

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Published: November 2, 2020

Funding Amount: Up to \$75,000

Project Period: December 11, 2020 – July 31, 2021

Eligibility: This opportunity is available to one (1) Public Health Training Center or Public Health Institute

Award Mechanism: National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) anticipates making a subaward for the Disease Investigation Specialist (DIS) Mentors for Contact Tracers and Case Investigators Development and Capacity Building (DIS Mentors) project under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cooperative Agreement OT18-1802 Cooperative Agreement Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health.

Timeline:

RFP released	November 2, 2020
Notice of intent to apply deadline (optional)	5:00 PM ET, November 18, 2020
Deadline to submit questions	5:00 PM ET, November 20, 2020
Proposal submission deadline	5:00 PM ET, December 4, 2020
Review and interview period	December 7-9, 2020
Notice of selection status	5:00 PM ET, December 11, 2020
Project period	December 11, 2020 - July 31, 2021

Objective

NNPHI seeks to partner with one (1) organization to support DIS Mentors project. The organization will be responsible for 1) conducting a rapid environmental scan to identify existing mentoring resources related to contact tracers and contact investigators; 2) developing a mentoring guidance document customized for DIS Mentors who will be working with COVID-19 Contact Tracers and Case Investigators; 3) hosting a series of five (5) support sessions for DIS Mentors using the customized mentoring guidance document. This funding opportunity will provide the selected organization the opportunity to be part of a national effort to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by improving contact tracing and case investigation processes that will save lives.

Background

To combat COVID-19, health departments across the nation are employing Contract Tracers (CTs) and Case Investigators (CIs). As the CT/CI workforce ramps up, a formal, experiential on-the-job mentorship program that would allow newly hired staff to hone their skills is often not in place. With funding from the CDC National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and Tuberculosis (TB) Prevention, NNPHI will launch the DIS Mentors project, leveraging its role as the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Training. Given that the functions of COVID-19 CTs/CIs are similar to those of STD and TB Disease Investigation Specialists, NNPHI will engage the DIS community and recruit mid- to senior level DIS professionals (DIS Mentors) on a part-time basis to provide mentoring and experiential training that will allow newly hired CTs/CIs gain essential skills, improve contact tracing efforts, and build response capacity. NNPHI and CDC

will recruit federal, state and contract DIS Mentors with extensive experience performing case interviews, investigations, and interventions but may be new to mentoring. NNPHI recognizes that 'soft' skills, including gaining trust and persuading people to share personal information, that have been previously taught through mentoring on-the-job are difficult to acquire in the classroom or via virtual training. The contractor activities described in the Scope of Work will support the transference of these skills from DIS Mentors to inexperienced CTs/CIs.

Scope of Work (SOW)

The purpose of this RFP is to establish an agreement with one (1) organization (herein referred to as "contractor") to provide support to DIS Mentors project.

TASK 1 – Conduct a rapid environmental scan to identify existing mentoring resources designed for infectious disease Contact Tracers and Case Investigators.

- a. The contractor will conduct a rapid environmental scan to identify currently available CT/CI mentoring resources that will support the work to be conducted by the DIS Mentors. Scan should focus on development of soft skills, such as effective communication strategies, conflict resolution, how to be an effective mentor, etc. within the scope of case investigation.
- b. The contractor will review the mentoring materials identified and select no more than twelve (12) for submission to NNPHI. The materials submitted will be the most relevant to the needs of the DIS Mentors. The contractor will provide NNPHI with the list of mentoring resources along with information on the source, URL, and a synopsis of its content. NNPHI and CDC will review the selected materials for appropriateness for this project. Once finalized, this list of materials will become a resource for the DIS Mentors.
- c. The mentoring resources identified may include materials developed for STD/HIV/TB disease investigators/interventionists with tips/tools to include topics such as effective communication, mentoring techniques, cultural sensitivity and other soft skills, and lessons learned. The materials should be evaluated based on their alignment with the National Coalition of STD Director DIS certification model job task domains with an emphasis on interviewing skills. <https://www.ncsddc.org/our-work/disease-intervention-specialists-dis/dis-certification/>

TASK 2 – Develop guidance customized for DIS Mentors who will be working with CTs/CIs.

- a. Using the curated resources described in Task 1, the contractor will develop a customized guidance document specifically for DIS Mentors not to exceed ten (10) pages in length. The guidance document will be used to prepare the DIS Mentors for their work with inexperienced CTs/CIs and should include consist of an overview of mentoring basics, disease investigation CT/CI mentoring, how to work effectively with mentees, problem solving, and communication tips. The mentoring materials identified in Task 1 should be referenced in the DIS Mentor guidance document.

TASK 3 – Host a series of support sessions for DIS Mentors using the customized guidance document.

- a. The contractor will host two (2) 60-minute virtual introductory sessions with DIS Mentors, a session each for DIS Mentor cohort #1 and DIS Mentor cohort #2 (each cohort will not exceed 25 mentors). The introductory session will prepare the mentors for their assignments by reviewing the guidance material developed in Task 2 and the resources developed in Task 1. The sessions are to be conducted using interactive

videoconferencing technology. NNPHI project team will participate in each session. CDC project team will be invited to participate as well.

- b. The contractor will host three (3) additional 60-minute virtual support sessions for all DIS Mentors (cohorts #1 and #2 combined) using interactive videoconferencing technology. These sessions will be a follow-up to the introductory session that will allow the DIS Mentors to share their experiences and learn from each other. The virtual sessions structure will be similar to the ECHO peer learning model that consist of a brief presentation of a case or problem followed by a discussion amongst the DIS Mentors. NNPHI project team staff will participate in each session. Subject matter experts from the CDC project team will be invited to participate as well.

Tentative Deliverables Timetable

Task 1

Deliverable	Timeline
On-going bi-weekly, 30-minute video calls with NNPHI	December 2020 – June 2021
Draft list of curated mentoring resources	January 8, 2021
Final list of curated mentoring resources	January 22, 2021

Task 2

Deliverable	Timeline
Draft mentoring guidance document	January 22, 2021
Final mentoring guidance document	February 12, 2021

Task 3

Deliverable	Timeline
Introductory session for DIS Mentor cohort #1	Mid-February 2021
Introductory session for DIS Mentor cohort #2	Early March 2021
Three (3) Follow up sessions with all DIS Mentors (combined cohorts)	March 2021, April 2021, May 2021 TBD

The contractor will report to the Director of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery at NNPHI. The contractor will work in collaboration with NNPHI, CDC National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Prevention. The contract end date is July 31, 2021.

Contractor Selection Criteria

Contractor selection will be made by NNPHI based on qualifications in accordance with the provisions of this RFP. The following criteria will guide NNPHI's selection of a contractor(s) for this project:

1. Demonstrated deep knowledge of adult learning principles
2. Demonstrated capacity to accomplish the SOW
3. Reasonable and clear budget following provided guidelines
4. Demonstrated capacity to manage a federal subaward in fiscally compliant manner
5. Completeness and quality of proposal

Funding

Funds may be used for salaries and benefits for staff engaged in the project, meetings and meeting supplies, pre-approved project-related travel, data collection and analysis, supplies, communications, marketing and graphic design. Funds are not intended to supplant state or federal funding. Funds may **not** be used for: lobbying activities; ongoing general operating expenses or existing deficits; items for which third-party reimbursement is available; endowments;

meeting meals; or capital costs including construction, or renovation.

How to Apply

NNPHI is utilizing a *Smartsheet Online System* for the proposal submission process. Submit your notice of intent to apply, proposal, and all additional documents through the links provided below. If you have any technical difficulties, please contact Christine Ortiz Gumina at cortizgumin@nnphi.org

1. Complete the (optional) notice of intent to submit by **5 pm ET on November 18, 2020**. Click [HERE](#) to submit your notice through the NNPHI Smartsheet system.
2. Submit proposal and required attachments by **5 pm ET on December 4, 2020**. Click [HERE](#) to submit your proposal through the NNPHI Smartsheet system.

Questions

Submit questions about this funding opportunity [HERE](#) by **5:00 pm ET on November 20, 2020**. NNPHI will respond to questions within 24 hours. Please check back frequently to review latest questions/answers.

Proposal

Please respond to the following questions 1-6, do not exceed twelve (12), single-spaced pages, Arial or Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. It is most helpful to reviewers if you respond to the questions in the order presented below.

1. Introduce yourself and organization, and interest in the project. Explain why you are particularly well-suited to successfully complete the SOW.
2. Describe how your organization's experience and expertise applies to the SOW.
3. Describe the background and experience of the key staff who would be assigned to the project and any partners that will be engaged in the work.
4. Describe your proposal for the SOW, including:
 - Approach/methodology
 - Timeframe
 - Milestones
 - Deliverables
5. Describe at least one example of similar work that speaks to your capacity to perform the SOW, including:
 - Key staff and partners
 - Approach taken and methodologies used
 - Timeframe in which the work was completed
 - Milestones
 - Deliverables
 - Outcomes
6. Please describe previous experience with a project supported by federal funding (either as direct recipient or as a subrecipient).

Required Additional Information

Please submit the following required items with your proposal (not included in the 12-page limit):

1. Cover letter
2. A budget spreadsheet and budget narrative that aligns with the scope of work and is prepared according to the [CDC Budget Preparation Guidelines](#).
3. Resume or curriculum vitae for all proposed personnel
4. List of references (at least 3) from previous/existing clients, including: Name, Organization, Relationship, Email address, Phone number

5. Work sample: One sample of a similar product you have developed (attach as PDF or provide URL).
6. Proposal in accordance with the stated SOW
7. Most recent fiscal/federal audit report
8. IRS Form 990
9. Federal negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA)

You will receive confirmation of receipt within 24 hours of the proposal deadline. In fairness to all applicants, NNPHI strictly enforces the submission deadline. **Proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed.** Note: If you do not receive a confirmation or have any technical difficulties, please contact Christine Ortiz Gumina, cortizgumina@nnphi.org. We recommend submitting early to avoid any problems.

Notice to Applicants

Please be advised that NNPHI reserves the right to modify the terms of the RFP with reasonable notification to all interested parties. This RFP and any related discussions or evaluations by anyone create no rights or obligations whatsoever. NNPHI may cancel or delay this solicitation at any time at its own discretion. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, the contract executed by NNPHI and the selected applicant, if any, will be the exclusive statement of rights and obligations extending from this solicitation. Applicants are further advised that all information submitted in response to this solicitation shall remain in the public domain.

Funding for this opportunity has been provided to the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) through a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 6 NU38OT000303-03-02 NNPHI is collaborating with the CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and Tuberculosis (TB) Prevention on this project. Contents of this RFP are solely the responsibility of NNPHI and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or the US Department of Health & Human Services.