



# Revised Request for Proposals (RFP) – Development of Preparedness Training Activities

## **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:**

**December 15, 2016 by 5:00 PM (EST)**

## **REVISED RFP RELEASE DATE:**

**November 21, 2016**

*Original RFP released October 31, 2016*

8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 700  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910



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## Summary

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), with funding support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under Cooperative Agreement Number U60OE000103 (CFDA No. 93.322), is looking identify up to seven locations to each develop an innovative public health preparedness training event. APHL anticipates providing up to \$25,000 to each selected recipient.

Interested parties must submit an application that contains all of the material specified in this RFP, including an evaluation component, to APHL by 5:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time) on Thursday, December 15, 2016, the Application Due Date specified below. If selected, APHL will require a location to make its event available to learners through CDC TRAIN.

## Background

APHL works to strengthen laboratories serving the public's health in the United States and globally. A national nonprofit, the organization represents state and local governmental health laboratories in the US. Its member laboratories monitor and detect health threats to protect health and safety.

Founded over 50 years ago as a forum for state public health laboratory directors, APHL has expanded to encompass laboratories and staff from multiple disciplines, including public health, environmental, agricultural and food safety laboratories. APHL collaborates with laboratory and public health partners to assure effective surveillance, detection and response to health threats. During public health emergencies, APHL operates as a coordinating center for laboratory response. With experience in 31 countries on five continents, it is recognized internationally as a leader in laboratory science and practice.

Since 1989 APHL and CDC have worked together through a series of cooperative agreements to strengthen and improve the public health laboratory system and practice. From the very beginning training programs designed for state and local public health laboratorians have been integral to this collaboration. Through this RFP, APHL looks to further assist with workforce development at its member laboratories.

Under this RFP, APHL seeks to provide funding to as many as seven APHL member laboratories to develop and deliver an innovative preparedness training event that addresses a current need in the state/local public health laboratory community. Any event funded through this RFP must use a virtual online format to maximize access and convenience for prospective learners. In addition, selected applicants must make the training event available to learners through CDC TRAIN. Additional information about CDC TRAIN is available at <https://cdc.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx>.

Interested parties must submit a proposal to APHL that provides all of the information specified in the [Application Requirements](#) section below. In order to be considered for funding, an applicant must

ensure that APHL has its complete proposal by no later than the Proposal Due Date specified in the Anticipated RFP Schedule section of this RFP. Applicants will find proposal submission information in the Submission of Proposals section below.

## Eligibility

This is an open and competitive process available to any APHL member laboratory.

## Anticipated RFP Schedule

APHL currently anticipates the following revised schedule:

- November 21, 2016 – Revised RFP issued
- December 8, 2016 – Last day to submit questions (exceptions may be granted in APHL’s sole discretion)
- December 15, 2016 – RFP responses due by 5:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time) (the Proposal Due Date)**
- December 21, 2016 – Proposal review and follow-up completed; winning applicants notified
- January 3, 2017 – Selected applicant names posted to <https://www.aphl.org/rfp>, APHL’s procurement website by this date

APHL will communicate any further modification to this schedule on APHL’s procurement website.

## Application Requirements

Each applicant must adhere to the following outline in preparing its application. An application should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages not including supporting documentation (such as letters of support). To maximize the score of the proposal, an applicant should verify that the proposal sufficiently covers all elements that are listed in the scoring criteria below. Applicants may also refer to Exhibit B – Suggestions for a Successful Application when developing their proposals.

### Project Description

*(not to exceed 1 page)*

Applicants should describe the project, its potential audience and include between 1 and 3 measurable learning objectives that the training event will meet.

### Project Specific Methodology

*(not to exceed 4 pages)*

Applicants should describe in detail how the laboratory staff or consultant or partnering agency would be used to carry out the project. This section should outline project steps, identify materials and methods required for project completion, expected outcome(s) and provide a detailed timeline of activities. All partners or collaborating parties or agencies must be listed here (see the Special Note

about Collaborative Projects section of this RFP below). Applicants are welcome to provide letters of support from partners such as hospital/independent laboratories, county or local health departments, professional laboratory organizations or academic partners (these letters should be attached to the application in an appendix).

### Evaluation Methods and Project Milestones

*(not to exceed 2 pages)*

Applicants should describe how the effectiveness and impact of the training or training tool will be measured and evaluated. In addition, if an applicant is proposing to deliver training, the applicant must include what type of evaluation and/or pre- and post-testing will be used.

An applicant must include three to five measurable milestones to allow APHL to track and measure the progress of the project. If an applicant is only proposing three milestones in its proposal, the applicant must meet these milestones by no later than February 15, 2017 for the first milestone, April 1, 2017 for the second milestone and June 30, 2017 for the third milestone.

### Budget and Justification

*(not to exceed 3 pages)*

APHL will provide up to **\$25,000** of funding in direct support to each selected project. Applicants must detail the use of the requested funding in its application and provide a justification of why the funds are needed. Identify and detail all in-kind services that the applicant will provide (including staff time and other resources provided by the public health laboratory or any partnering organization).

### Special Note about Collaborative Projects

APHL will fund individual projects or events. In the event that two or more organizations want to submit a joint proposal and will work together on a collaborative project or event, the maximum funding available for that project or event remains unchanged at \$25,000. APHL will not contract with multiple organizations on an event or project, so one of the organizations must submit the application as the lead applicant and must identify any other partnering organization as a subcontractor and describe each subcontractor's role and budget.

### Project Requirements

Each selected applicant must complete the following activities during the project period (estimate start of early January 2017 with a completion date of June 30, 2017):

- a. The selected applicant must complete all milestones as outlined in proposal. An applicant will be required to obtain APHL's prior written approval before making any change to milestones, deliverables or the overall scope of, or adjustments to the budget for the project. *If a selected applicant makes a change without first obtaining APHL's written approval, the applicant could forfeit all or part of the project funding.*

- b. Selected applicants will be required to submit progress reports or updates on meeting project milestones. Applicants are expected to submit milestone progress reports on the following schedule:
  - 1. Milestone 1 report due by February 15, 2017;
  - 2. Milestone 2 report due by on April 1, 2017; and
  - 3. The final written report due on June 30, 2017.
- c. If a selected application propose 4 or 5 milestones, APHL will inform the winning applicant of the revised milestone reporting schedule prior to contract finalization.
- d. Each milestone progress report must contain the following information:
  - 1. Information on whether the milestone was completed and, if it was, how that was accomplished (APHL will have the right to reject any progress report that simply restates or recaps the project description that was submitted in the applicant's proposal);
  - 2. Description of obstacles that caused the selected applicant any delay in completing its milestone and the solutions the applicant took to get back on track together with an updated milestone target for next reporting period, if applicable;
  - 3. If the selected applicant conducted a training during the reporting period, include the number of participants, their pre- and post-test scores, and an analysis of the training evaluation; and
  - 4. A summary of the types of resources that were distributed to training participants, if applicable.
- e. In addition, the final project report due June 30, 2017 must contain the following information:
  - 1. Identify whether the laboratory changed or modified the project in any way from the initial proposal and, if so, also explain why these changes occurred and their impact (if any) on the project;
  - 2. Specify the number of participants who either used the product or attended the training(s);
  - 3. Describe what participants liked and disliked about the format of the training(s);
  - 4. Detail whether or not the participants found the information useful;
  - 5. Discuss the impact the project had on the participants' knowledge of the practices addressed;
  - 6. Note whether the participants use (or plan to use) the information gained in their laboratory practice and explain how this information was gathered;
  - 7. Explain how the information helped participants make changes to laboratory practices and the impact over time related to the changes;
  - 8. Provide information on whether the laboratory will sustain the project and, if so, explain how the project will be sustained;
  - 9. Identify which of the Public Health Laboratory Competencies were addressed for the related training;
  - 10. Discuss the participants' pre- and post-test results and the implications relative to knowledge transfer;

11. Detail any gaps in the overall project that the laboratory had not anticipated; and
  12. Describe the lessons learned by trainers or course developers.
- f. Selected applicants should consider submitting a proposal for a presentation or poster on the project at a conference or meeting (applicants will first have to request APHL's prior written approval of the conference or meeting) or as a written manuscript for potential publication.

## Submission of Proposals

**APHL must receive completed responses by 5:00 pm EST on December 15, 2016.** Applicants must email complete applications using the subject line *Development of Preparedness Training Activities* to [susan.bailey@aphl.org](mailto:susan.bailey@aphl.org).

APHL encourages applicants to review [Exhibit A - RFP Evaluation/Scoring Criteria](#) prior to submission and to verify that their proposal includes all requested information. While APHL may review, in its sole discretion, incomplete applications it will deduct points from each section of a proposal where the applicant did not provide that scoring section's complete information.

Please note that 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 Susan Bailey at 240.485.2746 to ensure your application was delivered correctly.

## Application Review and Evaluation Process

### Evaluation Process

APHL will conduct the entire review either at APHL headquarters office in Silver Spring, Maryland or via a combination of email communications between APHL's Manager, Customer Service Support and the members of the evaluation team, or among the evaluation team members via teleconference and/or webinar evaluation sessions. APHL's Manager, Customer Service Support 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 scoring areas or will help to explain other information contained in an applicant's proposal.

### Evaluation Team

APHL staff, led by the Manager, Customer Service Support, will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. APHL anticipates that 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 experts from APHL members or program staff. SMEs from APHL will be identified and selected based on their familiarity with the laboratory workforce and

training. Once potential reviewers have been identified, APHL's Senior Director, Professional Development will have final approval over the review team's composition.

Each potential reviewer will be asked to complete a conflict of interest disclosure form prior to the start of the evaluation process. Potential reviewers with a conflict of interest either won't be selected by APHL to serve as a reviewer or, if feasible, will be excluded by APHL from reviewing any proposal where their identified conflict of interest might potentially impact their review. In the event that a conflict of interest is identified after the start of the evaluation process, APHL will remove any evaluation material submitted by the reviewer for whom the conflict of interest was identified and that material will not be considered as part of the final evaluation process.

### Evaluation Criteria

APHL will evaluate proposals based on responses to the requirements set out in the [Application Requirements](#) section above, and will provide a numeric score of up to 100 maximum points based on the scorecard template set out in Exhibit A - RFP Evaluation/Scoring Criteria.

### Post-Evaluation Process

The selected laboratories will be notified by APHL staff on or close to December 21, 2016, and the name of the winning applicants will be posted to APHL's procurement website, found at [www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp) by close of business on January 3, 2017. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by e-mail or by U.S. mail within 30 days of the date that the list of winning/successful laboratories 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 awardee.

Applicants must agree to comply with expectations outlined in this RFP.

### Questions

Please direct all questions via email to the following individuals:

1. Eva Perlman, MPH Senior Director, Professional Development  
240.485.2773 [eva.perlman@aphl.org](mailto:eva.perlman@aphl.org)
2. Susan Bailey, MPA Customer Support Manager  
240.485.2746 [susan.bailey@aphl.org](mailto:susan.bailey@aphl.org)

APHL must receive all questions by 5:00 PM (EST) December 8, 2016.

APHL or a subject matter expert (SME) will respond directly to the questions on an individual basis as they are received. APHL anticipates that it will then also post each question, together with the answers,

to APHL's procurement website ([www.aphl.org/rfp](http://www.aphl.org/rfp)) within two business days of the date APHL provided the answer(s) to the individual.

## Exhibit A - RFP Evaluation/Scoring Criteria

### Application Evaluation

Applications for each activity will be evaluated individually against the specific criteria listed below.

#### Project description and submission - (25 points)

Does the applicant clearly state how the training relates to preparedness? Does the applicant describe how the training is accessible by other state public health laboratories? Does the applicant adequately describe how the course will be uploaded to the state TRAIN system and accessed by learners? Does the applicant's project offer an innovative preparedness training event that addresses a current need in the state/local public health laboratory community, using a virtual online format to maximize access and convenience for prospective learners? Is the modality suitable for the projected audience? Are all components of the RFP addressed? Did the submitter stay in the page limit?

#### Project specific methodology goals and objectives – (30 points)

Is the methodology given for the project appropriate? Are measurable goals for the success of the project clearly written? Are measurable training objectives present (what the learner should come away with after successfully completing the training)? If collaborating with others, are roles clearly defined?

#### Program Evaluation/Timeline - (25 points)

Is there a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the training activity? Are the described evaluation metrics appropriate for the project? Are the described milestones measurable and appropriate to gauge progress of the project? Is the timeline for completion of the project reasonable?

#### In-kind support & Budget and Justification – (20 points)

Does the described project have an adequate and reasonable allocation of program staff to carry out recipient activities, including the number, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, and time allocation of the proposed staff? Is the budget realistic and reasonable?

## Exhibit B – Suggestions for a Successful Application

- ✓ Submit a double spaced application
- ✓ Stay within the page limitations
- ✓ Be sure to clearly state which how the training relates to preparedness
- ✓ Describe how the project is transferable to other public health laboratories
- ✓ Develop a realistic budget
- ✓ Define who the partners or collaborators are
- ✓ Be specific when describing in-kind support

The training projects identified in this RFP will be supported by Cooperative Agreement # U60OE000103 funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This RFP's contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services. All selected projects will be 100% funded with federal funds.