

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
TECH CATALYST FUND

AWARD OVERVIEW

Type of Award	Competitive Grant
Issuing Agency	South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA)
Application Opens	May 27, 2026
Application Submission Deadline	June 25, 2026
Due Diligence*	June 15, 2026 – July 9, 2026 *INVITE ONLY*
Pitch Days*	July 14 and July 21, 2026 *INVITE ONLY*
Total Funding	\$5,025,452
Maximum Award	\$500,000 <i>Higher award amounts of up to \$750,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.</i>
Expected Total Awards	To be determined by the Review Committee and availability of funds
Performance Period	12 months
Eligible Applicants	US-based companies, less than 10 years old, less than \$50 million in funding raised since founding, and commercializing consumer-facing technologies to address rural health challenges

V. BACKGROUND

The Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program was created under the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, signed into law by President Donald J. Trump on July 4, 2025. This legislation established a \$50 billion investment over five years to transform rural health systems through state-driven redesign, innovation, and modernization. This federal initiative, led by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), seeks strategic, long-term efforts to improve health outcomes, healthcare access, and healthcare delivery systems in rural communities.

For more information on the federal Rural Health Transformation Program, visit <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/rural-health-transformation-rht-program/overview>.

South Carolina has 1.75 million rural residents, representing 32.6% of the state's population, who experience disproportionate rates of chronic disease, maternal mortality, provider shortages, and aging healthcare infrastructure. These disparities, combined with economic and geographic barriers, place sustained pressure on rural hospitals, clinics, and health systems statewide.

South Carolina submitted a bold, comprehensive transformation plan in its federal RHT application, centered on five integrated initiatives. These initiatives are designed to produce high-impact, sustainable improvements, with a focus on chronic disease and maternal health outcomes.

1. **CONNECTIONS TO CARE** – Expanding digital infrastructure by implementing electronic health records, remote patient monitoring, telehealth services and a statewide resource database platform to improve care coordination and access.
2. **LEVELING UP** – Scaling successful pilot programs statewide, focusing on chronic disease management, pediatric care quality, and workforce development
3. **WELLNESS WITHIN REACH** – Deploying mobile health units, crisis response teams, and pop-up clinics to bring care directly to underserved populations.
4. **SHORING UP TO SUSTAINABILITY** – Strengthening rural healthcare through targeted investments in workforce recruitment and retention, facility upgrades, and provider training.
5. **TECH CATALYST FUND*** – Supporting rural health technology startups and community-based innovations to drive long-term health and economic improvements.

South Carolina was awarded \$200,030,252 in federal RHT Program funding for fiscal year 2026. Governor McMaster has designated the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) as the lead agency to implement South Carolina's RHT Program.

***SCDHHS has contracted with the South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) to manage and administer the Tech Catalyst Fund, leveraging SCRA's expertise in fostering innovation, supporting startups, and driving economic development through technology investments.**

For more information on South Carolina's Rural Health Transformation Program, visit <https://scdhhs.gov/resources/grants>

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VI. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **TECH CATALYST FUND** is a strategic initiative designed to accelerate innovation by supporting rural health tech startups and community-based innovations that improve chronic disease management and health outcomes across South Carolina. This initiative will focus on promoting consumer-facing, technology-driven solutions, for which traditional government funding sources and private commercial incentives have proven inadequate or insufficient to drive development and innovation. By investing in local entrepreneurs and scalable technologies, this initiative will spark a cycle of health improvement, workforce development, and economic growth across rural South Carolina.

South Carolina’s Tech Catalyst Fund will prioritize SC-based businesses in alignment with SCRA’s focus on accelerating technology-enabled growth of the state’s innovation economy.

Utilizing its proven due diligence process, SCRA will partner with key stakeholders including health systems, providers, consumers, private investors and venture capital firms, medtech and digital health entrepreneurs (founders/CEOs), academic institutions, and state government entities to evaluate proposals.

VII. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The company applying must meet all the following requirements:

1. Must be U.S.-based and U.S.-owned businesses, with preference for companies that will perform the RHT Program-supported work in the U.S. with U.S. employees and, if applicable, contractors.
2. Less than 10 years since founding and with less than \$50M prior funding raised since the company’s inception.
3. Must be registered as a for-profit business with the SC Secretary of State
 - a. This can include being a Delaware C-Corp but registered as a “foreign entity” with the SC Secretary of State, a standard designation.
4. Preference for SC-based companies, which SCRA defines as meeting at least one of two mandatory requirements:
 - a. The company’s official headquarters/principal place of business must be in the state of South Carolina, OR
 - b. The company must have at least 51% of its full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) working in the state.
5. Must be developing products or services that provide the following:
 - a. Deliver or enable care for rural communities, focusing on chronic disease prevention and management, AND
 - b. Demonstrate significant innovation and address unmet needs in rural communities.
6. Maturity of technology must be represented by technology readiness level (TRL) of at least 5.
7. Company must have at least one full-time member of the management team.
8. Must spend awarded funding by September 30, 2027.

VIII. AWARD INFORMATION

SCRA is a subrecipient, supporting the cooperative agreement between CMS and SCDHHS to implement the state's Rural Health Transformation Program. This cooperative agreement requires substantial involvement from CMS and SCDHHS throughout the life of the award.

According to CMS Notice of Funding Opportunity CMS-RHT-26-001:

Funds must support innovations that:

- Serve rural communities, with a focus on or special consideration for their particular needs and challenges
- Benefit Medicaid, low-income, and/or vulnerable rural consumers
- Focus on prevention and management of chronic diseases
- Are significantly different from or fulfil an unmet need compared to the existing landscape of products and solutions
- Increase quality, affordability, and access to care

Funding Awards to a company:

- Must be non-dilutive (funding that does not require the recipient to give up equity or ownership)
- Must be contingent such that it is earned through clear interim milestones and measurable benchmarks for technical progress and outcomes, defined by the entity managing the funding and approved by the State and CMS
- Must be contingent on data-sharing and reporting with the State and product accessibility requirements
- Must be awarded to companies subject to a competitive process with clear qualification criteria and requirements for preventing conflicts of interest. The process, criteria, and requirements must be approved by CMS
- Must come with some degree of collaboration with and oversight by the State, including definition and approval of milestones
- Must be spent by September 30, 2027

Outcomes (examples, non-exhaustive):

- Demographic and geographic reach of funded technologies, including number of Medicaid beneficiaries and/or low-income patients served in rural areas through the funded innovations
- Improved patient outcomes from funded innovations, with a focus on chronic disease management
- Robust user engagement metrics
- Evidence of sustainability post-award through follow-on funding and long-term strategic partnerships to advance broader implementation and scale

Note that the terms and conditions of federal awards flow down to subrecipients, as specified in 2 CFR 200.101(b)(1).

G. INTANGIBLE PROPERTY

Recipients of Tech Catalyst funding must comport with federal regulations on intangible property in 2 CFR 200.315, including, without limitation, that CMS reserves (and the State must ensure that reserved to CMS is) a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use a copyrighted work developed with RHT Program funds for federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so.

H. PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

Recipients of Tech Catalyst funding are subject to applicable regulations governing patents and inventions, including those in 37 CFR Part 401. The recipient may own the product developed, including associated intellectual property, and may commercialize it, to the extent consistent with these and all other applicable federal requirements.

I. PROGRAM INCOME AND PROFIT

If the subrecipient earns any money from its award-supported project activities (known as program income), the subrecipient must use it for the purposes and under the conditions of the award in accordance with federal regulations at 2 CFR 200.307 and 2 CFR 300.218.

J. USE OF FUNDS (ALLOWED/UNALLOWED)

The following costs are not allowed:

1. Reimbursement of past expenses
2. Construction
3. To replace payment for clinical services that could be reimbursed by insurance. CMS will not accept payments to clinical services if they duplicate billable services and/or attempt to change payment amounts of existing fee schedules.
4. Clinician salaries or wage supports for facilities that subject clinicians to non-compete contractual limitations.
5. None of the funding shall be used by the state for an expenditure that is attributable to an intergovernmental transfer, certified public expenditure, or any other expenditure to finance the non-federal share of expenditures required under any provision of law.
6. Social Security Act Section 2105(c), paragraphs (1), (7), and (9) apply as funding limitations. These limitations are related to general limitations, limitations on payment for abortions, and citizenship documentation requirements for payments made with respect to an individual.
7. Additional unallowed costs in Section E (CMS Funding Policies and Limitations)

K. CMS FUNDING POLICIES AND LIMITATIONS

Awards will be subject to any applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 300. As of October 1, 2025, HHS adopted 2 CFR Part 200, with some modifications included in 2 CFR Part 300. These regulations can be found at 89 FR 80055 and replace those in 45 CFR Part 75.

CMS does not allow the following costs:

8. Pre-award costs
9. Meeting matching requirements for any other federal funds or local entities
10. Services, equipment, or supports that are the legal responsibility of another party under federal, state, or tribal law, such as vocational rehabilitation or education services
11. Services, equipment, or supports that are the legal responsibility of another party under any civil rights law, such as modifying a workplace or providing accommodations that are obligations under law
12. Goods or services not allocable to the project
13. Supplanting existing state, local, tribal, or private funding of infrastructure or services, such as staff salaries
14. Construction or building expansion, purchasing or significant retrofitting of buildings, cosmetic upgrades, or any other cost that materially increases the value of the capital or useful life as a direct cost
15. The cost of independent research and development, including their proportionate share of indirect costs. See 2 CFR 300.477
16. Funds related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative action, or executive order
17. Purchase of covered telecommunications and video surveillance equipment (See 2 CFR 200.216) as well as financial assistance to households for installation and monthly broadband internet costs
18. Meals, unless in limited circumstances such as:
 - a. Subjects and patients under study
 - b. Where specifically approved as part of the project or program activity, such as in programs providing children's services
 - c. As part of a per diem or subsistence allowance provided in conjunction with allowable travel
19. Activities prohibited under 2 CFR 200.450 and the HHS Grants Policy Statement, including but not limited to:
 - d. Paying the salary or expenses of any grant recipient, or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations, regulation, administrative action, or executive order proposed or pending before the Congress or any state government, state legislature, or local legislature or legislative body
 - e. Lobbying, but awardees can lobby at their own expense if they can segregate federal funds from other financial resources used for lobbying

For guidance on some types of costs that CMS restricts or does not allow, see 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E - General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost.

L. BUDGET

Applicants must provide a detailed budget using the Budget Workbook found at www.scra.org/techcatalyst, which specifies the total amount of funding requested and associated milestones. The Budget Workbook must be submitted with the application.

Applicants will have until September 30, 2027, to spend awarded funding. Any unspent or remaining funds must be returned to SCRA. Applications with projects/activities that extend beyond September 30, 2027 will not be considered for funding.

Please note that the requested amount is not guaranteed to be awarded. SCRA and SCDHHS may adjust funding based on need and other relevant factors, which could include awarding partial funding. If an application is only partially funded, the awardee will be required to identify and demonstrate other funding sources to ensure the proposed strategy can be fully implemented as outlined in the application.

IX. REPORTING

Companies receiving Tech Catalyst Funding will be required to submit financial and performance reports that will be used by SCRA to report to SCDHHS and CMS.

G. REPORTING FREQUENCY

To support SCRA in successfully reporting to SCDHHS and CMS, awarded companies will be required to, at a minimum, submit quarterly progress and financial reports. The requirement to complete progress reports will continue after the performance period ends to monitor implementation and other outcomes; however, the frequency will be less.

Following Notice of Award, SCRA will provide additional guidance to awardees on (i) due dates, (ii) format, and (iii) how to submit their quarterly progress and financial reports.

H. OUTCOMES

Awardees must collect and report data on:

1. Demographic and geographic reach of the technology by county in South Carolina
2. Commercialization progress achieved
3. Evidence of consumer-focused impact (e.g., user adoption rates or preliminary data on patient engagement in chronic disease management)
4. Health outcomes targeted/achieved (e.g., reductions in chronic disease risk factors or improved prevention/management metrics in pilot phases)
5. Follow-on funding secured by awardees
6. Strategic partnerships established
7. Tracking expenses against budget, including submission of receipts

Failure to submit the complete and accurate reports in a timely manner will delay funding and may impact future funding.

For more information on reporting, see [Post-Award Reporting Requirements](#) on CMS' website.

VI. APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Tech Catalyst Fund application and review process is structured in multiple screening stages, with increasing levels of review and required materials at each stage. This approach helps applicants avoid investing significant time in due diligence and pitch preparation before core eligibility is confirmed.

Application and Review Stages:

1. **APPLY** (May 27 – Jun 25)

- Application
- Budget Workbook
- Pitch Deck (optional, required in Due Diligence)
- Letters of Support (optional, required in Due Diligence)

(INTERNAL ONLY) Confirm eligibility. Review Committee verifies unmet need, solution “fit” for unmet need, and differentiation from existing products

- Notification to applicant:
 - i. Invitation to enter due diligence, or
 - ii. Decline to move forward

2. **DUE DILIGENCE** (Jun 15 – Jul 9)

- Within 5 days of invitation to enter due diligence, applicants must provide required documentation listed in the Due Diligence Checklist at www.scra.org/techcatalyst
- Applicants must be available for a pre-pitch meeting with selected members of the Review Committee, if requested

(INTERNAL ONLY) Review Committee evaluation and recommendation

- Notification to applicant:
 - i. Invitation to pitch for funding
 - ii. Decline to move forward

3. **PITCH DAYS** (Jul 14 and July 21)

- Location: 1000 Catawba Street, Columbia, SC (in-person or virtual)
- Applicants that fail to attend the pitch at their scheduled time will be removed from consideration

(INTERNAL ONLY) Review Committee evaluation and recommendation of awards to HHS

4. (INTERNAL ONLY) HHS and CMS review and approval of awards

5. **NOTICE OF AWARD** (August)

A. REVIEW COMMITTEE

As part of the evaluation and selection process for the Tech Catalyst Fund, SCRA has convened a Review Committee to advise SCRA on the selection of technology that addresses unmet rural health needs specific to South Carolina and companies best positioned to deploy and scale their solutions in South Carolina's rural communities. The backgrounds and expertise of committee members include medtech and digital health investors, medtech and digital health entrepreneurs (founders/CEOs), and rural health providers and subject matter experts.

B. APPLY

The application will open May 27, 2026 and close June 25, 2026. Please visit www.scra.org/techcatalyst after May 27, 2026 to apply. Applications and budget workbooks submitted after June 25, 2026 will not be reviewed. Applicants that wish to provide a pitch deck preview and letters of support to accompany their application are permitted to submit this along with the completed application and budget workbook. The pitch deck and letters of support are mandatory for companies invited to Due Diligence.

Applications will be screened by SCRA to verify all initial eligibility requirements have been met including:

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THIS STEP:

- Submit completed application (required)
- Submit budget workbook (required)
- Pitch deck (optional, required in Due Diligence)
- Letters of Support (optional, required in Due Diligence)

1. U.S.-based and U.S.-owned businesses, with preference for companies that will perform the RHT Program-supported work in the U.S. with U.S. employees and, if applicable, contractors
2. Less than 10 years since founding and with less than \$50M prior funding raised since the company's inception
3. Directly delivering or enabling care through consumer-facing, technology-driven solutions
4. Maturity of technology is represented by technology readiness level (TRL) of at least 5, and
5. The company has at least one full-time member of the management team (at least 30 hours per week, 1099 or W2).

Applications that satisfy all core eligibility requirements will be provided to the Review Committee to complete evaluation of the application contents against review criteria at the Apply stage. The review criteria and scoring rubric are found in the Appendix.

Applicants receiving the highest scores by the Review Committee will be invited to enter Due Diligence.

Applicants that were not selected to enter Due Diligence will also be notified.

C. DUE DILIGENCE

Due diligence is a careful, structured investigation performed by SCRA and the Review Committee to evaluate proposals/companies and verify they are eligible, credible, and well-positioned to deliver the promised outcomes before moving forward to a formal invitation to pitch for funding. Areas to be examined during due diligence include but are not limited to:

- Market & Strategy: competition, go-to-market plan, traction, pricing
- Team: leadership experience, current and projected staffing, background/credentials, ability to execute within the grant/performance period
- Workplan Feasibility: assess scope, timeline, milestones, dependencies, and whether deliverables can be completed in the performance period
- Budget Allowability and Reasonableness: confirm costs are allowable under the program, are allocable to the project, and are adequately supported
- Contracts/Readiness: confirm the applicant can accept required award terms, reporting cadence, and monitoring

Once SCRA extends the invitation to enter due diligence, the company must provide access to their data room containing all requested documentation within five (5) business days. How to share data room access will be provided with the due diligence invitation. Refer to the Data Room Checklist at www.scra.org/techcatalyst.

NOTE: Access to view a company's data room is restricted to a small group of SCRA employees that perform due diligence activities for SCRA's investment affiliate, SC Launch Inc. Upon review, this group generates a general summary opinion for the Review Committee, listing any concerns related to potential business risks of the company, which includes the following:

- Legal/Corporate: entity formation, ownership/cap table, contracts, lawsuits
- Financial: historical financials, forecasts/projections, debts/tax issues
- IP: ownership, assignments, licensing, "freedom-to-operate"

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THIS STEP:

- Populate data room with required documents provided in the Due Diligence Checklist. Access is restricted to specific SCRA employees that regularly perform this task. Review Committee members are prevented from viewing applicant data rooms.
- Participate in pre-pitch meeting

Applicants may be invited to a pre-pitch meeting with a member of the Review Committee to address questions or concerns raised during review of the full application. **Applicants that fail to respond to requests for a pre-pitch meeting will not be invited to Pitch Days.**

Review Committee members will complete their evaluation of the company at the completion of Due Diligence. The review criteria and scoring rubric for this stage are found in the Appendix.

Applicants that receive the highest scores at the conclusion of Due Diligence will be invited to Pitch Days, where they will pitch to the Review Committee for funding.

Applicants not invited to Pitch Days will also be notified.

D. PITCH DAYS

The third and final review stage for the Tech Catalyst Fund is the pitch. Pitching is a critical skill for any startup and is a strong determinant of their ability to raise capital. A “good” pitch compresses a complex business into a clear, credible story that helps other people decide “yes” quickly. The ability to deliver an effective pitch is especially important for medtech and digital health startups because buyers and funders are not just evaluating a product—they’re evaluating clinical risk, regulatory readiness, workflow fit, and proof of outcomes in high-stakes settings.

For the Tech Catalyst Fund, pitching is not just a presentation—it is a key part of the competitive review process that helps the Review Committee determine which applicants are most likely to deliver measurable rural health impact within the 12-month performance period and beyond. Pitch Days allow applicants to clearly articulate (and the Committee to assess) the unmet rural health need being addressed, how the solution is meaningfully differentiated, and whether the team has the credibility and execution plan to deploy and scale in South Carolina’s rural settings.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES AT THIS STEP:

- Pitch to Review Committee (in-person or virtual)
- Location: 1000 Catawba Street, Columbia, SC
- Date: July 14 or July 21

Applicants must structure their pitch to be no longer than 10 minutes. At the conclusion of the pitch, there will be a 10-minute Q&A session where the applicant responds in real time to questions raised by the Review Committee. **Applicants that fail to attend Pitch Days at their scheduled time will be removed from consideration for funding.**

The contents of the pitch deck must align with the topics listed below. An optional pitch deck template is available at www.scra.org/techcatalyst. You are NOT required to use this pitch deck template if you have your own. However, you ARE required to address the following topics:

- Title Slide
- The Team
- The Problem
- Your Solution
- Differentiation, Competition
- Traction

- Strategic Partners
- Project Plan (Budget, Activities/Milestones, Outcomes)

Do not include more slides in your deck than you can comfortably present in 10 minutes. Please practice in advance to ensure your talk does not exceed 10 minutes. The agenda on Pitch Days will be tightly scheduled, and your pitch will be stopped if time runs out.

Review Committee members will complete their evaluation of the company following each company's pitch. The review criteria and scoring rubric for this stage are found in the Appendix.

Applicants that receive the highest scores at the conclusion of Pitch Days will be recommended for funding.

E. NOTICE OF AWARD

Award recommendations will be provided to SCRA by the Review Committee at the conclusion of Pitch Days. These award recommendations and accompanying application materials must be submitted to SCDHHS and CMS for review and approval. Once approval has been received, applicants will receive a Notice of Award that will include next steps in the contract and funding process.

Applicants not selected for funding will also be notified.

VII. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. COMPLIANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The awarded company is solely responsible for execution of the project, including compliance with all relevant federal and state laws and guidelines. The awards will be made via contracts between SCRA and the awarded company with a degree of collaboration with and oversight by SCDHHS and CMS.

SCRA reserves the right to refine and amend policies, as required.

If SCRA determines that a company is not using award funds in a manner consistent with the description provided in its approved application and contract (a "violation of agreement"), SCRA may withhold, reduce, or recover award payments. Violations of agreement include, but are not limited to:

1. Using funds in a manner inconsistent with activities described in a company's application, on activities explicitly limited in the Use of Funds (Allowed/Unallowed) and CMS Funding Policies and Limitations sections, and/or on activities SCRA has not approved.
2. Not investing funds in a way that affects South Carolina's rural areas and residents in a positive manner
3. Failure to submit required reporting requirements as described in the Reporting section
4. Failure to follow through on other actions in the approved application
5. Violating the terms and conditions of this award
6. Improperly managing or using award funds, including fraud, waste, abuse, and criminal activity

The company must remedy noncompliance within 30 days after SCRA notifies the company of a violation. Remediation may include submitting a remediation plan. If the company does not remedy its noncompliance, SCRA may recover past payments and withhold future payments.

B. SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Information provided by the applicant will be treated by SCRA as business sensitive, and SCRA will make all reasonable efforts to protect this information when disclosure is not legally required. However, SCRA is subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the applicant should not disclose to SCRA any information that would negatively affect its ability to obtain intellectual property protection or undermine other business efforts. This applies to all verbal or written material.

Upon award and execution of the grant, applications and supplemental documentation may be subject to public review, with the exception of those elements of an application that are clearly marked as confidential or trade secrets. Any such designation should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reason the information is non-public and protected from disclosure under South Carolina law.

Although the South Carolina FOIA allows certain confidential or trade secret information to be protected from disclosure, SCRA and SCDHHS may not be in a position to establish that the information submitted is protected. If SCRA or SCDHHS receives a request for public disclosure of all or any portion of an application that has been designated as exempt from disclosure, SCRA will use reasonable efforts to notify the responding party of the request and give such party an opportunity to assert, at its own expense, a claimed exemption under the South Carolina FOIA or other applicable law within the time period specified in the notice issued by SCRA or SCDHHS and allowed under the SC FOIA.

C. TRUTH AND ACCURACY OF REPRESENTATIONS

False, misleading, incomplete, or deceptively unresponsive statements in connection with an application shall be sufficient cause for rejection of the application. The evaluation and determination of rejection shall be at SCRA's sole judgment, and such shall be final. Any false, misleading, incomplete, or deceptively unresponsive statements discovered after award has been made shall be sufficient cause for SCRA to withdraw an award and/or require repayment of any award funds advanced.

D. REQUIRED PERFORMANCE

SCRA may withhold funds from an applicant who fails to meet the reporting requirements, falls behind schedule, has unexpended funds, or modifies the scope of the project. If an applicant finds themselves in this position, the applicant shall immediately contact SCRA and provide a mitigation plan to address the deficiency. SCRA may withhold funds until a mitigation plan is submitted and approved by SCRA and SCDHHS. If a mitigation plan is not submitted or if it has not been approved by SCRA and SCDHHS, SCRA reserves the right to reduce the grant award by the amount of any unexpended funds and/or require repayment of any award funds advanced.

E. RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Companies are responsible for acquiring the necessary facilities and infrastructure for the project activities and accepting the conditions of the award. Additionally, companies must adhere to current federal and state regulations, including those regarding financial conflict of interest and research misconduct.

Companies and partner medical facilities must safeguard the rights and welfare of individuals who participate as subjects in research activities by reviewing proposed activities through an Institutional Review Board (IRB) as specified by the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections, HHS OHRP](#). Additionally, the company must ensure appropriate governance of animal studies. If the research involves either animal or human subjects, IRB approval and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee numbers are not required at the time of application submission but must be provided prior to release of funding.

F. CHANGES TO PROJECT SCOPE

A change in the project scope of work or budget requires approval by SCRA and SCDHHS. Any such requests should be submitted to techcatalyst@scra.org. Any variance in the approved budget that exceeds 15% of the total approved budget will require prior approval from the Tech Catalyst Sr. Program Manager.

G. CONTACT

If there are any questions regarding this Funding Announcement, please submit them to techcatalyst@scra.org.

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APPENDIX: SCORING RUBRIC

Applicants will be evaluated at each review step and scored based on the determination that the applicant (i) meets/exceeds, (ii) partially meets, or (iii) does not meet each criterion. Applicants who do not meet the criteria marked with an asterisk (*) are ineligible to proceed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT (430 POINTS)

6. THE COMPANY (60 POINTS)

1. **U.S.-based and U.S.-owned business***
2. **Less than 10 years since founding***
3. **Less than \$50M prior funding raised since company's founding***
4. Registered as a for-profit business with SC Secretary of State (can include Delaware C-Corp)
5. SC-based business (headquarters located in SC)

7. THE TEAM (100 POINTS)

1. Key roles are staffed. At least one team member is full time.
2. Majority of management team and staff are in SC
3. Relevant technical expertise within management and/or advisory board
4. Relevant healthcare expertise within management and/or advisory board
5. Startup experience within management and/or advisory board
6. Fundraising experience within management and/or advisory board

8. PROBLEM AND SOLUTION (155 POINTS)

1. The problem or unmet need is clearly defined and quantified
2. The problem or unmet need is validated by rural health providers/SMEs
3. The solution is clearly defined and quantified
4. The solution is deemed feasible by rural health providers to address problem or unmet need
5. The solution focuses on prevention and management of chronic diseases
6. The solution will increase quality, affordability, and access to care
7. The solution is meaningfully differentiated from existing technologies or services
8. Stage of Development: TRL 5+ and/or functioning prototype
9. The technology has some form of initial customer validation
10. Intellectual Property: Company has a defensible market position in the form of IP (patents, copyright, trademark, trade secret, etc.), a license (if applicable), and freedom to operate

9. PATH TO MARKET (15 POINTS)

1. Company understands the stakeholders involved in adoption of new products in the target sector.
2. Company understands current workflows of target healthcare setting and any necessary modifications with adoption of new technology.
3. Traction: The company has received interest from rural medical facilities or related partner organizations in SC

10. PROJECT PLAN (80 POINTS)

1. Work will be performed in the U.S. with U.S. employees and contractors
2. Use of funds is allowed
3. Milestones and associated costs are clearly defined
4. Commercialization outcomes expected at the conclusion of the grant are clearly defined
5. Health outcomes expected at the conclusion of the grant are clearly defined

6. Demographic and geographic reach of the product in SC is understood
7. Proposed Use of Funds positions the technology towards commercialization and deployment in rural health settings
8. Rural healthcare clinics or related organizations are supporting the project or are likely to support the project
9. There is confidence that the company can execute the proposed workplan within 12 months and generate meaningful outcomes in alignment with RHTP objectives.

11. SUSTAINABILITY (20 POINTS)

1. Company clearly describes how Tech Catalyst funding will be leveraged to ensure sustainability
2. Commercialization outcomes anticipated within the next three years are clearly defined
3. Health outcomes anticipated within the next three years are clearly defined
4. Expanded demographic and geographic reach of the product in SC over the next three years is understood

DUE DILIGENCE (320 POINTS)

12. COMPANY AND TEAM (100 POINTS)

1. Company is responsive and respectful in addressing questions and requests
2. The management team exhibits in-depth expertise necessary to deploy and scale the technology in both rural and non-rural healthcare settings
3. The backgrounds and credentials of the team enable them to execute the requirements of this award.
4. Company has a viable exit strategy
5. The company has been engaged in the SC ecosystem prior to the Tech Catalyst Fund
6. The technology that is the subject of the application was under commercial development in its current form prior to the Tech Catalyst Fund or other RHTP funding opportunities.

8. BUSINESS RISK/COMPLIANCE (75 POINTS)

1. **Background check and research security assessment were acceptable***
2. Legal/corporate: No concerns around entity formation, ownership/cap table, contracts, or lawsuits
3. Financial: No concerns around historical financials, projections, debts/tax issues

9. PATH TO MARKET (25 POINTS)

1. Value proposition has been clearly articulated.
2. Company understands their path to market, including requirements for pilot/patient trials, regulatory approvals, reimbursement strategy, certifications, and other barriers to entry
3. The timeline of key milestones, costs, and potential sources of funding for commercial deployment and scale are understood
4. Clearly defined strategy to scale production, sales, and distribution to deliver cost effective product
5. Intellectual Property: Company has rights to commercialize the technology (IP ownership, licensing, etc.)

10. WORKPLAN FEASIBILITY AND BUDGET (105 POINTS)

1. Proposed workplan (including Implementation Plan) positions the company for success. Workplan dependencies have been identified and contingencies defined (e.g., partners, integrations, devices, data access, regulatory approvals, etc.).
2. There are sufficient staffing and resources to execute within the performance period

3. Key partners in SC have been engaged to facilitate success of the workplan
4. The proposed budget is reasonable and meets allowed/unallowed costs requirements
5. If company has applied for or has received funding from other RHTP funding opportunities, there are no anticipated resource constraints and activities are sufficiently distinct.
6. Company and team will have a physical presence in SC for the duration of the performance period
7. Company and team will have a physical presence in SC beyond the end of the performance period

11. DATA, PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND COMPLIANCE (15 POINTS)

1. Appropriate safeguards and agreements are in place to address protected health information (PHI) or other sensitive data
2. Necessary approvals have been identified and can be obtained within a reasonable period of time to execute activities (e.g., IRB)
3. Contract Readiness: Applicant can accept the required award terms, reporting cadence, and information/data sharing required for this award

PITCH DAY (250 POINTS)

12. THE PITCH (250 POINTS)

1. Company pitched clearly and concisely
2. Company effectively responded to questions raised during Q&A
3. Problem: The stated problem to be addressed is confirmed to be a critical unmet need in SC's rural communities
4. Solution: The proposed technology is a viable solution to address the unmet need in SC's rural communities
5. Competition: There is room in the market for the technology; differentiation from competitors
6. The Team: There is confidence that the management team exhibits the necessary expertise to deploy and scale the technology in both rural and non-rural healthcare settings
7. The Workplan: There is confidence that the company can execute the workplan within 12 months with the proposed budget
8. Outcomes: There is confidence that the company will produce meaningful outcomes in alignment with RHTP objectives by the end of the performance period
9. Follow-on Funding: Company shows potential to attract follow-on funding from investors to scale operations
10. No new concerns were raised