

Local Health Departments will provide targeted nutritional education to improve food and physical activity behaviors among rural residents. (MDH/LHDs)

- **Leveraging Multiple Funding Streams:** MDH is operationalizing LHD efforts alongside existing Tobacco and Chronic Disease grants to maximize the impact of rural nutritional programs.
- **Inter-Agency Food Infrastructure Collaboration:** MDH coordinating with Pillar 3 partners to strengthen regional food hubs, post-harvest supply chains, cold storage, and purchasing strategies.

## Pillar 3: Empower Rural Marylanders to Eat for Health

Invest in infrastructure to support Marylanders' access to nutritious, locally grown and raised Maryland foods.

### Immediate Impact

#### 3.4 Support Food Planning and Coordination:

Establish a Rural Food Coordination program with a regional approach to convening and coordinating. (MD Department of Emergency Management)

Developed **MD Food Link Work Plan**, with 6 overarching goals and 24 SMART objectives, communications strategies, and region-specific priorities

Presented MD Food Link fact sheet and program vision to stakeholders across the State through the MD Food System Resiliency Council and the MD Local Food Council Collaborative

Onboarding 4 **Regional Food Resilience Coordinators** in September to support communications and capacity building with rural food councils and other food system partners

Developing toolkit to support **rural food system planning for food councils** and to help local partners leverage existing state-level resources to strategically address place-based needs (e.g. the Maryland Food Insecurity Map)

## Pillar 3: Empower Rural Marylanders to Eat for Health

Invest in infrastructure to support Marylanders' access to nutritious, locally grown and raised Maryland foods.

### Transformation Fund

#### **3.5T Healthy Food Aggregation and Purchasing Strategy:**

Food Aggregation and food hubs to increase the availability of affordable, local foods. New organizational purchasing strategies to pivot to procurement of healthy local foods. (RMC)

RMC opened the application portal in April with applications for over \$4.6 million in available funding due May 15.

On May 15 the program received 33 applications requesting over \$9.4 million.

The Grant Review Committee consists of representatives from 5 state departments: MDH, DHCD, DBED, MDA, and DNR.

On September 8 the Grant Review Committee recommended funding 20 applications totaling over \$4.6 million.

