Kentucky Rural Health Transformation
October 2026 Update

Tom Walton

October 20, 2026

Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Accredited Health Department
PHAB
Advancing Public Health Performance
Public Health Accreditation Board

TEAM KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Rural Health Transformation Program is a cooperative agreement between CMS and the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Rural Health Transformation Program

The Commonwealth of Kentucky has been awarded funding through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Fund (RHTF). This investment will empower Kentucky to launch and implement its Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) — a community-driven strategy to expand access and improve health outcomes for rural residents across the Commonwealth. Read Governor Beshear's press release.

About the Program

This project is 100% funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for a total of $212.9 million in budget year 1 with 100% by CMS/HHS. The Rural Health Transformation (RHT) grant spans five budget periods aligned with federal fiscal years (FY2026–FY2030). Funding is disbursed annually by CMS based on achievement of performance metrics. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government. View the Notice of Funding Opportunity at https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/360442

A Healthier Rural Kentucky. Built to Last.



Kentucky Rural Health Transformation

Kentucky Rural Health Transformation (KyRHT) is a five-year federal investment to reshape health in rural Kentucky. Through five interconnected programs, we are tackling some of the challenges that impact rural communities most.

Rural Health Transformation Plan Goals

CMS Strategic Goals:

- Make Rural America Healthy Again
- Workforce Development
- Innovative Care
- Tech Innovation
- Sustainable Access

Allowable Uses of Funds*

states **must invest in at least three uses of funds*

- Prevention and Chronic Disease
- Provider Payments
- Consumer Tech Solutions
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Workforce
- IT Advances
- Appropriate Care Availability
- Behavioral Health
- Innovative Care

Rural Health Transformation Funding Constraints

Core Funding Exclusions



New construction



Independent Research and Development



Duplicate billable services

RHT funding **cannot** be used to replace or duplicate funding or change fee schedules.

RHT Funding must:

- Emphasize **sustainable system transformation**
- Support **big, innovative ideas** that are **evidence-based**
- Facilitate **early wins**, as the state is **at risk to pay back funding**

Five Programs Built to Deliver Better Health for Rural Kentucky



PoWERing Rural Maternal & Infant Health

Supporting mother and baby with tailored care, from pregnancy through year one.



Crisis to Care Program (CTC)

Coordinating EMS and trauma response to match every emergency to the care it needs, every time.



Rapid Response to Recovery (R3)

Shifting crisis response toward coordinated, lasting behavioral health care.



Rooted in Health (RIH)

Expanding dental care where it's needed most.



Chronic Care Innovation (CIH)

Reducing chronic illness through evidence-based, community-led strategies.

Activities awarded in the first 9 months

Rural Community Hubs

Rural Health Ambassadors

CTC (EMS)

PoWER (Maternal & Infant)

PoWER teams

HANDS Expansion

RRR (Behavioral)

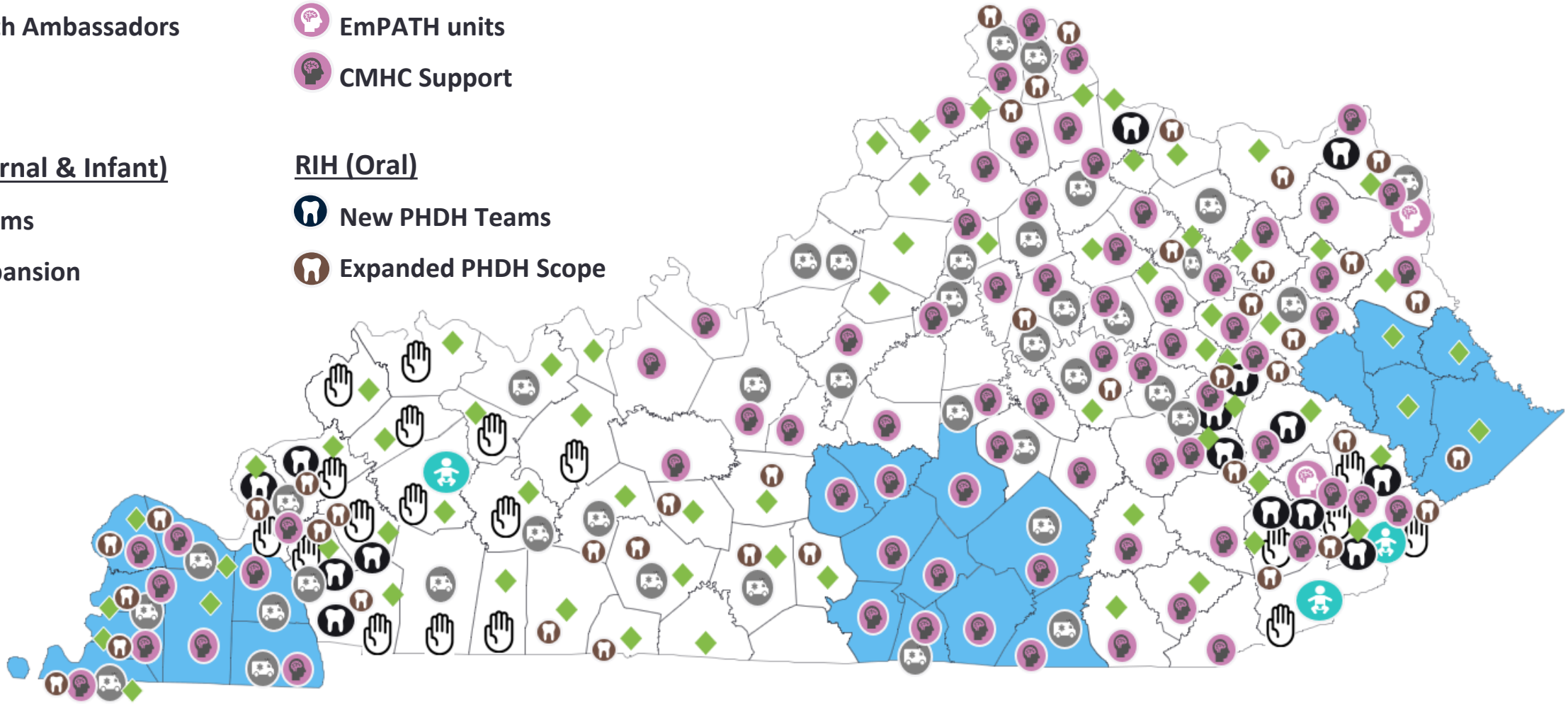
EmPATH units

CMHC Support

RIH (Oral)

New PHDH Teams

Expanded PHDH Scope



Goal: Increase Access to Maternal and Infant Healthcare in Rural Kentucky



PoWERing

Rural Maternal & Infant Health

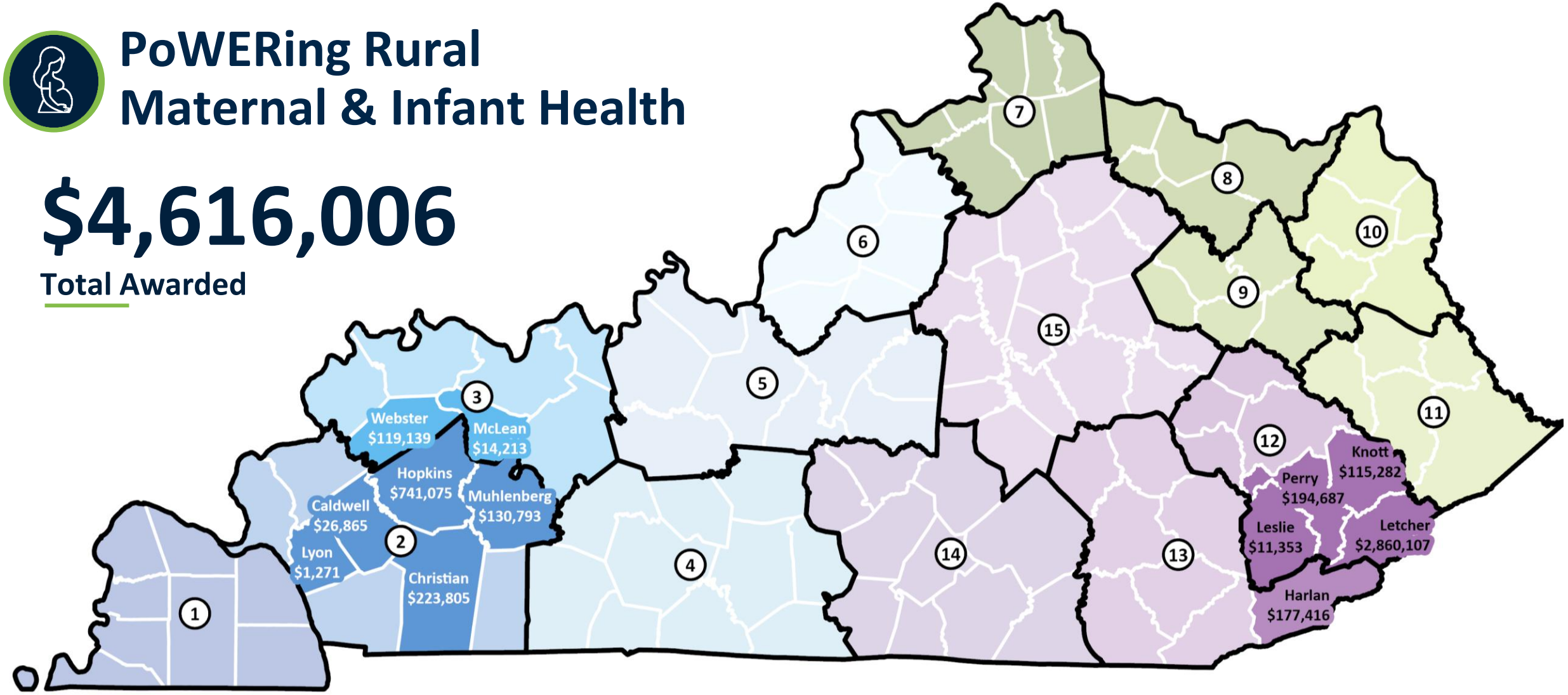
Transforming the maternal and infant health care delivery system in rural Kentucky to improve maternal and infant health outcomes

- **Increasing access to care** through the PoWER Model of Care and community-based teams.
- **Expanding the doula workforce statewide**.
- **Growing home visiting capacity** for prenatal, postpartum and early childhood care (HANDS).
- **Improving emergency maternal and newborn care training** for rural non-birthing hospitals and emergency responders.
- **Developing a specialized** perinatal Community Health Workers (CHWs) certificate.

PoWERing Rural Maternal & Infant Health

$4,616,006

Total Awarded



1 – Purchase
2 – Pennyrile
3 – Green River
4 – Barren River
5 – Lincoln Trail
6 – KIPDA
7 – Northern KY
8 – Buffalo Trace
9 – Gateway
10 – FIVCO
11 – Big Sandy
12 – KY River
13 – Cumberland Valley
14 – Lake Cumberland
15 – Bluegrass

Goal: Faster Help, Fewer Crises and a Clearer Path to Recovery for Rural Kentuckians



Rapid Response to Recovery

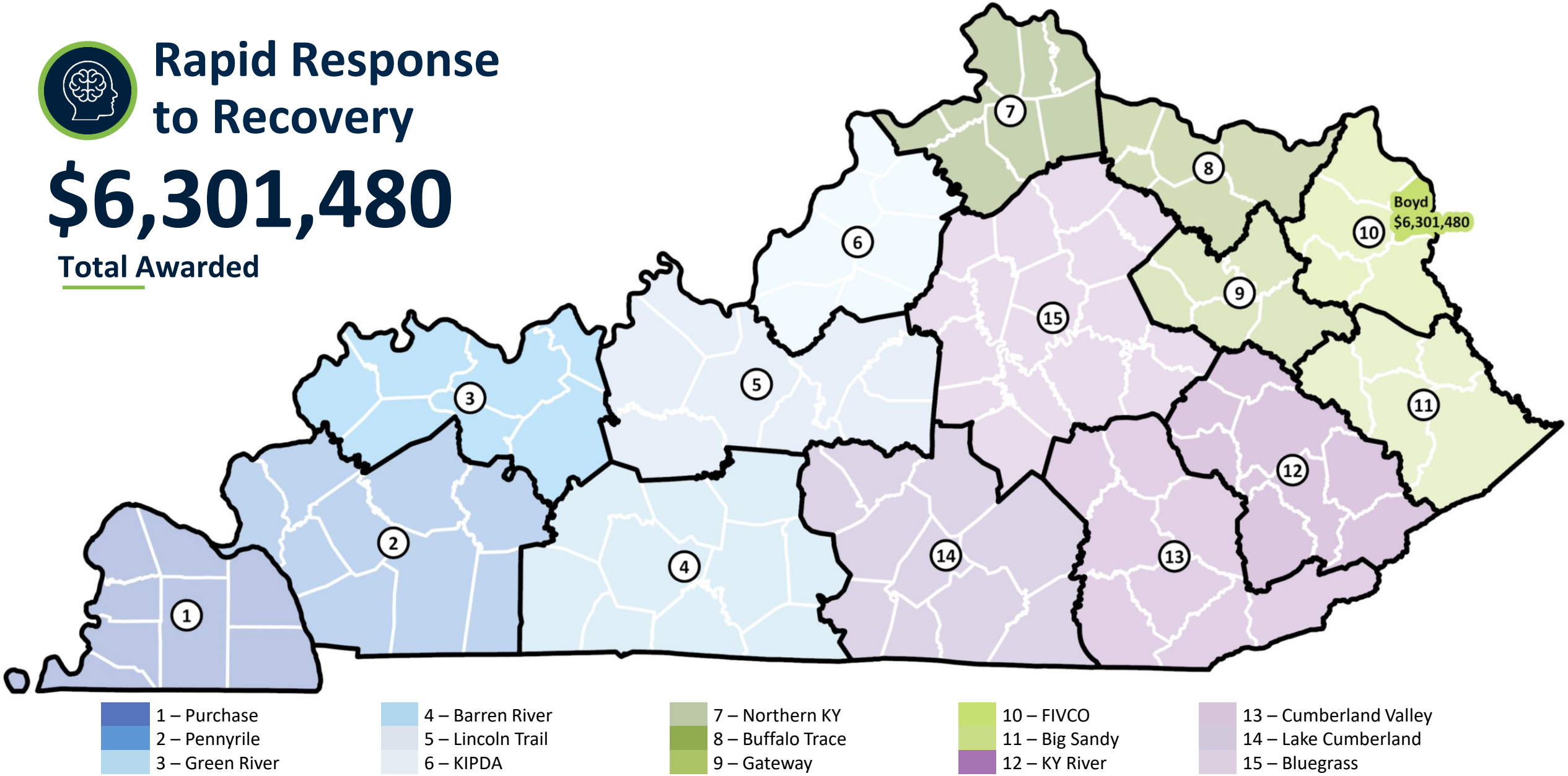
Transforming behavioral health for rural Kentucky

- Ensuring each patient gets the right care at the right time, **regardless of which door they walk through**.
- Increasing access to specialty crisis care through **telebehavioral health**, **response teams** and **EmPATH units**.
- Building **integrated clinical services** through **community-led partnerships**.

Rapid Response to Recovery

$6,301,480

Total Awarded



1 – Purchase
2 – Pennyrile
3 – Green River
4 – Barren River
5 – Lincoln Trail
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Goal: Bring Routine Dental Care Closer to Rural Kentuckians



Rooted in Health

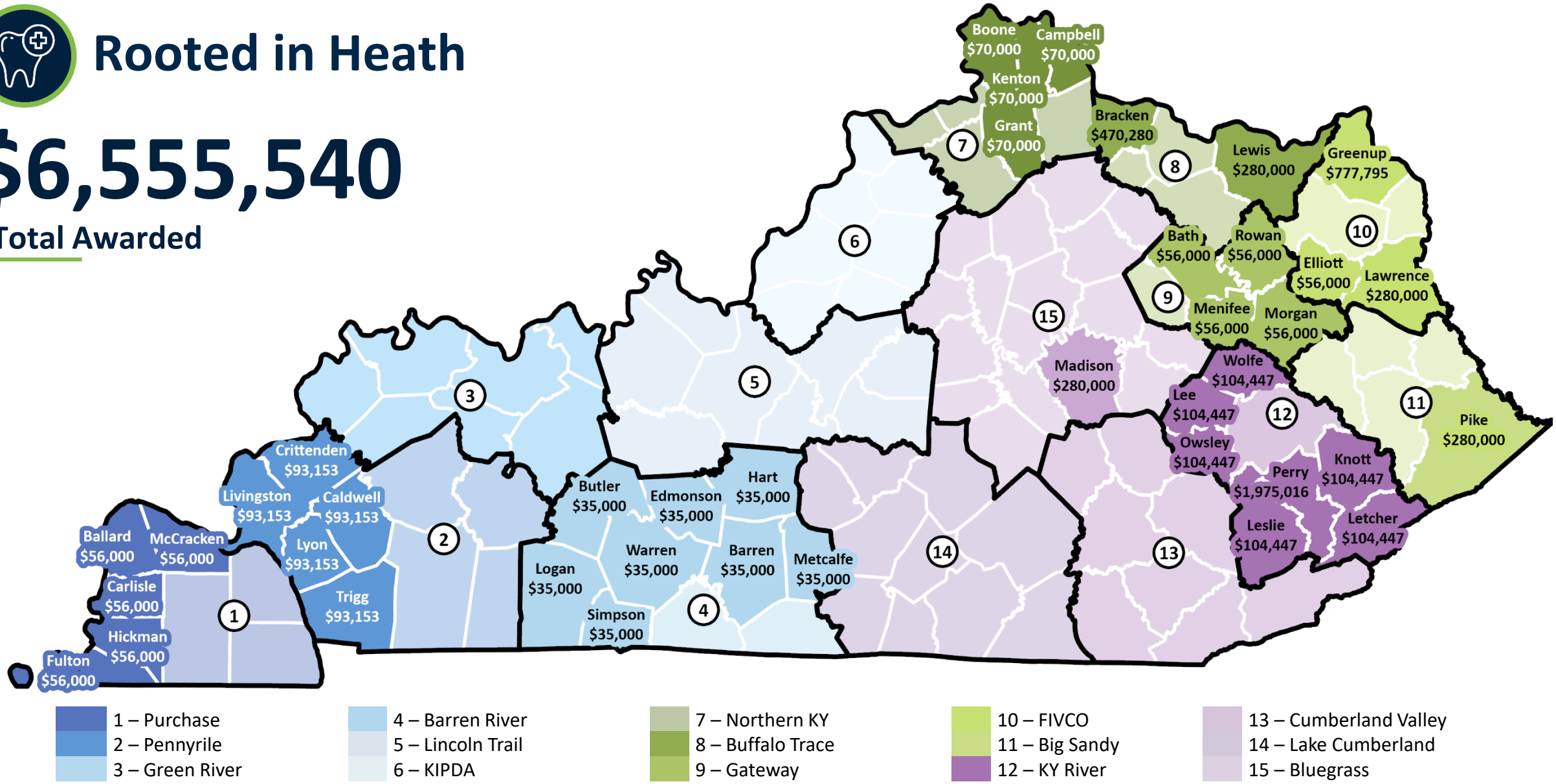
Prioritizing oral health through workforce development and treatment expansion

- Training and placing **more dental hygienists in rural Kentucky communities** so more people have somewhere to turn.
- **Bringing teledental and mobile dental services to rural communities** so people drive less and get care sooner.
- Equipping general dentists in rural communities with **advanced continuing education** for surgical extractions to **decrease wait times and referrals**.

Rooted in Heath

$6,555,540

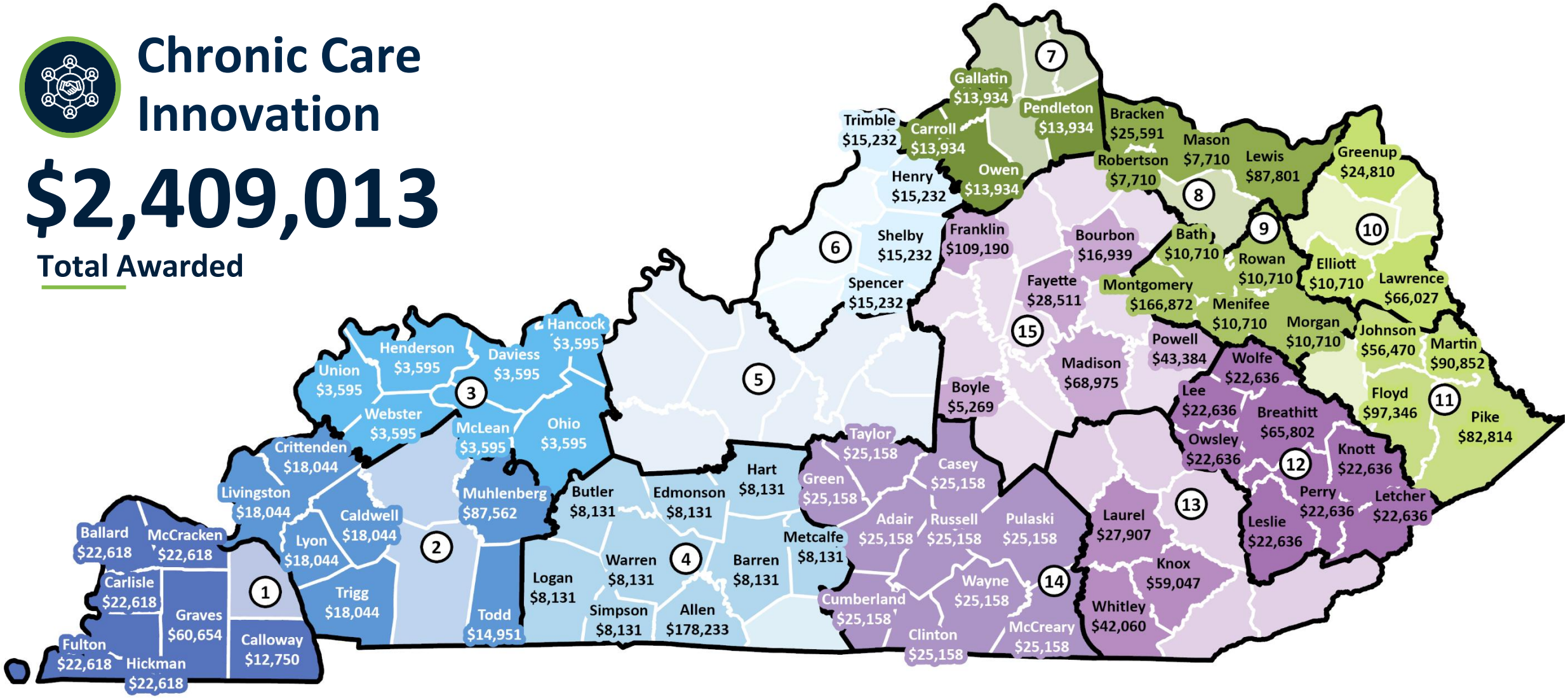
Total Awarded



Chronic Care Innovation

$2,409,013

Total Awarded

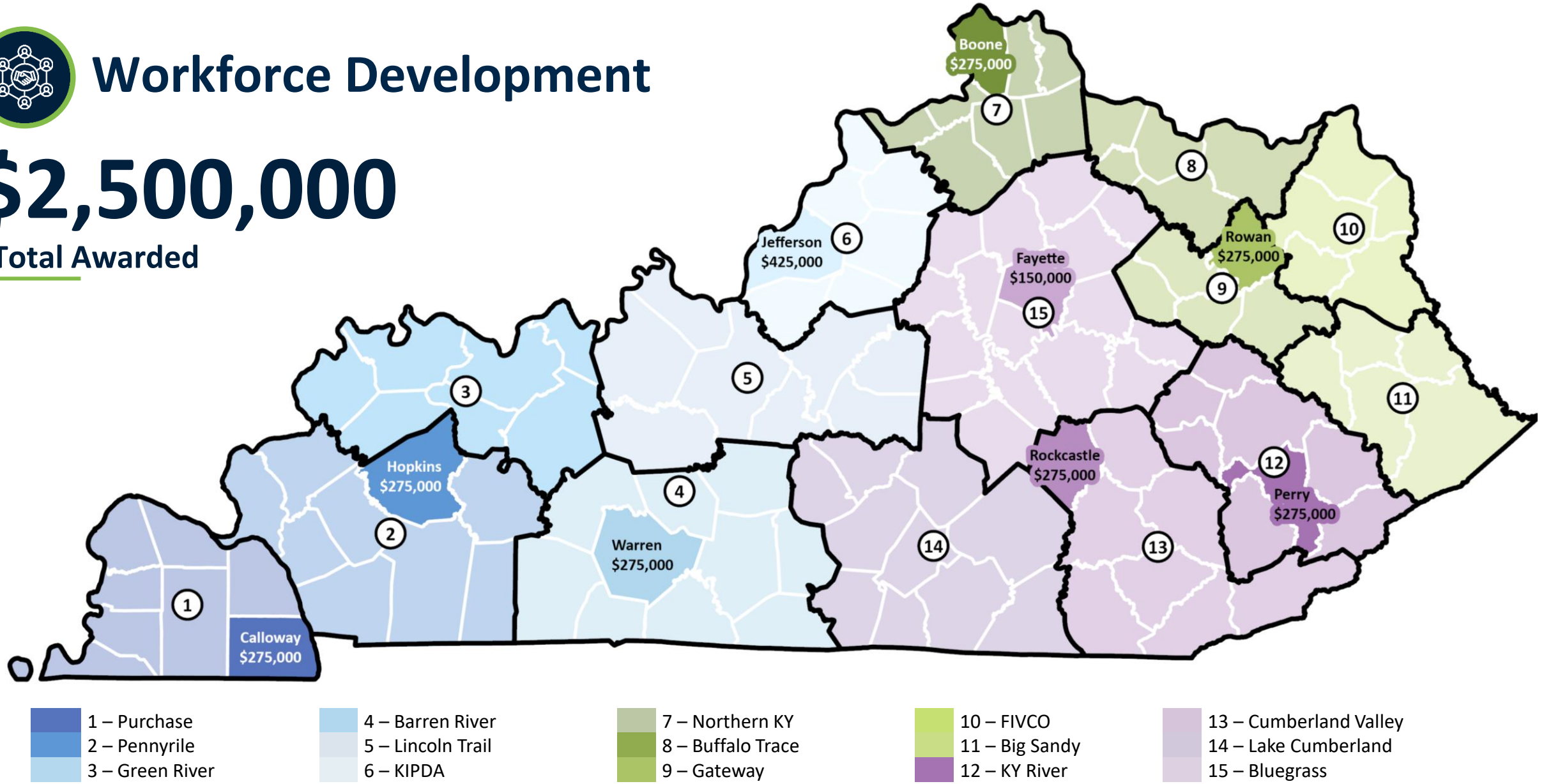


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Workforce Development

$2,500,000

Total Awarded



Statewide KYRHT Activities Under Contract

Clinical

- $4,390,605 **Teledental Hubs.** all three of Kentucky's Dental Schools: UK, UofL, and UPike *(Spring 2027)*
- $6,177,638 **Telebehavioral Health Hubs.** UK, UofL, KPCA, Behavioral Health Organizations *(Spring 2027)*

Emergency Response

- $9,072,941 **EMS Communications and Coordination.** UK, UofL, KPCA *(Fall 2026)*
- $477,452 **STARS.** EMS care plans for medically complex children UofL, Norton's Children's Hospital *(Winter 2026)*
- $2,263,512 **988 Communications Platform.** DBHDID, CMHCs *(Spring 2027)*

Data and Technology

- $2,248,831 **Vitality Signs.** public facing website with community data, UK College of Public Health *(June of 2027; Beta site live now)*

Community Care Coordination

- $4,350,743 **Clinical Care Coordination.** KHIE – RHT-specific features *(under development)*
- $5,190,000 **Non-Clinical Resource Coordination.** kynect resources – RHT-funded *enhancements (under development)*

Statewide KYRHT Activities Under Contract (continued)

Workforce

- **$6,587,732 Dental Hygienists** (Fall 2028): BCTC, Campbellsville, KSU, UK-Hazard
- **$1,011,172 Expanded Duty Dental Assistants** (Winter 2027): KPCA
- **$668,534 Advanced Extraction Training for General Dentists in Rural Areas** (Spring 2027): UK, KPCA
- **$175,000 Doulas** (Winter 2026): Kentuck Perinatal Quality Collaborative
- **$2,500,000 Pipeline** (Fall 2026)**:** UofL, UK, and all 8 Area Health Education Centers
- **$2,595,475 Community Health Workers** (foundational Fall 2026):UofL Trager Institute, AKHCAN, UK Homeplace; (specialty certificates Fall 2027): UofL Trager Institute, KPCA, WKU, Volunteers of America, Ky Pharmacy Education and Research Foundation

All Initiatives Score 2.2 on the CMS Checkpoint Model

#	Initiative Name
1	Rural Community Hubs for Chronic Care Innovations

Stage 0 – Planning			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
0.1	Establish governance	Yes	t 0.1 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master I
0.2	Submit project plan to CMS	Yes	See uploaded Project Plan
Stage 1 – Project Preparation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
1.1	CMS approval of project plan	Yes	CMS email dated 8/22/2026 (not included)
1.2	Launch initiative	Yes	Initiative 1 CCi Checkpoint 1.2 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Initiative Attachments PDF
Stage 2 – Early Implementation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
2.1	Continue initiative activities	Yes	See CCi tab in uploaded Project Plan
2.2	Achieve at least one post-launch milestone	Yes	See CCi tab in uploaded Project Plan

#	Initiative Name
2	PoWERing Rural Maternal and Infant Health: Community-Based Teams

Stage 0 – Planning			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
0.1	Establish governance	Yes	int 0.1 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master
0.2	Submit project plan to CMS	Yes	See uploaded Project Plan
Stage 1 – Project Preparation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
1.1	CMS approval of project plan	Yes	CMS email dated 8/22/2026 (not included)
1.2	Launch initiative	Yes	Initiative 2 PoWER Checkpoint 1.2 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Initiative Attachments PDF
Stage 2 – Early Implementation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
2.1	Continue initiative activities	Yes	See PoWER tab in uploaded Project Plan
2.2	Achieve at least one post-launch milestone	Yes	See PoWER tab in uploaded Project Plan

#	Initiative Name
3	Rapid Response to Recovery: EmPATH Model, Mobile Crisis and Telehealth

Stage 0 – Planning			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
0.1	Establish governance	Yes	0.1 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Ir
0.2	Submit project plan to CMS	Yes	See uploaded Project Plan
Stage 1 – Project Preparation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
1.1	CMS approval of project plan	Yes	CMS email dated 8/22/2026 (not included)
1.2	Launch initiative	Yes	Initiative 3 R3 Checkpoint 1.2 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Initiative Attachments PDF
Stage 2 – Early Implementation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
2.1	Continue initiative activities	Yes	See R3 tab in uploaded Project Plan
2.2	Achieve at least one post-launch milestone	Yes	See R3 tab in uploaded Project Plan

#	Initiative Name
4	Rooted in Health: Kentucky Rural Dental Access Program

Stage 0 – Planning			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
0.1	Establish governance	Yes	0.1 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Maste
0.2	Submit project plan to CMS	Yes	See uploaded Project Plan
Stage 1 – Project Preparation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
1.1	CMS approval of project plan	Yes	CMS email dated 8/22/2026 (not included)
1.2	Launch initiative	Yes	Initiative 4 RiH Checkpoint 1.2 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Initiative Attachments PDF
Stage 2 – Early Implementation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
2.1	Continue initiative activities	Yes	See RiH tab in uploaded Project Plan
2.2	Achieve at least one post-launch milestone	Yes	See RiH tab in uploaded Project Plan

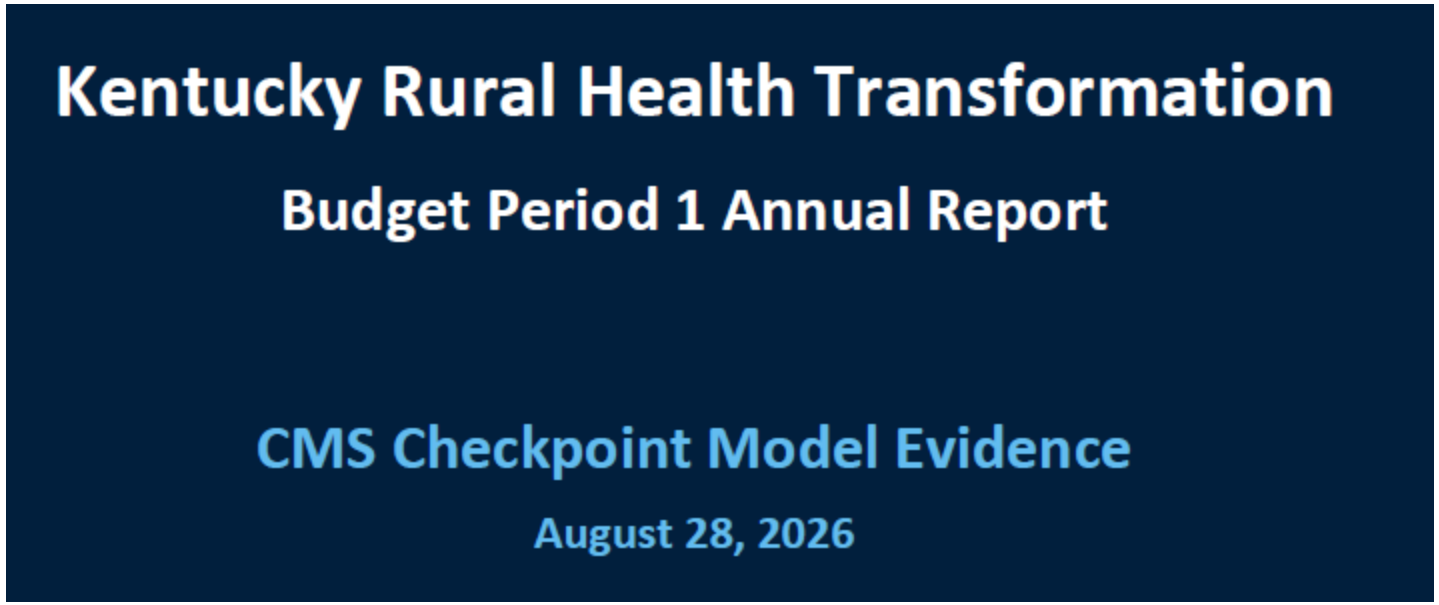
#	Initiative Name
5	From Crisis to Care: Integrated EMS and Trauma Response

Stage 0 – Planning			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
0.1	Establish governance	Yes	t 0.1 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master I
0.2	Submit project plan to CMS	Yes	See uploaded Project Plan
Stage 1 – Project Preparation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
1.1	CMS approval of project plan	Yes	CMS email dated 8/22/2026 (not included)
1.2	Launch initiative	Yes	Initiative 5 CTC Checkpoint 1.2 Evidentiary Documentation section in the Master Initiative Attachments PDF
Stage 2 – Early Implementation			
	Checkpoint	Yes/No	Attachment(s)
2.1	Continue initiative activities	Yes	See CTC tab in uploaded Project Plan
2.2	Achieve at least one post-launch milestone	Yes	See CTC tab in uploaded Project Plan

These snapshots are from the Annual Report.

Full plan posted on ruralhealthplan.ky.gov

Snapshot: Checkpoint Evidence



Snapshot: Five-Year Project Plan

Initiative I: Chronic Care Innovation (CCI): RCHs, CHWs, and Data and Technology Strategy

Designated Leads: RCH: Allison Adams; CHWs: Ashley Gibson; Data/Tech: Deepak Mirchanani

Key
Stage
Milestone
Task

Status Report	
74	Complete
12	In Progress - On Track
1	In Progress - Behind Schedule
78	Not Yet Started

Milestones in red font have been completed

Checkpoints highlighted in yellow have been met

Stage / Component	Milestones/Tasks	Target Start	Target Due Date	Status Report as of 7/31/2026	Task Owner
Stage 0	**Planning**				
I	Stand Up CCI Teams for RCH, CHWs, and Data/Technology	1/1/2026	7/31/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Confirm Convening Organization	1/1/2026	2/18/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Select staffing mechansim(s)	1/1/2026	2/1/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Andrew Yunt
	Establish CHFS internal advisors for CCI	1/1/2026	7/31/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Kickoff Meeting with A3 leadership team, key partners, and support team (all five initiatives)	1/6/2026	1/6/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	ADD selection criteria discussion (all initiatives)	2/19/2026	2/19/2026	Complete	Dr. Brent Wright, Andrea Adams
	CCI stakeholder engagement strategy meeting (internal)	1/30/2026	1/30/2026	Complete	Andrew Bledsoe
	UK CPH meeting re: Partner Tool and measuring strength of local networks	2/5/2026	2/5/2026	Complete	Allison Adams
	Checkpoint 0.1 Establish governance				
I	Establish Governance	1/1/2026	7/31/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Define initiative team operating model and governance structure	1/1/2026	1/27/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Establish approval processes and operational decision flows for initiative design, budget, and execution	2/10/2026	5/20/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Establish regular cadence for RHT financial reporting	2/9/2026	5/31/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Procure and launch PM tool for initiative tracking and collaboration	4/2/2026	7/30/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Compliance sprint to inform the development of the RHT subrecipient risk assessments process and monitoring plan	6/2/2026	6/30/2026	Complete	Dr. John Langefeld, Tom Walton
	Checkpoint 0.2 Submit project plan to CMS				
I	Develop Project Plan			In Progress - Behind Schedule	All Leads
	Refine milestones and flesh out acitvities in project plan	1/1/2026	6/26/2026	Complete	All Leads
	Submit project plan to CMS for informal review	6/29/2026	7/15/2026	Complete	Andrea Adams
	Dialogue with CMS re: project plan	8/7/2026	8/31/2026	In Progress - On Track	Leadership Team
	Revise project plan based on CMS feedback	8/7/2026	8/31/2026	In Progress - On Track	Andrea Adams, All Leads
	Submit revised project plan to CMS	8/18/2026	8/31/2026	In Progress - On Track	Andrea Adams
Stage 1	**Initial Launch** (public announcement or at least one contract signed or sub-recipient selected)			In Progress - On Track	
	Checkpoint 1.1 CMS approval of project plan				
I	Receive approval of project plan from CMS	7/15/2026	7/31/2026	Not Yet Started	
	Checkpoint 1.2 Launch initiative				

Budget Period 2 Notice of Award

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services anticipates issuing a Notice of Award on October 30, 2026.

Budget Period 2 begins on October 31, 2026.

Full report posted on ruralhealthplan.ky.gov