



# Request for Proposals – Deputy Chief for Antimicrobial Resistance Support at the Hawaii State Laboratories Division

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RFP Issue Date: March 3, 2017

**Application Due Date: March 13, 2017**

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# Request for Proposals: Deputy Chief for Antimicrobial Resistance Support at the Hawaii State Laboratory Division

**Application Due Date: March 27, 2017**

## Summary

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The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), in cooperation with the Hawaii Department of Health, State Laboratories Division (SLD) is seeking applicants to coordinate antibiotic resistance laboratory activities and other public health tasks as assigned. Funding will be awarded via a contract with APHL.

## Background

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Hawaii SLD has identified the need to procure a Deputy Chief for Antimicrobial Resistance (DCAR) to support the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grant program and state needs on antibiotic resistance and has contracted with APHL to identify a qualified individual to serve in this role. The SLD selected APHL because of the association's connection to public health laboratorians nationwide, its 60 plus years of work in support of the public health laboratories and the AR work discussed below.

*APHL recognizes antimicrobial resistance (AR) as a nationwide problem:*

- Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing has traditionally been performed in clinical laboratories
- Susceptibility testing is difficult to implement as there are multiple and many vertical AR surveillance systems
- Limited federal funding to implement existing surveillance systems has led to inconsistent participation across states
- Little available guidance on what organisms are a public health priority and which tests are best for surveillance purposes

*What APHL is doing to address the problem:*

- Using the association's community to work on standardized methods
- Developing mechanisms for centralized data collection and analysis which allows for
  - Regional outbreak response
  - Monitoring of trends over time
- Establishing connection for member labs to national networks by expanded access to most sophisticated methods

*By working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its member labs APHL is:*

- Building public health laboratory (PHL) capability and capacity to support comprehensive state and national surveillance systems
  - Developing guidance for PHLs on priority pathogens and test methods
  - Supporting the development of state based surveillance systems
- Increasing PHL capacity for outbreak support
  - Working to implement the Regional Laboratory Network referenced in the Combatting Antimicrobial Resistant Bacteria (CARB) initiative
- Advocating for an investment in enhanced public health IT infrastructure and working with CDC to build the same

*To address the antibiotic resistance issue in the US:*

APHL will maintain relationships with relevant governmental and nongovernmental partners to define and promote the role of PHLs in AR testing. APHL will promote the role and increase engagement of PHLs in AR testing and surveillance through staff and member participation in IDSA's Stakeholder Forum on AR and other similar groups. APHL will also work with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to coordinate messages to our respective memberships around the implementation of CARB.

Further, APHL will work with CDC to develop guidance on utilization of the AR Regional Laboratories which will define when and how to submit specimens, what testing will be provide, what kinds of specimens to submit and what to expect regarding reporting. The guidance will be shared with public health laboratories, other public health partners and clinical laboratories.

## Eligibility

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In order to be eligible for consideration, an individual must hold the credentials and meet the other requirements specified below.

### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

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Applicants **must have** the following knowledge, skills and abilities as of the Proposal Due Date in order to be eligible for consideration:

- Specific knowledge clinical and public health microbiology and molecular laboratory science
- Specific knowledge and understanding of the methods used to isolate and identify pathogenic bacteria
- Specific knowledge and understanding of principles of anti-infective therapy, antimicrobial action, and drug resistance mechanisms
- Knowledge and understanding of aseptic laboratory techniques
- Knowledge and understanding of laboratory safety practices
- Knowledge and understanding of quality control/quality assurance (QC/QA) practices as they apply to laboratory tests and procedures
- Working knowledge of Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) guidance documents on susceptibility testing
- General knowledge of activities undertaken at a state Department of Health with regard to public health and infectious disease policy issues
- Skill as an established leader
- Well-organized and detail-oriented
- Skilled in project management
- Ability to follow written and verbal instructions
- Ability to perform conventional and molecular microbiological testing tasks
- Ability to perform basic computer skills (e.g., data entry, word processing, database development and analysis, presentation preparation, use of e-mail, email, etc.)
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing
- Demonstrated ability to handle multiple tasks under tight deadlines
- Ability to establish working relationships with diverse groups

- Ability to work independently and with others

## Qualifications

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Applicants **must have** the following qualifications when as of the Proposal Due Date in order to be eligible for consideration:

**Education.** Doctorate degree. Formal education includes microbiology, life science, or health laboratory field, preferably at the graduate level; or a Medical Degree with specialized training in clinical and public health laboratory science; Board certified or eligible preferred; possess or eligible for a Hawaii Clinical Laboratory personnel license.

**Experience.** Minimum two to five years of clinical or public health microbiology laboratory experience that includes bacterial identification and conventional susceptibility testing in a regulated environment. An appropriate advanced degree and applicable laboratory project(s) may be substituted for some work experience. Medical Technologist or clinical microbiology background is preferred. Supervisory and molecular methods (PCR, MALDI-TOF, sequencing, etc.) experience is desired.

## Physical Requirements

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When considering whether to apply for this opportunity, applicants must be aware of the following:

- The DCAR support role may pose a risk of injury from physical hazards and exposure to caustic, flammable, explosive and/or carcinogenic chemical hazards
- The role may require repetitive motion and long periods of standing or sitting
- The role also may involve some lifting of materials

## Special Requirements

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Applicants must meet all applicable state and federal requirements and have, or be able to quickly obtain, all needed clearances associated with the DCAR support role. The role will require a moderate amount of intrastate and interstate travel.

## Work Schedule

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APHL expects that the selected applicant will work full time with the Hawaii SLD during its hours of operation from 7:45 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (Hawaii Time) Monday through Friday. The SLD is closed on the weekends and State holidays.

## Anticipated RFP Schedule

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At this time, APHL anticipates the following schedule:

Friday, <b>March 3, 2017</b>	– RFP issued
Monday, <b>March 13, 2017</b>	– Applications due by 5:00 P.M. (Eastern Standard Time)
Monday, <b>March 20, 2017</b>	– Proposal review completed
Monday, <b>March 27, 2017</b>	– Final review completed and winning applicant selected
Monday, <b>April 17, 2017</b>	– Contract finalized and DCAR Support begins at the SLD
Friday, <b>June 16, 2017</b>	– Relocation completed

If APHL makes any modification to this anticipated schedule it will post the change to APHL's procurement website, [www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp).

## Award

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The individual selected to serve as DCAR Support will receive a notice of award from APHL. The selected applicant will receive funding from APHL for the DCAR support role in accordance with the payment terms specified in the written contract with APHL. See [Term of Project](#) below for details on the anticipated contract period. The selected applicant will perform the duties described in [Appendix A: Services to be provided by DCAR Support](#) and will do so in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the contract with APHL.

## Compensation

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APHL will award funding based on the qualifications and years of experience possessed by the individual applicant selected for the DCAR support role, with a maximum potential compensation capped at \$12,500 per month during the contract period. The selected applicant would need to show proof of health insurance within one month of contract start date.

There is a one-time relocation package of as much as \$7,500 that is available to the selected individual that will be provided by APHL on a cost-reimbursable basis.

## Independent Contractor Status

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The selected applicant will perform the DCAR support role duties as an independent contractor to APHL and will receive a Form 1099 from APHL for each full or partial calendar year during the term of the project. The selected applicant will be neither an APHL employee nor an employee of, or a consultant under contract with, the Hawaii SLD.

## Term of Project

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APHL will award a contract for the DCAR support position with an initial term from the start date listed in the [Anticipated RFP Schedule](#) above through July 31, 2017; any subsequent contract would likely have a full annual term from August 1 through July 31. APHL anticipates that the Hawaii SLD will provide additional funding for the DCAR support position to extend the project term by as much as 24 months. APHL expects the SLD to award these additional funds annually, with each additional funding year running from August 1 to July 31. Each potential renewal will depend on the funding received by APHL and by the Hawaii SLD programmatic needs in that funding year.

## Request for Proposals – Required Submissions

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To apply for the DCAR Support position, an interested individual must respond to the following questions. Responses should be limited to no more than two single spaced pages (font size  $\geq 11$  pt. and page margins  $\geq .5$  inches).

1. Describe your experience as a liaison working between two groups on the development of a project.
  - a. Include any experience you have had coordinating extensive conference calls and meetings to insure the timelines and needs of the groups involved are being met.
  - b. If any products were developed from this experience, include the nature of this as well.
2. Describe the nature and extent of any experience with antibiotic resistance.
  - a. Include information on what protocols you have used and any trainings, competencies, and certifications you have received.
  - b. Describe your experience with developing and maintaining antibiograms.
3. Describe the nature and extent of any experience with clinical/public health bacteriology including microbial identification and susceptibility testing using conventional and molecular methods.

4. Describe the nature and any experience with quality systems and laboratory certification / accreditation.
  - a. Include information regarding document control, quality control, equipment function and maintenance, and record keeping.
  - b. Include information on your familiarity with guidance documents such as those produced by CLSI, CAP, APHL, and CMS.
  - c. Include information on proficiency tests, training, and competency assessments.
5. Describe your ability to troubleshoot laboratory analysis.
  - a. Include information on your experience communicating and interacting with laboratorians either in-person, over the phone or in writing.
  - b. Give examples of problems encountered and appropriate corrective actions.
6. Describe your experience using Microsoft Office, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and SharePoint. Describe experience with laboratory information management systems and web applications.
7. If selected, would you be able and willing to provide twice monthly reports on your activities, including progress toward ELC deliverables, through the laboratory director to APHL by email?
8. If selected, would you be able and willing to travel domestically up to 6 times per year?

## Evaluation Team

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APHL staff, led by the executive director, will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. Any incomplete application on the proposal due date specified in the [Anticipated RFP Schedule](#) section above will not be considered and will not receive a formal evaluation.

Complete proposals will be reviewed by a team of three APHL subject matter experts (SMEs). SMEs will be identified and selected by the Executive Director based on their familiarity with antibiotic resistance, laboratory practice and management and project requirements.

## Evaluation Criteria

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Proposals will be evaluated based on responses to the questions above and will receive a numeric score of up to 100 maximum points based on the scorecard template in [Appendix B: DCAR Support Score Card](#). Applicants will be given preference based on more extensive experience and subject matter expertise.

Some of the ranking categories listed on the scorecard template in Appendix B require no explanation (such as “no experience”). The remaining ranking categories noted on the scorecard template have the following meaning:

- *“Excellent”* – The applicant exceeds expectations and has extensive experience performing the tasks described.
- *“High”* – The applicant meets or exceeds expectations for capacity and has extensive experience performing the tasks similar to the ones described and would easily be able to translate that experience to this project.
- *“Moderate”* – The applicant has some experience with the tasks described.
- *“Low”* – The applicant may not have sufficient experience with the tasks described.

## Evaluation Process

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The entire review will be conducted via a combination of email communications between APHL’s executive director and the members of the evaluation team or among the evaluation team members and teleconference sessions. APHL’s executive director will coordinate the review process and the 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 the applicant’s proposal. These interviews and any supplemental information would clarify an applicant’s knowledge and/or experience in one or more of the evaluation criteria or to explain other information contained in an applicant’s proposal.

APHL will recommend the candidate that the evaluation team identifies as the most qualified to the Chief, Hawaii SLD. The SLD will have the right to deem the selected candidate as unacceptable within seven days of the selected candidate’s initial meeting and job briefing. In this event, APHL will recommend the next most qualified candidate from the applicant pool and may continue to do so should the SLD also deem the next selected candidate as unacceptable.

## Post-Evaluation Procedures

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APHL staff will notify the selected applicant within five business days of the completion of the evaluation and will simultaneously post the name of the recipient to [www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp). Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by email or by U.S. mail 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 protest any alleged irregularity or impropriety during the procurement process. Specific details of this policy are located on the procurement website.

## Conditions of Award Acceptance

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The eligible applicant must be able to contract directly with APHL. The selected applicant must agree to comply with duties, services and expectations outlined in [Appendix A: Services to be provided by DCAR Support](#).

## Contact for Clarification

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Applicants with questions about the application process or who need clarification on the RFP provision should post those questions to this RFP’s page on APHL’s procurement website ([www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp)). An applicant will be required to establish a free, no-cost account on [aphl.org](http://aphl.org) in order to post. APHL’s executive director will respond to the questions on the procurement website. APHL will endeavor to respond to questions within two business days of their initial posing.

If an applicant is unable to establish with [aphl.org](http://aphl.org), questions may be emailed to APHL’s legal department at [legal@aphl.org](mailto:legal@aphl.org) with the subject line “**Questions re HI SLD RFP**”. The legal department staff will work with the executive director to respond to emailed questions within three business days of APHL’s receipt of the enquiry and will post the question and response to this RFP’s page on the procurement website.

## Submission of Applications

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Applicants must submit their applications to Scott Becker at APHL either via email to [scott.becker@aphl.org](mailto:scott.becker@aphl.org) or via overnight or certified mail to 8515 Georgia Ave., Suite 700, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 (telephone 240.485.2747). *Applications must be received at APHL by 5:00 P.M. (EST) on March 13, 2017.* APHL will send an email acknowledging the receipt of an application; if an applicant does not receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours, they should call 240.485.2747 to confirm receipt.

## Appendix A: Services to be provided by DCAR Support

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The selected applicant will work as an independent contractor to APHL and will serve as a Deputy Chief of State Laboratories for Antimicrobial Resistance. In this role, the selected applicant will provide services as described below.

This position, the Deputy Chief of State Laboratories for Antimicrobial Resistance, will be a direct report to the SLD Chief and a peer leader with Branch and Program Chiefs. The selected applicant will have primary responsibility for all cross-cutting activities related to detection, characterization, coordination, and communication of data related to microbial susceptibility and resistance to anti-infective agents. The position requires horizontal technical and leadership skills, and will be expected to represent the Chief in a wide variety of internal and external situations.

**A. The selected applicant will spend 50% of their time serving as technical expert for analysis of clinical or environmental specimens and isolates for the presence of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms. The individual will perform specific tasks and duties, train and provide oversight along with peer managers as applicable. The specific tasks and duties include the following:**

1. Proficient in the inoculation of specimens (tissue, feces, milk, foods, urine, etc.) onto appropriate culture media for primary isolation.
2. Proficient in the examination of plated cultures and identify isolates by use of staining, biochemical, immunological, nucleic acid amplification, nucleic acid sequencing, protein profiling (e.g., MALDI-TOF/MS), and other differential tests.
3. Records and reviews laboratory data and other information on laboratory report forms and electronic systems.
4. Develops and conducts training on antimicrobial susceptibility tests using agar dilution, disk diffusion, broth dilution, gene or mutation detection, sequence analysis, and other appropriate methodologies.
5. Leads the state reference laboratory activities for the identification and antimicrobial susceptibility testing/confirmation of drug-resistant staphylococci, enterococci, Enterobacteriaceae, gonococci, *C. difficile*, pseudomonads, influenza; particularly those bacilli that cause healthcare-associated infections.
6. Leads the reference laboratory activities for detection and characterization of drug-resistant pathogens;
7. Trains laboratorians, investigators, and other trainees.
8. Coordinates antimicrobial resistance testing activities at the SLD.
9. Develops, performs, and conducts training on specialized test procedures.
10. Conducts applied laboratory research to trend and identify new strategies to prevent infections with antimicrobial resistant organisms.

- B. The selected applicant will spend 30% of their time on antimicrobial coordination activities.** The individual will perform specific tasks and duties, train and provide oversight along with peer managers as applicable. The specific tasks and duties include the following:
1. Measures, validates, interprets, and responds to data relevant to antimicrobial resistance in healthcare patients and populations.
  2. Detects, characterizes, and responds to known and emerging resistance trends.
  3. Assesses rates of resistant-bacteria in Hawaii through active engagement with statewide laboratory surveillance programs.
  4. Collaborates with academic and clinical laboratory partners to design, develop, and evaluate the efficacy of susceptibility testing and antimicrobial resistance detection.
  5. Develops and disseminates evidence-based laboratory guidelines and recommendations to detect, prevent, and control HAIs, antimicrobial resistance and related adverse events.
  6. Participates in the Hawaii Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI) Committee to provide recommendations and other evidence-based interventions to prevent HAIs and antimicrobial resistance, and related adverse events.
  7. Evaluates the impact of evidence-based recommendations and interventions.
  8. Coordinates guidance, monitoring, and research related to susceptibility testing and resistance detection across the agency and with partners statewide.
  9. Works with state and national leadership in public and private organizations to enhance antimicrobial resistance prevention and control, surveillance and response, and applied research.
  10. Provides expertise and assistance to OOH and other agencies on efforts and activities related to drug resistant microorganisms.
  11. Assists clinical laboratories in responding to inquiries about antimicrobial resistance issues.
  12. Prepares documents, reports, and correspondence for the SLD.
  13. Assists in preparing proposals and reports associated with cooperative agreement funding proposal annually.
  14. Represents the organization in external initiatives, advisory committees, and meetings.
- C. The selected applicant will spend 10% of their time on Quality Control/Quality Assurance matters with complete work done in compliance with SLD Quality Systems.** Specific tasks and duties include the following:
1. Performs, trains, and provides oversight along with peer managers as applicable.
  2. Prepares I evaluates agar and broth media and reagents for use in susceptibility testing using appropriate SOPS.

3. Maintains I monitors quality control (QC) records. Coordinates activities with other lab personnel assigned to similar and tangential duties.
4. Provides oversight of I performs laboratory equipment duties such as calibration, preventative maintenance, cleaning and function checks, and associated documentation.
5. Monitors supply inventory; prepares and justifies orders well in advance of when materials are needed.
6. Ensures autoclaving of materials in preparation for testing, and lab waste materials. Record required QC log information. Ensures that waste materials are discarded appropriately.
7. Ensures required information is documented into various QC logs.
8. Acknowledges documents, performs document reviews, and writes or revises documents as required.
9. Completes and acknowledges training as required.
10. Monitors regulatory actions relevant to public health laboratory practice.

**D. The selected applicant will spend the final 10% of their time performing other duties as assigned. Specific tasks and duties may include the following:**

1. In the absence of the SLD chief, serves as acting chief when appropriate. Rotates "Temporary Assignment (TA)" duties with Branch and Program Chiefs.
2. Participate in special scientific projects and method-development studies as required.
3. Maintain work areas in a clean, orderly condition.
4. Responsible for training/competency assessing staff in the techniques and skills required to perform all related tasks in bacteriology.
5. Perform other duties as assigned.
6. Monitoring. Services shall be monitored by the SLD through periodic inspections to assure that requirements of this Agreement are being met. Further, monitoring will take place through routine calls with APHL staff.

## Appendix B: DCAR Support Score Card

The following table is a copy of the score card that will be used to evaluate RFP responses.

Category	Maximum Value	Score	Comments
<p>1. Does the applicant have sufficient experience working as a liaison between two groups on the development of a project? Consider experience coordinating conference calls and meetings and if any final products were developed from their experience.</p> <p><i>Excellent = 9-10; High = 7-8 Moderate = 4-6; Low = 1-3; No experience = 0</i></p>	10		
<p>2. Does the applicant have sufficient experience with antibiotic resistance? Consider experience with described method(s), any trainings received or taught, any certifications, and any experience with developing and maintaining antibiograms.</p> <p><i>Excellent = 16-20; High = 11-15; Moderate = 6-10; Low = 1-5; No experience = 0</i></p>	20		
<p>3. Does the applicant have sufficient experience with clinical/public health bacteriology including microbial identification and susceptibility testing using convention and molecular methods? Consider experience with described method(s), any trainings received or taught and any certifications, if applicable.</p> <p><i>Excellent = 16-20; High = 11-15; Moderate = 6-10; Low = 1-5; No experience = 0</i></p>	20		
<p>4. Does the applicant have sufficient experience with quality systems and laboratory certification/accreditation? Consider all aspects of the process including quality control, record keeping, equipment function and maintenance and organization of reports. Consider experience guidance</p>	20		

documents put forth by the major lab organizations (CLSI, CAP, APHL and CMS).  <i>Excellent = 16-20; High = 11-15; Moderate = 6-10; Low = 1-5; No experience = 0</i>			
5. Does the applicant have sufficient experience troubleshooting laboratory analysis? Consider the communication aspect.  <i>Excellent = 16-20; High = 11-15; Moderate = 6-10; Low = 1-5; No experience = 0</i>	20		
6. Does the applicant have working knowledge using Microsoft Office products such as Excel, Access and SharePoint? Does the applicant have experience with LIMS and web applications?  <i>Excellent = 9-10; High = 7-8 Moderate = 4-6; Low = 1-3; No experience = 0</i>	10		
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>100</b>		