

Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) Request for Proposal 2026-2027 Public Affairs & Lobbying

TIMELINE & KEY INFORMATION

Proposal release date: August 20, 2026

Proposal deadline: September 10, 2026

Contractor or firm interviews: September 21-22, 2026

Award notification: October 1, 2026

Anticipated contract term: November 1, 2026-June 1, 2027

Submit proposal by email to Kelly Erb Zager, ke@coruralhealth.org

(Please use subject line CRHC Public Affairs & Lobbying RFP 2026-2027)

Any questions may be addressed to Kelly Erb Zager, ke@coruralhealth.org

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) seeks to retain the services of a lobbyist to work with the Director of Policy & Advocacy, CEO, and the Director of Member services to address matters that will appear before the Colorado General Assembly, individual state legislators, the Governor, and other state agencies.

The Director of Policy & Advocacy will be on maternity leave roughly between mid-November 2026 to mid-February 2027. During the time of leave, the retained lobbyist will work primarily with the CEO and Director of Member Services. Before taking leave, the Director of Policy & Advocacy will work with the retained lobbyist to educate and train them on CRHC policy program policies and procedures. After leave, the Director of Policy & Advocacy will work in partnership with the retained lobbyist to support policy and advocacy activities.

CRHC seeks a firm rooted in approaches that center our mission and policy priorities, and that understands and values the diverse perspectives of healthcare providers in rural Colorado.

BACKGROUND

CRHC is Colorado's nonprofit State Office of Rural Health and Rural Health Association. CRHC works with federal, state, and local partners to offer services and resources to rural healthcare providers, facilities and communities. We have a diverse and inclusive statewide constituency serving organizations in every corner of the state, including 43 hospitals and over 100 clinics in Colorado's rural and frontier counties.

Established in 1991 by members of the Colorado Rural Health Consortium, Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) was created with start-up support from the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) Grant and several public and private organizations around the state. CRHC was

developed as a nonprofit organization and is one of only three nonprofit offices of rural health in the country.

Our mission is to enhance healthcare services in the state by providing information, education, linkages, tools, and energy toward addressing rural health issues. Our vision is to improve healthcare services available in rural communities to ensure that all rural Coloradans have access to comprehensive, affordable, high quality healthcare.

CRHC SERVICES

CRHC offers robust programs and services to meet its mission and vision that includes:

- **Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Health Clinics:** CRHC provides comprehensive services, technical assistance and education that support rural hospitals and clinics in quality, operational and financial improvement, emergency preparedness, health information technology, regulatory compliance, and workforce development.
- **Outreach:** CRHC supports its members by facilitating educational conferences and events, developing data-informed publications and data resources, disseminating information including funding opportunities, state and federal updates and resources via its website, newsletters and social media, and collaborating with other rural health stakeholders.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** CRHC advocates, tracks, and analyzes policy that impacts rural healthcare delivery, access, and services, and disseminates information on rural healthcare issues to the public and to state and federal policy makers.

SCOPE OF WORK

CRHC is requesting proposals and an associated fee structure for the following lobbying services:

- **Facilitate CRHC's Policy & Legislative Committee (PLC) meetings** while the Director of Policy & Advocacy is on leave.
 - The PLC is an advisory committee made up of CRHC members across the state.
 - The PLC meets every other Friday from 12:00-1:30pm via Zoom during legislative session. Meetings may increase in frequency to every Friday if necessary.
 - During PLC meetings, relevant legislation is presented and summarized by staff, then discussion among PLC members is facilitated.
 - PLC members vote on a policy position via Zoom polls.
 - The recommended bill positions from the PLC are crafted into a report for the CEO to provide to CRHC Board of Directors for final approval of positions and the correlating policy position priority tiers.
- **Advance CRHC legislative and budget priorities**, as needed, including by initiating and directly advocating for priority legislation, budget requests and related state regulatory matters.

- Support CRHC on bill positioning and effective engagement strategies, including facilitating meetings, appropriate and timely messaging, introductions and relationships between the client's leadership and members with relevant policymakers, and assisting the client in organizing testimony on key bills.
 - This may include testifying on behalf of CRHC in committee and/or coordinating member testimony, especially when the Director of Policy & Advocacy is on leave.
 - This may include coordinating an action alert in partnership with the CRHC Associate Director of Outreach.
- Cultivate CRHC's relationships with key legislators, officials in the Governor's office, and key agencies and departments.
- Represent and assist in representing CRHC to various stakeholders and settings:
 - Internal stakeholders include CRHC Policy & Legislative Committee and advocacy days at the Capitol, including a partner lobby day with the Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) and CRHC's Clinics at the Capitol Day.
 - External stakeholders at key committee hearings, stakeholder meetings, and interim session proceedings as needed.
- Identify, track, and report on legislation – both in development and introduced – that is aligned with CRHC's priorities. Apprise CRHC staff and PLC members of any potential policy and/or funding resources aligned with organization priorities.
- Maintain CRHC's bill tracking spreadsheet for dissemination to CEO, PLC members, CRHC Board of Directors and relevant CRHC staff.
 - CRHC currently utilizes the [Capitol Commons](#) bill tracking and advocacy platform
- Develop CRHC's final legislative report, which includes a session overview, descriptions of CRHC's policy and advocacy activities, and summaries and final actions of bills with CRHC policy positions.
- Work closely with CRHC's CEO and Director of Member Services

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS REQUIREMENTS

- Cover letter (single page, one sided)-qualifications of firm to meet expectations and Scope of Work
- Address Scope of Work components fully (no more than 5 pages)
- Proposed fee structure and payment schedule (monthly is preferred)
- Professional references
- Identify key firm member(s) servicing this contract
- Address firm's approach to advancing equity in health and public policy making
- Disclosure of current clients
- Identify any possible conflicts of interest

EVALUATION CRITERIA & PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Effectively address proposal elements described above

- Clear demonstration of the ability to develop and deliver an innovative and effective strategy through an ongoing collaborative partnership with CRHC
- Experience serving non-profit/association and healthcare facilities, including hospitals and primary care clinics
- Familiarity with rural healthcare stakeholders, including rural Colorado hospitals and primary care clinics
- Breadth and network of key contacts
- Demonstrated past success in providing similar services
- Compliance with lobbying registration and reporting requirements
- Proposed fees
- Final round interview participation

ATTACHMENTS

- [2026 CRHC Legislative Report](#)
 - A summary of CRHC policy positions and activities during 2026.
 - A 2027 report will be developed by the lobbyist in partnership with the Director of Policy & Advocacy.
- [2026 Snapshot of Rural Health](#)
 - An annual infographic resource developed annually by CRHC.
 - The lobbyist will use the 2027 Snapshot (currently in development) as a resource and advocacy tool during their contract.