



Office of the Director

Kate Brown, Governor



500 Summer Street NE E20
Salem, OR 97301
Voice: 503-947-2340
Fax: 503-947-2341
TTY: 503-947-5080

April 8, 2015

The Honorable Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative 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 – The National Syndromic Surveillance Program: Enhancing Syndromic Surveillance (OHA-PH-15-07)

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the National Syndromic Surveillance Program: Enhancing Syndromic Surveillance grant for federal funds up to \$400,000 a year for 4 years, beginning September 1, 2015 and ending August 31, 2019, for a total of up to \$1,600,000.

The intent of the grant is to support key syndromic surveillance capabilities, support regional surveillance activities, and provide public health workforce training and development. The funding is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The request for proposals was received on March 3, 2015, and the application is due on April 20, 2015. This grant funding requires no state matching funds. There is not a federal requirement for maintenance of effort.

Agency Action

Oregon's syndromic surveillance system, called Oregon ESSENCE, collects near real-time data from hospitals for situation awareness, which is particularly useful in public health emergencies, outbreaks and events, such as wildfires, influenza season, disease outbreaks (e.g., pertussis and measles), and large gatherings such as athletic events. The system currently has data from 99% of statewide emergency department visits. This new project would enhance the Oregon ESSENCE system and its activities by providing funds to begin participating in the national syndromic surveillance system, train local health

The Honorable Richard Devlin, Co-Chair

The Honorable Peter Buckley, Co-Chair

DATE

Page 2 of 3

department and hospital users, conduct regional exercises, and improve data quality and interoperability with other data systems.

This grant would allow the ESSENCE program to develop regional training and exercise plans that teach ESSENCE users how to monitor the data during outbreaks and public health emergencies. The training and exercise activities would include partners who use ESSENCE from local health departments in Oregon, all Oregon hospitals and health systems that provide emergency department care, and the Washington Department of Health. The grant would also enable Oregon to participate in the national syndromic surveillance system, called Biosense, which helps partners at CDC maintain situational awareness during emergencies such as disease outbreaks and natural hazards such as wildfires and earthquakes. Finally, the grant would provide funds to support data quality work to ensure that the data sent to the system are timely, complete and accurate.

Funds will be used to create two limited duration positions. 1) C6217 Epidemiologist 1. The Epidemiologist 1 will develop and conduct training and exercise, and perform data analysis and reporting. 2) C0872 Operations and Policy Analyst 3. This Operations and Policy Analyst will be responsible for technical work, including system development for data parsing and routing, data quality and interoperability work. These positions will be needed for the entire length of the grant, 4 years. Position authority is requested for these full time limited duration positions.

There is no expectation that the state will continue to fund these activities at the end of the grant period.

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. Assessment and epidemiology and emergency preparedness and response are foundational public health capabilities. The grant funding would allow us to improve situational awareness locally, regionally and statewide and be better prepared to implement public health interventions in the case of public health emergencies and natural hazards.

Action Requested

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division requests authority to accept a The National Syndromic Surveillance Program: Enhancing Syndromic Surveillance Capacity and Practice grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention if the state's application is successful.

Legislation Affected

The Honorable Richard Devlin, Co-Chair

The Honorable Peter Buckley, Co-Chair

DATE

Page 3 of 3

None.

For additional information, please call Collette Young at 971-673-1006, or Melissa Powell at 971-673-1131.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William J. Coulombe".

William Coulombe

Budget Director

Oregon Health Authority

CC: Ken Rocco, Legislative Fiscal Office
George Naughton, Chief Financial Office
Linda Ames, Legislative Fiscal Office
Kate Nass, Chief Financial Office
Art Ayre, Chief Financial Office