



DELAWARE RURAL HEALTH INNOVATION

RURAL TECH CATALYST FUND

Request for Proposals: Program Operator

ISSUED
September 21, 2026

PROPOSALS DUE
October 5, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET

Issued by Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP)
in partnership with Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS)
Funded by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Program

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1. Program Context, Opportunity & Desired Outcomes

1.1 Program Context and Opportunity

Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP), in collaboration with Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS), seeks an experienced Program Operator to design and implement a rural health innovation accelerator supported through Delaware's Rural Health Transformation Program.

The initiative presents an opportunity to advance two complementary objectives: improve health outcomes, access to care, and healthcare delivery for rural Delawareans while strengthening Delaware's startup, commercialization, and innovation ecosystem.

OPERATOR CONTRACT Through the Catalyst Fund, DPP anticipates deploying approximately \$5 million in non-dilutive funding to selected startups developing and deploying technology-driven solutions to meaningful rural health needs. A separate Program Operator contract of up to \$680,000 will support program design and delivery, startup commercialization assistance, specialized expertise, program administration, milestone monitoring, stakeholder and ecosystem engagement, and related activities.

DPP is not seeking a traditional accelerator model built primarily around generalized curriculum, mentorship, and a culminating pitch event. Rather, DPP seeks an Operator capable of helping participating startups navigate the pathways between a promising healthcare technology and meaningful validation, deployment, commercialization, and scale.

1.2 Three distinct financial and administrative streams

These streams are related to the same initiative but are not interchangeable. Dollar amounts and responsibilities should be read within the labeled stream.

STREAM	AMOUNT / RESOURCE	PURPOSE
OPERATOR CONTRACT	Up to \$680,000	Compensation for the selected Program Operator's contracted scope of work.
CATALYST FUND	Up to \$5 million	Direct, non-dilutive payments to participating startups; separate from the Operator contract.
DPP ADMINISTRATION	Separate DPP resources	DPP administration, oversight, payment authority, official records, evaluation, and post-contract tracking.

1.3 Rural Health Challenge Context

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Tech Catalyst Fund is intended to advance novel, technology-driven solutions that can improve rural healthcare quality, access, affordability, and health outcomes. The CMS Resource Guide places particular emphasis on consumer-facing technologies addressing chronic disease prevention and management and on solutions designed for the particular needs and constraints of rural populations.

The Program Operator will support DPP and DHSS in convening a multi-stakeholder workshop to validate, refine, and prioritize the resulting Challenge Statements. Final Challenge Statements will inform startup recruitment, program tracks, selection, and Catalyst Fund activities.

1.4 Program Opportunity

DPP intends to recruit promising U.S.-based startups whose technologies align with approved Challenge Statements and whose maturity and development pathways make meaningful progress achievable within the available funding period.

CMS requires participating technologies to demonstrate a minimum Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4, including evidence of technology feasibility.

DPP has developed a proposed healthcare-specific readiness framework as a potential reference tool. Respondents are not required to adopt that framework and may recommend another transparent and defensible method of assessing healthcare technology readiness, provided it is consistent with CMS's minimum TRL requirement.

DPP recognizes that healthcare technologies may follow substantially different regulatory, clinical, technical, adoption, and commercialization pathways. Accordingly, the selected Operator should help startups pursue company-appropriate, evidence-based milestones rather than requiring all participating startups to follow an identical commercialization or pilot pathway.

1.5 Desired Outcomes

The Catalyst Fund should generate measurable progress across four interconnected areas.

Healthcare Impact. Advance technologies that address approved rural health Challenge Statements and demonstrate progress toward improved health outcomes, access, quality, affordability, care delivery, chronic disease prevention or management, patient experience, or other approved outcomes.

Startup Commercialization. Advance participating startups toward meaningful technical, regulatory, clinical, operational, market, investment, and commercial milestones appropriate to their individual pathways. Outcomes may include validation, pilot or study activity, regulatory progress, paid deployment, commercial contracts, revenue, reimbursement progress, follow-on investment, or other meaningful commercialization achievements.

Delaware Economic Impact. Generate economic-development activity connected to Delaware, including company engagement, employment, business presence, investment, contracts, customers, partnerships, and other durable economic relationships.

Ecosystem Capacity and Sustainability. Strengthen Delaware’s ability to identify, evaluate, support, fund, deploy, and scale healthcare innovation by building durable connections among startups, healthcare organizations, community partners, subject-matter experts, corporations, investors, and state stakeholders.

DPP recognizes that some healthcare, commercialization, and economic outcomes will occur beyond the Program Operator’s contract period. The program should therefore produce reportable progress within the funding period while establishing systems that allow DPP to continue longitudinal assessment.

Final performance measures, targets, and reporting protocols will be established by DPP and DHSS in collaboration with the selected Program Operator.

1.5 Strategic Alignment and Sustainability

The Catalyst Fund also contributes to DPP’s broader innovation and economic-development strategy. DPP’s four innovation pillars are Pipeline Development, Capital Attraction, Corporate Connection, and International Soft Landing. DPP has positioned the Rural Health Transformation Catalyst Fund as an anchor initiative within Corporate Connection, with related opportunities to strengthen the startup pipeline and to increase access to capital.

DPP seeks a Program Operator who will treat the Catalyst Fund not as a one-time accelerator but as an opportunity to build durable commercialization relationships and innovation infrastructure.

Respondents should describe how their proposed model will help participating startups remain connected to appropriate healthcare partners, customers, investors, mentors, capital sources, and other commercialization resources after the Operator’s involvement ends, and how the relationships and capabilities developed through the program can continue to benefit Delaware.

DPP does not prescribe a specific sustainability or capital model, and Catalyst Fund awards do not provide DPP or the State with equity or ownership interests.

2. Program Parameters, Governance & Non-Negotiables

2.1 Core Program Parameters

Parameter	Current Requirement
Program Operator Budget	Up to \$680,000
Catalyst Fund	Up to \$5 million, separate from Operator budget
Contract Period	Effective date of executed agreement through September 30, 2027
Catalyst Fund Deadline	Applicable Catalyst Fund payments must be completed no later than September 30, 2027
Technology Readiness	Minimum TRL 4, consistent with CMS requirements
Challenge Alignment	Participating startups must align with approved Challenge Statements
Program Structure	Proposed by Respondent and finalized with DPP/DHSS
Number of Startups	Proposed by Respondent, subject to CMS/DHSS requirements
Catalyst Fund Allocation	Proposed methodology, subject to CMS/DHSS requirements and approval
Graduation Event	Required conceptually; timing and format proposed by Respondent
Evaluation Administration	DPP will independently administer participant evaluation surveys/interviews
Fiscal Accountability	Complete, auditable federal-funds documentation required

DPP has intentionally not prescribed a fixed accelerator duration, number of cohorts, number of startups, uniform Catalyst Fund award amount, or required progression through a clinical pilot. However, compliance with the Catalyst Fund’s milestone-based award and payment requirements is a core, non-negotiable program parameter. Respondents should recommend the program structure, cohort and track configuration, award strategy, and delivery model they believe are most likely to achieve the objectives of this RFP within the available resources and period of performance, while meeting all applicable milestone, funding, reporting, and federal compliance requirements.

2.2 Governance

DPP ADMINISTRATION

DPP will provide strategic leadership and overall program administration and will manage the Catalyst Fund. DHSS will provide rural health expertise, CMS coordination, federal compliance oversight, and applicable review and approvals. The Program Operator will lead day-to-day program implementation. This division is consistent with the current Delaware CMS-facing governance framework.

DPP is expected to:

- provide strategic direction and contract oversight;
- conduct the primary one-on-one stakeholder discovery process;
- coordinate Challenge Statement development with input from DHSS;
- participate in startup evaluation and selection;
- execute Catalyst Fund agreements;
- retain final authority over Catalyst Fund administration and payment;
- maintain official programmatic and financial records;
- administer independent participant evaluation activities; and
- continue post-contract longitudinal tracking.

DHSS

DHSS is expected to:

- serve as the State's primary liaison for CMS compliance;
- advise DPP and the Operator regarding applicable federal requirements;
- review program materials, award structures, reporting templates, and other items where required;
- participate in Challenge Statement validation and relevant selection activities; and
- coordinate federal reporting to CMS.

The current Delaware Statement of Work specifically assigns DHSS responsibility for advising on federal requirements involving intellectual property, program income, profit limitations, and data-sharing obligations.

Program Operator

The Operator will:

- finalize and implement the approved program architecture;
- support the Challenge Statement validation/prioritization workshop;
- recruit and evaluate startups;
- deliver accelerator programming and individualized commercialization support;
- coordinate appropriate mentors and specialized experts;
- support milestone development, monitoring, and verification;

- facilitate relevant healthcare, customer, investor, and ecosystem connections;
- provide program, milestone, performance, and financial reporting to DPP;
- support DPP-administered evaluation; and
- provide complete knowledge, data, and relationship transfer at contract closeout.

2.3 Federal Funds Stewardship and Documentation

The Program Operator and participating startups will be expected to maintain a high standard of fiscal accountability appropriate to the use of federal funds.

All expenditures charged to the Program Operator contract or supported through Catalyst Fund awards must be allowable under applicable CMS, DHSS, federal, and contractual requirements and must be supported by sufficient documentation.

The Program Operator must maintain complete, auditable financial records for expenditures under its contract and support DPP in establishing and enforcing comparable requirements for participating startups.

Supporting documentation may include, as applicable, invoices, receipts, payroll and personnel records, contracts, proof of payment, procurement documentation, travel records, and other source documentation sufficient to establish the nature, purpose, amount, authorization, and allowability of each expenditure.

DPP must be able to trace program expenditures from approved budget to actual expenditure and supporting documentation.

Participating startups will be required to report use of Catalyst Fund payments and maintain records sufficient to demonstrate that expenditures are consistent with approved agreements, budgets, milestones, and applicable federal requirements.

The Operator should design startup onboarding, reporting systems, financial-monitoring procedures, and technical assistance accordingly.

3. Program Design Challenge

3.1 Purpose

DPP seeks a Program Operator with the experience and judgment to recommend and implement a program model capable of advancing promising healthcare startups while producing measurable rural health, commercialization, economic-development, and ecosystem outcomes.

DPP has intentionally defined the objectives, resources, governance structure, federal constraints, and accountability expectations without prescribing a complete accelerator architecture.

Respondents are expected to propose and justify the model they believe will best achieve these outcomes.

3.2 Program Architecture

Respondents should propose and justify:

- number and profile of startups served;
- cohort, rolling, staged, challenge-based, or alternative structure;
- number of cohorts or cycles, if applicable;
- program duration and cadence;
- balance of common programming and individualized support;
- program-track architecture;
- relationship among programming, milestones, Catalyst Fund payments, and graduation;
- approach to startup recruitment and national sourcing;
- approach to startup support and commercialization;
- healthcare and ecosystem engagement;
- performance measurement;
- timeline through September 30, 2027; and
- major risks, dependencies, and mitigation strategies.

DPP anticipates a defined graduation or culminating event, such as a Demo Day or comparable high-visibility convening. DPP does not prescribe whether Catalyst Fund milestones must be completed before, at, or after graduation.

Where milestones extend beyond graduation, Respondents should explain the nature and duration of continued Operator support and accountability.

3.3 Healthcare Commercialization

Participating startups may represent materially different technologies and commercialization pathways.

The Operator should be capable of identifying when a startup requires specialized support related to areas such as regulatory strategy, clinical evidence, study or pilot design, privacy and cybersecurity, health-system procurement, reimbursement, quality systems, manufacturing, intellectual property, customer development, health economics, and investment.

DPP does not expect the Operator to maintain all such capabilities internally. Respondents should describe the expert network they will provide or access and how they will determine when specialized expertise is required.

A clinical pilot or healthcare provider deployment should be pursued when appropriate for the startup's pathway, not simply because the startup is participating in a healthcare accelerator.

3.4 Ecosystem Connectivity and Sustainability

Respondents should describe how the program will connect participating startups with the relationships and resources necessary for continued progression, including healthcare organizations, customers, corporations, community partners, subject-matter experts, investors, and capital sources.

DPP is particularly interested in approaches that create durable value after the contract period by:

- increasing startups' access to follow-on capital and commercialization resources;
- creating meaningful Delaware customer and partner relationships;
- strengthening investor-startup connectivity;
- creating reusable healthcare innovation pathways and partnerships; and
- transferring relationships, infrastructure, tools, and knowledge to DPP.

Respondents should propose their own sustainability model rather than assume continued funding from the Operator.

3.5 Program Pacing

The proposed architecture must provide sufficient time for startup sourcing and selection, milestone development and approval, startup support, milestone execution and verification, Catalyst Fund disbursement, reporting, and program closeout before applicable deadlines.

Respondents should identify schedule risks such as CMS review, healthcare contracting, regulatory processes, cybersecurity review, clinical/research approvals, startup recruitment, or other dependencies and explain how their model accounts for them.

4. Startup Selection & Catalyst Fund Framework

4.1 Startup Eligibility and Readiness

Participating startups must satisfy all applicable CMS and DHSS eligibility requirements described in the appended Rural Tech Catalyst Fund Resource Guide (Appendix A).

At minimum, technologies must meet the CMS Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4 requirement.

DPP has developed a proposed Healthcare Technology Readiness Level framework (Appendix B) as a potential reference tool. Respondents may use, adapt, or replace this approach and should explain the technology-readiness methodology they recommend.

The selected methodology must allow transparent and consistent assessment of readiness and remain consistent with CMS requirements.

4.2 Startup Evaluation and Selection

The Operator will support DPP and DHSS in developing and implementing a transparent and consistently applied startup selection process.

Evaluation is expected to consider CMS eligibility as well as factors such as:

- Challenge Statement alignment;
- technology readiness;
- potential to achieve meaningful progress within the available period;
- execution capacity;
- rural health impact;
- commercialization potential; and
- potential contribution to Delaware's economic-development and innovation objectives.

Respondents should propose the scoring methodology and identify where clinical, technical, regulatory, investment, or other expert diligence should be incorporated.

The Operator will administer and document the evaluation process and make recommendations. DPP will retain appropriate selection and approval authority, and finalists will be subject to applicable reviews by DHSS and CMS.

4.3 Program Tracks

Respondents should recommend a compliant program-track architecture consistent with approved Challenge Statements and CMS requirements.

The Operator should consider Challenge Statement alignment, startup maturity, commercialization pathway, fair benchmarking, milestone design, and program pacing.

DPP does not prescribe the number of tracks.

4.4 Catalyst Fund Allocation

CATALYST FUND: Up to \$5 million is available for direct, non-dilutive payments to participating startups.

DPP does not prescribe a final uniform award amount or allocation methodology. Respondents should propose a transparent and equitable funding model that balances:

- fairness and transparency;
- differences in startup and technology capital needs;
- appropriate stewardship;
- meaningful startup progression;
- compliance within program tracks;
- incentive alignment; and
- timely deployment of available funds.

Respondents may recommend equal awards, standardized tiers, differentiated awards, staged funding, or another compliant model.

The proposed methodology should avoid incentivizing startups to pursue unnecessarily expensive activities simply to maximize award size.

CATALYST FUND Applicable CMS provisions regarding kickoff payments and milestone-based disbursements will apply. The Resource Guide permits a kickoff payment of no more than 20% of the total award.

4.5 Milestones and Payment

CATALYST FUND Catalyst Fund payments will be tied to predefined, observable technical events and quantifiable outcomes consistent with CMS requirements.

Respondents should describe their approach to:

- milestone development;
- sequencing and dependencies;
- appropriate associated funding;
- monitoring and documentation;
- evidence verification;
- risk identification and corrective support; and
- payment recommendations.

DPP ADMINISTRATION The Operator will provide documented milestone status and payment-readiness recommendations to DPP. DPP retains responsibility for payments and official records.

The detailed CMS requirements regarding minimum milestones, outcome-based milestones, sequencing, cure periods, off-ramps, documentation, and payment structures are incorporated through the appended Resource Guide and need not be repeated in the Respondent's proposal.

5. Scope of Services & Required Deliverables

The selected Program Operator will provide the personnel, expertise, systems, networks, and program-management capacity necessary to implement the approved model.

5.1 Mobilization and Program Management

The Operator will develop and maintain an implementation plan, timeline, governance workflows, staffing model, risk-management approach, communication protocols, program-management systems, and operational processes necessary to deliver the program through September 30, 2027.

The Rural Tech Catalyst Fund is anticipated to continue as a multi-year initiative for up to five years, subject to continued federal funding and program authorization. This RFP, however, is for the initial period of performance only. DPP may elect to renew or extend the Operator's engagement for subsequent periods based on Operator performance, program needs, availability of funding, and applicable procurement and approval requirements. Nothing in this RFP guarantees funding, renewal, or continuation beyond the initial period of performance.

5.2 Challenge Validation

DPP will conduct primary one-on-one stakeholder discovery. The Operator will support design and facilitation of a one-time multi-stakeholder workshop to validate, refine, and prioritize proposed Challenge Statements and translate the results into actionable parameters for recruitment and program design.

5.3 Startup Recruitment and Selection

The Operator will lead local, regional, and national startup sourcing and recruitment; administer the application process; conduct eligibility screening and due diligence; coordinate reviewers and subject-matter experts; maintain conflict-of-interest protections; document scoring; and present recommendations to DPP/DHSS.

5.4 Accelerator Programming and Startup Support

The Operator will deliver the agreed combination of structured programming, individualized support, mentorship, technical assistance, expert consultation, peer learning, and connections necessary to advance participating startups toward approved milestones. DPP does not require identical programming for all startups.

5.5 Healthcare Commercialization Expertise

The Operator will provide or coordinate timely access to specialized healthcare commercialization expertise appropriate to startup needs, including regulatory, clinical, cybersecurity/privacy,

reimbursement, procurement/adoption, intellectual property, quality/manufacturing, health economics, customer development, and capital strategy.

5.6 Catalyst Fund and Milestone Support

CATALYST FUND The Operator will support the development of milestone structures, assess feasibility and dependencies, monitor progress, review evidence, identify risks, help address barriers, maintain supporting documentation, and recommend readiness for milestone payments. Respondents may reference the Resource Guide’s “Illustrative Example: Milestone payment schedule for one budget period” to guide their proposal.

5.7 Fiscal Monitoring and Federal Funds Compliance

The Operator will establish and maintain financial-management processes sufficient to support DPP’s federal stewardship responsibilities.

At minimum, the Operator will:

- maintain complete supporting documentation for its own federally funded expenditures;
- provide timely financial reports in the form and cadence required by DPP/DHSS;
- support startup onboarding regarding allowable uses of funds and documentation requirements;
- collect or facilitate collection of startup financial/use-of-funds information;
- identify missing, unsupported, or potentially unallowable costs promptly;
- support corrective action;
- make financial and program records readily available to DPP, DHSS, CMS, and authorized reviewers/auditors; and
- support complete financial closeout.

DPP ADMINISTRATION DPP will maintain the official financial and programmatic record, consistent with the current CMS-facing Statement of Work.

5.8 Ecosystem, Investor, and Commercialization Connections

The Operator will facilitate purposeful connections with healthcare providers, customers, corporations, community organizations, investors, capital sources, mentors, universities, and other resources that can advance startup progress and durable Delaware engagement. Connections should have a defined purpose and pathway to an outcome rather than engagement for engagement’s sake.

5.9 Visibility and Culminating Event

The Operator will support an agreed-upon, co-branded graduation or culminating event featuring DPP and the Operator and designed to showcase startup progress, engage relevant stakeholders, and build visibility for Delaware’s rural health innovation efforts and the state more broadly.

5.10 Measurement, Evaluation and Learning

The Operator will develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for the Program, in collaboration with DPP and DHSS. The plan will define program Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), startup baseline measures, data collection methods, and evaluation instruments, including participant surveys and interview protocols. It should specify the timing of data collection, including appropriate baseline, interim, end-of-program, and longitudinal follow-up measures, as well as other methods needed to assess program outcomes, participant experience, and Operator performance.

The Operator will provide DPP with the finalized evaluation plan, instruments, protocols, and administration guidance. DPP will administer post-program and longitudinal evaluation activities and maintain responsibility for ongoing data collection following the Operator's period of performance.

During the Program, the Operator will maintain required performance data, support agreed-upon reporting, and provide DPP with the data and documentation necessary to implement the evaluation plan and continue longitudinal tracking after the Program concludes.

5.11 Knowledge Transfer and Closeout

Before contract closeout, the Operator will provide DPP with a complete handoff of program records, startup and milestone status, financial and performance records, data definitions, evaluation instruments, stakeholder and expert relationships, operating procedures, lessons learned, and recommended longitudinal tracking protocols.

Required Minimum Deliverables

Deliverable	General Timing
Program Implementation Plan	Following contract execution
Challenge Validation/Prioritization Workshop & Summary	Early implementation
Recruitment and Selection Plan	Early implementation
Selection Documentation and Recommendations	Per approved schedule
Catalyst Fund / Milestone Framework	Prior to awards
Startup Milestone Documentation	Ongoing
Program, Financial and Performance Reports	Agreed cadence
Milestone Verification & Payment Recommendations	As applicable
Graduation/Culminating Event	Proposed by Operator
Evaluation Framework & Instruments	Early enough for baseline
Final Program Report	Prior to closeout
Longitudinal Evaluation & Knowledge-Transfer Package	Prior to closeout

6. Proposal & Evaluation

6.1 Respondent Qualifications

DPP seeks Respondents with demonstrated capability relevant to:

- startup acceleration and commercialization;
- early-stage healthcare technology assessment;
- healthcare commercialization;
- national startup recruitment and diligence;
- milestone-driven funding/program management;
- healthcare, corporate, investor, and expert networks;
- federally or publicly funded program administration;
- financial stewardship and documentation;
- performance measurement; and
- management of complex multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Respondents may assemble these capabilities through internal personnel, committed partners, subcontractors, and expert networks.

Respondents should clearly distinguish committed resources from resources they intend to recruit after award.

6.2 Proposal Narrative

The narrative proposal may not exceed 15 pages, excluding the materials identified in Section 6.3. To support consistent and equitable review, proposals must follow these formatting requirements:

- Page size: 8.5 × 11 inches
- Margins: At least 0.75 inch on all sides
- Font: Arial, Calibri, Aptos, or Times New Roman
- Font size: At least 11-point for narrative text; tables, figures, footnotes, and captions may use 10-point font
- Spacing: Single or greater line spacing
- Page numbering: Pages must be numbered consecutively
- File format: Submit as a single searchable PDF
- Tables and figures: Permitted within the narrative and count toward the 15-page limit

Respondents should organize the proposal using the section headings and sequence identified in this RFP to facilitate consistent review. DPP may decline to review content exceeding the page limit.

The narrative should contain:

A. Executive Summary

Concise summary of the Respondent, proposed program architecture, differentiators, assumptions, and expected outcomes.

B. Strategic Alignment

Describe how the proposed model advances:

- rural health transformation;
- startup commercialization;
- Delaware economic development;
- Delaware innovation and ecosystem capacity;
- DPP's relevant innovation pillars;
- sustainability beyond the Operator contract; and
- durable connectivity to healthcare partners, customers, investors, and capital.

C. Program Design

Present and justify the proposed response to the Program Design Challenge, including program architecture, number of startups, track structure, pacing, startup recruitment/selection, Catalyst Fund methodology, milestones, startup support, graduation, implementation schedule, and key risks.

D. Healthcare Commercialization

Describe the Respondent's approach to assessing healthcare startup pathways and providing or accessing necessary regulatory, clinical, technical, adoption, reimbursement, cybersecurity, investment, and commercialization expertise.

E. Team and Organizational Approach

Describe program leadership, staffing, governance, roles, partner structure, organizational capacity, federal-funds management capability, and approach to working with DPP/DHSS.

F. Past Performance

Provide two to three relevant examples emphasizing measurable outcomes, lessons learned, and relevance to this program.

G. Evaluation, Learning and Knowledge Transfer

Describe proposed performance measures, evaluation support, learning/continuous-improvement approach, longitudinal framework, and knowledge transfer to DPP.

6.3 Required Supplemental Materials

The following materials do not count toward the 15–page narrative limit:

Detailed Budget & Budget Narrative

Itemized Operator budget with assumptions and rationale.

Key Personnel Qualifications, Commitment & Availability

Biosketch/resume plus role, organization, anticipated level of effort, availability, and commitment status for each key individual.

Organizational Resources & Capabilities

Concise description of relevant infrastructure, systems, expert networks, facilities/resources, and organizational capabilities available to support the program.

Data, Evaluation & Security Approach

A supplemental plan addressing:

- program data systems;
- where and how data will be stored;
- cybersecurity controls;
- access controls and permissions;
- confidential startup information;
- regulatory/data requirements applicable to information handled;
- backup, retention, and incident response;
- third-party systems/vendors;
- how DPP will access program, milestone, financial, and evaluation data;
- data export/transfer at closeout; and
- support for longitudinal evaluation.

Partner/Subcontractor Information

Required where applicable, including roles and whether commitments are confirmed.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Including affiliated investment funds or financial interests that could create actual or perceived conflicts.

References

Respondents are encouraged to provide up to three references for comparable work.

Required Procurement/Compliance Forms

As applicable.

6.4 Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight
Strategic Alignment	15%
Program Design	35%
Healthcare Expertise	15%
Team & Capacity	10%
Past Performance	10%
Evaluation & Learning	5%
Budget & Value	10%
Total	100%

Strategic Alignment – 15%

Reviewers will consider the Respondent’s understanding of the dual rural health and economic development objectives; alignment with DPP’s innovation strategy; approach to startup commercialization and Delaware engagement; ecosystem connectivity; sustainability; and ability to create strategic value beyond the immediate accelerator period.

Program Design – 35%

Reviewers will consider the coherence, rationale, feasibility, and innovation of the proposed program architecture, including recruitment, startup selection, program tracks, Catalyst Fund methodology, milestone strategy, support model, implementation timing, federal compliance integration, graduation, and risk mitigation.

Healthcare Expertise – 15%

Reviewers will consider early-stage healthcare technology assessment experience, healthcare commercialization capability, understanding of diverse regulatory/clinical/adoption pathways, healthcare-provider and payer knowledge, and the quality and accessibility of the proposed specialist network. The CMS Resource Guide states that RTCF management requires deep expertise and experience in healthcare investment and in assessing early-stage healthcare companies.

Team & Capacity – 10%

Reviewers will assess team quality, availability, level of effort, organizational capacity, project management, federal funds management capability, networks, and the ability to execute within the available period.

Past Performance — 10%

Reviewers will assess comparable experience and demonstrated outcomes, including commercialization, deployment, capital, healthcare, economic development, program management, and public-sector results.

Evaluation & Learning — 5%

Reviewers will assess the quality of proposed KPIs, baseline and outcome measurement, learning and continuous improvement, support for independent DPP evaluation, longitudinal tracking, and knowledge transfer.

Budget & Value — 10%

Reviewers will assess reasonableness, transparency, federal cost alignment, cost-effectiveness, and the appropriate concentration of proposed resources on the activities most likely to achieve program outcomes. Lowest cost will not necessarily receive the highest score.

6.5 Selection Process

DPP anticipates a competitive review involving written scoring and may also use interviews or presentations, reference checks, requests for clarification, and negotiations.

DPP and DHSS will participate in the review process. The selected Respondent will be the proposal judged to provide the strongest overall value and ability to advance the Catalyst Fund's health, commercialization, economic, and ecosystem objectives.

7. Budget, Contract & Procurement Requirements

7.1 Operator Budget

OPERATOR CONTRACT The maximum anticipated Program Operator budget is up to \$680,000.

OPERATOR CONTRACT The Respondent's budget should include all costs necessary to deliver its proposed program model and must remain separate from the up to \$5 million Catalyst Fund.

OPERATOR CONTRACT Respondents should identify major cost assumptions, personnel and effort, consultant/subcontractor costs, specialized expertise, travel, events, technology, and other significant expenses.

OPERATOR CONTRACT Respondents must identify any assumptions about program scale or Catalyst Fund design that materially affect the Operator budget.

7.2 Catalyst Fund

CATALYST FUND Up to \$5 million is anticipated to be available for direct payments to participating startups.

CATALYST FUND Catalyst Fund dollars are separate from the Operator contract.

DPP ADMINISTRATION The Operator will support DPP/DHSS in finalizing the approved funding architecture, developing and monitoring milestones, verifying evidence, and making documented recommendations. DPP retains responsibility for payments.

CATALYST FUND Respondents should not budget Operator fees, accelerator programming, general technical assistance, or other Operator administrative costs against the Catalyst Fund except where expressly permitted under applicable requirements.

7.3 Financial Reporting and Audit Readiness

The Program Operator must maintain accounting and financial-management systems capable of meeting federal, DHSS, CMS, and DPP documentation and reporting requirements.

The Operator and participating startups should assume that expenditures may be subject to review by DPP, DHSS, CMS, or authorized auditors and must be supported by complete source documentation.

The selected Operator must respond promptly to documentation requests, questioned costs, corrective actions, and financial closeout requirements.

7.4 Contract Period

The anticipated agreement will begin on its effective execution date and terminate on September 30, 2027.

7.5 Procurement Schedule

Activity	Date
RFP Issued	September 21, 2026
Respondent Questions Due	September 29, 2026
DPP Responses Issued	October 1, 2026
Proposals Due	October 5, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET
Finalist Interviews, if applicable	October 12, 2026
Anticipated Selection	October 26, 2026
Agreement Execution	November 1, 2026
Program Start	Upon agreement execution
Contract End	September 30, 2027

7.6 Submission and Communications

Proposals must be submitted via email to CatalystFund@ChooseDelaware.com and include the subject line **DRHC-2026** and your organization name.

All RFP questions must be submitted in writing to CatalystFund@ChooseDelaware.com.

Respondents should rely only on written amendments, clarifications, and responses issued by DPP.

7.7 Procurement Conditions

Proposal Submission

Proposals shall include all information requested in this RFP.

Late submissions may not be considered. Respondents are responsible for ensuring complete and timely delivery.

Proposal Validity

Proposals shall remain valid for a minimum of 120 days following the submission deadline unless otherwise extended by mutual agreement.

Rights Reserved

DPP reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Request clarification or additional information
- Negotiate with one or more respondents
- Cancel or reissue this RFP
- Make no award
- Waive minor irregularities when determined to be in the best interest of the State

Communications Review

All public-facing communications, branding, marketing materials, press releases, and award announcements developed by the Operating Partner shall be subject to DPP review and any required DHSS and CMS approvals prior to release.

Anticipated Contract

The selected respondent will enter into an agreement with DPP that incorporates:

- The final negotiated Scope of Work
- Approved budget
- Reporting requirements
- Applicable DHSS and CMS requirements
- Rural Health Catalyst Fund requirements
- Applicable federal and state regulations
- DPP contractual terms and conditions

The agreement will be structured in a manner consistent with the cooperative relationship described throughout this RFP, while maintaining DPP's responsibility for strategic oversight, compliance, and fiscal accountability.

Appendices

The following documents are incorporated by reference and will accompany this RFP.

Appendix	Document
A	Rural Tech Catalyst Fund Resource Guide
B	DPP Proposed Healthcare Technology Readiness Framework