Informational Call for CDC-RFA-TS-24-0005
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU)

March 27, 2024

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Agenda:
Introductions and Welcome: Amanda Cadore, PEHSU Project Officer
Overview of the NOFO: Amanda Cadore, PEHSU Project Officer
Organizational Capacity: Linda Hansen, PEHSU Program Manager
Strategies, Activities, Evaluation: Linda Hansen, PEHSU Program Manager
Eligibility Criteria, Funding, and Application Requirements: Kimberly Lewis
Questions and Answers: All
Wrap Up: Amanda Cadore

Roll Call: Amanda Cadore

Hello, we are glad you can join us today for this informational call for the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, or PEHSU, Notice of Funding Opportunity, which will be referred to as NOFO throughout this call.

Our interagency partner is the Office of Children's Health Protection at the US Environmental Protection Agency.

There are no slides for today's call. Also, we will not be recording this call; however, we will add our remarks and answers to questions to the NOFO as an amendment after this call.

We ask that you please put your name and organizational affiliation in the chat.

Please remain muted until the question and answer portion of this call. You may enter questions in the chat at any time and you may also unmute and ask a question during the question and answer period. Questions will be answered at the end of the brief presentations.

Introductions and Welcome: Amanda Cadore

I am Amanda Cadore, the project officer for the PEHSU. I work in the Environmental Medicine and Health Systems Intervention Section of the Office of Capacity Development and Applied Prevention Science at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry or ATSDR.

Welcome to this informational call about a new funding opportunity CDC-RFA-TS-24-0005, Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) from CDC ATSDR.

Thank you for taking the time to be on the call today. I will review the agenda and introduce the CDC ATSDR staff you will hear from today. I will provide a general overview of the funding opportunity and the intended audience. Linda Hansen, the PEHSU program manager, will review organizational capacity and discuss strategies, activities, and evaluation.

Kimberly Lewis, a grants management specialist in CDC's Office of Grant Services, will discuss the eligibility and application requirements.

After these presentations, there will be time to respond to your questions. We will start with reviewing answers to questions we have received prior to this call, then provide answers to questions in the chat, and finally open the call to any other questions you may have.

Overview of Program: Amanda Cadore

I will now provide an overview of the NOFO, describe the purpose and the intended population, and review key aspects of what is expected of applicants.

Please note that these are highlights. The full description and all requirements are stated in the published NOFO, which is CDC-RFA-TS-24-0005 and titled Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU). This NOFO is from the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The purpose of the PEHSU is to lead the way in enhancing reproductive and children's health by incorporating environmental health into clinical care and public health, while also supporting communities. This funding opportunity will support initiatives aimed at educating health professionals, conducting outreach and education to communities, providing consultative services, offering referral resources, and collaborating with stakeholders to prevent or minimize hazardous environmental exposures during fetal, childhood, and adolescent development as well as the preconception period.

CDC ATSDR will provide technical assistance, share information, and provide other assistance as outlined in the NOFO.

The intended populations to be reached through this NOFO are health professionals, community members and organizations, schools, families, governmental and tribal officials and entities, and others having an interest in environmental exposures that influence reproductive and pediatric health. PEHSU employ available tools and resources such as ATSDR Environmental Justice Index and EPA EJScreen to help identify populations with disproportionate risks. PEHSU are located at academic institutions in each of the 10 federal regions.

Now I will hand it over to Linda Hansen who will discuss organizational capacity.

Organizational Capacity: Linda Hansen

I am Linda Hansen, and I serve as the PEHSU program manager as well as section chief of the Environmental Medicine and Health Systems Intervention Section of the Office of Capacity Development and Applied Prevention Science in ATSDR.

I would like to review some points about demonstrating organizational capacity. Applicants must

demonstrate sufficient capacity and readiness to carry out the strategies and activities outlined in the NOFO.

It is critical that applicants carefully review and respond to all the requested information in the NOFO.

I would like to highlight that applications should demonstrate

- Experience managing a multi-regional or national educational consultative program;
- Experience in project management, evaluation, website content management, and communications;
- A staffing plan with an organizational chart showing capacity to complete the work, including appropriate staffing levels, experience, and ability to hire;
- A risk management plan outlining potential organizational risks and proposed strategies to mitigate these risks;
- Budget management experience and ability to write and award contracts in a timely fashion;
- A financial management system that will meet the criteria defined in the NOFO; and
- A data management system that will allow for recording and tracking performance measures and success stories.

We will now discuss strategies and evaluation.

Strategies, Activities, and Evaluation: Linda Hansen

During the project period, the recipient will implement activities to support the strategies outlined in this NOFO including

- Education of health professionals;
- Education of and outreach to communities;
- Consultations and referrals; and
- Building and maintaining partnerships.

Expected outcomes include:

- Increased opportunities for health professionals to enhance their knowledge of hazardous environmental exposures;
- Integration of environmental health content into clinical curricula;
- Increased primary care awareness of environmental medicine practices and competency in taking an environmental exposure history in clinical care;
- Increased recognition of individuals impacted by environmental exposures and capacity of health professionals to provide timely and appropriate mitigation strategies to those individuals;
- Increase in access to knowledge about exposure risks and mitigation strategies among community members; and
- Better recognition of PEHSU's role and what resources they offer.

The strategies and activities should lead to the outcomes depicted in the NOFO logic model. Applicants are not required to develop a logic model.

During each funding cycle, the recipient is expected to show progress on the short-term and intermediate outcomes depicted in the NOFO logic model.

Applicants must provide an overall evaluation plan as described in the NOFO. Evaluation and performance measures will be finalized in collaboration with the recipient within six months of the project start date. The recipient should include key partners in the evaluation and measures planning process and ensure that information collected will be limited to data that can be analyzed and used for program improvement.

Now, I will turn it over to Kimberly Lewis from CDC's Office of Grant Services to discuss the eligibility criteria, funding, and application requirements.

Eligibility Criteria, Funding, and Application Requirements: Kimberly Lewis

The entities that are eligible to apply for this NOFO are listed in the announcement.

Awards are dependent upon availability of funds. No minimum or ceiling was set for this NOFO. There are no cost sharing or matching requirements with this NOFO.

CDC anticipates funding one applicant. The average award will be $2.5-3.5M, *subject to the availability of funding*. Throughout the project period, CDC will continue to award based on the availability of funds, the evidence of satisfactory progress by the recipient (as documented in required reports), and the determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the federal government.

The total number of years for which federal support has been approved (project period) is listed in the "Notice of Award", which is three years. This information does not constitute a commitment by the federal government to fund the entire period. The total period of performance comprises the initial competitive segment and any subsequent non-competitive continuation award(s).

Applicants must submit an itemized budget narrative, as part of the Organizational Capacity of Applicants to Implement the Approach. When developing the budget narrative, applicants must consider whether the proposed budget is reasonable and consistent with the purpose, outcomes, and program strategy outlined in the projective narrative. The budget must include salaries, fringe benefits, consultant costs, equipment, supplies, travel, other categories, contractual costs, total direct costs, and indirect costs.

For guidance on completing a detailed budget, see Budget Preparation Guidelines online (https://www.cdc.gov/grants/documents/budget-preparation-guidance.pdf). We will put the link in the chat.

The Budget Period or Budget Year is the duration of each individual funding period within the project period. Traditionally, budget periods are 12 months/1 year.

Amanda Cadore will now go over a few reminders.

Reminders: Amanda Cadore

- The NOFO was posted on February 15, 2024, and will remain posted until the application due date.
- The application due date is May 7, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time, at grants.gov.
- The CDC has requested that interested candidates submit a letter of intent. Submission of a letter of intent is optional; it allows CDC to plan for the right number of objective reviewers. If you plan to submit a letter of intent, it is due April 7, 2024. Please send it to me, Amanda Cadore, at

fzj3@cdc.gov. We will put the email address in the chat.
- All applications meeting the requirements (as listed in the NOFO) will be accepted for review.
- The project period is September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2027.

We will now start the question and answer period, which Linda Hansen will lead.

Questions and Answers: (Linda Hansen facilitating)

Questions and answers from this call and others received through April 7, 2024 will be posted as an amendment to this NOFO on grants.gov. We will continue to take questions after this date as needed, but these will not be posted on grants.gov.

First, we will address questions we received prior to this call, then questions received in the chat, and finally open the call for any other questions. Please raise your hand and when called on, unmute and ask your question.

Wrap Up: Amanda Cadore

To submit questions after this call, you may send them to me, Amanda Cadore, at fzj3@cdc.gov.

As a reminder, remarks from this call and answers to questions received through April 7, 2024 will be posted on grants.gov.

For technical assistance with grants.gov, please refer to the "support" tab on grants.gov.

Thank you for your participating in today's call.