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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** JANUARY 20, 2021

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### **Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Awarded \$2.5M DOL Grant to Bolster Healthcare Workforce in Rural Communities**

CEDAR PARK, Texas – U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) this week [announced](#) that [Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area](#) (WSRCA), the non-profit community partnership providing no cost recruitment and employment services in the nine-county Rural Capital Area of Central Texas, was awarded a \$2.5 million Rural Healthcare Initiative (RHI) grant to address rural healthcare workforce shortages in communities within its workforce development area. WSRCA is the only organization in the great state of Texas to be awarded the prestigious grant.

The coronavirus pandemic has increased the need for frontline workers across the country, particularly in rural communities, where the demand for healthcare professionals was already rising. The public private RHI partnerships will use both federal and state funding streams, as well as investments from the private sector, working together to continue building a skilled healthcare workforce for Texas.

“Amid the pandemic, our communities have relied upon our healthcare centers and their workers to provide comfort and care at our greatest time of need, and they have answered the call with courage,” said WSRCA CEO Paul Fletcher. “This award provides us with more resources to support this world-class workforce, by boosting the number of Texans training in healthcare occupations, to enhance the quality of patient care, alleviate healthcare workforce shortages, and continuing fueling the economic recovery of our region.”

WSRCA will utilize the RHI grant to serve the communities of Blanco, Burnet and Llano counties, with the goals of:

1. Increasing the number of individuals in healthcare occupations
2. Alleviating healthcare workforce shortages by creating sustainable employment and training programs in healthcare occupations serving rural communities.
3. Developing a coordinated approach to preparing a skilled healthcare workforce for rural area(s), through leveraging existing work in creating community workforce councils, engaging partners, and aligning workforce activities; and
4. Identifying and incorporating new and emergent technologies into healthcare training including interactive simulations, personalized and virtual instruction, digital tutors, etc. into the training design (when appropriate).

WSRCA is proud to partner with the [Marble Falls Economic Development Council](#); [Bluebonnet Trails Community Services](#); [Baylor Scott & White Health](#), [Hill Country Memorial](#); [Central Texas College](#); [Texas Tech University](#); [Central Texas Allied Health Institute](#); [Texas State University](#); [Workforce Network Inc.](#); [Community](#)

[Resource Centers of Texas](#); and [Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas](#), on the project.

“We will begin to work with our key local partners and the DOL, throughout the spring to finalize the project,” said WSRCA COO Diane Tackett. “We have a seven to nine-month implementation planning phase that we will begin in early February and continue through September, with implementation of the training project targeted to begin October 2021.”

WSRCA is one of 17 public and private entities from across the nation, awarded funds from the \$40 million H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program, to address rural healthcare workforce shortages.

Section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998, as amended (codified at 29 U.S.C. 3224a) funds the H-1B Rural Healthcare Grant Program with awards ranging from \$1.2 million to \$2.5 million.

*Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area is a nonprofit community partnership providing no cost recruitment, employment services and childcare assistance, to businesses, employers, and job seekers in the Rural Capital Area of central Texas. This nine-county region includes Bastrop; Blanco; Burnet; Caldwell; Fayette; Hays; Lee; Llano; and Williamson counties. For more details on WSRCA, and the services it offers, visit [www.workforcesolutionsrca.com](http://www.workforcesolutionsrca.com).*