



RURAL HEALTH CAREERS PROGRAM PROCESS & PROCEDURE MANUAL

January 1, 2021- September 30, 2027

The Rural Health Careers (RHC) Program is funded 66.5% through an H1-B \$2,500,000 grant and 33.5% by a \$1,267,392 WORC grant from the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. The mission of the Rural Health Careers Program is to support individuals in entering and advancing in identified healthcare occupations.

More information:

[H-1B Skills Training Grants | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

[WORC- Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities](#)

Connect with us: ruralhealthcareers@hitchcock.org

Dartmouth Health is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer.

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Rural Health Careers Program Overview

The Rural Health Careers 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 and supportive services
- 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 Program including program 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://dhwri.org)

Equal Employer Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

The RHC 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 program team at 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 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 Program Enrollment Form](#)

The RHC program team reviews every enrollment form for complete information and to assess eligibility for H1B or WORC grant supports. Mandatory fields in the enrollment form must be completed, along with an uploaded government issued ID.

Participant Eligibility- H1B Grant

In order to qualify for H1B 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 – H1B Grant		
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

Participant Eligibility- WORC Grant

In order to qualify for WORC grant services, applicants must meet all of the following criteria per the Department of Labor WORC Grant program requirement:

- Participants must be unemployed, underemployed, or incumbent workers persons who are
- Participants are residents in Justice40 identified areas
- Participants must be pursuing or interested in pursuing a career path in one of the Department of Labor WORC Grant program identified target occupations

Target Occupations- WORC Grant		
Phlebotomist	Medical Equipment	Medical Assistant
Medical Laboratory Technician/Technologist	Pharmacy Technician	Licensed Nurse Assistant & Home Health and Personal Care Aid

Social Worker	Surgical Technologist	Licensed Practical Nurse
Substance Abuse, Mental and Behavioral Health Counselor	Radiology Technician	Registered Nurse
Emergency Medical Technician	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Radiologic Technicians and Technologists
Dental Assistants	Respiratory Therapist	Occupational & Physical Therapist Assistants

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.
- **Supportive Services:** grant team will connect with participant regarding need as identified on the enrollment form and discuss payment or reimbursement processes

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](#).

Stipends

Rural Health Careers Program supports program participants with readiness barriers through the use of paid stipends to reduce the cost of attending a readiness training. Readiness training may include participant attendance in an ESL, professional development or adult educational program.

A participant in need of stipend support shall build a plan with the Rural Health Careers career coach to explore resources to remove the identified readiness barriers. The developed plan will:

Identify the resource, expected length of participant engagement and goals of the readiness intervention.

The process for submitted weekly participant time sheets and progress reports.

A participant receiving a stipend will receive \$20.00 per hour spent during the readiness classroom time. Weekly timesheets will need to be submitted to RuralHealthCareers@hitchcock.org sent by an instructor or signed by the instructor. Stipends will be paid via the Rural Health Careers grant and are taxable.

Supportive Services

Supportive Services are available to Rural Health Careers (RHC) Participants and shall be provided when it is reasonable and necessary to enable individuals to participate in training or education programs for employment. The utilization of supportive services is determined on an individual basis. A participant in need of supportive services shall enroll in the Rural Health Careers Program and self-identify the financial need for supportive services. All Supportive Services must be approved by the RHC Program staff who will work with the participant to address the need and provide appropriate support within the scope of the RHC Program.

Supportive services are payments made for one-time or temporary services required to support access to participate in education and/or training. All supportive services will be disbursed directly to the vendor or disbursed in the form of reimbursement. The RHC Program will only pay for expenses incurred while a participant is enrolled in an eligible training or education program and actively participating in activities. Supportive services are not intended to assist in paying for expenses refundable to the participant. The maximum amount available per participant is \$500.

Examples of supportive services include transportation assistance in the form of mileage reimbursement, support with additional childcare or housing costs that result from participation in the training or education, or utility and food assistance needs can be requested and administered on a case-by-case basis.

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- H1B Grant

Current employees of the H1B 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- H1B Grant

The Rural Health Careers H1B Grant 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 for payment to be processed.

Education programs and institutions interested in becoming a grant partner can reach out to 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 – H1B Grant

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 H1B 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 \(dhwri.org\)](#)

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
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.

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 project manager the completed and signed W9 and a photo or scan of the expense receipt(s):
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 Program 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 Program 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. 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 – Colburn Hill, Bld E, Level 2
One Medical Center Dr.
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.