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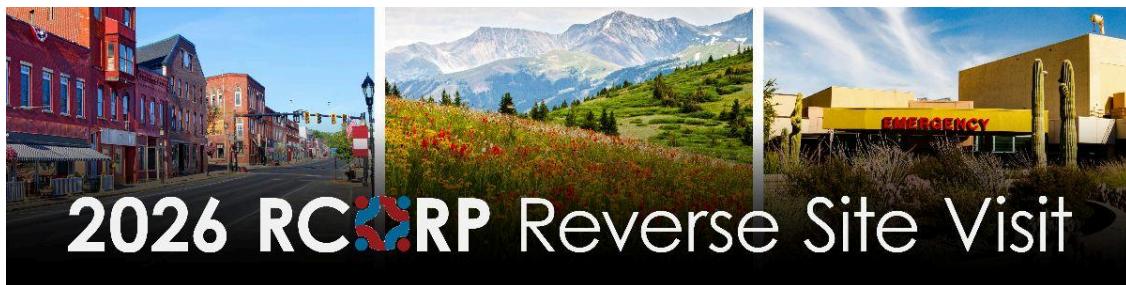


RURAL COMMUNITIES OPIOID RESPONSE PROGRAM - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

News Connection: Bridging Rural Communities January 2026 - Volume 55

Welcome to the January 2026 RCORP-TA Newsletter!

In this issue, we highlight resources for support in the new year, celebrate the great work of our Featured Grantee—Middle Tennessee State University, and introduce the "Be There" Anti-Stigma Media Toolkit as January's featured resources. **Happy New Year!**



RCORP-TA Reverse Site Visit (RSV) 2026

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), Rural Strategic Initiatives Division (RSID) is pleased to invite you to the 2026 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Reverse Site Visit (RSV). This 3-day event will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel (2500 Calvert Street NW, Washington, DC 20008), from 9:00 a.m. ET on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, through 12:30 p.m. ET on Thursday, March 5, 2026.

[Register](#) for the event and click [here](#) to view more details on the RCORP-TA Portal.

Support for the New Year

The start of the new year can give rise to difficult emotions, thoughts, or feelings—such as stress, loneliness, and grief—that can impact mental health and substance use (including alcohol use).

Learn more about [support for the new year](#) on the RCORP-TA Portal.



Featured Grantee

Middle Tennessee State University

Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU's) Center for Health and Human

Services and Cedar Recovery have partnered over the past two years to establish medication-assisted treatment (MAT) access points in six rural Tennessee counties. Learn more in MTSU's [Featured Grantee writeup](#).



RCORP "Be There" Anti-Stigma Media Toolkit

The "Be There" media materials were developed to address the ongoing need for compassionate care and community support for people with substance use disorders, specifically those who live in rural areas. The key message within the materials is that support is vital to recovery and a committed presence from loved ones can make the difference between success and failure in a person's recovery journey.

View and download the various files that comprise the [media toolkit](#) on the RCORP-TA portal.



Rural Roads Podcast

Rural Roads - The RCORPodcast

The Rural Roads Podcast is back, and new episodes are coming soon! Thank you for all of the support over our first two years. We hope the information has been helpful to you as an RCORP grantee. Check out January's featured episode.

[Engaging Patients in Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder](#)



RURAL ROADS

The RCORPodcast

5,000 Downloads! Listen Now



Events

Rural Peer Hour

- January 20, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Being and Becoming a Rural MOUD Provider: Live Sessions

- January 21, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

Recovery Office Hour

- January 21, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Office Hours with Dr. C

- January 20, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Funding Opportunities

The list of funding opportunities updates continually. Check the portal regularly to view all [listings](#).

- [HRSA State Loan Repayment Program](#)
 - Deadline: January 12, 2026
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Development: Community Facilities Programs](#)
- [Small Business Administration Rural Initiative Pilot Program](#)
- [USDA: National School Lunch Afterschool Snack Program](#)
- [USDA: Summer Food Service Program](#)



HRSA Updates

New Toolkit for Rural Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) released a new Outreach Toolkit (#5) to raise awareness about VA burial and memorial benefits for Veterans living in rural communities. It includes ready-to-use talking points, social media posts, flyers, info sheets, and digital posters that highlight available benefits and how to apply for them. Organizations and partners may use these materials to provide clear and helpful information to Veterans and their families.

Rural Health Research

Research in this section is provided by the HRSA/FORHP-supported Rural Health Research Gateway. [Sign up to receive alerts](#) when new publications become available.

[Availability of Higher-Level Neonatal Care Services in Rural U.S. Counties, 2010-2022](#)

This policy brief shows changes in higher-level neonatal care availability in rural counties from 2010 to 2022. Among the key findings, only about one percent of noncore rural counties had higher-level neonatal care availability in 2022; 20 of the 27 noncore counties that had higher-level neonatal care in 2010 lost this service by 2022.

[Rural Hospital Financial Distress Index: Relative Risk in 2025](#). The Financial Distress Index assigns every rural hospital to one of four financial risk categories: highest, mid-highest, mid-lowest, or lowest.

[Rural-Urban Differences in Barriers to Care and Utilization of Preventive Care Among Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage Beneficiaries](#). This policy brief compares differences between services in rural and urban areas among Medicare and Medicare Advantage enrollees. The study used data to examine barriers to care (such as out-of-pocket costs) and utilization measures (such as flu shots and cholesterol tests).

Resources

- [HRSA needs rural reviewers for grant applications](#)

- [HRSA National Health Service Corps medications for opioid use disorder training](#)
- [Rural Graduate Medical Education planning and development](#)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation: Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success \(ROUTES\)](#)
- [Targeted Technical Assistance for Rural Hospitals Program](#)

As the technical assistance provider for the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP), RCORP-TA provides access to a wide range of resources on relevant topics. Inclusion in this document does not imply endorsement of, or agreement with, the contents by JBS International or the Health Resources and Services Administration.



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