

ANALYSIS

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, in the amount of \$2 million over five years, to reduce negative health outcomes attributed to climate change.

Analysis: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) requests retroactive approval to apply for the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) competitive grant, which supports strategies that prepare for the effects of climate change. The grant application was due June 18, 2021 and OHA subsequently received a \$2 million award for the five-year grant period beginning September 1, 2021. The agency requested retroactive approval to apply for this grant at the November 17, 2021 meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means; however, the committee did not approve the request. Due to that action, OHA has not proceeded with expending the award and has worked with legislators to clarify how the grant fits into core, existing programs. The agency is again requesting retroactive approval to apply for the grant.

The federal BRACE program grant has funded the Public Health Division's Climate and Health Program since 2010 and the new grant period is meant to advance activities funded over the previous five years. 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 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.

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 education material for use with participating community-based organizations. The grant does not require a state match or maintenance of effort.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.



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

January 7, 2022

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

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division is requesting retroactive approval to request permission 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. OHA submitted a 10-day retroactive notice on October 18, 2021 and it was heard during the November legislative days, however, it was not approved at that time.

Agency Action

The most recent five-year competitive funding award concluded August 30, 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 1.0 Operations and Policy Analyst 3: To lead strategic development of climate adaptation-focused planning, policy and communications.
- Existing 1.0 Program Analyst 3: To lead program development, project coordination, and tracking/reporting grant deliverables.
- 0.05 to .15 of various other existing supporting positions (PEMD, OPA3s)

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 permission 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
Amanda Beitel, Legislative Fiscal Office