

Here comes more funding: HHS awards eight states to help set up health insurance exchanges

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The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded more Level One and Two Establishment Grant funding to assist states in setting up their one-stop health insurance exchange (HIX) portals. The winners this time include California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Iowa, New York, Nevada and Vermont.

Level one grants provide one year of funding and are given to states that have started building their insurance exchange. Level two grants provide multiple years of funding and are given to states further along in their implementation.

Here's a breakdown of today's Level One Establishment Grant winners:

California: The California Department of Human Services was awarded **\$196,479,629**, and plans to use some of the funding to design policies for enrollment and eligibility, and enhance financial management and business operations in the exchange.

Hawaii: The Hawaii Department of Insurance was awarded **\$61,815,492**, and plans to use some of the funding to hire new staff to support outreach and public education. The state will also begin the solicitation process to contract for the design and development of the IT architecture and user experience for individuals and small businesses.

Iowa: The Iowa Department of Public Health was awarded **\$26,623,003**, and plans to use some of the funding to redesign its current database and Web application to change the system from an application-center architecture to a person-centered architecture. The state also plans to further automate eligibility business processes.

New York: The New York Department of Health was awarded **\$95,496,490**, and plans to use some of the funding to further enhance the IT systems needed to operate its exchange. The state will also begin researching a campaign to educate enrollees in preparation for open enrollment in October 2013.

Here's a breakdown of today's Level Two Establishment Grant winners:

Connecticut: The Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange was awarded **\$107,358,676**, and plans to use some of the funding to further develop its state-run exchange. The state also plans to hire staff/consultants to manage the activities related to the creation and ongoing operations of the exchange during the grant period.

Maryland: The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was awarded **\$123,048,694**, and plans to use some of the funding to accomplish necessary activities to achieve certification by January 2013 and begin enrolling individuals by January 1, 2014.

Nevada: The Nevada Silver State Health Exchange was awarded **\$50,016,012**, and plans to use some of the funding to implement a common system complemented with a high level of integration to avoid duplication of costs, processes, data and effort on the part of the state and beneficiaries. The state also plans to leverage the federal approach to verification from federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and HHS.

Vermont: The Department of Vermont Health Access was awarded **\$104,178,965**, and plans to use some of the funding to develop the IT systems to facilitate the critical functions of the exchange, and to ensure operability with other state health care systems built as part of the greater eligibility modernization project.

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