



# RURAL HEALTH CAREERS GRANT PROCESS & PROCEDURE MANUAL

January 1, 2021- January 31, 2025

The Rural Health Careers Program is 100% funded through a \$2.5million grant from the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. The goal of this program is to address healthcare workforce shortages in rural communities across the region by creating and providing access to employment and training programs in healthcare occupations.

**More information:** [H-1B Skills Training Grants | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](https://www.dol.gov/eop/etop/h1b-skills-training-grants)

**Connect with us:** [ruralhealthcareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:ruralhealthcareers@hitchcock.org)

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# Rural Health Careers Grant Program Overview

In 2021, Dartmouth Hitchcock (DH) was one of seven organizations across the country to be awarded funding from the Department of Labor's Rural Health Workforce Development grant program. DH's Rural Health Careers Grant Program is designed to address healthcare workforce shortages in rural communities across the New Hampshire and Vermont region by creating and providing access to employment and training programs in healthcare occupations.

## Opportunities and Services

- Career coaching and job search navigation to get started in a healthcare career
- Funding for training related expenses
- Connection to statewide resources for supports like childcare, housing and transportation during education and training
- Scholarships and education counselling for current healthcare workers to grow and advance
- Resources for regional education programs to support training delivery
- Resources for employers to support employee skill development

This grant manual details the processes for enrollment, eligibility and more information about the services/supports available.

## Website and Additional Information

Additional detail and current information about the RHC Grant Program including grant partners, eligible expenses and services, and forms to access services can be found at the grant program website: [Rural Health Careers Grant - D-H Workforce Readiness Institute \(dhwri.org\)](https://www.dhwri.org)

## Equal Employer Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

The RHC Grant Program complies with Dartmouth Health's Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policies (Policy ID: 962 and 457) and all applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nondiscrimination during admissions. Dartmouth Health is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by law. In order to ensure reasonable accommodation for individuals protected by Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Veteran's Readjustment Act of 1974, and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants that require accommodation in the grant application process may contact the grant program team at [RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org) or (603) 653-0400.

## Participant Tracking: Enrollment, Eligibility, Communication

### Grant Enrollment

In order to request grant related supports and services, individuals must submit an initial Rural Health Careers Grant Program (RHC) enrollment form. The data collected in the enrollment form is used to determine eligibility for grant services, and for reporting to the Department of Labor on the grant

program’s performance. The RHC enrollment form collects the demographic and program related information as required by the Department of labor. Grant enrollment information is collected through and managed in the Monday.com platform, which has been assessed and meet the standards of the Dartmouth Health Information Security team to protect privacy, including personally identifiable information (PII).

The initial enrollment form for potential grant participations is accessible here: [Rural Health Careers Grant Enrollment Form](#)

The grant team reviews every enrollment form for complete information and to assess eligibility. Mandatory fields in the enrollment form must be completed, along with an uploaded government issued ID.

### Participant Eligibility

In order to qualify for grant services, applicants must meet all of the following criteria per the Department of Labor H-1B Grant program requirements:

- Participants must be 17 or older and not be enrolled in high school
- Participants must be unemployed, underemployed, or incumbent workers
- Participants must be pursuing or interested in pursuing a career path in one of the Department of Labor H-1B Grant program identified target occupations

Target Occupations		
Phlebotomist	Medical Equipment	Medical Assistant
Medical Laboratory Technician/Technologist	Pharmacy Technician	Licensed Nurse Assistant
Social Worker	Surgical Technologist	Licensed Practical Nurse
Behavioral Health Counselor	Radiology Technician	Registered Nurse

### Enrollment Process

The grant team confirms and documents eligibility and the grant service requested. Upon determination of eligibility, grantees have access to the following services provided by the RHC Grant Program:

- **Scholarship:** Individual must be an incumbent worker at one of the Grant Employer Partners & attending of the education subaward recipients. Individual must be enrolled in a pathway leading to one of the H1B identified occupations. Individuals will enroll in the scholarship at the education partner where initial eligibility will be determined. The individual will then be directed to enroll in the RHC Grant.
- **Expense Reimbursement:** reimbursement for training related expenses to support participation in training that leads to a credential or license in the identified career fields
- **Career Coaching:** 1:1 career counseling and resource navigation

- **Co-Enrollment:** connection to supportive services to support participation in a training program through resources available in other grant programs or state partners.

## Communication with Grant Participants

The grant team will communicate with individuals, education partners and co-enrollment partners to confirm enrollment and next steps to receive any supports or services. Grantees may receive one or more of the following supports and services:

- **Scholarship only requests:** grant team will confirm enrollment with participant and education partner, and will follow up with participant at regular evaluation intervals.
- **Career Coaching:** grant team will connect with participant and send a career coaching schedule and initial intake form to complete prior to the coaching session, and will follow up at monthly check points or as applicable.
- **Expense Reimbursement:** grant team will connect with participant regarding type of training related expense identified as needed on the inquiry form, and how to submit for reimbursement, and will connect with participant as applicable.
- **Co-Enrollment:** grant team will connect with participant to assess and determine needs and co-enrollment options. The grant team will work with enrollee and grant partners on referrals and connections as appropriate, and follow up as applicable.

## Participant Follow-Up

The grant team will follow up with grant participants at regular intervals based on the grant service provided. Follow ups will be done via email, phone call or Webex. Follow up information and information about continuing support will be securely tracked in the program's participant tracking tool in Monday.com.

## Information, Reporting and Documentation of Participant Data

- All enrollment information, actions or services received & communications are documented in the grant program's participant tracking tool in Monday.com.
- Once a participant is served by the grant in one or more of these categories, the participant's enrollment information and grant supports are included in the grant programs quarterly reporting requirements with the Department of Labor. This information is used to evaluate the impact of the grant program and to develop future strategies that will support rural healthcare career and overall employment strategies.

# Grant Funding for Services and Supports

## Career Coaching

To support career navigation, employment searching, training/education planning, and co-enrollment for supportive services, grant participants are able to receive 1:1 virtual career coaching sessions by enrolling into the Rural Health Careers grant. These sessions focus individualized services such as case management, fit assessment, co-enrollment, pre-employment support and coaching. Follow-up services are provided, as identified with participants.

Additional information and initiating the process of enrolling in the grant and signing up for career coaching can be found here: [Career Coaching & Training Expenses](#).

## Training Related Expenses and Reimbursement

Grant program participants may apply for financial support to assist with training related expenses. Examples of eligible training related reimbursable expenses include:

- **Exam preparation/study** (e.g. NBSTSA, PTCB, etc.)
- **Exam fees** (e.g. NCLEX, TEAS, CCMA, PTCB, etc.)
- **Testing & certification fees** (e.g. CCMA, LNA, Pharmacy, etc.)
- **License fees** after completion of a training/education program (e.g. Board of Nursing, Board of Pharmacy, etc.)
- **Background check and fingerprinting fees** (including credential verification such as international transcripts)
- Classroom or workplace required **uniform costs** (e.g. scrubs, close toed shoes, etc.)
- Other **required classroom or employment expenses** (e.g. analog wrist watches, stethoscope, etc.)

Additional information and instructions on how to initiate the reimbursement process can be found in the reimbursement section of this handbook or here: [Career Coaching & Training Expenses](#).

## Classroom Equipment and Supplies

To support and improve the delivery of approved training programs delivered by grant education partners, training providers can request funding support for classroom equipment and supplies. Requests are reviewed for eligibility by the RHC grant team. For more information and to initiate a request, please visit: [RHC Grant Information for Employers & Educators](#).

## Co-Enrollment for Supportive Services (e.g. Transportation, Childcare, Housing)

Supportive services may be available for grant enrollees from partners of the RHC Grant Program for RHC grant enrollees that identify a need, financial, educational or support service that is necessary for their successful completion or entry along a Rural Health Careers identified grant pathway. Rural Health Careers grant staff will provide a direct connection to co-enrollment into organizations providing the related service based on need and a pre-assessment of eligibility.

Examples of supportive services through co-enrollment may include, but are not limited to: scholarship, tuition support, connection to other state or federal resources, transportation, bills, housing support, ESL or counseling. Co-enrollment organizations may include, but are not limited to, Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Adult Education, ApprenticeshipNH, and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. Co-enrollment follow up will be made as needed, based on identified participant need.

## Scholarship Program for Incumbent Workers

Current employees of grant employer partners are eligible for scholarship awards at the following education partners: Colby Sawyer College, River Valley Community College, Lakes Regional Community College, White Mountain Community College, Weber State University and LNH Health Careers.

Additional information about the scholarship program, including the list of employer partners and links to the scholarship applications at each education partner can be found here:

[RHC Scholarship Program.](#)

### Scholarship Award Process



## Subawards for Educators and Training Programs

The Rural Health Careers Grant Program has executed five subawards to education partners in order to implement the scholarship and direct care supervisor training project goals.

Invoices for subawards are submitted monthly or quarterly using the subaward invoice template, to the Project Manager, reviewed for accuracy and then sent to [GrantsandContractsPayables@hitchcock.org](mailto:GrantsandContractsPayables@hitchcock.org) for payment to be processed.

Education programs and institutions interested in becoming a grant partner can reach out to [RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org) to express interest. Please include a point of contact, the nature of your partnership interest including what education/training programs you offer, and a description of how a partnership would help support the grant program's rural health workforce development mission.

## Employer Partners

Employer partners are those employer organizations that are located in a rural region of NH and have expressed written support of the Rural Health Careers Grant and initiatives. VT-based locations of NH employer partner systems are also eligible. The current list of employer partners may be found on our RHC website: [Scholarship Program - D-H Workforce Readiness Institute \(dhwri.org\)](http://www.dhwri.org)

To become an employer partner, employers complete the following steps:

1. Check Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer: <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health>
2. Schedule a time to meet with the RHC Program Manager. [RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org)
3. Submit a letter from the organization expressing support of the grant objectives and how you plan to participate.
4. Commitment to participate in the nursing retention work stream by sharing nursing retention data.

## Procurement

### Equipment & Supply Request Process for Education Partners

1. **Submit Request for Equipment or Supplies:** When an education partner or program identifies an equipment or supply need to support training delivery for Rural Health Careers supported career fields, RHC Grant Equipment and Supply Request Form must be submitted to initiate the process. This request form will include the details about the request including dollar amount and preferred vendor or supply company. This form will also include an impact statement or summary, which will include some considerations such as how many students this will impact over a period of time and what the overall improvement, enhancement or impact this equipment will have on the program.
2. **Review/Approve:** The RHC Grant Program Team and Project Manager will review equipment requests on a weekly basis to determine if it meets grant objectives, scope and budget.
3. **Communication:** The Project Manager will respond to the requestor and discuss the procurement plan if the request is approved.



## Training Supplies or Expenses for Individuals

Once a training related expense has been approved for reimbursement, grant participants may request expense reimbursements for training related expenses through the following methods:

1. Dartmouth Health system employees (except Mt. Ascutney employees) submit expense reimbursement requests through the DH approved expense system, [Concur](#) (note this link is only accessible for current employees of DH and when connected to the DH network). Expenses must be submitted within 30 days of purchase, and receipt(s) are required to be uploaded at the time of submission. A photograph or a scan of the receipt can be used.
2. Mt. Ascutney employees and all other grant participants will be sent a W9 form to complete and may submit for expense reimbursement by emailing the RHC grant project manager the completed and signed W9 and a photo or scan of the expense receipt(s):  
[RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org)

The following items are purchased directly and distributed through the DH Workforce Readiness Institute for grant participants in these programs that request financial support:

- LNA Program: scrubs and watches
- MA Program: scrubs
- Phlebotomy: scrubs
- Surgical Tech Program: Cengage subscription & exam prep materials
- Pharm Tech Program: Exam Prep subscription/materials

## Marketing/Outreach Activities

Through strategic marketing and outreach initiatives including the grant program website, career fair participation and support, social media advertising, and broad stakeholder partnership, the grant program team will connect to populations and community based organizations where there are barriers to participation in the healthcare workforce.

Eligible and Targeted Populations for Outreach & Recruitment Strategies	
Unemployed	Persons who are displaced / unemployed and seeking entry or reentry into the workforce
Underemployed	Persons under-employed in retail, service and/or low-pay seasonal jobs who could be upskilled to healthcare careers with advancement potential.
Disabilities	Persons with physical and developmental disabilities.
Recent High School Graduates	Recent HS graduates who are not entering fulltime college programs and who would otherwise enter retail or service jobs with limited career growth potential.
Military	Un- or under-employed military service members, Veterans and spouses. Per title 38 U.S.C. 4215, this population will be prioritized for project participation.

Financial/Social Barriers	Persons who face financial and social challenges to employment, such as transportation, child care, relationship violence, and housing barriers.
Current Healthcare Workers	Persons who are incumbent in healthcare H-1B roles, who are in healthcare roles that can lead to an H-1B job, and/or who supervise H-1B direct care roles

## RHC Grant Steering Committee and Governance

### Steering Committee:

- Steering Committee's responsibility is to set key directions, affirm the project plan, and recommend ways to address emerging challenges
- The Steering Committee meets quarterly

### Dartmouth Hitchcock Grant Program Team:

- **Program Direction and Oversight:** Workforce Development Department leadership team
- **DH Support Team:** DH Office of Research Operations and Finance team which liaises with DOL for reporting, and the DH CHRO is the grant program's Executive Sponsor
- **Project Manager:** uses recommendations from the Steering Committee to build and refine the project plan; develop MOUs with partner organizations; develop tracking systems to monitor progress of all partners toward project goals; identify resource constraints and help partners address emergent challenges and develop resources to complete their goals
- **Grant funded outreach and program development:** enrollment-focused and statewide partner engagement

# Incident, Complaint & Grievance Procedure

The Rural Health Careers Grant maintains an “open door” philosophy that encourages all grant participants, employer partners and education partners to address concerns directly with the relevant party. Any program participant, employer partner or education partner who wishes to file a grievance as a result of perceived unfair treatment, discrimination, or violation of grant regulations, must follow the procedure outlined below.

## **Step 1:**

If a grantee participant or partner has a grievance, then the party should try and resolve the issue by having an awareness conversation with the other responsible person or party. If the grantee or partner does not feel that the problem has been resolved then they can escalate, as necessary. **Scholarship related grievances** should first be addressed directly with the college or training program enrollment advisor.

## **Step 2:**

If a grantee wants to further escalate their grievance, they may contact the Rural Health Careers Grant Program team at [RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org](mailto:RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org). The grantee or partner must submit documentation containing written, objective statements, concerning their grievance which the RHC Grant Program team will review. A response will be given within seven business days.

## **Step 3:**

If you are still not satisfied with the resolution, you may file a formal grievance or written complaint addressed to the Rural Health Careers Grant Steering Committee:

Attn: Rural Health Careers Grant Steering Committee  
c/o Workforce Development Department  
30 Lafayette St.  
Lebanon NH 03766

This written complaint must detail the specific grievance and include the following information:

- Your name, address, business, and home telephone number
- Nature of the grievance
- Date of incident or concern
- Name and title of others involved in the situation
- Regulations or policies violated, if known

A response will be given within fourteen business days.