



Request for Proposals (RFP): Curriculum and Framework Development for CDC-hosted CPEP (SubCommittee of Postdoctoral Educational Programs) Fellowship

Submissions due 12/20/2021 to Lauren Johnson, Specialist, Infectious Diseases
(infectious.diseases@aphl.org)

**via: The Association of Public Health Laboratories, Inc.
8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 700
Silver Spring, MD 20910**

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Summary

The Association of Public Health Laboratories, Inc. (APHL, or the Association), in collaboration with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is developing a fellowship curriculum that may be submitted for consideration to the American Society of Microbiology's CPEP (SubCommittee of Postdoctoral Educational Programs) Fellowship. The fellowship curriculum would allow CDC to serve as a host for a CPEP fellowship with the potential for rotations to neighboring clinical and public health laboratories to satisfy all CPEP requirements. This novel fellowship would prioritize education and experience in public health microbiology and prepare fellows to be leaders in public health laboratories (PHLs). Upon completion of this fellowship, fellows should have the extensive, detailed working knowledge of PHLs to successfully sit for the American Board of Medical Microbiology (ABMM) certification exam.

APHL is seeking a highly qualified instructional design company to develop a comprehensive competency-based curriculum for the CDC-hosted CPEP Fellowship. The curriculum must emphasize public health microbiology while still meeting all CPEP requirements. The selected contractor/organization will also provide a framework that details how the fellowship curriculum will be managed at CDC and the location and duration of external rotations. The curriculum will be designed with extensive stakeholder input and may pull from existing curricula at CPEP medical and public health microbiology programs. Additionally, time and budget permitting, the selected contractor or organization will identify opportunities to better integrate public health microbiology into existing CPEP medical and public health microbiology programs.

The final deliverable will be curriculum for the CDC-hosted CPEP Fellowship program that is ready for submission to ASM for CPEP accreditation and a framework for management of the fellowship at CDC.

This award will be for a maximum of \$200,000 and work must be completed by June 30, 2022.

Background

APHL is a non-profit organization that works to safeguard the public's health by strengthening public health laboratories (PHLs) in the United States and globally. APHL is organized under the laws of the United States of America's District of Columbia, with its headquarters office in Silver Spring, MD. The Association's members include state and local laboratories, state environmental and agricultural laboratories and other government laboratories that conduct testing of public health significance. 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 labs spans more than 60 years.

In collaboration with its members, APHL advances laboratory systems and practices and promotes policies that support healthy communities globally. The Association serves as a liaison between the public health laboratories and federal and international agencies. It ensures that the network of public

health laboratories has current and consistent scientific information in order to be ready for outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

The APHL Infectious Diseases Program builds public health laboratory capacity to detect, identify and respond to infectious disease threats. APHL supports both domestic and global initiatives through Cooperative Agreement Number NU60OE000104 (the Cooperative Agreement) with CDC. Under the Cooperative Agreement, APHL is working in coordination with the CDC to develop a new CDC-hosted CPEP Fellowship curriculum and develop a framework for how it could be managed at CDC. Currently, critical gaps in public health laboratory expertise are exacerbated by limited career potential for laboratory microbiologists and an inadequate number of rigorous training programs that increase industry knowledge. These challenges are detrimental to sustaining high quality public health and public health laboratories. Outside the ASM-supported CPEP Fellowships, very few training opportunities exist to address these workforce challenges and the new CDC-hosted CPEP Fellowship will be instrumental in generating high quality laboratory leaders and microbiologists.

Eligibility

This is an open and competitive process. Interested parties must submit a proposal to APHL that provides all information specified in the Proposal Submission section below. To be considered, applicants must ensure APHL has the complete proposal by no later than the Proposal 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 the individual(s) specified in the Final Response section of this **RFP by 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST) on December 20, 2021**. APHL anticipates the following schedule for the entire competitive bidding process:

November 22, 2021	APHL issues RFP
December 20, 2021	Complete RFP responses due to APHL by 5:00 pm EST
December 21 –	
January 10, 2022	Proposal review
January 11, 2022	APHL publicly announces the names of the selected applicants on its procurement website, www.aphl.org/rfp
January 31, 2022	Anticipated start date of project

Any modification to this anticipated schedule will be communicated on APHL's procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp).

Response Submittal

APHL must receive a complete proposal by no later than **5:00 PM EST on December 20, 2021**.

Applicants should submit proposals via email to infectious.diseases@aphl.org (Attn: Lauren Johnson). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is received at APHL by this deadline.

APHL will send an email acknowledging the receipt of your application. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours, please call 240-485-3859 and email infectious.diseases@aphl.org.

APHL may terminate or modify the RFP process at any time during the response period. All changes to the RFP will be posted to the APHL's procurement website, www.aphl.org/rfp.

Questions

Please direct all questions regarding this RFP or its application requirements via email to Lauren Johnson at infectious.diseases@aphl.org.

A member of APHL's Infectious Diseases staff will respond directly to the questions on an individual basis as questions are received. While APHL will endeavor to answer questions within one business day of receipt, additional time may be needed depending on the issue raised. APHL anticipates that it will also post each question, together with the answers, to APHL's procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp) within one business day of responding directly to the email sender.

Scope and Approach

The organization or individual engaging in this project must provide the capabilities to work from the early stages of background research through curriculum development, including implementation strategies.

The successful applicant will be expected to execute the following:

1. Conduct Background Research and Gather Pertinent Information (February 1, 2022-February 28, 2022). This includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

- a. Document details associated with existing CPEP fellowships, including the current number of placements, locations of placements, specifics of curriculum including PHL rotations (length and location), stipend and benefits.
 - b. Document CDC vision for reimagined CPEP Fellowship track with increased public health emphasis and options for management of the fellowship at CDC. This will include hosting 2-3 calls with identified CDC leads to characterize the vision for a modified CPEP Fellowship including workforce gaps it might address.
 - c. Document advantages and challenges to various options for management of the CPEP Fellowship at CDC.
 - d. Gather feedback from clinical and public health laboratory partners in the Atlanta area on feasibility and interest in hosting fellowship rotations for fellows participating in this program.
 - e. Deliverable: Document summarizing information described above
 - f. Proposed date of completion: February 28, 2022
2. Engage Stakeholders Prior to Curriculum Development (February 1, 2022 – March 15, 2022)
 - a. Use a combination of key informant interviews and focus groups to determine perceived challenges, opportunities, and barriers to achieving CDC vision as well as gather initial ideas for approach and curriculum from various stakeholders.
 - i. Stakeholders include but are not limited to CDC staff at various levels, public health laboratorians, public health professionals with board certification experience and clinical laboratorians.
 1. Other stakeholders may include ASM staff, alumni of the CPEP Fellowship programs and CPEP mentors.
 - b. Findings of stakeholder engagement will be used to develop an approach for curriculum development.
 - c. Deliverable:
 - i. Outline of proposed curriculum
 - d. Proposed date of completion: March 15, 2022
 3. Develop Curriculum (March 15, 2022- June 30, 2022)
 - a. Host a series of virtual meetings (estimated 6-10) that would include stakeholders from key groups described above.
 - b. With stakeholders, generate ideas and come to consensus on how a CDC-hosted CPEP Fellowship program might be achieved, managed at CDC and implemented.
 - c. With stakeholders, develop a curriculum for a CDC-hosted Fellowship program that is eligible for CPEP accreditation. To provide the opportunity for fellows to sit for the CPEP examination, the curriculum should cover any existing requirements set forth by ASM and emphasize public health and public health microbiology.
 - d. Deliverable: Curriculum and framework for integration
 - e. Proposed date of completion: June 30, 2022

Project Term and Award

APHL will deliver a written notice of award to the successful applicant. The successful applicant will receive funding through a contract agreement with APHL for a maximum amount of \$200,000. Funding is available from January 11, 2022 through June 30, 2022.

APHL has responsibility for validating the accuracy and completeness of the content of the final product and all materials created.

Proposal Submission

Guidelines and Required Information

The applicant must ensure that APHL receives its complete response by the due dates set out in the Anticipated RFP Schedule above. *APHL's evaluation team will not review incomplete applications.*

There is no designated response format or outline for responding to this RFP. However, regardless of the chosen format, an applicant's proposal must be limited to eight (8) pages of narrative and visuals. If an application exceeds this 8-page limit, only the first 8 pages will be sent to the evaluation team and scoring will be based solely on the portion of the proposal submitted for review. An application should have a font size of 11 points or larger and page margins of at least 0.5 inches. *Note:* Neither the Cost Proposal described below nor anything included as an appendix will count as part of the 8-page count (material included as an appendix will only be used as reference material and will not be reviewed as part of the evaluation process).

The applicant must include the following in their 8-page response:

1. A company profile describing your mission, size of the company, key past customers and products and services offered;
2. Two (2) professional references that can speak to company's ability to develop curricula and/or fellowship training framework;
3. Competencies that will be established in the proposed curriculum and framework;
4. An example of two (2) past curricula that have been developed and best reflect the applicant's work and relevancy to this project (example curricula may be included as an appendix);
5. A description of the applicant's experience in producing training programs/curricula that included highly technical or scientific content (examples may be included as an appendix);
6. A description of organizational capacity and approaches to the following:
 - a. Producing or administering fellowship or other training programs;
 - b. Project management and gathering stakeholder input;
 - c. Designing and developing scientific curricula emphasizing anything related to public health and/or microbiology; and

- d. Designing curricula for a fellowship or training program.
7. A description of what type of team will be assigned to this project, including a brief description of each person's role and amount of time they will dedicate to the project;
8. A realistic timeline for gathering background information, curating stakeholder input and generating curriculum and framework for implementation; and
9. A description of the applicant's proposed approach and understanding of the scope and content outlined in the RFP.

Cost Proposal

The applicant should provide a detailed cost estimate and explanation/justification of costs. The cost proposal must be no longer than two (2) pages. The cost proposal should include the staff involved in this project, roles and responsibilities, hourly rates and hours dedicated per week to this project. There is no required format, and the cost proposal should be submitted in the format of the applicant's choice.

The applicant should provide estimates for this RFP that hold some level of reasonable accuracy for time and cost based on the information provided.

Evaluation

Initial Review

APHL staff members will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. APHL will not consider any applications incomplete 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. An APHL Infectious Disease staff member 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 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

An evaluation team will be assembled to evaluate competitive proposals and then assess their relative qualities based on the Evaluation Criteria outlined below. This evaluation team comprise four reviewers: APHL's Director of Infectious Diseases, APHL's Sr. Advisor of Scientific Affairs and two CDC staff.

Conflicts 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 and to affirm that they have no conflict of interest that would preclude an unbiased and objective review of the proposals received. A copy of the disclosure statement and the related Fiduciary Responsibility and Conflict of Interest Policy is attached as Appendix B: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and Policy. APHL will not select reviewers with a perceived or potential conflict of interest. Once potential reviewers have been identified, APHL's Director, Infectious Diseases will have final approval over the review team's composition.

Evaluation Criteria

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

- *Suitability of the Proposal* – The applicant's proposal demonstrates an understanding of the needs of the project and follows application requirements.
- *Curriculum Development Expertise* – The applicant demonstrates sufficient experience in curriculum design and development as evidenced by the proposal and references.
- *Public Health and Fellowship Experiences* – The applicant demonstrates sufficient experience in public health microbiology and with fellowship programs to serve as the instructional designer.
- *Project Management & Administration* – The applicant shows experience and resources related to successful management of a similar program.
- *Organizational Capacity* – The applicant has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project. The applicant organization has appropriate staff to devote to the project within the timeframe needed.
- *Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels* – The price is commensurate with the value offered by the applicant.

Each member of the evaluation team will evaluate proposals against the questions or criteria found in Appendix A: RFP Scorecard and will assign a numeric score 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:

Suitability of the Proposal (Max 10 points)

- **No issues or concerns**—Applicant follows all RFP instructions (stays in page count and provides all information that APHL seeks); includes two references and provides a clear, logical approach to the project (10 points).
- **Minor concerns**—Some information missing to fully assess and/or some minor concerns with the approach (6-9 points).
- **Major concerns**—Significant information missing to fully assess plan and/or major concerns with the approach (1-4 points).
- **Insufficient information to assess plan and/or did not follow key instructions** (0 points).

Curriculum Development Expertise (Max 20 points)

- **Outstanding**—Applicant has capacity and capability to execute their proposed plans (18-20 points).
- **Excellent**—There are minor concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (14-17 points).
- **Fair**—There are minor concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (7-13 points).
- **Poor**—There are major concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (1-6 points).
- **Unacceptable** (0 points).

Public Health and Fellowship Experiences (Max 10 points)

- **Outstanding**—Applicant demonstrates scientific knowledge and experience that is highly relevant to the project (e.g., has experience specifically related to microbiology and developing fellowship curricula) (9-10 points).
- **Excellent**—Applicant demonstrates a high degree of relevant knowledge and experience (6-8 points).
- **Fair**—Applicant has some experience in working on technical or scientific materials, but it is not relevant to the fields of microbiology, public health or fellowships (3-5 points).
- **Poor**—Applicant does not demonstrate relevant scientific knowledge or experience. (1-2 points).
- **Unacceptable** (0 points).

Project Management & Administration (Max 20 points)

- **Outstanding**—Applicant demonstrates significant project management experience, outlines a clear and logical approach to executing the project, describes how and when they will interface with APHL and other stakeholders and presents a reasonable timeline. (16-20 points).
- **Excellent**—Applicant demonstrates a high degree of project management experience but lacks clarity or specifics in some area. (10-15 points).
- **Fair**—Applicant demonstrates project management experience, but review approach is unclear or insufficient (5-9 points).
- **Poor**—Applicant does not demonstrate relevant project management experience (1-4 points).

- **Unacceptable** (0 points).

Organizational Capacity (Max 20 points)

- **Outstanding**—Applicant demonstrates exceptional organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is clear and appropriate. (16-20 points).
- **Excellent**— Applicant demonstrates strong organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is clear and appropriate. (10-15 points).
- **Fair**—Applicant demonstrates adequate organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate. (5-9 points).
- **Poor**— Applicant demonstrates gaps in organizational capacity and/or allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate. (1-4 points).
- **Unacceptable** (0 points).

Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels (Max 20 points)

- **No concerns with budget** (20 points).
- **Minor Concerns with budget** (10-19 points).
- **Major Concerns with budget** (1-9 points).
- **Budget not appropriate for proposal** (0 points).

Proposals will be evaluated and may receive a maximum possible score of 100 points.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

APHL staff will notify the selected consultant or organization within ten (10) business days of completion of the evaluation, and the name of the recipient will be posted to APHL's procurement website, found at www.aphl.org/rfp on the same day. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by e-mail within 30 days of the date that the winning/successful vendor is posted.

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

Conditions of Award Acceptance

The eligible applicants 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. All applicants must be legally able to contract within the United States and not disbarred or prohibited from contracting with businesses or the federal government.

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 a definitive contract with the selected applicant or it may decline to do so.

APHL must ensure that the selected respondent is neither suspended nor debarred 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. If 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.

Appendix A: RFP Scorecard

Category/Question	Maximum Value	Score	Comments (REQUIRED)
<p>Suitability of the Proposal: Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the project and follow application requirements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what degree did the proposal meet the overall requirements of the RFP? Did the applicant follow instructions? (i.e., stay in page count, include required information, etc.) Is the information presented in a clear, logical manner and is well organized? Did the applicant provide references for two former or current clients? Are the applicant's experiences and qualifications articulated at a quality level? <p>No issues or concerns—Applicant follows all RFP instructions (stays in page count and provides all information that APHL seeks); includes two references and provides a clear, logical approach to the project (10 points).</p> <p>Minor concerns—Some information missing to fully assess and/or some minor concerns with the approach (6-9 points).</p> <p>Major concerns —Significant information missing to fully assess plan and/or major concerns with the approach (1-4 points).</p> <p>Insufficient information to assess plan and/or did not follow key instructions (0 points).</p>	10		
<p>Curriculum Development Expertise: Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate sufficient experience in curriculum design and development to serve as the instructional designer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the applicant list and thoroughly articulate experiences developing curricula that reflect their work and relevancy to this project? Did the applicant thoroughly explain and have experience in developing curriculum for fellowship programs? Is the applicant's existing knowledge and experience in curriculum development as described in the proposal 	20		

<p>relevant to the project and sufficient to execute the project? (company profile, length of time in business, experience with developing fellowship curricula)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the two example curricula provided at a quality level that APHL seeks? <p>Outstanding—Applicant has capacity and capability to execute their proposed plans (18-20 points). Excellent—There are minor concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (14-17 points). Fair —There are minor concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (7-13 points). Poor —There are major concerns about the applicant’s capacity and capability to execute the proposal (1-6 points). Unacceptable (0 points).</p>			
<p>Public Health and Fellowship Experiences: Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate sufficient experience in public health microbiology and with fellowship programs to serve as the instructional designer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant have experience with building scientific curricula or training materials? • Does the applicant have experience building fellowship curriculum specifically? • Is the applicant’s existing technical knowledge and experience producing scientific content as described in the proposal relevant to the project? <p>Outstanding—Applicant demonstrates scientific knowledge and experience that is highly relevant to the project (e.g., has experience specifically related to microbiology and developing fellowship curricula) (9-10 points). Excellent—Applicant demonstrates a high degree of relevant knowledge and experience (6-8 points). Fair —Applicant has some experience in working on technical or scientific materials, but it is not relevant to the fields of microbiology, public health or fellowships (3-5 points). Poor —Applicant does not demonstrate relevant scientific knowledge or experience. (1-2 points). Unacceptable (0 points).</p>	10		Type comments here. (REQUIRED)
<p>Project Management & Administration: Does the applicant have experience in project management?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant demonstrate project management experience relevant to completion of rapid curriculum development? 	20		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant have relevant experience and/or articulate a clear approach for leading focus groups and/or conducting key informant interviews? • Does the applicant have experience soliciting and compiling stakeholder input to inform decisions? <p>Outstanding—Applicant demonstrates significant project management experience, outlines a clear and logical approach to executing the project, describes how and when they will interface with APHL and other stakeholders and presents a reasonable timeline. (16-20 points).</p> <p>Excellent—Applicant demonstrates a high degree of project management experience but lacks clarity or specifics in some area. (10-15 points).</p> <p>Fair —Applicant demonstrates project management experience, but review approach is unclear or insufficient (5-9 points).</p> <p>Poor —Applicant does not demonstrate relevant project management experience (1-4 points).</p> <p>Unacceptable (0 points).</p>			
<p>Organizational Capacity: Does the applicant have the appropriate staff to develop the product in the time frame needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant have organizational capacity to produce a year-long Fellowship curriculum within the stated timeframe? • Did the applicant outline an appropriate team to work on this project? <p>Outstanding – Applicant demonstrates exceptional organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is clear and appropriate. (16-20 points).</p> <p>Excellent — Applicant demonstrates strong organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is clear and appropriate. (10-15 points).</p> <p>Fair —Applicant demonstrates adequate organizational capacity. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate. (5-9 points).</p> <p>Poor — Applicant demonstrates gaps in organizational capacity and/or allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate. (1-4 points).</p> <p>Unacceptable (0 points).</p>	20		

<p>Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels: Is the price commensurate with the value offered by the applicant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are time and costs allocated in the budget reasonable for the project? <p>No concerns with budget (20 points). Minor Concerns with budget (10-19 points). Major Concerns with budget (1-9 points). Budget not appropriate for proposal (0 points).</p>	20		Type comments here. (REQUIRED)
TOTAL SCORE	100		

Appendix B: APHL Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and Policy

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement and Policy (APPLICANTS NEED NOT COMPLETE UNLESS INSTRUCTED BY APHL)

Association of Public Health Laboratories
Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

Applicability: Disclosure of the following information is required of all Officers, Directors, committee members, staff members and other volunteers who have been designated and who have accepted responsibility to act on behalf of APHL ("APHL Personnel"). Please answer the following questions and, where indicated, include the same information for your immediate family members (your parents, your spouse or partner, your children and your spouse/partner's parents).

APHL will keep your completed disclosure statement in the corporate records of the association.

1. Please list the name, address, phone number, email address and type of business of your current employer. If you are self-employed, please note that below and provide us with the address, phone number, email address and type of business you operate.

2. Do you, or does any family member, currently serve as an officer, director, committee member, or other volunteer (or work as an employee of or a paid consultant to) any organization serving the interest of laboratory science or public health laboratories other than APHL or your state or local laboratory?

Yes No

If yes, please list the organization(s) and provide detail on your or your family member's interest or position in the organization(s).

3. Do you, or any family member, have an existing or potential interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any third-party providing goods or services to APHL, or with which APHL is currently negotiating?