

Request for Proposals

Increasing Laboratory Response Network – Chemical (LRN-C) Capacity for Chemical Threat Technology Transfer



www.aphl.org

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Request for Proposals: Increasing LRN-C Capacity for Chemical Threat Technology Transfer

Application Due Date: Monday, April 30, 2018

APHL Background

The Association of Public Health Laboratories, Inc. (APHL) is a nonprofit corporation organized under District of Columbia law that serves as a national member organization in the United States representing the nation's public health laboratories (public health labs or PHLs). The Association's members include all of the country's state and territorial public health labs, a sizable number of its local PHLs and other affiliated institutional laboratories such as state agricultural, environmental or food safety laboratories. APHL is recognized as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its work on behalf of PHLs 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 labs and federal international agencies. It works to make sure that PHLs have current and consistent scientific information in order to be ready for outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

In addition to the PHLs, APHL's membership includes corporations and individuals with an interest in public health and laboratory science in several non-voting member categories, and it currently has more than 800 members. The vast majority of APHL's revenue is grant funded from several federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – provided through cooperative agreements.

Interested firms can find additional information about APHL and its work on behalf of PHLs on the association's website, www.aphl.org.

Introduction

APHL, with funding support from CDC, National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) Division of Laboratory Sciences, is pleased to offer funds to LRN-C laboratories (Level 1 or Level 2) to facilitate technology transfer of LRN-C developed methods. APHL has a total of \$200,000 for this project (Total Funding Amount). One award of approximately \$200,000 or two awards of approximately \$100,000 each, will be made with the aim of expediting technology transfer for new LRN-C methods and increasing the capacity and capability of LRN-C member laboratories to respond to high threat chemical agents. APHL will award this project to state/local/territorial LRN-C laboratories through an executed agreement with APHL.

APHL seeks applications from LRN-C (level 1 or 2) laboratories to support the technology transfer of LRN-C developed methods. This includes, among other things, the following:

- two toxic metals methods using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS), including:
 - Toxic Element Screen, including total Arsenic (urine); and
 - Iodine and Mercury (urine).
- Sulfur mustard metabolites (SBMSE) method (serum) using Liquid Chromatography/Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC/MS/MS)

Funding Support

APHL will provide up to \$200,000 to fund the selected applicant(s) for the technology transfer of one or more CDC developed methods. Selected applicants can use funds to support staffing, classrooms, laboratory space, reagents, equipment, supplies or maintenance.

The funding support amount represents the total amount available for the applicant(s), and APHL will use this amount for all activities specified in the applicant's proposal. **The project duration is from the signing of an agreement between the selected applicant(s) and APHL, through June 30, 2019 - when the selected applicant has completed the work and submitted a final report to APHL.**

Scope of Work

The selected applicant(s) must complete all training by June 30, 2019. The selected applicants will focus the training on increasing the capacity and capability for LRN-C member laboratories to respond to high threat chemical agents. Applicants must provide detailed timelines and budgets to complete the following activities:

- 1) Develop hands-on training curriculum in collaboration with subject matter experts at the Division of Laboratory Sciences, National Center for Environmental Health;
- 2) Coordinate multi-laboratory validation studies (including materials and shipping costs);
- 3) Perform method refinement (as needed);
- 4) Complete hands-on training sessions for at least 4 LRN-C laboratories, or at least 16 participants; and
- 5) Submit quarterly updates and a final report at the completion of the project.

Note: CDC will evaluate the success of the project by conducting training assessments of all participants within 3 months of training completion.

Project Requirements

The selected applicants will complete the following activities during the project period:

- a. Complete all milestones as outlined in the agreement with APHL. Applicants will consult with APHL staff for recommendations or guidance as needed. Any changes to milestones or the project must be approved by APHL.
- b. Submit quarterly status reports to APHL and hold corresponding check-in calls by the dates specified in the project timeline with the APHL project officer. In the status reports, the selected applicant(s) will summarize and document completion of the project, regardless of whether or not the selected applicant(s) has completed the milestones specified in their project timelines by that date. These report must include the following:
 1. Whether the selected applicant(s) has completed the timeline milestones and how they were completed (without simply recapping the project description); and
 2. A description of obstacles that resulted in any delays of meeting the milestones, solutions taken to get back on track, and updated milestone(s) for the next reporting period, if applicable.
- c. Submit a final project report by June 30, 2019. The selected applicant will provide the following in the final project report:
 1. A list of partnering agencies or organizations (if any) with a description of their role and impact on the training sessions;
 2. A detailed description of all training sessions, including content, number of analysts trained, etc.;

3. Feedback from the trainees; and
 4. Note whether or not the selected applicant(s) faced any unanticipated challenges during the process and, if so, how the selected applicant(s) addressed these challenges.
- d. If the selected applicant(s) makes any changes to the project, milestones or budget, they must submit the changes for APHL approval before implementing them. Any changes not pre-approved can result in forfeiture of funding.
- e. Consider submitting an oral or poster session of the training outcomes for the 2019 APHL Annual Meeting.

Application Requirements

Please adhere to the following outline in preparing your application. **Your application should not exceed eight double-spaced pages.** This page limit does not include supporting documentation (such as letters of support). To maximize the strength of the proposal, please verify that the proposal contains all elements listed in the scoring criteria on Appendix A.

1. **Hands-On Training Curriculum and Details** – *(Not to exceed 4 pages)*
Describe in detail how the staff will plan and carry out the trainings. Provide a detailed timeline of activities, including project development, project steps, creating the curriculum, determining logistics, the laboratories and participants to be trained, a timeline of activities, coordination of multi-laboratory validation studies (if applicable) and evaluation methods for assessing the efficacy of the training programs. If applicable, list all partners and explain their roles for the project in detail. Applicants are welcome to provide letters of support from partners. These letters should be attached to the application in an appendix.
2. **Evaluation** – *(Not to exceed 2 pages)*
Describe how the effectiveness and impact of the training and activities will be measured and evaluated. How will trainees demonstrate competency once they return to their respective laboratories?
3. **Budget and Justification** – *(Not to exceed 2 pages)*
APHL will provide up to **\$200,000** for the selected applicants through an agreement with APHL. The selected applicants must detail the use of such funding in the application with justification as to why the funds are necessary. Applicants must list all in-kind services to be provided (including staff time and other resources provided by the public health laboratory or partnering organization).
4. **Reporting requirements** The selected applicant(s) must participate in monthly calls with the APHL Project Officer and must provide written quarterly status reports. The selected applicants must send a status report and have check-in phone calls with the APHL project officer that summarizes and shows proof of activity completion. The final written report is due on June 30, 2019.

Application and Program Deadlines

Application Deadlines

Applicants must submit complete applications by email to eh@aphl.org by close of business Monday, April 30, 2018. APHL and CDC will review applications and will make decisions and send notifications by no later than **Tuesday, May 8, 2018**. Please check the RFP Scoring Criteria on Attachment A to ensure that points are not deducted as a result of not providing complete information in one or more of the scoring areas.

Please note: APHL is not responsible for lost or misdirected submissions. A confirmation email of receipt of submission will be sent to submitters. If you do not receive this confirmation within three days of submission, please contact Brianna Carey at 240.485.3848 to ensure your application was delivered correctly.

Project Deadline

APHL expects that the selected applicant(s) will complete each status report and applicable milestones by the due date specified in the agreement with APHL and must submit a final report by no later than **June 30, 2019**.

Evaluation Team

APHL staff, led by the Environmental Health Senior Specialist, will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. Any incomplete application received on the proposal due date specified in the application and Program Deadlines section above may not be considered and may not receive a formal evaluation.

A team of three to four individuals, each of whom is a subject matter expert will review completed proposals. Two of these individuals will be selected from CDC/National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), and the remaining two will be members of APHL staff. Once the Evaluation Team identifies potential reviewers, APHL's Director of 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 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 **Exhibit 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, Environmental Health will have final approval over the review team's composition.

Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Team will evaluate proposals based on the information provided in response to the Application Requirements above. Applicants will receive a numeric score of up to 100 maximum points based on the evaluation/scoring criteria found in Appendix A.

Evaluation Process

The entire review will be conducted via email communications between the members of the evaluation team or via teleconference. APHL's Environmental Health Senior Specialist will coordinate the review process and APHL's Environmental Health Director will lead 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 will be used by the reviewers to clarify an applicant's knowledge and/or experience in one or more of the evaluation criteria or to explain other information contained in the applicant's proposal.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

APHL staff will notify the selected applicant(s) within ten business days of the completion of the evaluation and will post the name of the recipient(s) 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 are 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.

Reduced Scope of Work and Available Funding

APHL will award 50% of the Total Funding Amount to the selected applicant(s) by June 30, 2018. The Funding Agency has not yet approved of the remainder of the Total Funding Amount for this project. As such, the remainder of the funding (after June 30, 2018) will not be available until approximately January, 2019, after APHL has received funding agency approval.

APHL will submit a formal request to the Funding Agency for the remainder of the Total Funding Amount. Until APHL receives approval for the funding request, APHL cannot pay the selected applicant(s) for any portion of the work performed after June 30, 2018. Once APHL receives approval for the funding request, the selected applicant(s) may invoice for work conducted after APHL has delivered to the selected applicant(s) an authorization notice to invoice for the remainder of the work completed.

Receipt of funding approval for the remaining 50% of the Total Funding Amount may involve some adjustment to the scope of work in order to address any change in the funding received by APHL. APHL will notify the selected applicant(s) of any modification to the anticipated scope of work.

Conditions of Award Acceptance

Selected applicant(s) must be able to sign an agreement with APHL that spells out how funds will be received, and must comply with the duties, services, and expectations outlined in the agreement. The selected applicant(s) must also be able to accept funding (50% of the Total Funding Amount) by June 30, 2018. Therefore, it is crucial to have a signed agreement in place by no later than June 18, 2018. The rest of the funding will be allocated as specified in the **Reduced Scope of Work and Available Funding** section above.

Applicants must post all questions to this RFP's page on APHL's procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp). To post questions, an applicant will need to establish a free account on aphl.org. Once posted, APHL's Environmental Health Senior Specialist or another member of APHL's Environmental Health Department will respond to the questions on the procurement website. APHL will work to respond to questions within two business days of their initial posting.

RFP-Related Questions

All questions should be directed to Brianna Carey, MPH, at brianna.carey@aphl.org. Questions received from interested parties, together with the answers provided by APHL, will be posted to APHL's procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp).

Disclaimer and Other General Matters

This RFP is neither an agreement nor an offer to enter into an agreement with any respondent. Once evaluation is complete, APHL may choose to enter into a definitive contract/agreement with the selected RFP applicant(s).

APHL must ensure that the selected applicant(s) are neither suspended nor debarred from receiving federal funds and that the applicant(s) meet any other funding eligibility requirement imposed by the Cooperative Agreement. APHL's determination of whether the applicant is eligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding will be definitive and may not be appealed. In the event

that APHL determines that the selected applicant(s) is ineligible to receive Cooperative Agreement funding, APHL will nullify the contract/agreement or will cease negotiation of contract terms.

Each applicant 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 applicant, and APHL will not be liable for these or for any other costs or other expenses incurred by the applicant in preparation or

submission of its application, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the response period or the selection process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Julianne Nassif, MS
Director, Environmental Health
240.485.2737
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Jennifer Liebreich, MPH
Senior Specialist, Environmental Health
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Brianna Carey, MPH
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Appendix A: RFP Evaluation/Scoring Criteria

Application Evaluation

The evaluation team will evaluate applications individually against the specific criteria listed below.

Project description and submission - (25 points)

Does the applicant's project description demonstrate how they will increase LRN-C capacity for chemical threat technology transfer in a way that relates to the scope of work outlined in the RFP? Are all components of the RFP addressed? Did the applicant stay within the page limit?

Project specific methodology – (25 points)

Is the methodology given for the project appropriate? When collaborating with others, are the applicant's roles clearly defined?

Program Evaluation/Timeline - (25 points)

Is there a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of all activities? Are the described evaluation metrics appropriate? Are the described milestones measurable and appropriate to gauge progress of the project? Are measurable training objectives present (what the learner should come away with after completing the training)? Is the timeline for completion of the activities reasonable?

Logistics – (10 points)

Does the proposal have an adequate and reasonable allocation of program staff to carry out activities, including the number, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, and time allocation of the proposed staff?

Budget and Justification - (15 points)

Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Is there clear justification given for all budget line items? Is in-kind support included?

Please note that your application may be disqualified if you do not follow all instructions.

- Suggestions for a Successful Application
 - Do not submit a single spaced application
 - Stay within the page limitations
 - Develop a realistic budget
 - Define who the partners or collaborators are
 - Be specific when describing in-kind support

Appendix B: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement and Policy

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?

Yes No

APHL Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

If the answer is yes, please provide the name of the organization below and describe in detail the nature of the position held.

4. Please note any other financial or business interest you may have with any organization serving the interests of public health laboratories.

If you have none, please check this box:

5. Do you, or does any family member, have any other interest or affiliation that is likely to compromise your ability to provide unbiased and undivided loyalty to APHL, or that could come in conflict with your official duties as an Officer, Director, committee member, staff member or other volunteer who has been designated and who has accepted responsibility to act on behalf of APHL?

Yes **No**

If you answered yes, please describe in detail below the nature of each such interest or affiliation.

6. If you are currently aware of any actual or possible conflict of interest that might otherwise hamper your ability to serve APHL to your best ability and with the highest degree of care, loyalty and obedience – *including any potential conflict you or a family member may have with one or more of the RFP applicants* – please describe them in detail below.

7. Do you agree that so long as you are an Officer, Director, committee member, staff member or other volunteer who has been designated and who has accepted responsibility to act on behalf of APHL you will immediately disclose to the other Directors and/or Officers or, for staff members, the Executive Director and/or General Counsel the nature of any interest or affiliation which you may hereafter acquire, which is in or is likely to become in conflict with your official duties with APHL?

Yes

No

YOU MUST READ THIS SECTION AND THEN SIGN BELOW

I acknowledge that I have received and read APHL's Fiduciary Responsibility and Conflict of Interest Policy (the Policy). I have listed all my relevant fiduciary responsibilities and affiliations, and I have identified any actual or potential conflict of interest on this Disclosure Statement and I agree to abide by the Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to inform APHL in writing of any change in circumstances relating to the Policy and this Disclosure Statement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

APHL Fiduciary Responsibility and Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

The members of the APHL Board of Directors understand the importance of serving APHL to the best of their ability and with the highest degree of obedience, loyalty and care. Accordingly, the Board adopts the following policy for APHL Officers and Directors, all staff, committee members, and other volunteers who have been designated and who have accepted responsibility to act on behalf of APHL ("APHL Personnel").

2. Individual Duty and Annual Disclosure

APHL Personnel will avoid any conflict of interest with APHL. APHL Personnel will not profit personally from their affiliation with APHL, or favor the interests of themselves, relatives, friends or other affiliated organizations over the interests of APHL. As used in this Policy, "Conflict of interest" includes any actual, apparent, and potential conflict of interest.

Upon commencing service with APHL, each APHL Personnel will file with the Board an annual statement disclosing all material business, financial, and organizational interests and affiliations they or persons close to them have which could be construed as related to the interests of APHL or the profession of public health laboratory science. Each APHL Personnel has an obligation to make an additional disclosure if a conflict of interest arises in the course of the individual's service to APHL, whether arising out of his/her employment, consulting, investments, or any other activity. These disclosures will be documented promptly in writing and recorded in the Board minutes and corporate records.

3. Procedure

Whenever APHL considers a matter, which presents an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest for APHL Personnel, the interested individual will fully disclose his/her interest in the matter, including the nature, type, and extent of the transaction or situation and the interest of the individual or that individual's relatives, friends or other affiliated organizations. The Board, after consultation with counsel as appropriate, will determine whether an actual and material conflict exists and, if so, what is the appropriate course of action under this policy and the Board vote will be recorded in the minutes.

Any Board member having a conflict of interest must either (i) voluntarily abstain from and be disqualified from participation in all deliberation and voting on all Board actions relating to the situation or matter that gives rise to the conflict of interest, or (ii) ask the Board to determine whether an apparent or potential conflict of interest is considered by the Board to be an actual and material conflict. In the event that the Board member in question requests that the Board evaluate the apparent or potential conflict, that Board member will abstain and be disqualified from participating in (and voting on) the determination of whether the issue presents an actual and material conflict. If the Board determines that an actual and material conflict exists, the Board member in question will abstain from all voting on, and will be disqualified from participation in all deliberation concerning all Board actions relating to the conflict of interest. The vote will be recorded in the minutes.

These procedures will neither prevent the interested individual from briefly stating his/her position on the matter, nor preclude him/her from answering pertinent questions of Board members, since his/her knowledge may be of assistance to the Board's deliberations.

APHL Personnel must be cautious and protective of the assets of APHL and insure that they are used in the pursuit of the mission of APHL. The association's policy requires APHL Personnel to avoid transactions in which APHL personnel may have a significant financial interest in any property which APHL purchases, or a direct or indirect interest in a supplier, contractor, consultant, or other entity with which APHL does business. The Board, after consultation with counsel as appropriate, will determine whether an actual and material conflict exists and, if so, determine whether the transaction is nonetheless favorable to APHL before considering whether to approve it.

4. Other Duties and Obligations

Whenever any APHL Personnel discovers an opportunity for business advantage which is relevant to the activities of APHL, the opportunity belongs to APHL and the individual must present this opportunity to the Board. Only once the Board determines not to pursue the matter and relinquishes the opportunity may the individual consider it a matter of possible personal benefit.

APHL Personnel may not accept favors or gifts exceeding \$75.00 from anyone who does business with APHL.

All APHL Personnel will keep confidential those APHL matters designated confidential. APHL Personnel are prohibited from disclosing information about APHL to those who do not have a need to know or whose interest may be adverse to APHL, either inside or outside APHL, and are prohibited from using in any way such information for personal advantage to the detriment of APHL.

All APHL Personnel who participate in APHL activities, including committee activities and international consultation activities, must be adequately prepared to fully participate as their position descriptions require and will do so in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of their respective state or territory and APHL's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and corporate policies. The APHL Board will read and understand the association's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, corporate policies and financial statements, and routinely verify that all state, federal, and local tax payments, registrations and reports have been filed in a timely and accurate manner.

Board members will never exercise authority on behalf of APHL except when acting in meetings with the full Board or the Executive Committee or as authorized by the Board. If any member of the Board has significant doubts about a course of action of the Board, he or she must clearly raise the concern with the Executive Director and the Board and, when appropriate, seek independent expert advice.

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