

COMPETITIVE BID

ASTHO STAR Center: Advancing S/THA Administrative and Organizational Capacity and Preparedness

Applications Due: October 29, 2021

1. Summary Information

Purpose: The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is seeking the services of one (1) highly qualified consultant to research and develop comprehensive administrative and organizational indicators that will support an organizational capacity peer assessment program for state and territorial health agencies (STHAs).

Proposal Due Date and Time: Friday, Oct. 29, 2021, at 11:59 PM ET

Selection Announcement Date: Friday, Nov. 5, 2021, by 5:00 PM ET

Maximum Funding Amount: Up to \$20,000

Estimated Period of Performance: Nov. 15, 2021 – July 31, 2022

Final Report Date(s): July 31, 2022

Eligibility: All consultants eligible to receive federal funding, registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM), and in good standing with ASTHO are eligible to apply.

ASTHO's Point of Contact: Joya Coffman (performanceimprovement@astho.org).

2. Description of Competitive Bid

Background

Under supplemental funding to support the COVID-19 response, CDC awarded funds to ASTHO to support state/territorial health agencies (S/THA) and their leadership in responding to COVID-19 through three key strategy areas: leadership and workforce development; laws and policies; and programs and services.

Through the first strategy, ASTHO will provide crisis response support for states, deliver crisis leadership trainings, and convene national discussions on developing a public health response and recovery workforce. ASTHO will also characterize emerging lessons learned and program adaptations during COVID-19 to inform the development of a reinvigorated public health practice agenda.

In the field of laws and policies, ASTHO will provide technical assistance and resources to build the capacity of S/THA leaders to describe and evaluate the laws and policies that are needed and used to respond to COVID-19 and other public health emergencies. This will also include guidance and recommendations on administrative practices that enable S/THAs to rapidly absorb and deploy emergency funds to address COVID-19.

In the third strategy, ASTHO will focus on advancing workforce and program implementation assessments for COVID-19 contact tracing and will provide continuous training delivery for case investigators and contact tracers.

Throughout this work, ASTHO will approach activities with a health equity lens. ASTHO will also support activities that recognize and address the unique context of the insular areas (e.g., United States territories and freely associated states).

As part of the second strategy of this cooperative agreement, ASTHO is creating the ASTHO STAR Center for Administrative and Organizational Excellence. The goal of the STAR Center is to connect health officials and their leadership teams with peers, subject matter experts, and consultants who can provide in-depth technical assistance, skill-building, and business process improvement using strategies that focus on modernizing and strengthening administrative and organizational infrastructure.

The Center will also serve as a hub to facilitate peer assessment of administrative and organizational capacity using evidence-informed benchmarks and standards known as capacity indicators. When fully realized, the Center will function as a hub for model practices, state examples, and successes. It will actively promote and disseminate resources to S/THAs and identify the need for new resources. This will build on current efforts to coordinate and triage on-demand S/THA technical assistance on administrative organizational capacity within ASTHO.

The consultant(s) will focus on the development of the evidence-informed administrative and organizational capacity indicators to be integrated within these larger efforts.

The consultant opportunity is open to individuals or consulting agencies that are available to provide support between Nov. 2021 and July 2022 and have relevant indicator development, technical writing, and feedback integration skills and experience.

Project Activities

In collaboration with ASTHO, the contractor will design a framework and indicators for assessing the administrative and organizational capacity of S/THAs. This process should draw on best and promising practices for standards and indicator development and engage a diverse set of stakeholders and subject matter experts. This contract will support the design, drafting, and feedback process to develop these frameworks and indicators.

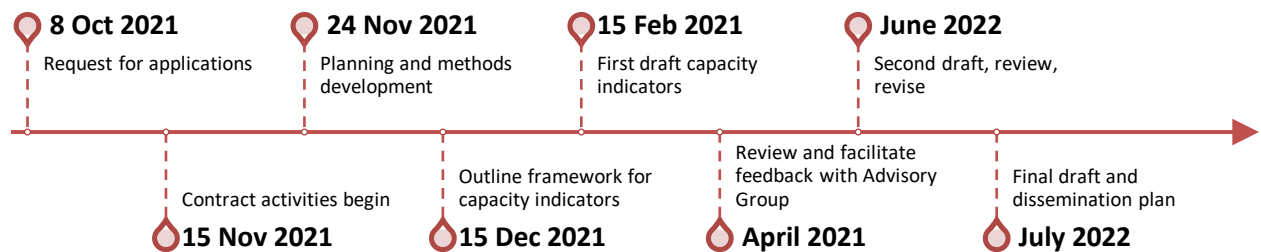
The selected applicant(s) will be responsible for completing the following project activities:

- Research methods for standards development, including drafting, gathering feedback, prioritization, and consensus-building. Consider PHAB, NPHPS, PHEP, CSTE, Safe States, administrative policy assessment, COOPs, and All-Hazard plans, Project Public Health Ready, and Operational Readiness Review.
- Develop a summary report of methods and recommendations for implementing in support of the ASTHO STAR Center.
- Design a process for drafting capacity indicators and facilitating input from stakeholders and subject matter experts.
- Develop a framework and outline for administrative and organizational capacity indicators.

Identify problem areas, challenges that may impede using capacity indicators.

- Solicit feedback from key groups and incorporate modifications in a manner that aligns with metric development and is informed by public health practitioners. This may include multiple methods such as interviews, polls, surveys, and support for up to four (4) workshops to gather input with a cross-functional advisory group including preparation of meeting agendas, presentation of findings, and draft indicators.
- Draft, review, and revise three drafts to produce a final set of operational and defined capacity indicators.
- Draft an implementation plan detailing how to use these indicators as benchmarks within the ASTHO STAR assessment program, or any additional resources that might be needed for further understanding (e.g., a glossary of terms, overview document, guide, etc.).

Timeline



Inclusion of Health Equity

ASTHO is committed to the promotion of health equity and the elimination of health inequities. Health inequities are reflected by disproportionately high rates of disease, premature death, and a lower quality of life. Health inequities are avoidable and state, federal, and locally funded activities play a key role in helping to solve this problem. Applicants are encouraged to address health inequities within the context of proposed activities.

Funding

A total award(s) of up to \$20,000 will be made through a fixed-priced agreement to complete all activities. ASTHO intends to award up to one (1) consultant a grant to complete the activities described above.

Evaluators

Each proposal will be reviewed by a team of ASTHO staff using the selection criteria below.

III. Requirements for Financial Award

Allowable Expenses

Funds may not be used for equipment purchases. Per HHS requirements, funds awarded under this Competitive Bid are prohibited from being used to pay the direct salary of an individual at a

rate in excess of the federal Executive Schedule Level II (currently \$199,300).

Required Grant Activities to be Covered by Award

Project activities will include but are not limited to:

Develop Comprehensive Administrative Competencies, Standards, and Indicators: ASTHO will develop a core set of business process and administrative competencies, standards, and indicators for S/THAs. These standards will be informed by research, aligned with best practices in the field (i.e., PHEP/PHAB), and informed and vetted by current public health leaders and practitioners, such as S/THA health officials, chief financial officers, and senior deputies. A detailed outline of tasks to be completed for each project can be found above in the project activities section.

Period of Performance

The estimated period of performance is November 2021 to July 2022. The final report will be due on July 15, 2022.

These timelines are subject to change and are contingent upon the selection process for procuring the consultant(s) and participating jurisdictions.

Reporting Requirements

The selected applicant will be required to demonstrate progress towards developing written administrative and organizational capacity indicators. Consultant will participate in conference calls with ASTHO to report on project activities and will submit progress and produce final deliverables by July 31, 2022.

IV. Selection Criteria

- A. Resume/Cover Letter (5 points):** *Description of past relevant work experience. Cover letter must also include the name of the lead programmatic contact (name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number). For grantee fiscal agent, include the name of the agency designated as the grantee fiscal agent and identify a contact person (name, title, mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number), and agency’s DUNS number or CAGE Code.*
- B. Completed Consultant Application (5 points):** *Candidate must complete the consultant application on Qualtrics.*
- C. Proposed Approach (20 points):** *Provide a brief outline of the approach and strategy to accomplishing the requested project activities. Detail a work plan which includes activities, timeline, goals, and milestones to achieve the deliverables and meet the expectations noted above.*
- D. Content Expertise (20 points):** *Candidate demonstrates appropriate subject matter expertise needed to execute the project.*

- E. **Prior Experience and Performance (20 points):** *Candidate demonstrates sufficient experience and quality of performance on recent work completed with similar scope, in order to represent ASTHO well in interactions with state and territorial health agency staff and other governmental, private sector, and/or non-profit stakeholders.*
- F. **Inclusion of Health Equity (5 points):** *Throughout the proposal, incorporate the following: (1) Describe the extent to which potential health disparities are evident within the health focus of the application, (2) Identify specific group(s) that could experience a potential disproportionate burden of the health condition, and (3) Demonstrate how proposed activities could address health inequities (this also includes identifying social and/or environmental conditions which are the root causes of health disparities). The root causes of health inequities are sometimes referred to as social determinants of health. All information regarding health inequities must be supported with data.*
- G. **Status as Women-, Minority-, Disadvantaged-, Veteran-Owned, and/or Small Business (10 points):** *Bidders who classify as or partner with these businesses may be strongly considered.*
- H. **Project Management Skills (5 points):** *Candidate demonstrates the appropriate project management experience and skills that are needed to carry out the project(s).*
- I. **Response to ASTHO Contract Terms and Conditions (5 points):** *ASTHO and selected applicant(s) will enter into a fixed price per deliverable contractual agreement. A copy of ASTHO's contract Terms and Conditions is available [here](#). **Review the agreement's terms and conditions—including provisions related to publications; acknowledgment of federal support; copyright interests; conference, meeting, and seminar materials; and logo use for conference and other materials—with your organization's contracts officer or legal team and confirm that if selected, you will enter into this agreement; or identify and include proposed edits for the specific term(s) you wish to change with your proposal / application.***

If you would like to propose edits for specific term(s) please suggest the edits you would like on the pdf document. You will upload the document through the Qualtrics application. ASTHO reserves the right to accept or decline any proposed changes to the terms and conditions. Significant proposed changes, which could affect the agreement's timely execution, may impact your selection as a successful applicant.

- J. **Budget and Budget Narrative (5 points):** *Please provide a detailed fixed price per deliverable budget, including detailed projected costs for the completion of activities in the proposal. The fixed-price budget should include a cost breakdown per task and a proposed payment schedule. If an applicant includes an indirect cost rate of >10% in their budget, they should be prepared to submit a federally approved indirect cost rate letter upon award.*

*The maximum award is up to \$20,000. **Attachment A** ([Contract Budget Template](#)) outlines the general format for a detailed budget. Applicants may use Attachment C as a template or simply as a guide to inform the development of the project budget. A budget narrative (see*

the tab in the template) must accompany the budget and indicate the costs associated with each proposed activity.

V. Submission Information

Application Procedure:

ASTHO must receive applications in response to this Competitive Bid by Friday, Oct. 29, 2021, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Please submit the application via this [questionnaire](#). Google Chrome is the recommended browser for completing this application. Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered. ASTHO will notify selected consultants by Friday, Nov 5, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. ET.

Applicant Questions and Guidance:

ASTHO will support interested applicants to offer guidance and address specific questions about the Competitive Bid. Interested parties may contact ASTHO staff via e-mail: performanceimprovement@astho.org.

Disclaimer Notice:

This Competitive Bid is not binding on ASTHO, nor does it constitute a contractual offer. Without limiting the foregoing, ASTHO reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all proposals; to modify, supplement, or cancel the Competitive Bid; to waive any deviation from the Competitive Bid; to negotiate regarding any proposal; and to negotiate final terms and conditions that may differ from those stated in the Competitive Bid. Under no circumstances shall ASTHO be liable for any costs incurred by any person in connection with the preparation and submission of a response to this Competitive Bid.