



# National Network of Public Health Institutes

---

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Building Capacity of the Public Health Workforce: An Examination of Challenges and Opportunities Related to Enhancing Infection, Prevention, and Control Education and Training for Students

---

**Published: (March 10, 2021)**

**Funding Amount: Up to \$150,000**

**Project Period:** April 20, 2021 – July 31, 2021

**Eligibility:** This opportunity is available to members of the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and private/public institutions of higher education, including Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)- supported Public Health Training Centers or their community-based partners, non-profit and for-profit organizations.

**Award Mechanism:** NNPHI anticipates making a subaward under CFDA # 93.421 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement NU38OT000303.

**Deadlines:**

- Notice of intent to apply: March 17, 2021
- Application Due: April 6, 2021

**Objective**

NNPHI seeks a partner to lead a set of activities that will inform the development of infection prevention and control (IPC) coursework and/or academic certificate programs for students studying public health and/or infection prevention in community colleges, vocational programs, schools and programs of public health, or other similarly situated educational institutions.

**Background**

The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Collaborative is a national training effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and aims to train all frontline healthcare personnel in the United States. Called Project Firstline, the CDC initiative is engaging nine national-level partners and 56 health departments receiving funding under the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control Infections Diseases Cooperative Agreement. The project will build an infection control foundation of knowledge and culture of expertise in the healthcare and public health fields that will help protect patients, healthcare workers and the public.

The primary goal of the project is training of the estimated 6 million-plus healthcare and public health professional (HCP) workforce with basic IPC knowledge using adult learning techniques. Training modalities and languages employed will reflect the workforce and include traditional and innovative methods such as Project ECHO tele-mentoring, demonstration, micro training, games and simulations. **CDC also seeks to institutionalize IPC capacity in the public health workforce through the dissemination of training and creation of an IPC area of emphasis within existing academic programs, coursework and/or IPC vocational program leading to an academic certificate – this RFP seeks a partner for the initial exploration to inform development of such a program.** Additional RFPs may be made available later for other components of this work (including training dissemination).

### **Purpose**

Informed by the results of this study, NNPHI will lead the design and pilot testing of an IPC coursework, area of emphasis within existing undergraduate and graduate programs and/or certificate program to build capacity of the future workforce. The goal is to provide recommendations for a pilot certification program for students studying public health or related disciplines in community colleges, vocational programs, and undergraduate and graduate schools and programs of public health. The environmental scan efforts aim to focus on **TWO** target groups:

1. Community college and vocational programs offering associate level degrees or similar in programs of study relevant to IPC
2. Schools and programs of public health (baccalaureate and/or master level) *Note: Depending on the findings of this study, additional affiliated schools may be considered.*

### **Scope of Work (SOW)**

The selected organization will design and conduct a study to inform the feasibility of an IPC coursework and/or academic certificate program and recommendations for design and implementation of the program. It is anticipated that the study may result in recommendations for a single certificate program, or two programs (one for schools and programs of public health and one for associate or community college level students) or multiple other options. The specific SOW includes:

1. Conduct an environmental scan that defines the landscape of IPC education and certification opportunities within educational institutions, including:
  - a. What IPC-related degrees, undergraduate and graduate certifications, concentrations, etc. among Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited public health (PH) programs exist nationwide?
  - b. What IPC-related degrees, certifications, concentrations, etc. among programs under National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) with a focus on Occupation Health, including programs have concentration in toxicology and risk exposure that may have an IPC element?
  - c. What IPC-related associate degrees, community college certifications, concentrations, etc. among community colleges or similarly situated institutions exist nationwide?
  - d. What are the curricula, courses, and learning outcomes for these?
  - e. What similarities and differences exist across these educational programs and formats?
  - f. Who are the key target audiences within public health for IPC education?
  - g. What professional certification programs exist that could inform or serve as a model for

- IPC certification?
  - i. What schools/programs/or bodies implement these certificate programs?
  - ii. What processes do they use?
- h. Institutional/university receptivity to a new IPC coursework and/or certification program
- i. Contributing departments to a potential new IPC coursework and/or certification program – all within one department or interdisciplinary across university departments.
- j. Format for the current programs – online, in-person, hybrid?
- k. Operations<sup>1</sup> and capacity consideration to deliver a new IPC coursework and/or certification program
- l. External environment facilitators and barriers to developing and delivering a new IPC coursework and/or certification program.

Note: The applicant will be charged with designing the study, and it is anticipated some of the activities may include:

1. Literature review, including program websites, white, and gray literature.
  2. Surveys and/or interviews with key stakeholders, or other methodologies deemed most appropriate.
  3. Interviews with faculty and departmental leadership, or other stakeholders to be outlined in the proposal, on IPC priorities, feasibility, receptiveness, and barriers to IPC coursework and/or certificate integration and adoption.
  4. Interviews within the field and profession to assess student readiness and desired competencies.
2. Provide recommendations for a pilot coursework and/or certification program for community colleges, vocational programs, and/or schools and programs of public health:  
Recommendations should include:
- i. Key components of the curriculum
  - ii. Process steps for designing/implementing program, including timeline
  - iii. Recommended implementing institutions
  - iv. Barriers and facilitators to adoption

### **Deliverables**

1. Literature search inclusion/exclusion criteria
2. All tools and survey instruments created, and access to responses via databases/raw data.
3. Draft Environmental Scan Report
4. Written Environmental Scan Report
  - a. A written report including the literature review or annotated bibliography, interview analytic approach and key findings, summary of findings, suggested curriculum courses and learning outcomes, and recommendations for moving forward, including a direct path for developing the IPC certificate program(s) in community colleges, vocational programs, and/or schools and programs of public health.
5. Presentation of findings and recommendations to NNPHI and CDC staff.

### **Selection Criteria**

The following criteria will guide NNPHI's selection of a partner to conduct the study:

1. Demonstrated capacity to conduct qualitative research using a variety of methods.

---

<sup>1</sup> CDC Evaluation Standards <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/standards/stepsandrelevantstandards.pdf>

2. Demonstrated knowledge of IPC, or connection to partners with this expertise.
3. Understanding of higher education curricula and program development.
4. Access to key stakeholders necessary for the study (e.g., university personnel, existing professional associations, etc).
5. Ability to act quickly and successfully to implement SOW on a tight timeline. including access to staff who are ready to begin work immediately.
6. Staff qualifications indicate capacity to complete the SOW
7. Reasonable and clear budget, following provided CDC budget guidelines.
8. Fiscal capacity to manage a federal subaward, with ability to invoice NNPHI on a monthly basis..
9. Completeness and quality of proposal.

## **Funding**

Funds may be used for salaries for staff engaged in the project, approved consultants/contractors, meetings and meeting supplies, approved project-related travel, data collection and analysis, project supplies, and/or 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; or capital costs including construction, or renovation.

## **How to Apply**

NNPHI is utilizing a *Smartsheet Online System* for this 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 Laila Fox at [lfox@nnphi.org](mailto:lfox@nnphi.org).

1. Complete the notice of intent to apply by **5 pm ET on Wednesday, March 17, 2021**. Click [HERE](#) to submit your notice through the NNPHI Smartsheet system.
2. Submit a written proposal and required attachments by **5:00 PM ET on Tuesday, April 6, 2021**. Click [HERE](#) to submit via the NNPHI Smartsheet system.

## **FAQs**

Submit questions about this opportunity [HERE](#) by **5:00 pm ET on Wednesday, March 31, 2021**. NNPHI will respond to questions within 24 hours. Please check back frequently to review latest questions/answers.

## **Proposal**

Please respond to the following questions. Do not exceed 10, single-spaced pages, Arial or Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. It is most helpful to reviewers if you respond to the questions in order.

1. Introduce your organization and interest in the opportunity. Explain why you are particularly well-suited to successfully complete the Scope of Work (SOW).
2. Describe how your expertise in higher education programs and qualitative research

specifically applies to the SOW. Be specific about methodologies you have used.

3. Describe your knowledge and experience related to IPC and how it specifically applies to the requested SOW. Include background/experience of your staff team and/or partners who will be engaged in the work.
4. Describe an example of similar work that speaks to your capacity to perform the SOW, including:
  - Who led the work?
  - What approach did you take? What methodologies used?
  - In what timeframe was the work completed?
  - What were the results?
5. Please describe with as much detail as possible your proposed approach to complete the SOW, including:
  - Detailed workplan including key activities and timeline for completion of these
  - Key staff and partners to be involved in the work
    - Indicate how soon staff/partners are available to begin the work
  - Milestones
  - Deliverables
6. Please describe your organization’s experience managing federal funding (either as direct recipient or as a subrecipient).
7. Additional Information: Please submit the following items to your proposal
  - a. A budget and budget narrative that aligns with the SOW and is prepared according to the [CDC Budget Preparation Guidelines](#).  
*\*Note: You may use your federally negotiated indirect cost rate. If you do not have a negotiated rate, NNPHI will allow 10% for indirect costs.*
  - b. Resume or curriculum vitae of key personnel/partners
  - c. List of references (at least 3) from previous/existing clients, including: Name, Organization, Relationship, Email address, Phone number.
  - d. Work sample: Sample of a similar product you have developed (attach as PDF or provide URL).

You will receive confirmation of receipt within 24 hours of the application deadline. In fairness to all applicants, NNPHI strictly enforces the submission deadline. **Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.** If you do not receive a confirmation or have any technical difficulties, please contact Laila Fox, [lfox@nnphi.org](mailto:lfox@nnphi.org). We recommend submitting early to avoid any problems.

## Anticipated Timeline

RFP released	Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Notice of intent to apply deadline	5:00 PM ET, Wednesday, March 17, 2021
Deadline to submit questions via <a href="#">FAQ Google Doc</a>	5:00 PM ET, Wednesday, March 31, 2021
Application deadline	5:00 PM ET, Tuesday, April 6, 2021
Notice of selection status	5:00 PM ET, Friday, April 9, 2021
Project period	April 20, 2021 – July 31, 2021

**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 project in the amount of \$3.5 million dollars has been awarded to the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) through a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 6 NU38OT000303-02-04). NNPHI is collaborating with the CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion 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.*