

# CHET | Frequently Asked Questions

*About CHET, who can apply, what we fund, and how the process works.*

## About CHET

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- **What is CHET?**

CHET (the Consortium for Healthcare Education and Training) is a statewide organization advancing initiatives to support the development of a competent, engaged rural healthcare workforce.

- **How is CHET different from MERGE or Building-ME Network?**

MERGE and Building-ME Network are programs that joined to form CHET. MERGE focuses on graduate medical education and physician learners. Building-ME Network focuses on clinical training and the upstream healthcare pipeline (CNAs, EMTs, paramedics, nurses, APPs, community college students, and preceptor development).

If you have an existing relationship with MERGE or Building-ME, that work continues. CHET partner funding is a separate, formal application process for new or expanded programs, and it is the path forward for new partner work.

- **What is the relationship between CHET and the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP)?**

RHTP is one of CHET's funding sources. CHET is staffed by MaineHealth employees and MaineHealth serves as a subrecipient of Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the RHTP funding. CHET 'partner funding' is the mechanism by which a portion of RHTP funds reaches partner organizations doing rural healthcare workforce training. CHET is also currently funded by a Northern Rural Borders grant and private foundation funding.

## Eligibility and scope

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- **Who can apply?**

Maine-based organizations proposing new or expanded healthcare training programs that serve rural Maine. Eligible applicants include hospitals, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), academic institutions with a clear rural clinical training partner, community-based health organizations, residency and fellowship programs, and other entities engaged in healthcare workforce training.

Vendors and technology providers are not eligible to apply as direct recipients. A rural site must own the application. Vendors and technology providers can be named as partners or subcontractors within a rural site's proposal.

- **What does CHET mean by "rural"?**

CHET uses the HRSA Rural Grants Eligibility Analyzer to determine whether a site qualifies as rural. We accept rural towns or cities, rural counties, and rural census tracts within otherwise non-rural counties.

As of May 29, 2026, we have received guidance that CMS has approved CHET's overall RHTP approach which recognizes that some urban settings may develop proposals/programs that serve a predominantly rural population. These applications will also be considered for funding, although the strongest proposals will have a rural location and serve a rural population. Proposals from non-rural sites should explain clearly how the work reaches and benefits rural communities.

- **What does CHET fund?**

CHET funds new or expanded healthcare clinical training programs in rural Maine. The work supported through CHET partner funding falls into several broad areas:

- Graduate medical education, including residencies, fellowships, and rural rotation expansion.
- Rural clinical training across the healthcare professions, including time and support for the preceptors and sites that host learners.
- Internal upskilling programs that help current healthcare workers develop additional skills.
- Transition-to-practice support for clinicians moving into rural settings.
- Infrastructure that strengthens rural clinical training, including short-term housing for learners and instructors, simulation embedded in training, and statewide platforms like Clinician Nexus.
- Professional development for educators, faculty, and preceptors who teach in rural sites.
- Obstetric and perinatal care training and consultation programs that build capacity in rural communities.

If you are unsure whether your work fits CHET's scope, submit a short concept proposal. The CHET team will review the concept application and respond regarding eligibility. Strong concept proposals will receive an invitation to submit a full proposal, including budget, workplan, and deliverables, through a separate portal.

- **What does CHET not fund?**

CHET has received guidance from the State that our primary focus will be, though not exclusively, on clinical training in rural areas. Please contact State resources for other funding agencies that may fund the items below. The following (non-exhaustive) list below covers categories that CHET would not routinely fund:

- Ongoing programs that are not new or expanded. CHET cannot supplant existing funding.
  - Full-time employees (full FTEs) whose role is programmatic or administrative. Partial FTEs may be considered when the role is directly tied to learner-facing work. (See the personnel question below for more.)
  - Medical equipment used on patients. (Educational simulation equipment embedded in a clinical training program is different and may be considered.)
  - Academic coursework or tuition that precedes clinical training.
  - Employee well-being, resiliency training, or leadership training that is not clinical training.
  - Curriculum design as a standalone deliverable. Curriculum development tied to a specific clinical training program is different.
  - Out-of-state primary applicants. CHET funds Maine-based organizations.
- **The exclusion list says CHET will not fund new full-time positions. Does that rule out any new personnel in my proposal?**

Not necessarily. The personnel restriction is aimed at new full-time positions hired to administer or implement a program, such as a program coordinator handling logistics or scheduling. It does not rule out personnel who would deliver the clinical training itself. A new role focused on providing training or precepting is eligible to submit, even though a new role focused on program administration generally is not.

This distinction is a newer area of our guidance, so we encourage you to frame any personnel request clearly in terms of the training or instruction the person would deliver. As with every proposal, whether a specific budget item is ultimately funded is decided by the Executive Committee through the review process. An invitation to submit a full proposal confirms your concept is eligible to move forward; it does not mean any particular budget line is pre-approved.

- **Is CHET funding only for clinical roles, or does it cover all healthcare roles in rural areas?**

The focus is clinical training. Roles directly involved in healthcare delivery (physicians, nurses, APPs, social workers, behavioral health clinicians, dental providers, pharmacy professionals, EMTs and paramedics, medical assistants, and similar) are in scope.

Roles indirectly supporting clinical training programs such as healthcare administrative roles, and similar non-clinical support functions may be included if essential to running a healthcare training program.

- **What learners can be counted in our proposal?**

Trainees in any healthcare or healthcare-pathway role. Use the role name: "nurses," "physicians," "social workers," "medical assistants," etc., for clarity.

- **Does "number of learners" mean enrollment or completion?**

Completion is the goal we care about most, and we encourage applicants to describe their program in terms of expected completers per cycle. For programs where completion happens over a longer arc than a funding cycle, describe both enrollment and expected completion so we have the right picture.

- **Are academic institutions eligible?**

Yes, when an academic institution serves a specific rural clinical training site. The site relationship is what matters. An academic institution proposing a clinical training program in partnership with a named rural site is eligible. An academic program without a clear rural training site is not.

## Applying for CHET partner funding

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- **Where do I submit?**

All applications go through the CHET portal in REDCap. CHET does not accept proposals by email, by hand, or through any other channel. The reason is fairness: every applicant goes through the same process, and routing around the portal would compromise equity and our audit trail.

If you have questions before submitting, send them to the CHET chat email or consult this FAQ. Staff members cannot give individual go-aheads or pre-approvals, because that would create an unfair advantage relative to applicants who did not have the same conversation.

- **What does the application process look like?**

The process has two parts. First is the concept proposal, about 10 questions submitted upfront. This is intentionally lightweight: we want to respect your time before you build out a full budget and work plan. Second is the full proposal with budget, submitted only if your concept is invited forward. Not every concept is invited. The full proposal includes scope, budget, learners, sustainability plan, and other details.

- **When are applications due?**

CHET reviews concept proposals in cycles rather than the moment they arrive. Concepts are gathered and reviewed together after a cycle closes.

- **If you have already submitted a concept:** you do not need to resubmit. Every concept submitted after the previous review will be included in the upcoming review cycle. We have your submission, and you will receive a decision letter after review.
- **If you have not yet submitted.** You can submit a concept for the upcoming cycle until **July 6, 2026**. Concepts received after that will not be considered. Only complete concepts are reviewed. If yours is started but unfinished, complete it before the deadline so it can be included. **This is the last review cycle CHET currently has planned.** CHET is not accepting proposals beyond it at this time, and whether CHET opens future opportunities depends on its funding sources. All updates will be announced on our website.

- **How long does an award last?**

CHET's own funding is currently confirmed for one year, so we are generally not able to guarantee funding beyond a one-year term. The exception is training programs, where the funding period may be defined by the training period itself.

There may be an opportunity to renew based on progress, outcomes, and continued alignment with CHET's mission, but renewal is not guaranteed. If your work depends on multi-year support, please describe that clearly in the concept so we can evaluate fit.

- **What information do I need to provide in the concept?**

The concept asks for the basics: who you are, what the program does, what rural site or sites it serves, how many learners it would support, an approximate cost, and how the program would be sustained over time. The concept is short on purpose (about 10 questions). The full proposal, if invited, asks for the details.

- **Can someone from the CHET team review my draft before I submit?**

No. We do not review drafts in advance, and CHET staff cannot give pre-approval signals on specific ideas. This is deliberate. Pre-approvals would create an unfair advantage over applicants who did not have the same conversation, and we want to be confident every applicant has the same opportunity. Use this FAQ or send questions to the CHET email. Once you are ready, submit the concept through the portal.

- **My concept was declined. Can I reapply?**

Yes, in a later cycle, if the underlying circumstances have changed (for example, you have added a rural training partner or refined the scope). A decline in one cycle is not a permanent bar.

If your concept was "revise and resubmit" rather than declined, that means the idea has promise but needs specific changes before it can advance. The CHET team will communicate with applicants in this category to help support strong rural clinical training programs.

## How CHET reviews and decides

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- **What happens after I submit a concept?**

CHET staff review your concept against the eligibility criteria. The CHET Director and PI oversee and sign off on each outcome. You will receive a letter with one of three outcomes.

- **Accept.** Your concept fits CHET's scope and you are invited to submit a full proposal.
- **Revise and resubmit.** The idea has promise but needs specific changes. You get one revision round. Depending on timing, a resubmission may land in the next cycle.
- **Decline.** The concept is outside CHET's scope or rests on cost categories CHET cannot fund. The letter explains the decision and, where helpful, provides relevant public resources.
- **Defer.** CHET cannot yet make a final determination about whether the concept aligns with CHET's funding parameters. Additional information or clarification from the State is needed on whether this kind of work is appropriate for CHET funding. The letter sets the expectation that CHET will follow up once there is more clarity. Once scope is determined, CHET will either invite the applicant to submit a full proposal in the next review cycle, or share what we have learned so the applicant can pursue the right pathway for their work

- **What happens with the full proposal?**

The full proposal goes through three steps after submission.

1. **Staff pre-review.** CHET staff check the proposal for completeness, budget appropriateness, and feasibility.
2. **Distributed scoring by the Executive Committee.** Each proposal is scored by three Executive Committee members plus the PI (four scorers per proposal), drawn at random from the full Executive Committee with conflicts of interest screened out.
3. **Executive Committee meeting.** The full Executive Committee meets, reviews each proposal, and makes final decisions.

- **How does CHET handle conflicts of interest?**

Every Executive Committee member completes a conflict-of-interest disclosure before proposals are assigned for scoring. A member who is conflicted on a proposal is not

assigned that proposal, does not see it during scoring, does not participate in its discussion, and does not vote on it.

- **When will I hear back?**

After the concept stage, applicants receive a letter explaining the outcome (accept, revise and resubmit, defer, or decline).

For invited full proposals, funding decisions are made at the next Executive Committee meeting, about four weeks after the full-proposal deadline. Applicants are notified by letter following the meeting. A funding decision is not the same as final funding; contracting and any final adjustments follow the decision.

## If you are funded

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- **What does becoming a partner mean? Will there be a contract?**

Yes, every funded relationship involves a written agreement. The form of the agreement depends on the work.

- **How quickly do funded projects need to launch?**

Ideally within about six months. Programs that can launch quickly are stronger candidates. Programs that need a longer runway should explain why and describe what the runway buys.

- **Will the fact that my program is funded be made public?**

Yes. Funded programs will be featured on the CHET website as an accountability metric for RHTP funding and to celebrate the great work that is being done in rural healthcare clinical training

## Communicating with CHET

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- **Who do I contact with questions?**

Send questions to the CHET email at [CHET@mainehealth.org](mailto:CHET@mainehealth.org). If you ask a question that adds materially to this FAQ, we will add it (in anonymized form) so future applicants benefit from the same answer.

- **Can I meet one-on-one with CHET staff about my idea?**

CHET staff are unable to hold one-on-one meetings with prospective applicants regarding funding inquiries, for two reasons. First, individual meetings would give some applicants an advantage that others did not have, and we want every applicant to have

the same opportunity. Second, interest in CHET partner funding has been substantial, and we are not currently staffed to meet with everyone individually.

For partner funding questions, we encourage you to check our website (CHETmaine.org) and the FAQ for information. If you have a question that is not addressed in those resources, please send it to the CHET email (CHET@mainehealth.org) and we will respond.

- **Is this FAQ final?**

No. This FAQ is a living document. If you have a question that is not answered here, send it to the CHET email. We will respond and, where helpful, add the answer here so others benefit too.