

Request for Proposals

Laboratory Funding to Conduct Serum Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Testing



www.aphl.org

8515 Georgia Ave, Suite 700
Silver Spring, MD 20910

March 10, 2020

Request for Proposals: Laboratory Funding to Conduct Serum Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Testing

Application Due Date: March 24, 2020

Background

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) is a non-profit membership organization that works to safeguard the public's health by strengthening laboratory systems in the United States and globally. APHL is organized under the laws of the District of Columbia, with its headquarters office in Silver Spring, MD. APHL's members include state and local laboratories, state environmental and agricultural laboratories, and other governmental laboratories that conduct public health testing. APHL is recognized as tax exempt in the United States under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Its work on behalf of public health laboratories spans more than 60 years.

APHL, with funding support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is pleased to offer funds to one state, local or territorial laboratory to conduct serum PFAS testing for individuals whose results could provide or clarify critical scientific information, as determined in consultation with CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

Eligibility

State, local, or territorial laboratories with Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification are eligible to submit proposals. Interested parties must submit a proposal to APHL that provides all of the information specified in the *Proposal Requirements* section below. In order to meet consideration requirements, applicants must complete proposals no later than the Proposed Due Date specified in the *Anticipated RFP Schedule* section below. Applicants will find proposal submission information in the *Response Submittal* section below.

Anticipated RFP Schedule

Applications are due to eh@aphl.org by 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST) on March 17, 2020. APHL anticipates the following schedule for the entire competitive bidding process:

March 10, 2020	APHL Issues RFP
March 24, 2020	Complete proposals due to eh@aphl.org by 5:00 pm EST
March 25, 2020	Proposal Review
April 8, 2020	APHL posts names of the selected applicant(s) to procurement site, www.aphl.org/rfp

If APHL makes any modification to this anticipated schedule, it will post the change to APHL's procurement site, www.aphl.org/rfp.

Response Submittal

APHL must receive a complete proposal by no later than 5:00 pm EST on March 24, 2020. Applicants must send proposals via email to eh@aphl.org.

APHL will send an email acknowledging the receipt of your proposal. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 72 hours, please email erin.morin@aphl.org to confirm receipt.

Project Award

APHL will award one sub-award of \$19,000, payable in two installments, to a single awardee laboratory. APHL will email a notice of award to the selected awardee laboratory. The selected awardee laboratory will receive funding through a sub-award agreement with APHL.

Scope of Work

The awardee laboratory will conduct serum PFAS analysis for individuals whose results could provide or clarify critical scientific information, as determined in consultation with CDC and ATSDR. The awardee laboratory can use funding for specimen collection, transport and analysis, including but not limited to the following:

- Equipment, reagents, proficiency test challenges and/or certified reference materials;
- Partial payment towards an analytical instrument;
- Instrument service agreement;
- Instrument interface to laboratory information management system (LIMS);
- Phlebotomy services;
- Specimen collection, materials and outreach, and cost;
- Specimen transport; and
- Communication materials

The selected awardee may not use funding to support personnel.

The awardee laboratory will provide testing for up to 95 specimens (assuming maximum \$200/specimen).

Proposal Requirements

Applicants should submit a proposal no longer than five pages. Any documents included as an appendix are not included in the 5-page count. The applicant must include the following in their response:

1. A description of the laboratory's need for this funding
2. A description of the laboratory's current serum PFAS testing, capability and capacity.
3. A description of the proposed serum PFAS testing methodology
 - a. Include a description of the appropriate staff and their role in program development and implementation.
4. Budget and justification

APHL will award one sub-award of \$19,000, payable in 2 installments (50%) at the initiation of the project and (50%) at the conclusion. The awardee laboratory will develop a detailed budget and justification that will enable them to test up to 95 specimens.

Evaluation

Initial Review

APHL staff members will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. APHL will not consider any applications that are not complete by the proposal due date specified in the *Anticipated RFP Schedule* section above. Incomplete proposals will not receive a formal evaluation.

Evaluation Process

APHL will conduct reviews via a combination of teleconference and email communications between the evaluation team described below. APHL's Director of Environmental Health will coordinate the review process and evaluation sessions.

The reviewers may request follow-up interviews with all or some of the applicants and, following these interviews, may request supplemental information on an applicant's proposal. These interviews and any supplemental information will clarify an applicant's capacity or experience in one or more of the evaluation criteria, or will help to explain other information contained in an applicant's proposal.

Evaluation Team

APHL will assemble an evaluation team to review competitive proposals and then assess their relative qualities based on the *Evaluation Criteria* outlined below. The evaluation team will consist of four members: two from the CDC/National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) and/or the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the remaining two will be members of APHL staff. Once potential reviewers are identified, APHL's Director, Environmental Health will have final approval over the review team's composition.

Conflict of Interest

APHL will ask potential reviewers to complete and sign APHL's Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement in order to disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to the start of the evaluation process. Reviewers will have to affirm that they have no conflict of interest that would preclude an unbiased and objective review of the proposals received. APHL will not select reviewers with a perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation team will use the following criteria as a general overall framework in which to evaluate proposals:

- Proposal Sufficiency – The proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP, including all proposal requirements.
- Budget and Justification – The proposed budget is reasonable and realistic and gives clear justification for all budget line items, including in-kind support.

Each member of the evaluation team will evaluate proposals against the 9 questions or criteria found in

Appendix A: Proposal Scorecard. Reviewers will assign a numeric score from zero (0) (indicating a ‘poor’ response) to four (4) (indicating an ‘outstanding’ response) to reflect that reviewer’s assessment of the responsiveness of a proposal to each question or criterion. The evaluators will assign score using the following categorizations:

- *Poor* (0 points) – The respondent’s proposal neither provides a reasonable proposed approach and/or budget justification nor meets the baseline requirements set out in this RFP.
- *Fair* (1 point) – The respondent’s proposal does not provide a reasonable proposed approach and/or budget justification but meets the baseline requirements set out in this RFP.
- *Good* (2 points) – The respondent’s proposal provides a reasonable proposed approach and/or budget justification and meets the baseline requirements set out in this RFP.
- *Excellent* (3 points) - The respondent’s proposal provides a very good proposed approach and/or budget justification and meets the baseline requirements set out in this RFP.
- *Outstanding* (4 points) - The respondent’s proposal provides an exceptional proposed approach and/or budget justification and greatly meets the baseline requirements set out in this RFP.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

APHL staff will notify the selected applicant within ten (10) business days of the completion of the evaluation, and APHL will post the name of the recipient to APHL’s procurement website, www.aphl.org/rfp on the same day. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by email within 30 days of the date the name of the winning applicant is posted.

All applicants will be entitled to utilize APHL’s RFP Appeals Process to formulate a protest regarding alleged irregularities or improprieties during the procurement process. Specific details of this policy are located on the procurement website.

Conditions of Award Acceptance

The eligible applicant must be able to contract directly with APHL or have an existing relationship with a third party organization that can contract directly with APHL on behalf of the applicant.

General Considerations

This RFP is neither an agreement nor an offer to enter into an agreement with any respondent. Once application evaluation is complete, APHL may choose to enter into a definitive contract with the selected applicant or may decline to do so.

APHL must ensure that the selected respondent is neither suspended nor barred from receiving federal funds and that the respondent meets any other funding eligibility requirement imposed by the Cooperative Agreement. APHL’s determination of whether the respondent is eligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding will be definitive and may not be appealed. In the event that APHL determines that the selected respondent is ineligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding, APHL will nullify the contract or will cease negotiation of contract terms.

Each respondent will bear its own costs associated with or relating to the preparation and submission of its application. These costs and expenses will remain with the respondent, and APHL will not be liable

for these or for any other costs or other expenses incurred by a respondent in preparation or submission of its application, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the response period or the selection process.

Questions

Please direct all questions regarding this RFP or its requirements via email to Erin Morin at erin.morin@aphl.org, with a copy to Julianne Nassif at julianne.nassif@aphl.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Julianne Nassif, MS

Director, Environmental Health

240.485.2737

julianne.nassif@aphl.org

Sarah Wright, MS

Manager, Environmental Laboratories

240.485.3829

sarah.wright@aphl.org

Erin Morin, MHS

Associate Specialist, Environmental Health

240.485.3830

erin.morin@aphl.org

Appendix A: Proposal Scorecard

Scoring: Poor = 0, Fair = 1, Good = 2, Excellent = 3, Outstanding = 4

Category:	Criteria:	Score:	Reviewer Comments:
Proposal Sufficiency Does the proposal include all of the necessary elements and demonstrate an understanding of project needs?	Does the proposal meet the overall objectives of the project?		
	Did the applicant follow the proposal requirements, i.e. page count and include required information?		
	Is the information in the proposal presented in a way that is clear and well organized?		
	Section Total:		
Budget and Justification Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate a reasonable budget and justification?	Does the include budget justification for all line items, including any in-kind support?		
	Is the applicant's budget and justification reasonable and realistic?		
	Section Total:		
Organizational Capacity Does the applicant have the appropriate staff to implement the proposed program?	Did the applicant outline an appropriate team to work on this project?		
	Does the applicant's laboratory have the organizational capacity to complete this project?		
	Section Total:		
	Does the applicant have a development process in place to achieve the project goals according to schedule?		
	Section Total:		