Notice of Funding Opportunity: Assessing Use of Health IT by U.S. Physicians Providing Outpatient Care Cooperative Agreement

Informational Session

June 20, 2024

The Office of the National Coordinator for
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Agenda

- Introduction of Speakers.
- Reminders.
- NOFO Purpose and Goals.
- Application Process.
- Merit Review Criteria.

Introduction of Speakers

- **Jordan Everson**

  ONC Office of Technology, Data Analysis Branch

- **Tevon Taylor**

  Grants Management Specialist, ONC Procurement and Grants Division

- **Yolonda Thompson**

  Grants Management Specialist, Merit Review Coordinator, ONC Procurement and Grants Division

Reminders

- This webinar is being recorded and will be made publicly available.

- All participants will be muted during the presentation.

- If you have questions, please enter them into the Chat box.

  - Note: All questions will be answered in FAQs made publicly available weekly.

- Webinar and FAQs will be available at https://www.healthit.gov/topic/onc-funding-opportunities/funding-announcements.

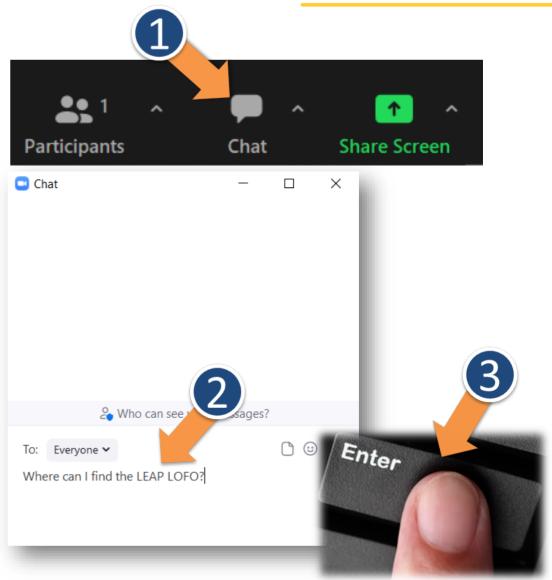The Office of the National Coordinator for
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How to Ask a Question

If you have any questions during the presentation, please follow the instructions below.

Use the Chat function to ask a question:

1. Along the bottom of the webinar window, find and click the Chat button.

2. Input your question into the Chat box.

3. Press "Enter" or "Return" to **Send**.

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Additional Questions

If you have additional questions after today's webinar session, please direct them to the following email address:

PhysicianHITSurvey@hhs.gov

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NOFO Purpose and Goals

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Background

- Interoperable health information technology (IT) enables the secure exchange of electronic health information and use of electronic health information from other health information technology without special effort on the part of the user.

- Several Federal health IT policies have sought to advance the use of interoperable health IT among healthcare providers.

- In a survey of primary care physicians in 2018, the most commonly cited improvement to health IT that primary care physicians desired was improvements to interoperability.

- A 2022 survey of family physicians by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) found the following:
    - Most physicians were only somewhat satisfied with their ability to access information from other organizations as enabled by interoperable health IT.
    - Less than one-quarter of physicians indicated that it was very easy to use information from outside organizations to treat their patients.

Purpose

- Support conducting national surveys to assess:
  - The extent to which physicians use interoperable health IT.
  - Their experience using that technology to support the effective care of their patients.

- Insight into whether Federal policy is:
  - Having the intended effect of leading to better health enabled by data.
  - Highlighting remaining challenges, inadequacies, and pain point.

- Inform ongoing policy and coordination work.

Performance Goals

1. Develop survey questions that align with physicians' understanding and use of health IT to support key measures on interoperability.

2. Ensure that survey questions will result in high-quality and valid data.

3. Collect survey responses from U.S. physicians providing outpatient care to produce national-level estimates with a response rate over 50 percent.

4. Collaborate and coordinate with ONC on the analysis and interpretation of results and publication of written products.

5. Develop a strategy for continued valid and representative measurement of the use of health IT.

Substantial Involvement of ONC

- Under a cooperative agreement, ONC's purpose is to support and stimulate the recipient's activities by involvement with the recipient; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities.

- ONC and the recipient will be in contact monthly and, when appropriate, more frequently.

- ONC involvement will include:

  - Guidance on sampling approach and data collection strategy.
  - Collaboration to develop content for measurement.
  - Guidance on timeline, and data quality assurance approach.
  - Collaboration on data analysis, interpretation, and publication.
  - Participation in the selection of key personnel, such as consultants.

  - Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub awards or contracts.
  - Review and approval of deliverables.
  - Guidance and feedback during project execution.
  - Collaboration in developing an ongoing measurement strategy.

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Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Domestic entities.

- Public or private entities.

- Nonprofit or for-profit entities.

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Summary of Key Details

NOFO FOR APPLICATIONS UNDER ASSESSING USE OF HEALTH IT	
Type of Award	Cooperative Agreement
Available Funding	$425,000
Number of Awards	1
Application Due Date	July 22, 2024
Anticipated Award Date	August 30, 2024
Anticipated Start Date	August 30, 2024
Project Period	August 30, 2024–August 29, 2029
Budget Period	August 30, 2024–August 29, 2025

Funding of future non-competing continuation awards is conditioned on the availability of funds, satisfactory progress by the recipient, and an awarding office determination that continued funding of the award is in the best interests of the Government.

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Application Process

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Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Applicants are <u>strongly encouraged</u> to submit a non-binding email LOI to apply for this funding opportunity.

- Submit by June 28, 2024, 11:59 p.m. ET.

- Send to PhysicianHITSurvey@hhs.gov.

- Identify the following:
  - Title.
  - Name of applicant organization.
  - City and State of applicant organization.
  - NOFO No. NAP-AX-24-001.

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Application Process

- Applicants must complete the following tasks:
  - Submit all material electronically through Grants.gov; this process is outlined in the NOFO.
  - Contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at Support@grants.gov, or call (800) 518-4726 for assistance with submitting applications on Grants.gov.
  - Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). UEIs can be obtained via registering at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration and typically takes 7 to 10 business days. Please plan accordingly.
  - Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov and use their UEI. The SAM registration process takes 7 to 10 business days so please plan accordingly. If you have already registered with the SAM but have not renewed your registration in the last 12 months, you will need to renew your registration.
  - Ensure that the application meets application requirements and page limits.

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Application Components

COMPONENT	LIMIT
Project Abstract	< 500 words
Project Narrative	20 pages
Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	No limit
Form SF-424 A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs	No limit
Form SF-424 B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs	No limit
Form SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	No limit
Budget Narrative	No limit
Letter of Commitment	No limit
Proof of Nonprofit Status (if applicable)	No limit
Indirect Cost Agreement(s)	No limit

Project Abstract

- Clear, accurate, concise abstract that can be understood without reference to other parts of the application and that provides a description of the proposed project, including the project's goal(s), objectives, overall approach, anticipated outcomes, products, and duration.

- Format:
  - One page.
  - No more than 500 words.
  - Project title.
  - Include the project's goal(s), objectives, overall approach, anticipated outcomes, products, and duration.
  - Personal identifying information should be excluded from the abstract.

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Project Narrative

- The project narrative should address the elements articulated in the Areas of Interest section of this NOFO.

- The project narrative should also align with the Performance Goals and Merit Review criteria.

- Format:
  - Double-spaced and no more than 20 pages.

  - Formatted to 8½" x 11" (letter size) plain white pages.

  - Either Cambria or Times New Roman font.

  - 1" or larger margins and font size 11 pt. or greater.

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Project Narrative (cont.)

Your project narrative should include the following components. These components will be counted as part of the page limit. The suggested lengths of the components, given below, are guidelines to help applicants create a balanced document. They are not mandatory restrictions.

1. Discussion and Understanding of the Project (1–2 pages).
2. Personnel Qualification and Past Performance (2–5 pages).
3. Management Plan and Budget (1–2 pages).
4. Technical Approach (5–10 pages).

Discussion and Understanding of the Project

- Describe the applicant's understanding of the project and the broader context related to the goals of the cooperative agreement.

- Discuss the current state of health IT, including the current health IT policy and regulatory landscape related to the goals of the cooperative agreement.

Personnel Qualification and Past Performance

- Describe the following:

  - Applicant's personnel qualification.

  - Past performance.

- Demonstrate experience consistent with successfully meeting the goals of the cooperative agreement.

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Management Plan and Budget

- Discuss the following:

    - Overall project management approach.

    - Types and level of staffing, resources, and infrastructure in place to support measurement.

- Identify the roles of key staff, subcontractors, and other external consultants or subject matter experts.

- The applicant must provide the names of staff that will be overseeing the analysis of the data and preparation of the ongoing reports.

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Management Plan and Budget (cont.)

- Include an approach to:

  - Maintaining a project plan,

  - Ensuring that program goals and milestones are met, and

  - Collaboration and communication strategy with ONC, including provision of progress reports.

- This section should also include the proposed budget.

Technical Approach
Sampling Strategy

Describe the following:

- Approach to obtain data on a national sample of U.S. physicians (i.e., not centered on specific States or regions) that provide outpatient care.

- Collection of data that represent diverse range of practice settings (e.g., rural vs. urban, specialty type, practice group size).

- How the applicant will target physicians providing direct patient care.

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Technical Approach
Data Collection Strategy

Describe approach for data collection, including:

- Method and modality (e.g., telephone, mail, or online) and its strengths and limitations.

- Approach for identifying and targeting physicians, as opposed to front desk or office staff.

- Any anticipated challenges in reaching the target population and strategies that may be used to address these challenges.

- Outreach efforts.

- Approach to achieving a response rate of 50 percent or greater, such as approach for following up with non-respondents.

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Technical Approach
Developing Content for Measurement

Describe plans to develop and finalize measures to meet the goals of the cooperative agreement. Examples of topics for consideration include:

- Use of certified health IT;

- Health information exchange activity and interoperability of health IT systems (e.g., ability to query (or find), send, receive, incorporate, and use electronic health information from sources outside their healthcare organization, as described in ONC publications);

- Experience with, satisfaction with, benefits from, and barriers to interoperability;

- Health IT usability and provider burden associated with health IT;

- Responsible use of artificial intelligence in health IT;

- Use of health IT functionalities for patient engagement;

- Telehealth; and

- Use of health IT to support public health activities.

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Technical Approach
Data Quality and Delivery

Describe the following:

- A plan to ensure that the selected measures will be well-understood and result in valid responses.

- Processes for properly coding and cleaning the final dataset.

- Processes to assure the quality and completeness of the data.

- How the applicant will provide the final data set and related documentation.

Technical Approach
Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Publication

Describe the following:

- Approach to analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating results.

- Use of any subject matter experts, consultants, or expert panels in informing interpretation of results.

- Data analysis plan and strategy for disseminating data findings. Approach to coordinate and collaborate with ONC on data analysis, production of data products, and publications to highlight the recipient's key findings.

- An approach to interpreting and presenting findings to ONC staff, leadership, and Federal partners, which may include the use of an expert panel to interpret the data.

Technical Approach

Timeline:

- Describe a cadence for the key project milestones.
- Timeline should reflect the first year of the project period.
- Should be able to be projected over the full project period.

Approach to making data available to others:

- Describe plan to make a de-identified or limited data set available for use by the public.
- Any governance and review processes to provide access to that data as the applicant believes appropriate.

Technical Approach
Strategy to Address Gaps in Measurement

- Describe a plan to identify gaps in the survey based on:
  - Sampling strategy,
  - Data collection strategy, or
  - Analysis of the first year of data collection.

- Describe strategies to address these gaps:
  - Use of alternative data sources,
  - Partnerships with other organizations, or
  - Alternative outreach approaches.

- May include the use of other data sources, such as metadata derived from health IT.

Budget Narrative

- This section should include a detailed breakdown of how the applicant plans to spend the allotted resources to complete the activities detailed in the NOFO:

  - Budget Narrative on how the proposed budget, as articulated in the SF-424A, aligns with the applicant's project narrative.

  - Application for Federal Assistance, Form SF-424.

  - Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs, Form SF-424A.

  - Assurances for Non-Construction Programs, Form SF-424B.

  - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, Form SF-LLL.

- Detailed budget instructions are provided in the NOFO.

Merit Review Criteria

Application Review Process

- Submit all application materials electronically through Grants.gov.
- Grants.gov issues an email receipt upon successful submission.
- Applications are reviewed for responsiveness and categorized as pass/fail.
- All applications that pass the review for responsiveness are forwarded for merit review.
- Once the merit review is complete, ONC may make an award.
- ONC is not obligated to make an award if none of the applications meet the intent of program requirements or if there is a change in funding levels or availability of funds.

Application Responsiveness Criteria

- All applicants **must** meet the following completeness criteria or they will be administratively eliminated and not sent forward for merit review:
  - The applicant meets the eligibility criteria.
  - The application is received by the deadline of Monday, July 22, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. ET through https://grants.gov/.
  - The application contains all required components (Project Narrative, SF-424, etc.).
  - The application meets all formatting and length requirements.
  - Appendices and attachments are not used as a mechanism to exceed page limits of the Project Narrative.

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Merit Review Criteria

- Merit reviews will be conducted by a review panel of at least three experts in their field from academic institutions, nonprofits, and local and Federal Government agencies.
- Applications can receive a maximum of 100 points, using the following scale:

MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA	POINTS
Discussion and Understanding of the Project	10
Personnel Qualification and Past Performance	40
Management Plan	10
Budget	15
Technical Approach	25
Total	**100**

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Merit Review Criteria:
Discussion and Understanding of the Project
(10 Points)

- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of key issues related to adoption and use of interoperable health IT by physicians and survey methodology to address those issues.

- Addresses the purpose and objectives.

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Merit Review Criteria:
Personnel Qualification and Past Performance
(40 Points)

- Prior data collection efforts on physician experience using health IT at the national level among U.S. physicians:

  - The quality of that data collection effort.

  - Whether it generated a high response rate.

- Evidence of past work producing reports and publications on health IT from these past data collection efforts.

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Merit Review Criteria:
Personnel Qualification and Past Performance
(40 Points) (cont.)

- Data collection and survey development infrastructure and resources to conduct a national level survey of U.S. physicians providing outpatient care.

- Relationships with physicians or physician organizations to facilitate survey develop and recruitment of respondents.

- Physicians on staff with subject matter expertise in health IT and interoperability who can support measurement development needed for this cooperative agreement.

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Merit Review Criteria: Management Plan (10 Points)

- Describes a clear and workable plan to meet program goals and ensure that program milestones are met.

- Provides the names of staff that will be involved in the management and technical approach of this project.

- Describes a workable plan and timeline for managing and evaluating development of survey content.

- Describes an effective plan for managing survey data collection and delivery of data to ONC.

- Provides a proposed timeline for fielding the survey.

- Describes approach to collaborate with ONC on development of written products, including proposed roles and responsibilities of personnel.

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Merit Review Criteria: Budget (15 Points)

- Budget is sufficiently detailed to explain how they will use the award funds to conduct the survey.

- Proposed allocation of the budget is in line with the goals of the cooperative agreement.

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Merit Review Criteria:
Technical Approach (25 Points)

- Approach is succinct and logical.

- Methods are consistent with the goals to be accomplished.

- Clear and detailed approach for developing and finalizing survey content.

- Detailed and robust approach to collecting information to produce estimates on key health IT measures with a response rate over 50 percent.

- Describes an analysis and dissemination plan likely to result in wide use of the results by policymakers and researchers.

- Clearly identifies an approach for verifying the validity and accuracy of the data through cognitive interview, audit, or other means.

- Describes an approach to developing a strategy for valid and representative measurement of the use of health IT beyond proposed survey that complements the survey that the applicant plans.

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Questions

- All questions must be submitted in writing either via the Chat function during this Webinar or emailed to PhysicianHITSurvey@hhs.gov.

  - Questions submitted today in the Chat will not be answered today.

- All questions will be answered in the form of an FAQ and made publicly available at 3 p.m. each Friday at the following web page:

  https://www.healthit.gov/topic/onc-funding-opportunities/assessing-use-health-it-us-physicians-providing-outpatient-care

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Q&As

- Thank you for attending!

- We will remain online for 5 minutes—please submit any remaining questions via the Chat function on this webinar page.

- To see the NOFO on Grants.gov or to apply, go to https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/354966.

- For assistance with submitting applications in Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at Support@grants.gov or call (800) 518-4726.

Please submit your questions.

5 Minutes Remaining

Please submit your questions.

3 Minutes Remaining

Please submit your questions.

1 Minute Remaining

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Dates to Remember

- Release Date: June 14, 2024.

- Informational Session: June 20, 2024.

- Letter of Intent (LOI): June 28, 2024.

- Application Deadline: July 22, 2024.

- Anticipated Award Date: August 30, 2024.

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The moderator will now end this session.

Thank you for attending.