

ANALYSIS

Consent Agenda – Oregon Health Authority Requests for Approval to Apply for Federal Grants

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) seeks retroactive approval to submit grant applications to various federal agencies. Retroactive approval is necessary for grant applications with deadlines that fell before the submittal dates for the November 2021 meeting of the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means and for which prior legislative approval had not been obtained. The agency submitted advance notification to legislative leadership of their intent to apply for the grants as required by the Department of Administrative Services and Legislative Fiscal Office.

Item 10: Oregon Health Authority – Health Insurance Marketplace

Analyst: Tom MacDonald

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in the amount of \$800,000 over one year to enhance consumer education, outreach, and navigation services related to the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace.

Analysis: The State Exchange Modernization Grant Program was established by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to help states modernize their health insurance exchange systems (if on a state platform) and/or assist consumers with new financial assistance opportunities available under ARPA. CMS approved the Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) grant application in the amount of \$500,000 for the one-year grant period starting September 10, 2021.

OHA will use this award to expand Marketplace consumer webtools, including updates to its standalone plan display feature, development of enhanced provider and formulary search tools, and Spanish translation of the Marketplace's primary website. OHA will also expand consumer assistance activities, targeted consumer education activities, and development of additional training materials and support for call center staff, community partners, and insurance agents. All grant activities will be carried out by existing program staff and community and contractual partners. No state match or maintenance of effort is required.

Item 12: Oregon Health Authority – Climate and Health Program

Analyst: Tom MacDonald

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the amount of up to \$12 million over five years to help reduce negative health outcomes attributed to climate change.

Analysis: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) requests retroactive approval to apply for the federal Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) competitive grant, which supports strategies that build resilience to the health impacts of climate change. OHA applied for the grant's core component and three optional components related to building community capacity and improving data tools. CDC subsequently approved only the core component at \$2 million over the five-year grant period beginning September 1, 2021.

OHA's existing Climate and Health Program, which has largely been funded by previous BRACE grant awards, will manage the new grant by advancing ongoing program activities and strategy development. The following summarizes the key planned activities:

- Provide technical assistance and training to community partners and publish an updated climate and health resiliency plan that identifies community-driven priorities.
- Establish a web-based climate and health data tool.
- Support OHA's role in implementing the state's 2021 Climate Equity Blueprint with respect to information sharing, the design of program outcomes and goals focused on climate equity, and improving data collection.
- Increase collaboration among environmental health, behavioral health, and other relevant programs based on forthcoming recommendations from a report on climate change, youth depression, and mental health. This report was required by Executive Order 20-04 and will be published in early 2022.

Over half the cost to support these activities will be from existing program staff salaries and a new permanent Operations and Program Analyst 3 position to work on planning, policy, and communications. The grant will also fund contractual expenses for technical assistance and the development of culturally responsive climate and health curricula. The grant does not require a state match or maintenance of effort.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means approve the 2 requests to apply for federal grants, en bloc, with the understanding that if the funds are awarded, the Oregon Health Authority will return to the Legislative Assembly for approval of any necessary Federal Funds expenditure limitation and position authority.



500 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-947-2340

350 Winter St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-378-4100

October 18, 2021

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street
NE H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Health Policy and Analytics Division requests retroactive approval to apply for the State Exchange Modernization Grant administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This funding was authorized for the State Based Exchanges and State Based Exchange Federal Partnership states, through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This grant would allow for more ample education, outreach, marketing, and consumer assistance services offered by the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace to be directed at the most vulnerable current and potential marketplace enrollees impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. OHA received the federal notice of funding opportunity on June 21, 2021. The application was due on July 20, 2021.

OHA applied for the full amount allotted to State Based Exchange Federal Partnership states (SBE-FP) of \$800,000 and was awarded a modified allotted amount to State Based Exchange Federal Partnership States (SBE-FP) of \$500,00 to be used between September 10, 2021, and September 9, 2022. This grant requires no matching funds nor are there requirements for maintenance of effort. OHA will support the grant with existing staff and grant funding will not be used to pay for current staff.

Agency Action

The Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace operates with funding levels calculated to operate the Marketplace and all its programs during non-emergency times. Due to this, our ability to conduct consumer outreach specific to the increased financial assistance opportunities under ARPA has been limited. With additional funding, our certified insurance agents, community partners, community organizations, agency staff, and technological assistance tools could significantly expand outreach, education, and plan selection assistance to consumers impacted by the ongoing and temporary provisions detailed in the ARPA.

With this additional funding, the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace plans to:

- Provide new or increased grant opportunities to community partners who are engaging and assisting Oregonians who are newly eligible for increased financial assistance.
- Offer new grants to selected licensed and specially trained insurance agents to assist consumers with multiple plan changes this year and next due to eligibility changes resulting from this act.
- Provide more complete plan information to consumers by updating the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace's standalone plan display to include an improved provider directory and Spanish translation.
- Create marketing and advertising campaigns targeting specific Oregon populations most impacted ARPA.

Action Requested

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Health Policy and Analytics Division requests permission to apply for the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services State Exchange Modernization Grant.

Legislation Affected

None.

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
October 18, 2021
Page 3 of 3

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Allen
Director
Oregon Health Authority



Andrew R. Stolfi
Director
Department of Consumer and
Business Services

EC: Patrick Heath, Department of Administrative Services
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Tom MacDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office



Office of the Director

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon
Health
Authority

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

October 18, 2021

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division is requesting retroactive approval to apply for the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) cooperative agreement administered by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is the CDC's main source of funding for climate and health work and has been the primary source of funding for Oregon's Climate and Health program for the last 11 years. This funding would continue and expand the work of OHA's climate and health program established under previous BRACE grants.

The CDC awarded OHA \$400,000 per year for five years in core Climate and Health Program support. (CDC did not award Oregon funding under three optional components for which OHA submitted proposals.) The total award is \$2 million through August 31, 2026, subject to availability of annual federal appropriations. This grant funding does not require state matching funds and does not have a federal requirement for maintenance of effort. The funding will support one new position and existing positions, as described below.

OHA received the federal notice of funding opportunity on April 19, 2021. The application was due on June 18, 2021. OHA submitted a 10-day notification letter June 3, 2021, but it was not considered by a legislative committee during the 2021 legislative session. This letter updates that submittal to reflect the outcome of the CDC's funding decision.

Agency Action

The most recent five-year competitive funding award concluded August 31, 2021, and provided OHA \$217,000 per year and funded one full-time program lead, part of a manager and ancillary activities, all focused on climate adaptation. The new funding that started September 2021 will allow Oregon to further advance collaborative climate and health projects to reduce negative health outcomes, especially among populations most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in Oregon. This cooperative agreement will support Oregon in adopting and expanding strategies that protect and promote public health. It will allow the agency to build upon a decade of climate and health assessment and planning and support the implementation and evaluation of public health interventions in collaboration with community partners across Oregon. This work aligns with OHA's overarching goals to improve social and environmental determinants of health and helps to advance relevant strategies prioritized in OHA's state health improvement plan *Healthier Together Oregon*, including the strategy to "build climate resilience among priority populations."

Projects proposed by the Public Health Division include publishing a new Climate Impact Compendium that summarizes recent climate and health risk data in a user-friendly format and an updated five-year Climate and Health Resilience Plan that provides community-determined climate resilience priorities for Oregon's public health system. The funding will also support the implementation of the interagency Oregon Climate Equity Blueprint, public health strategies in the multi-agency Oregon Climate Change Adaptation Framework, as well as selected recommendations from OHA's forthcoming report on climate change, youth depression and mental health.

Core program work funded by CDC will pay for the following positions to achieve the intended cooperative agreement outcomes:

- New Position: Operations and Policy Analyst 3 position (0.75 FTE) to lead strategic development of climate adaptation-focused planning, policy and communications.
- Existing Position: Program Analyst 2 (0.50 FTE) to lead program development, project coordination, and tracking/reporting grant deliverables.
- Various other supporting positions (PEMD, OPA3s, RA4) at varying levels (0.05 to .15 FTE).

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
October 18, 2021
Page 3 of 3

This funding opportunity supports foundational Environmental Health work to prevent disease and injury, eliminate the disparate impact of environmental health risks and threats on population subgroups, and create health-supportive environments where everyone in Oregon can thrive. The work will further the OHA mission of a healthy Oregon and ensuring all people and communities can achieve optimum physical, mental and social well-being through partnership, prevention and access to quality, affordable health care. It prioritizes health equity, aligning with the OHA strategic plan goal of eliminating health inequities by 2030.

Action Requested

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division requests retroactive approval to apply for the CDC Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE): Implementing and Evaluating Adaptation Strategies that Protect and Promote Human Health cooperative agreement.

Legislation Affected

None.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Allen
Director

EC: Patrick Heath, Department of Administrative Services
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Tom MacDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office