

Federal Grant Application Request

Oregon Health Authority

Domestic Well Safety Program

Analyst: Linda Ames

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the amount of up to \$175,000 per year for two years, to address health hazards related to private wells and other small drinking water systems.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Analysis: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is requesting approval from the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to apply for the “Improving capacity to assess and manage risks associated with private wells and other small drinking water systems” grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Grant funding is expected to be up to \$175,000 per year for two years. No state matching funds are required for the grant, nor is there a requirement for maintenance of effort.

This grant funding would enable the agency to analyze data that is already available relating to contaminants in private wells and other small drinking water systems. Based on the results of the analyses, the agency would work with local public health departments and communities to develop and implement educational outreach about those hazards. The specific outreach and education strategies will depend on the type and magnitude of the hazards being discussed, as well as the level of community involvement. Efforts could include local advertising, public interest articles in local publications, brochures for local stakeholders, and community meetings. Information provided would include such things as the specific risk in the area, how to get drinking water tested, and options available for treating water to make it safe.

The agency will need one new limited duration part-time position to work on data entry and analysis. Funds will also support part of an existing position to coordinate communications, outreach and education efforts.

The grant application is due on May 15, 2013. If approved, funding would begin on September 1, 2013 and end August 31, 2015. If necessary, additional expenditure limitation and position authority could be included in the OHA 2013-15 budget, or be added later in the biennium.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.

Motion: I move that the Joint Committee on Ways and Means approve the Oregon Health Authority’s submission of a federal grant application to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address health hazards related to private wells and other small drinking water systems.

May 1, 2013

The Honorable Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
The Honorable Peter Buckley, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Re: Request to Apply Letter – Competitive Grant – Domestic Well Safety
Program (CDC-RFA-EH13-1301)(OHA-PH-13-08)

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “Improving state and local capacity to assess and manage risks associated with private wells and other small drinking water systems by using the Environmental Health Specialist Network (EHS-Net)” grant for federal funds for up to \$175,000 a year for 2 years, beginning September 1, 2013 and ending August 31, 2015, for a total of up to \$350,000.

The intent of this grant is to build Public Health capacity to address health hazards posed to private wells and other small drinking water systems, and to provide people drinking water from those systems with the information they need to protect themselves. The funding is available through the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The request for proposals was received on April 8, 2013, and the application is due on May 15, 2013. This grant funding requires no matching state funds. There is not a federal requirement for maintenance of effort.

Agency Action

Although large drinking water systems are required to submit testing information to us on a regular basis and meet specific standards for safety, there are no such requirements for small drinking water systems and private wells. Since there are hazardous substances in some of these small systems, it is important that people drinking water from those systems have the information they need to protect themselves. This grant would help us provide that information to Oregonians. If funded we would analyze data about contaminants in water that we already receive under the Domestic Well Testing Act to assess drinking water hazards across the state; new data would not be collected. Based on these analyses we will then develop and implement educational outreach about these hazards to those living in areas with them.

For example, we know that many areas in Oregon have high concentrations of naturally occurring arsenic in groundwater. Methods to remove arsenic from drinking water are well developed, easily installed and relatively inexpensive. This grant would allow us to target outreach activities to those areas most affected and provide well owners with information about the risks of arsenic in drinking water, how to get their drinking water tested and what options are available for treating their water to make it safe to drink.

A portion of the funds will be used to support an existing, vacant limited duration Public Health Educator 2 position. This position will lead communications planning, outreach and education efforts. Funds will also support part of a limited duration Research Analyst 1 position to maintain existing and ongoing data entry.

There is no expectation that the state will continue to fund these activities or positions at the end of the grant period. When funding for this work is eliminated, we would not expect to continue working on this project. What we hope to achieve within two years is to build informational and outreach tools that are readily accessible to future OHA staff to provide Oregonians with the information they can best use to ensure that their drinking water is safe and pure.

The OHA mission is to help people and communities achieve optimum physical, mental and social well-being through partnerships, prevention and access to quality, affordable health care. This funding will support the mission by helping individuals and communities reliant on small drinking water systems and private wells improve the quality of their drinking water.

Action Requested

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the Domestic Well Safety grant.

Legislation Affected

None

For additional information, please call Dave Leland at 971-673-0403.

Sincerely,



Kelly Ballas
Chief Financial Officer

CC: Linda Ames, Legislative Fiscal Office
Kate Nass, Department of Administrative Services
Blake Johnson, Department of Administrative Services
Dustin Ball, Department of Administrative Services