

# State of Alaska Department of Health

## Rural Health Transformation Program Overview Senate Health & Social Services

---

Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner

Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner

Betsy Wood, Associate Director, Office of Health Savings



Thursday, January 29, 2026

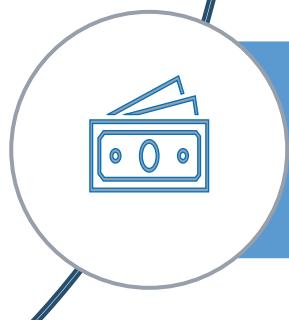
# Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Basics



The RHTP is a one-time, five-year, \$50 billion federal initiative to catalyze rural health care delivery transformation and improve access and health outcomes across the country



Alaska submitted application for funding in November 2025



The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded Alaska **\$272 million** to allocate between January and October 2026

# Technical Score Policies – Legislative Action



- By December 31, 2027, these policies must be implemented or risk CMS clawing back funding
- Scope of Practice
  - Pharmacy
- Compact Licensing
  - Emergency Medical Services
  - Psychologists
  - Physicians
  - Physician Assistants
  - Nursing



# RHTP Vision for Alaska



- Ensure Alaskans get the affordable care they need to stay healthy
  - Make primary and preventive care readily available close to home
  - Make it easier to get mental health, specialty, emergency, and long-term care services
- Reduce barriers so providers can focus on patient care
- Grow and support our health care workforce so communities can access the care they need
- Invest in innovative technologies and systems to help care teams work together and deliver high-quality, convenient care

# Transforming Alaska's Health Care System



**Our North Star**  
vision

**What people**  
**experience**

**What enables**  
**the system**

**What sustains**  
**the system**

## Healthier Alaskans

*Lifelong health and wellbeing for all Alaskans.*



### Health Care Access Across the Full Lifespan



*Prenatal → Infant/Early Childhood → Youth/Adolescent → Adult → Elder/Senior Care*

- Readily available primary and preventive care close to home
- Easier access to behavioral health, specialty, complex, emergency and long-term care services
- Coordinated, integrated, high-quality care across provider teams
- Sustained support and engagement beyond clinical settings

### Workforce



*Build resilient health care teams:*

- Pipeline and incentive programs to get more clinical and non-clinical providers in rural and frontier areas
- Training to help providers deliver high-quality care at the top of their license

### Technology and Innovation



*Invest in technology and innovation:*

- Telehealth and remote monitoring tools to connect patients at home to providers
- Data systems to share clinical records among connected health care teams

### Pay for Better Health Outcomes



*Advance models to financially align reimbursements with improved health outcomes:*

- Pilot and test alternative payment models, shifting away from fee-for-service
- Reduce providers' administrative barriers so they can focus on patients and outcome

# Alaska's RHTP Goals and Initiatives



**Goal 1:** Promote Lifelong Health and Wellbeing for Rural, Remote, and Frontier Alaskans

Healthy Beginnings

Health Care Access

Healthy Communities

**Goal 2:** Build Sustainable Outcomes-Driven Health Systems

Pay for Value:  
Fiscal Sustainability

**Goal 3:** Drive Workforce and Technology Innovations

Strengthen Workforce

Spark Technology & Innovation

# Cooperation between CMS and DOH



***“The Recipient must use funds for the purposes stated in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity] and the purposes approved by CMS in the approved application.” – RHTP Notice of Award***

All RHTP funding must be reviewed and approved by CMS.

This is a cooperative agreement; CMS and DOH work together throughout the project, not just at award time. CMS involvement includes:

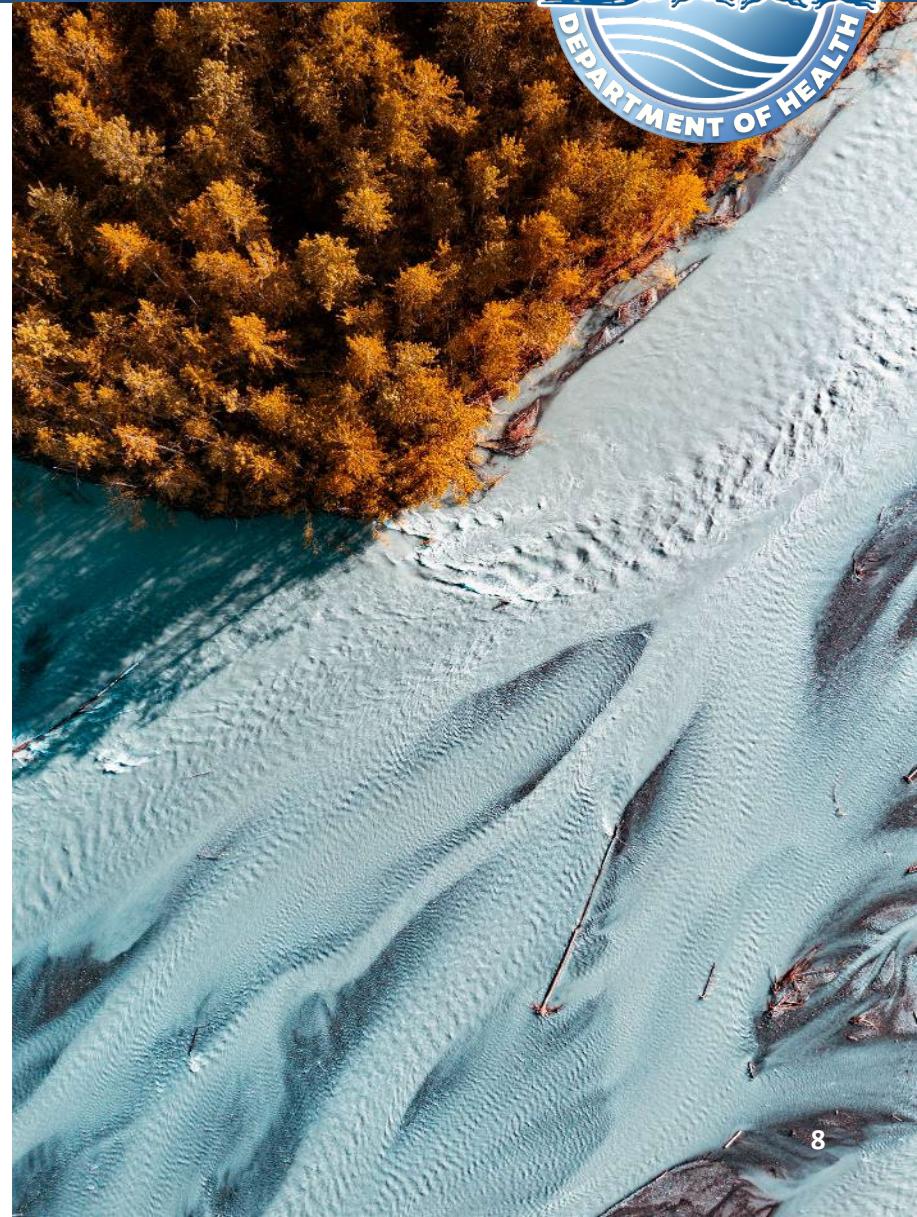
- Regular communication and planning input
- Review and approval of key activities, budget, performance measures, and personnel
- Technical assistance and evaluation support
- Collaboration on adjustments to workplans if needed

# Federal Limitations on RHTP Funding



Examples of CMS-defined unallowable uses of RHTP funding include:

- Construction of new facilities or building expansions
- Purchasing land and/or buildings
- Funding clinical services already covered by insurance
- Supplanting existing funding
- Broadband infrastructure, internet installation costs, and certain telecommunications equipment
- Provider loan repayments
- Direct payments to individuals (e.g., cash assistance, gift cards)
- Supplanting state contribution to Medicaid match
- Food



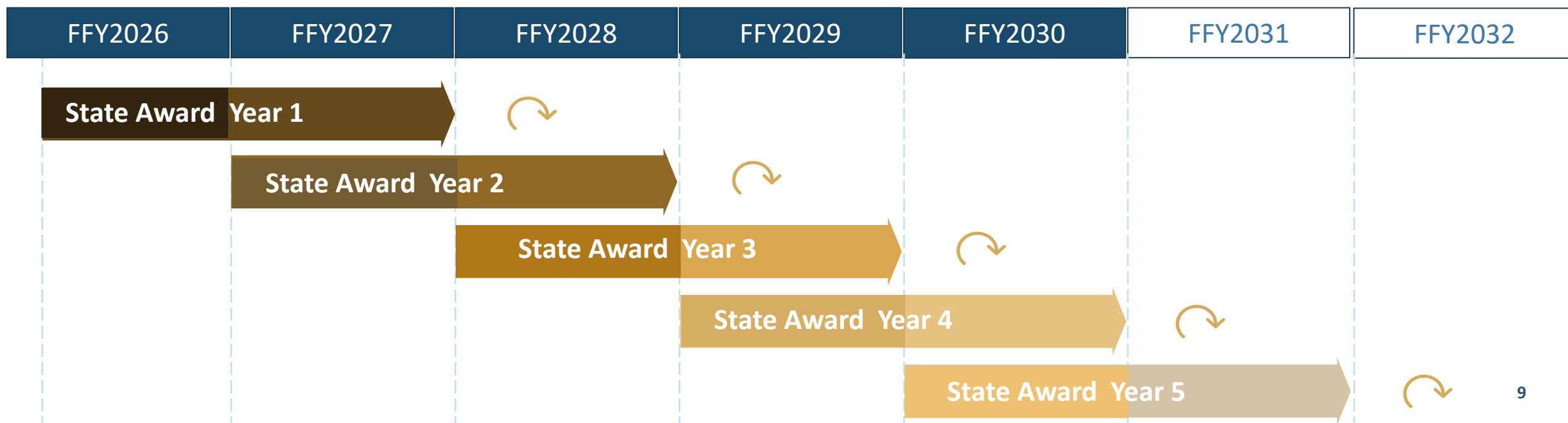
# RHTP Funding Timeline



CMS will make annual awards to states.

- States have one year to incur costs (obligate funds) and an additional year to finish spending them
- Beginning March 31, 2028, CMS will start annually redistributing unspent funds. Any final reallocated funds must be spent by the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2032

**REMINDER:** This is one-time, five-year funding. Investments must be sustainable after RHTP funding concludes



# Potential Funding Recipients



Potential funding recipients include, but are not limited to:

Health care providers

Hospitals and clinics

Tribal Health Organizations

EMS

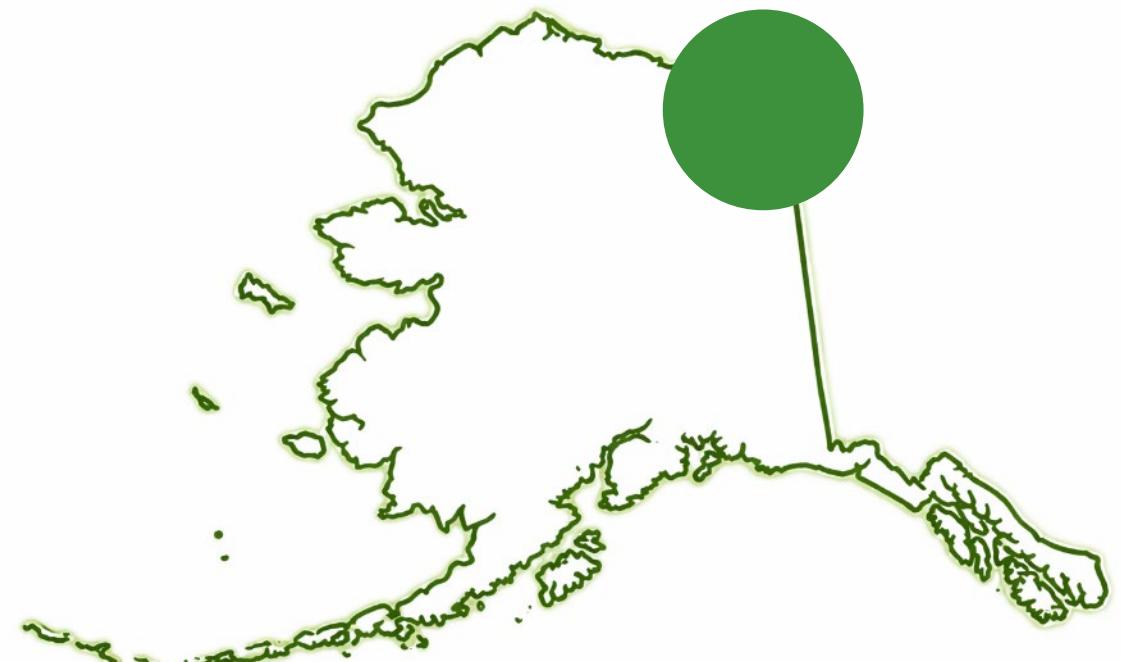
Local governments

Community centers

Schools

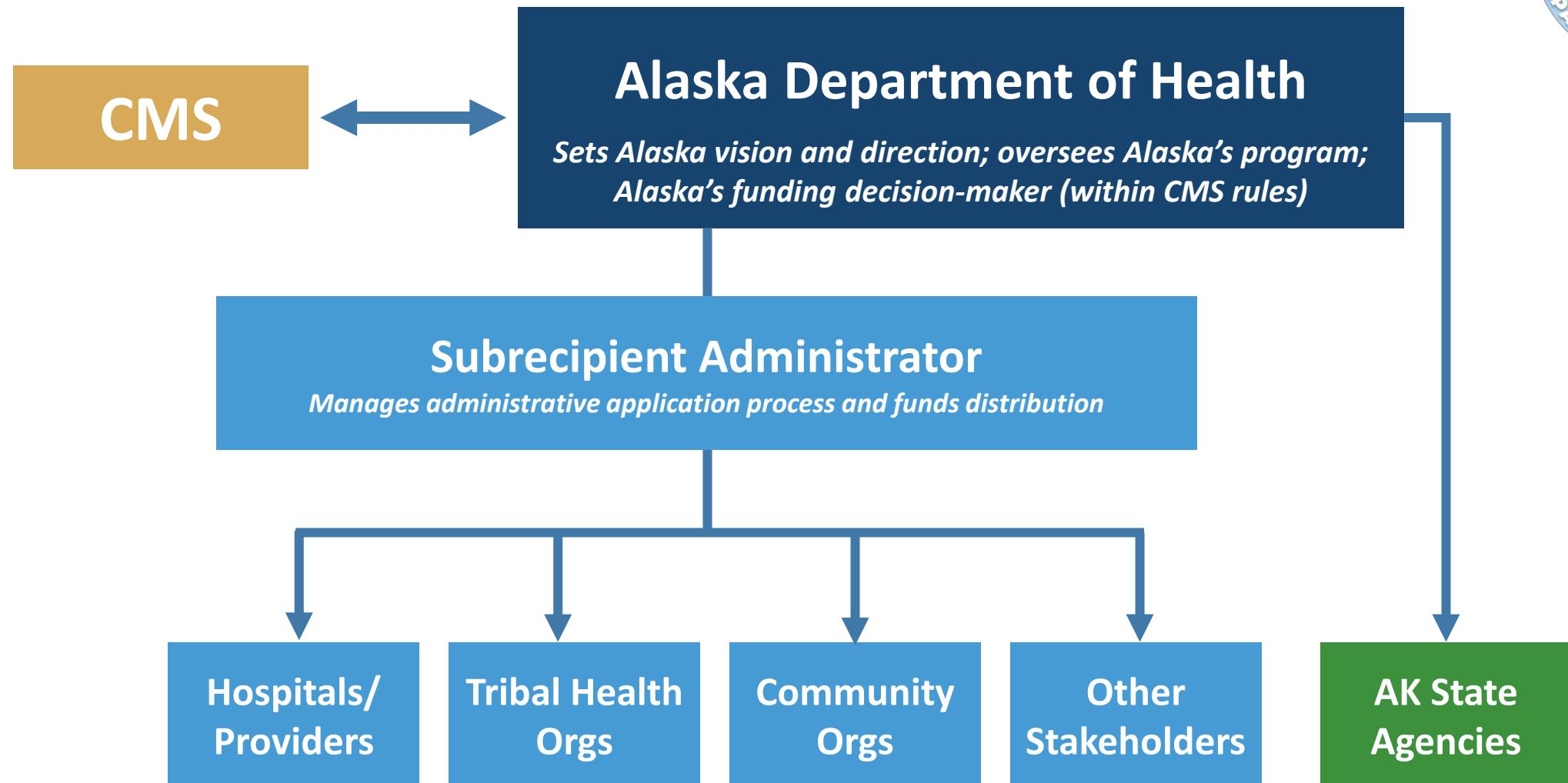
Non-profit organizations

State agencies



Entities across Alaska can apply for RHTP funds

# Key RHTP Partners



# Funding Pathways



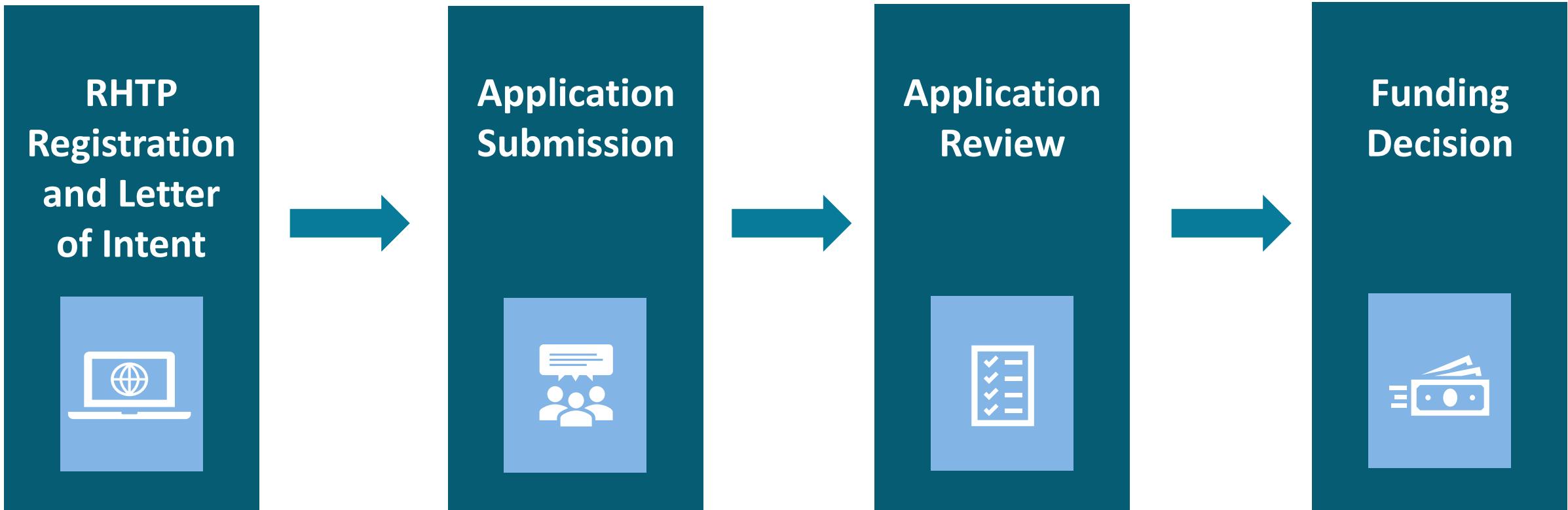
# Application Elements



For fully developed projects, Alaskan entities will need to prepare the following types of information:



# Application Review Process



*Application requirements and timelines may differ by funding pathway.*

# Stay Informed



For more information, please visit:

[health.alaska.gov/RHTP](http://health.alaska.gov/RHTP)

Email:

[DOH.RHTF@alaska.gov](mailto:DOH.RHTF@alaska.gov)

Resources:

[Webinars](#)

[Initiatives](#)

[Convenings](#)

[FAQs](#)

## Rural Health Transformation Program Frequently Asked Questions

[What is the Rural Health Transformation Program \(RHTP\)?](#) View +

[What is the goal of RHTP?](#) View +

[Can RHTP funds support projects anywhere in Alaska? Can organizations in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and other hub communities apply?](#) View +

[Who can apply for RHTP funding?](#) View +

[What can RHTP funds be used for?](#) View +

[What can RHTP funds not be used for?](#) View +

[Is Alaska's RHTP Project Narrative final?](#) View +

[How will the program be administered?](#) View +

[When can organizations apply?](#) View +

[How will applications be reviewed? Will the criteria be public?](#) View +

# Questions?

Courtney Enright  
Department of Health  
Legislative Liaison  
[courtney.enright@alaska.gov](mailto:courtney.enright@alaska.gov)  
907-310-4296

