

Analysis

Oregon Health Authority

Prevention of Excessive Alcohol Use

Analyst: Tom MacDonald

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application request from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the amount of up to \$1,000,000 over five years to build the state's capacity in alcohol epidemiology.

Analysis: OHA requests approval to apply for a federal grant of up to \$200,000 per year for five years to strengthen the public health infrastructure needed to reduce excessive alcohol use. The federal opportunity allows state governments and other organizations to apply for funding for one of two components. Component 1 supports capacity building through analysis and dissemination of surveillance data on excessive alcohol use and by developing partnerships with stakeholders to plan and evaluate prevention strategies. Component 2 supports technical assistance for alcohol density mapping, the development of new research tools, and the training of Component 1 grantees. OHA is applying for Component 1 funding because of the need for additional program capacity and to implement alcohol density mapping.

The Public Health Division's Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention program currently works on strategies to prevent excessive alcohol use and would be responsible for administering this grant. If awarded funding, the program will satisfy the capacity-building requirements by hiring one Epidemiologist 2 position. This position will identify additional data sources to communicate the benefits of evidence-based prevention practices, ensure information is shared in an accessible manner with stakeholders, and support a more equitable public health approach to policies impacting excessive alcohol use.

The federal grant does not require a state match or maintenance of effort. The grant application was due April 26, 2021 for the five-year grant period beginning September 30, 2021. OHA submitted its request to apply for the grant in advance of this deadline; however, the request could not be scheduled for a work session in the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services until after the deadline due to scheduling constraints. Because of this, the request is now similar to retroactive federal grant application requests submitted during interim legislative periods. If OHA receives an award, the agency will return to the Legislature for position authority and expenditure limitation, as needed.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: Approve the request.

Oregon Health Authority Heath

Request: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is requesting authorization to apply for a five year, \$1.0 million grant from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) to increase the Department's epidemiological capacity to respond to excessive alcohol use.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: OHA is requesting authorization to apply for a five year, up to \$1.0 million grant from the CDC to strengthen the Department's public health response to excessive alcohol use. The grant was announced on February 18, 2021 and applications are due on April 26, 2021.

This grant would allow the Department to hire an Epidemiologist 2 position to focus on data analysis, share scientific findings on the impacts of alcohol abuse, develop partnerships with stakeholders and communities, and provide technical assistance related to understanding the impacts of excessive alcohol use. OHA does not currently have staff dedicated specifically to addressing the public health impact of alcohol abuse; therefore, this grant would build that capacity.

The grant does not have a match or maintenance of effort requirement. The Department would seek to maintain this position after the grant has expired and will consider funding from the marijuana tax, the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, or a request for General Fund.



Office of the Director

Kate Brown, Governor

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March 31, 2021

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the Promoting Population Health through Increased Capacity in Alcohol Epidemiology & the Prevention of Excessive Alcohol Use (CDC-RFA-DP21-2105) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This new funding opportunity would increase Oregon's ability to build state capacity in alcohol epidemiology and provide the tools and information needed to perform core public health functions related to excessive alcohol use prevention in Oregon.

The grant would fund up to \$200,000 per year for five years, for a total award amount of up to \$1,000,000 through September 29, 2026. This grant funding does not require matching funds or maintenance of effort. The grant opportunity requires hiring a full-time Epidemiologist 2 position to develop stakeholder partnerships, establish an alcohol data surveillance system to disseminate information on excessive alcohol use, and respond to inquiries and provide technical assistance to support prevention efforts.

OHA received the request for proposals on February 18, 2021. Applications are due on April 26, 2021.

Agency Action

The purpose of this grant is to:

- Build state capacity in alcohol epidemiology.

- Increase the dissemination of surveillance data on excessive alcohol use in Oregon.
- Provide tools and information needed to perform core public health functions related to excessive alcohol use prevention in Oregon.
- Build the public health infrastructure needed to reduce excessive alcohol use and support population-level evidence-based prevention strategies recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force.
- Increase the number of stakeholders engaging with state public health on the prevention of excessive alcohol use.

This grant aligns with the work the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention section is doing to address excessive alcohol use, which drives many of Oregon's most pressing health and social challenges.

- Alcohol is the third leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon and was responsible for over 2,000 deaths in 2018.
- Alcohol-related deaths in Oregon have increased nearly 37 percent over the past 20 years.
- Excessive alcohol use costs the Oregon economy \$4.8 billion per year, including lost workplace productivity, health care expenses, criminal justice costs, and motor vehicle crash related costs.
- Alcohol-related harms disproportionately affect communities already experiencing other health and economic disparities, especially among American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention section currently monitors excessive alcohol use and shares the data with partners. The grant would make these efforts significantly more robust with a dedicated Epidemiologist 2 position. Additional data sources could be identified and used to communicate the benefits of evidence-based prevention practices. The position could also help ensure the information is shared in an accessible manner that engages stakeholders and decisionmakers and helps support a more equitable public health approach to rules and policies that impact excessive alcohol use.

Grant funds would support one full-time position. The Epidemiologist 2 position would work with the Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Education Program staff and the Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Alignment Team to address the work as described above.

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
March 31, 2021
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This funding opportunity furthers the OHA mission of a healthy Oregon and the mission of 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 permission to apply for Promoting Population Health through Increased Capacity in Alcohol Epidemiology & the Prevention of Excessive Alcohol Use.

Legislation Affected

None.

For additional information, please contact Tatiana Dierwechter, Interim Section Manager, at (503) 754-0631 or Tatiana.Dierwechter@dhsoha.state.or.us.

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