

# 2020 ASTHO Forensic Pathology Workforce Shortage Stakeholder Convening and Learning Community

## Request for Applications

### **Project Summary**

The overall purpose of this opportunity is to increase state capacity to address shortages in the forensic pathology workforce. The opioid epidemic has intensified the effects of the shortage of board-certified forensic pathologists, presenting a major workforce challenge for public health systems and complicating the collection of timely and high-quality overdose mortality data. As a result, public health agencies are limited in their ability to identify populations at risk for overdose and to target geographic hot spots - weakening their ability to prevent overdose deaths. As states continue to respond to the opioid epidemic, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, building a sufficient forensic pathology workforce is of critical importance.

- **Request for Applications Released:** November 20th, 2020
- **Due Date:** December 14th, 2020
- **Project Period:** January 4– July 31, 2021
- **ASTHO point of contact:** Richa Ranade, Director, Social and Behavioral Health, ASTHO: [rranade@astho.org](mailto:rranade@astho.org)

ASTHO is offering two capacity building opportunities to states interested in connecting with stakeholders, other states, federal partners, and subject matter experts to address forensic pathology workforce shortages:

- Option 1) An ASTHO-supported virtual stakeholder convening intended for states that want intensive partnership-building and have identified this as a high-priority issue or
- Option 2) A learning community for states interested in learning more about forensic pathologist workforce shortages and peer/subject matter expert discussion about how these shortages might be addressed.

### **Option 1: Virtual Stakeholder Convening**

Stakeholder convenings will be conducted with up to 6 states that have identified forensic pathologist workforce shortages as a high-priority issue but need support and coordination to bring stakeholders together to discuss the issue and implement solutions. ASTHO support will include planning and coordination of one virtual stakeholder convening, connection to subject matter experts, and follow-up technical assistance. States who have chosen Option 1 will also have the opportunity to participate in the learning community (Option 2)

### **Purpose/Goal**

1. Identify strategies for addressing forensic pathologist workforce shortages.
2. Develop collaborative plans to begin addressing forensic pathologist shortages in the state or territory.

## Benefits

1. Collaborate with other stakeholders to reduce forensic pathologist workforce shortages with support from ASTHO and other partners.
2. Be better positioned to reduce forensic pathologist workforce shortages and obtain more accurate and complete mortality data to use for public health surveillance.

## Commitment

1. Assist ASTHO in planning for a virtual stakeholder convening.
2. Attend one, 90-minute virtual stakeholder convening between December 17, 2020 and July 31, 2021.
3. Participate in collaborative planning to address forensic pathologist workforce shortages.

## Option 2: Learning Community

The learning community is an opportunity for states that are just beginning to explore this area and wish to take the first steps in developing a plan to address forensic pathologist shortages. Over the span of four webinars, participants from 8-10 states will have the opportunity to connect with peers and subject matter experts and workshop the development of their own action plans. The learning community webinars will be recorded for future reference and for staff who could not attend all four webinars.

## Purpose/Goal

1. Connect on strategies to promote collaboration between state/ territory stakeholders who are interested in addressing forensic pathologist workforce shortages.
2. Support peer learning and relationship building opportunities to identify strategies to reduce workforce shortages in forensic pathology.

## Benefits

1. Connect with states with similar or different systems to understand what solutions might be feasible to address forensic pathologist workforce shortages.
2. Access to subject matter expertise related to experience-based recommendations for addressing workforce shortages.
3. Be better positioned to reduce forensic pathologist workforce shortages and obtain more accurate and complete mortality data to use for public health surveillance

## Commitment

1. Attend four, 90-minute ASTHOConnect webinars between December 2020 and June 2021.

## Applicant Interest

Participation in this technical assistance opportunity is open to all states interested in addressing forensic pathologist workforce shortages. ASTHO also encourages states to apply if they demonstrate one or more of the descriptions below:

1. States with high rates of overdose.
2. States with existing relationships between diverse stakeholders

## **I. Application Process**

Interested states should submit their brief responses to the questions below to [rranade@astho.org](mailto:rranade@astho.org).

**Which opportunity would you like to pursue: Option 1 or Option 2? Please note this option below and provide a short explanation of why your state would like to participate in this opportunity.**

**What has been your experience with forensic pathologist shortages within the last few years? Have shortages in your state impacted your implementation of overdose surveillance/prevention activities?**