Fiscal Year FY 2027-2028

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
OPERATING REQUESTS *(FORM B1)*	X	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
		Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS *(FORM B2)*		Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
		Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
CAPITAL REQUESTS *(FORM C)*		Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
PROVISOS *(FORM D)*		Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
		Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	X	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Ann Lefebvre	(843) 792-4431	lefebvre@musc.edu
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Ali McMenamin	(843) 792-6683	mcmenami@musc.edu

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2027-2028 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	Alefebvre 9/23/26	
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Ann Lefebvre	

Agency Name:	Area Health Education Consortium
Agency Code:	H530
Section:	24

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Addressing AHEC Capacity to Support Increased Program Utilization	457,622	0	0	0	457,622	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00
TOTALS			457,622	0	0	0	457,622	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

1

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Addressing AHEC Capacity to Support Increased Program Utilization

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $457,622

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $457,622

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

4.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
X	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) connects students and professionals with the tools, training and resources necessary to develop an effective healthcare workforce, with a focus on primary care for rural and medically underserved areas. This request supports the following measures from the Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement portion of the accountability report:

• All AHEC centers meet requirements for continuing professional development, clinical student placements, and health career pipelines throughout the state

• Percent of providers participating in the rural providers incentive program at SC AHEC that will be retained in their rural practice placements for the entire fiscal year.

The AHEC Program Office, which is where AHEC's state FTEs are employed, supports all of the work completed across the entire SC AHEC statewide system (including the four regional AHEC centers). This funding request supports the strategies listed above by increasing AHEC's capacity to complete program implementation, program

effectiveness evaluation, reporting, and program compliance verifications; the results of which supports accountability and overall effective use of state funds for programming across the state.

The use of these funds will be evaluated using human resources determinations for pay comparisons for salary and compensation and alignment with state pay band salary rates. Effectiveness of the staff hired via these funds will be measured during the annual employee performance evaluation process and in accordance with established program goals, objectives and timelines for each respective area.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

AHEC would be the recipient of these funds to hire four additional staff members. These funds would be allocated according to the state pay band guidelines for salary and compensation for the identified position classifications. Human resources will conduct the required assessments to ensure that compensation is offered in alignment with market rates, pay equity across state positions, and within budget constraints.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

AHEC is requesting $457,622 in recurring funding and 4 FTEs to hire four new staff members. This funding total was calculated based on the mid-point salary indicated by state human resources for each position's respective pay band, including a fringe rate calculation of 45.1% for classified staff. The proposed new positions are as follows:

- **Database Administrator**: $94,758 salary + $42,736 fringe ($137,494 total)
  This request would enable AHEC to hire a second database administrator to support our agency. This would increase our efficiency in responding to data requests and allow us to increase our capacity to further evaluate our programs.
- **Administrative Coordinator I**: $54,162 salary + $24,427 fringe ($78,589 total)
  This position would support operational activities, administrative tasks, and procedural requirements across all AHEC programs so that programmatic staff have additional bandwidth to focus on program implementation and evaluation.
- **Program Coordinator II**: $71,706 salary + $32,339 fringe ($104,045 total)
  This position would support AHEC Recruitment & Retention Programs, which administers the state's healthcare workforce incentive programs (Rural Provider Incentive Program, Rural Behavioral Health Incentive Program, Rural Dentist Loan Repayment Program). These programs administer more than $3 million in incentive funding and review and process nearly 250 applications every year. This new staff member would enable the team to be more effective at receiving and processing applications, responding to questions and inquiries from participants and prospective applicants, and conducting annual employment verifications to ensure program compliance by participating providers.
- **Program Manager I**: $94,758 salary + $42,736 fringe ($137,494 total)
  This position would perform additional project management and staff oversight for a team of 5 staff who perform essential duties that support all program areas that AHEC provides (i.e., communications, marketing, workforce development, technology, and web application development).

AHEC has 2 FTEs that are currently vacant due to routine employee turnover, and those positions are in the process of being filled. AHEC also has 2.32 FTEs available that are not assigned to staff positions and the funding necessary to utilize those unassigned FTEs for hiring. This request is to meet staff needs beyond AHEC's existing FTEs, for which it already has plans to utilize with existing resources.

Between FY21 and FY25, AHEC has achieved tremendous growth in program utilization, including a 49% increase in individuals served (FY21: 9,183/FY25: 13,706):

- 60% increase (775/1,243) in high school and college students provided with health careers exploration
- 22% increase (930/1,134) in health professions students placed for clinical training and rotations

- 29% increase (14/18) in family medicine residency program partners
- 38% increase (109/150) in rural providers contracted for rural practice recruitment and retention incentive programs
- 10% increase (79,394/87,291) in hours of continuing professional development provided to health professionals
- 347% increase (15/67) in data requests fulfilled by the SC Office for Healthcare Workforce

However, these utilization increases have been realized with minimal increases to staffing levels. In the same time period, AHEC increased its state employee staff size by only 6 staff members, bringing the total of state FTEs that support the entire SC AHEC Statewide System to 25 in FY25.

AHEC places an extremely high priority on the efficient and effective use of the state funding it receives. AHEC has requested increased state funding in only four of the previous seven budget cycles, and those requests included only 2 additional state FTEs to support a new initiative. AHEC has done its best to continue excellent service provision via efficiencies and high performance but is reaching a point at which staff cannot keep up with the pace of program utilization growth without additional staffing resources.

The risk if this request is not funded is twofold: having to turn down partnerships and program development opportunities plus increased staff turnover and attrition. AHEC is currently operating at or near programmatic capacity in the Program Office (the office that runs the statewide AHEC system and where all AHEC state FTEs are employed). Requests from partners for new programs, curriculum development, and data requests are having to be carefully evaluated and/or delayed to ensure staff availability/capacity for new work. Additionally, a quarter of AHEC staff who are not in administrative, finance, or leadership positions currently support two or more program areas, resulting in higher workloads and making these positions more prone to turnover, which reduces our productivity and efficiency. Results from the annual Press Ganey employee engagement survey indicate an increasing risk of turnover vulnerability (down a quarter point over the previous year).

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Area Health Education Consortium		
Agency Code:	H530	Section:	24

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	AHEC's contingency plan for 3% cost reduction
AMOUNT	$439,373 *What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.*
ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	0 FTEs would be reduced *How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?*
PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	AHEC would need to reduce programming to students, health professionals and family medicine residents across the state. *What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?*
SUMMARY	The cut would be distributed evenly across the program office and regional subcontractors of the AHEC program, including: the four regional AHEC centers and the healthcare systems affiliated with family medicine residency programs. This would result in a $33,798 reduction per contractor: • Program Office: $33,798 • 4 Regional AHEC Centers: $135,192 ($33,798 per center) • 8 Family Medicine Residency Programs: $270,384 ($33, 798 per residency program) This reduction in programming would impact students from rural and medically underserved communities (health careers programs), students seeking rural placements for clinical training, health professionals seeking educational programs and supplemental teaching payments to local healthcare systems.

Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

- AHEC has reduced operating expenses by adjusting its annual statewide staff all-hands meeting to a format that requires less travel expenditures: the agenda is organized so that an overnight stay is no longer needed for staff travel and the location is centrally held in Columbia where the meeting venues are also more cost-effective than other destinations in the state.
    - Savings: $15,450 savings in lodging and per diem costs annually
- AHEC has also discontinued a student family medicine recruiting event after identifying declining attendance from medical students. AHEC will reformat this initiative in a more cost-effective manner that will be more attractive to prospective medical students.
    - Savings: $17,940 annually
- AHEC previously covered all costs associated with another South Carolina family medicine residency program recruiting event for medical students. AHEC now asks the participating family medicine residency programs to cover the costs of their individual booths at this event.
    - Savings: $27,750 annually
- **Total savings: $61,140**

All cost savings have been repurposed into providing more programming for students and health professionals to build and support the state's healthcare workforce.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than $50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

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FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	AHEC's plan to reduce burden to businesses and citizens

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS	AHEC does not charge any fines or fees to businesses or broadly to South Carolina citizens. Any savings will be found in efficiencies in our current programming.

What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	**Mark "X" for all that apply:**
	Repeal or revision of regulations.
	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.
X	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.
	Other

METHOD OF CALCULATION	Savings will be determined by monitoring spending throughout the year and repurposing any savings to student programming as much as possible.

Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	AHEC does not collect fees or fines.

Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION	AHEC does not impose any regulations.

Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

SUMMARY	AHEC works hard to ensure that we are as effective and efficient as possible. We monitor our outcomes and assess our spending on a quarterly basis. AHEC does not charge any fines or fees to businesses or broadly to the public. However, some continuing professional development programs hosted by AHEC do have registration fees for health professionals choosing to attend the event. To the extent possible, AHEC tries to minimize the cost of these programs with grant funding and partnership, but when appropriate and without impacting effectiveness, we will move programs to a virtual environment to reduce travel and other expenses.

Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?