

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin



**Universal Service Fund
Telemedicine Equipment Program**

***Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023
Grant Application
Supplemental Guidelines and
Forms***

Docket 5-TF-2022

**Application Deadline
February 10, 2022**

Introduction

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Medical Telecommunications Equipment Grants. The Medical Telecommunications Equipment Grant Program (Telemedicine program) was created to provide funding to nonprofit medical clinics, hospitals or public health agencies for the purchase of specialized telecommunications equipment designed to augment or enhanced the delivery of medical services. The Commission may award one or more grants that, in aggregate, do not exceed an annual total of \$500,000 during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 160.115(6)(a)1. The Commission will also consider in June 2022 the level of funding for FY 2023 Telemedicine grants (not to exceed \$500,000).

The Commission has developed an on-line application system to submit grant applications, the PSC Grants System. The FY 2022/2023 Telemedicine grant round will be the first grant round to use this new application procedure. As with any new software, there will be some unexpected issues that will need to be addressed. However, the Commission has adopted the on-line application system to streamline the application process, produce grant applications that better respond to the scoring criteria, and provide applicants with better confidence that their submission meets the filing requirements for this grant cycle.

Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit medical clinics, hospitals and public health agencies are eligible to request a grant from the Telemedicine program. For purposes of the Telemedicine grant program, nonprofit medical clinic or hospital includes any medical facility that:

1. Is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors;
2. Serves federally-designated health professional shortage areas as defined in 42 USC § 254e(a)(1), medically underserved areas, or medically underserved populations, and;
3. Fulfills one, or both, of the following:
 - a. Provides service to all patients regardless of insurance status,
 - b. Uses a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients based on income status.

For purposes of the Telemedicine grant program, a public health agency includes:

1. The Department of Health Services;
2. Local health departments as defined in Wis. Stat. § 250.01(4); and,
3. Health care facilities or programs operated by a tribe, or tribal organization under the Indian Self-Determination Act (25 USC § 450f et seq.).

Anticipated Funds Available

In accordance with Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 160.115(3), a maximum of \$500,000 per fiscal year may be disbursed under the Telemedicine grant program. The Commission has allocated \$500,000 for Telemedicine grants for FY 2022. The Commission may allocate a similar amount for FY 2023 when it sets its FY 2023 USF budget in June 2022.

Applications may not request funding for projects that would obligate grant funds over multiple fiscal years. Applications may not be for equipment that has already been purchased. There is no specified dollar limit for any particular project.

No Matching Funds Requirement

No matching funds are required for this program. However, the application should include an explanation of how any portion of the project not covered by the Telemedicine grant will be paid for. In addition, commitment of other resources toward a project or equipment purchase may be considered as a positive factor when the grant applications are scored.

An offer to contribute matching funds can only apply to the Telemedicine Equipment items that the applicant proposes to purchase. For example, if an applicant proposes to purchase equipment in conjunction with a larger project to remodel a facility or to create and staff a new treatment unit, the costs associated with remodeling or the salary expense of new or existing employees necessary to put the equipment into use are in addition to the purchase of the equipment and will not be counted as a contribution of matching funds.

Grant Application Submission and Deadline

All applicants are required to submit an application using the Commission's on-line grant application system. The PSC Grants System will automatically upload the application to the appropriate Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) account when the application is submitted. The PSC Grants System will not permit late applications. Applicants are encouraged to start early and leave plenty of time to work with the new grant application.

The PSC Grants System application process is intended to be simple and straightforward. Any medical clinic or county health department should be able to submit a competitive application without having to employ a regulatory consultant. If an applicant has difficulty for any reason submitting an on-line grant application, please contact Dennis Klaila at dennis.klaila@wi.gov or at (608) 267-9780 to discuss the application process.

Applications must be submitted using the PSC Grants System and are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 10, 2022. The PSC Grants System will not accept any applications submitted after the deadline.

Application Procedure

The instructions for completing a telemedicine grant application are in two parts. Both parts are available on the PSC Telemedicine Grant website: [PSC Telemedicine Grants \(wi.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/psc/telemedicine-grants)

The first part of the instructions is the PSC Grants System User's Guide for Grant Applicants and Recipients. The User's Guide provides a detailed overview of the PSC Grants System. The User's Guide provides step by step instructions to create a system account, navigate the on-line grant application, validate the application, and submit the complete application. The PSC Grant account will also provide the on-line form and filing process that grant recipients will use to request reimbursement. The User's Guide is the primary resource an applicant should consult to enter and use the on-line grant system.

The second part of the instructions is this current document. This document, [Supplemental Guidelines and Forms](#), provides specific guidance on completing an application for an FY 2022/2023 telemedicine grant. This [Supplemental Guidelines](#) discusses the questions in the narrative section of the application. An applicant should use this supplement to understand what information is requested for each page and each question in the telemedicine grant application.

Step 1: To begin the application, go to the telemedicine grant webpage, [PSC Telemedicine Grants \(wi.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/psc/telemedicine-grants), and select FY 2022 Telemedicine Grant Application. This will open the login page of the PSC Grants System. For the first instance of logging in, an applicant will need to create a system account. (See User's Guide page 2). Remember your User Name and Password. For all subsequent instances, you should be able to log-in to the system with that User Name and Password.

Step 2: On the page titled Available Grants, find the line for the FY 2022/2023 Telemedicine Grant, and click on 'Apply.' (See User's Guide page 4).

Step 3: The program will now display the application you will fill out. The application is arranged in a series of tabs along the top of the form. Each tab brings a page to the top so you can fill it in. The steps below assume that you will open the tabs in order from left to right. Select the Details tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 4).

Please note that this page has a validation step. You cannot save your entries or move to the next page until you enter the required information and correct any arithmetic errors in your entries.

It is very important that you remember to save your work (using the save icon at the bottom of the page) before you leave the page. Any unsaved entries will be lost once you leave the page.

Step 4: Select the Contacts tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 6). The program will require that you fill in one Primary Contact. Use the Add New Contact to add additional contacts. A grant recipient can use this page to add additional names or

change the Primary Contact for the grant if the recipient has turnover or other change in staff assignment while the grant project is underway.

Step 5: Select the Contributions tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 6-7). Please note there is a validation step here as well. You cannot save your entries on this page unless the entries agree with the data entered on the Details page.

The response entered on this will be scored. All other factors being equal, the Commission will use matching funds contributions as one tie-breaker question to differentiate between two or more proposals with equal merit.

This response could also provide a complete answer to how the applicant will pay for the equipment. In some instances, the grant award is just a portion of the overall funding for the equipment purchase.

Step 6: Select the Budget tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 7-8). Again, there is a validation step. You cannot save your entries on the Budget page unless the entries agree with the data entered on the Details and Contributions pages.

The Budget page requires that the applicant entered the total cost of all equipment that will be purchased on a single line of the budget. The form requires that you divide the total cost of the equipment into the portion that will be paid by grant reimbursement and the portion paid by matching funds contribution. In the Upload step below, the applicant is instructed to upload the Budget Summary Form and quotes for the equipment the applicant proposes to purchase. The applicant will use this form to break out the individual proposed equipment items. A well written application will provide an itemized list of equipment on the Budget Summary Form that matches the aggregate total for Equipment on the Budget page, and matches the equipment description on the Narrative page discussed below.

Step 7: Select the Communities tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 8-9). Please note that the area served by the project is a significant aspect of the application evaluation. The communities listed on this page should match the discussion of Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) discussed below in the Narrative. Maps showing the HPSA for Primary Care and Mental Health Care are available at [PSC Telemedicine Grants \(wi.gov\)](#).

Step 8: Select the Narrative tab and fill in the required information. (See User's Guide page 9-10). The Narrative consists of nine questions. All nine questions are important. It is possible to write in the phrase 'n/a' and move on to the next question, but that means the applicant is passing on a question that either determines the applicant's eligibility to apply for a grant or contributes to the overall score for the application. Answer every question. Remember to save your work before advancing to the next page of the Narrative.

Question 1: Is the applicant a Non-profit Medical Clinic, as defined in the Supplemental Guidelines and Forms?

This response is not scored. This question goes to the issue of eligibility. If the applicant meets the definition for a Non-profit Medical Clinic select ‘Yes’ for this question. If not select ‘No.’ (An eligible medical clinic should answer Yes to Question 1, No to Question 2, and ‘n/a’ to Question 3.)

For purposes of the Telemedicine Grant program, a Non-profit Medical Clinic is a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Directors; serves federally-designated health professional shortage areas as defined in 42 USC § 254e(a)(1), medically underserved areas, or medically underserved populations, and fulfills one, or both, of the following:

- a. Provides service to all patients regardless of insurance status,
- b. Uses a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients based on income status.

Question 2: Is the applicant a Public Health Agency, as defined in the Supplemental Guidelines and Forms?

This response is not scored. This question goes to the issue of eligibility. If the applicant meets the definition for a Public Health Agency select ‘Yes’ for this question. If not select ‘No.’

For purposes of the Telemedicine Grant program, a Public Health Agency is a bureau or office within the Department of Health Services; a local health department as defined in Wis. Stat. § 250.01(4); or a Health care facility or program operated by a tribe, or tribal organization under the Indian Self-Determination Act (25 USC § 450f et seq.).

Question 3: If the applicant is not a Non-Profit Medical Clinic of a Public Health Agency, then the applicant must request a waiver of the eligibility provision in the Administrative Rule. State the request for waiver, and explain the reason for the waiver.

This response is not scored. This question goes to the issue of eligibility. If the applicant has answered ‘Yes’ to either Question 1 or 2, then the applicant should enter the phrase n/a.

However, if an applicant is not an eligible non-profit clinic or public health agency, as defined above, it must request a waiver. A well written waiver request will identify an unmet medical need and explain why the applicant institution is well situated to address that need.

Question 4: Briefly describe the applicant organization(s) mission, history, organizational capacity and geographic service area that enable the applicant to undertake the proposed project.

(10 points) A well written response will demonstrate that the applicant possesses the institutional experience, personnel, technical resources, and financial resources necessary to complete the proposed project.

Question 5: Define the specific need or problem that is currently not being met.

(20 points) A well written response will identify the Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) that will be served, or the medically underserved area and/or underserved population that will be served; and identify the specific medical issue or type of care that the project will address. The applicant should describe the population served by the proposed project, including demographic and other information to indicate why the underserved population has limited access to existing health care resources.

Question 6: Describe the project. What type of medical telecommunications equipment will be purchased and how will it promote technologically advanced medical services, enhance access to care in rural or underserved areas or populations of people with disabilities.

(20 points) A well written response will identify a telemedicine equipment solution for an existing medical need that is not well served by the existing medical care system. This equipment could be any equipment item meeting the definition of 'Telehealth' found in Wis. Stat. §49.45(61)4. The best examples would include:

- Home health monitoring units that facilitate a daily or frequent opportunity to measure and report health status information to a supervising clinic;
- Telemedicine carts that facilitates real time medical advice and therapy to a patient from a specialist located in another city or clinic facility;
- Video conference equipment that facilitates mental health care and behavioral health care from a physician or therapist located in another city or clinic facility;
- Interpreter service and tablet computer that provide a real time interpreter for a patient and medical care professional that are unable to communicate with each other in a common language.

Other examples of telemedicine equipment could include a digital x-ray device, a digital pathology device, or other diagnostic equipment with an internet connection to transmit imagery to a specialist. On rare occasions this program has funded the purchase of telecommunications equipment and services to reach an underserved population.

An applicant may use this question to discuss features of the proposed telemedicine equipment that may not be apparent to a lay audience.

Question 7: Identify measurable goals you expect to meet with the purchase of telecommunications equipment. Include information about the number of people served and intended outcomes or changes.

(10 points) A well written response will provide a clear and straightforward connection between the identified medical need, the target population or area where the need is located, and the telemedicine equipment that the clinic proposes to purchase to meet this need.

If possible, the response will provide a quantifiable outcome that is measureable and attainable. An outcome could be an increase in clients, residents or patients served; an increase in the frequency of care; or a reduction in the number or frequency of adverse health outcomes.

Question 8: Describe any partnerships, community support, or other collaborations with individuals or organizations that will be involved in the project.

(10 points) A well written response will include a discussion of the community that will participate and/or benefit from the proposed project.

Question 9: Other information.

An applicant may use this question to provide additional information that may provide a complete picture of the proposed project.

An applicant may use this question to identify financial issues that limit medical care its organization can provide and particularly why it needs funding from this grant program in order to purchase this equipment.

An applicant may this question to describe whether the equipment requires high speed internet for use, and provide additional details if the equipment requires patients to have internet access in their homes or identify network requirements that would limit the utility of the telemedicine equipment.

Step 8: Select the Upload tab. (See User's Guide page 10-11). Following the instructions in the User's Guide, the applicant should upload the documents that support the application.

Using the form provided on the PSC webpage at [PSC Telemedicine Grants \(wi.gov\)](http://PSC Telemedicine Grants (wi.gov)), the applicant should fill out and upload the Budget Summary Form as an attachment to the application. The applicant should also upload a vendor proposal, a price quote from an internet page, or other written basis for the proposed purchase price for each listed item. A well written response will include a complete list of equipment, including any installation costs, training costs, or other expenses related to operating the equipment. (In most instances, operating costs should be nominal.)

In the Budget Summary Form, list any warranty or maintenance agreements included in the purchase price of the equipment. No more than one year of a maintenance agreement can be reimbursed from grant funds.

In the Budget Summary Form or in an accompanying narrative, identify the planned vendors for each piece of equipment proposed to be purchased. Explain why the chosen equipment and vendor were selected. If the vendor is not yet selected, provide information on how the equipment price was determined and the process to be used for selecting the vendor.

Review and Selection Process

All grant applications will be subject to a screening and review process conducted by Commission staff, a review team and the Commissioners. Reviewers will have expertise in technical or programmatic aspects of information systems, medicine, telecommunications or universal service issues. The process is outlined below:

Initial Screening

Commission staff will conduct an initial screening of all applications. The applications will be screened for timeliness of filing, and eligibility of the applicant as a nonprofit medical clinic or public health agency as defined in Wis. Admin. Code §§ PSC 160.115(b) and (c) and completeness of the application. Any application that fails the initial screening may be eliminated from further review.

Application Review

The screening panel will review applications passing the initial screening. Results of this analysis and review will be reported in a memorandum to the Commissioners.

Final Decision on Grant Awards

The Commission will make its decision based upon the response to the Narrative questions and other information provided in the application. The Commission's decision is an independent review of the applications. The Commission is not bound by the merit list developed by the screening panel. The screening panel's merit list is simply one opinion regarding the relative merit of the applications under consideration. In its decision, the Commission may choose to give greater weight to some information provided by the applicant. The Commission may consider other factors in its decision-making including, but not limited to:

- Analysis provided by staff.
- Analysis of the review panel.
- Number of grants and dollars previously awarded to the applicant.
- Geographic distribution of the proposed grants.

- Financial need of the organization and need for Telemedicine Grant funds to enable the project to be completed.
- Diversity of needs being met by the proposed grants.
- Diversity of types of projects requesting funding.
- Availability of funds from the USF budget.

The Commission makes its decision in Open Meetings of the Commission. The Commission will notify all grant applicants of its decision by adopting and serving on all applicants an Order awarding grants. Notification of award decisions for FY 2022 and FY 2023 will be made in the April or May, 2022.

Grant Agreement, Reporting and Payment Process

The Order will require that each approved grant applicant enter into a grant agreement with the Commission. The Grant Agreement will confirm the grant award, including the amount of the grant award and the terms and conditions ordered by the Commission. The grant award is not final until the applicant signs and returns the Grant Agreement. A signed Grant Agreement is due to the Commission no later 60 days following the date of the Commission Order. Failure to complete and return the Grant Agreement by the due date may result in cancellation of the award.

Grant recipients will be required to complete the purchase of equipment items prior to the expiration date stated in the Order (approximately 21 months after the date of the Order). Extensions of this deadline will not be approved unless the grant recipient can show that the project was delayed for reasons outside its control.

The Commission will use the reimbursement process in the PSC Grants System. Additional information will be provided to successful grant applicants when the order awarding grants is released.

The Commission retains the right to revoke a grant if the funded applicant and project do not comply with Commission guidelines; or fail to implement the project in accordance with the application as submitted and approved. In addition, the Commission reserves the right to take any other action allowed by law in the event an approved project is implemented in a manner inconsistent with the Telemedicine Equipment Program.

Withdrawal of Application

Applicants may withdraw their proposal at any time by providing a written request to the Commission.

False, Misleading, or Omitted Statements

False or misleading statements or omissions that render the information provided on an application to be false or misleading are grounds for rejection of an application, for denial, or

for termination of funding. The applicant may also be required to reimburse the USF. In addition, the Commission reserves the right to take any other action allowed by law.

No Obligation for Future Funding

If an application is selected for funding, the Commission has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Funding is limited to the amount awarded by the Commission when it makes its decision on grant awards. A subsequent award of funding for purchase of additional equipment is entirely at the discretion of the Commission.

Technical Assistance

For PSC Grants System technical support, an Applicant may call or send an e-mail to staff below. An Applicant may request a one-on-one appointment to discuss the application process. These appointments will be limited to technical assistance on the use of the new PSC Grants System.

Staff will provide limited technical assistance to all prospective applicants as staff resources allow, until the time that a proposal has been submitted to the Commission. Staff will only provide answers to specific questions and make general comments in regard to the grant application guidelines and forms. Staff will not provide specific suggestions regarding content for a particular applicant nor review a draft copy of a forthcoming application.

In compliance with state regulations regarding conflict of interest and open records, Commissioners will not provide any specific advice or assistance to applicants. All applicants will be referred to Commission staff.

For Further Information, Contact:

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Madison WI 53707-7854

PHONE: 608/267-9780

E-MAIL: dennis.klaila@wisconsin.gov

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