

**Recruitment Contingency Fund (RCF)
Policy**

Ministry of Health
Revised April 2024

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Section: 1 General	Effective: April 2024

1.1 Description

The Recruitment Contingency Fund (RCF) is intended to provide grants to assist with the expenses related to recruiting physicians to fill vacancies in eligible rural communities. The RCF is available to assist health authorities (HA's) with the expenses associated with filling vacancies in a timely manner that would otherwise have a significant impact on the delivery of medical care required by the HA Physician Supply Plan.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to outline the criteria and eligibility of the RCF of British Columbia (BC).

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to physicians, HA's and other key partners who may be eligible for the RCF.

1.4 Oversight

RCF is a rural physician program under the Rural Practice Subsidiary Agreement (RSA), which is a subsidiary agreement of the Physician Master Agreement between the BC Government, Doctors of BC (DoBC) and the Medical Services Commission (MSC).

The Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC), established under the RSA, is comprised of representatives from DoBC, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) and the HAs. The JSC advises the BC Government and DoBC on matters pertaining to rural medical practice and is responsible for the overall governance of these rural programs for physicians.

The goal of the JSC is to enhance the availability and stability of physician services in rural and remote areas of BC by addressing some of the unique and difficult circumstances faced by physicians in these areas.

1.5 Administration

The Ministry, in collaboration with the HA's, provides the administration of the RCF in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the JSC. Applications for the RCF are administered by Rural Practice Programs, Physician Services Branch, Ministry of Health, on behalf of the JSC.

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Section: 2	Definitions	Effective:	April 2024

Term	Definitions
Health Authority (HA)	Governing bodies, as per the <i>Health Authorities Act</i> , with responsibility for the planning, coordination, and delivery of regional health services, including hospital, long term care and community services.
Itinerant Physician	A physician who travels from his/her home community to an eligible RSA community to provide outreach/direct patient services.
Locum Physician	A physician with appropriate medical staff privileges who substitutes on a temporary basis for another physician (host physician) and who works as independent contractors.
Rural Practice Subsidiary Agreement (RSA) Community	A rural community that meets all the criteria of the RRP, included in Appendix A of the RSA.
Rural Retention Program (RRP) Fee Premium	Physicians providing services in eligible RSA communities will receive a premium on their Medical Service Plan (MSP) Fee for Service (FFS) billings.

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Section: 3 Guidelines

Effective: April 2024

3.1 Guidelines

- Grants of up to \$25,000 per permanent vacancy may be obtained from the RCF. These grants may only be used to:
 - assist with recruiting expenses that may be incurred, and /or
 - assist physicians with expenses incurred for relocating to an RSA community.
- Under circumstances where the HAs face extreme difficulty recruiting into a permanent vacancy, they may request an exception from the JSC to utilize the RCF to increase the Recruitment Incentive Fund (RIF).

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Section: 4 Eligibility	Effective: April 2024

4.1 Advertising and Site Visits Eligibility

HA's may claim up to \$10,000 for the following:

Advertising

- Advertising: \$5,000 maximum per vacancy. A maximum of 2 advertisements may be placed and qualify for reimbursement.
- To be eligible for advertising expense reimbursement the vacancy must be advertised through Health Match BC (HMBC).
- Eligible means of advertisements include journal, web-based and targeted social media. Up to 2 advertisements may be placed and qualify for reimbursement. HMBC offers discounted rates for ads in the Canadian Medical Association Journal and the BC Medical Journal.
- Conferences, recruitment fairs and association/professional meetings are not eligible for funding.
- Recruitment activities that are financially supported by the Government through HMBC are not eligible for funding.

Site Visits

- Candidates may be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$3,500 for expenses related to community site visits. Eligible expenses include travel, meals, accommodation and one dinner with the local physicians related to the vacancy (one per candidate) and may include the costs of their spouse but does not apply to children.
- The \$3,500 per candidate listed above includes a maximum of \$50 per guest (up to 15 guests, maximum \$750) may be claimed for a community physician dinner. The funds cannot be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

4.2 Relocation Physician Eligibility

- Physicians recruited to an RSA community to fill a permanent vacancy in the HA Physician Supply Plan may be eligible to receive assistance with relocation expenses through the RCF:
 - \$15,000 to physicians relocating from outside of Canada.
 - \$12,000 to physicians relocating from outside of BC, but within Canada.
 - \$9,000 to physicians relocating within BC.
- To qualify for the RCF, physicians must be eligible for and receiving the RIF benefit.
- Medical school residents who transition to full-time practice and fill a permanent vacancy in the HA Physician Supply Plan in an eligible RSA community may be eligible for the RCF.
- A physician receiving this benefit is obligated to repay the amount in full if they leave the community less than 1-year after commencing work.
- Locum and itinerant physicians are not eligible for the RCF.
- If a physician has already received a RCF payment for relocation expenses for moving to an eligible RSA community and subsequently left that RSA community, they are eligible to receive the RCF stipend for recruitment to a different RSA community if the following conditions are met:
 1. The 1-year minimum requirement in the first community.
 2. If a physician has not received the RCF stipend more than 2 times already (i.e., a physician may only receive the RCF stipend a maximum of 3 times).
 3. If relocating between RSA communities, physicians must be moving both their practice and permanent residence. Relocations between adjacent/neighboring communities in close proximity are subject to JSC approval.

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Section: 5 Application and Payment

Effective: April 2024

5.1 Application

- The HA (or group of community physicians with the HA's support) may apply for a grant from the RCF to support their recruitment expenditure plans related to advertising and site visits. HA's must submit the completed [RCF application form](#) to the Ministry outlining their request and provide the specific allocation of funds towards advertising, site visits or relocation expenses.
- The RCF application should include:
 1. A copy of the HA's Physician Supply Plans showing the vacancy for which this additional recruiting support is being requested.
 2. A written description by the HA clearly articulating how the recruitment of this position fits with the HA's objectives and health care delivery priorities in accordance with their approved Physician Supply and Health Service Plans.
 3. For recruitment of specialists, a specific impact analysis must also be prepared and submitted by the HA.

5.2 Payment

- All RCF applications must be received by the Ministry within 1-year of the date of eligibility. No retroactive payments shall be issued on applications older than 1-year.
- Upon receipt and approval of the RCF application the Ministry will release the funds to the HA for appropriate distribution.
- For the relocation expenses, HA's must notify the Ministry of any physicians who do not fulfill the 1-year commitment. HAs are responsible for the recovery of funds from the physicians and repayment to the Ministry.



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Section: 6 Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation	Effective: April 2024

6.1 Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Ministry will monitor program expenditures on a regular basis and perform an annual reconciliation of program expenditures.
- The Ministry will provide a report on the RCF utilization to the JSC quarterly, reporting on financial information, identify unresolved program issues, and bring forward recommendations on policy or program changes, as needed.