

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
BUREAU OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
INFECTIOUS DISEASES & OUTBREAKS DIVISION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
FOR
COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION
AND CONTACT TRACING SERVICES**

MAY 10, 2021

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) pursuant to Governor Ivey's State of Emergency Proclamation for community contact tracing and case investigation.

On March 13, 2020, Governor Ivey issued a State of Emergency Proclamation in response to the community spread of COVID-19. The initial proclamation included provisions to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and in mitigating the consequences of COVID-19. The Governor has issued twenty-five supplemental emergency proclamations to further amend the recently extended Safer at Home Order. In accordance with the proclamation, the ADPH is seeking a contractor to partner with existing state and local trained staff in performing case interviews and contact tracing.

ADPH intends to award a contract to (2) two applicants for an initial term of 12 months with the option to renew, based on availability of funding, satisfactory performance, and acceptable completion of deliverables.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are nonprofit and for-profit entities with a minimum of 5 years of experience in conducting client/customer telephone interviews, and scheduling, training, supervising, and monitoring staff assignments.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding for this contract comes from federal grants awarded by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (ELC) Program. As part of the "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-139, Title I)", the CDC awarded funds nationwide to its recipient base in a program-initiated component funding under the Emerging Issues (E) Project of CK19-1904, henceforth, "ELC Enhancing Detection" and "ELC Enhancing Detection Expansion" supplements. These funds are broadly intended to provide critical resources to state, local, and territorial health departments in support of a broad range of COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 testing and epidemiologic surveillance related activities.

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance 2 CFR §200.319, this procurement transaction must be conducted in a full and openly competitive manner. Cost will be a determining factor in our final decision in selecting the applicant, who will enter into a contractual agreement with ADPH.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-associated Coronavirus, also known as SARS-CoV or COVID-19, is a reportable condition in Alabama. By law, laboratories must report all

COVID-19 test results and disease reporters must report positive and presumptive cases to ADPH within 24 hours of presumptive diagnosis. Staff members, known as Investigators, will be assigned cases to complete an investigation. During the case investigation, the Investigator interviews the case and obtains demographic and epidemiologic information, including information about who the case may have come into contact two days prior to symptoms or testing positive. The Investigator will elicit information on close contacts and then contact these persons after completing the case investigation. In addition, the Investigator provides cases and close contacts with guidance on social distancing, quarantine and/or isolation measures, as well as how to monitor their symptoms. These activities, collectively, make up the case interview and contact tracing process.

The Bureau of Communicable Diseases (BCD) Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks Division (ID&O) has received funding from the CDC to assist with detection of COVID-19 and prevention strategies to minimize transmission throughout Alabama communities. In accordance with the ELC Enhancing Detection and ELC Enhancing Detection Expansion grant awards, ID&O has allocated a portion of this funding towards seeking qualified applicants to assist with contact tracing and case interview services.

Upon selection of the applicant(s), ADPH ID&O will enter into a contract with the applicant to perform case investigation and contact tracing services. The applicant will be given appropriate training and necessary tools to be successful. The applicant will be required to adhere to strict guidelines and protocols determined by ADPH.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & EXPERTISE

This section provides the applicant with additional information to determine if they are compatible with and can meet ADPH's requirements and expectations. In addition, the applicant should incorporate these requirements into their proposal when detailing how they will execute the scope of work and meet the deliverable due dates (see next section).

Applicant Expertise:

- Entity history, years in business, number of employees, financial stability and capacity to do the work
- Proven history to hire and train staff to meet needed demand
- Must demonstrate the ability to provide services sought through this RFP
- Must have experience complying with patient confidentiality and HIPAA requirements
- Experience preferred in managing a public health, health care or community social services setting and with recruiting, hiring, and onboarding staff, OR experience in disease investigations and supervising a team of investigators
- Proven experience in reporting progress and meeting goals and milestones that conform with specified requirements
- Proven experience and understanding of technology systems, data systems, telephone and video conference software
- Must have the capacity to supply computers, phones and a secure Internet to staff

- Proven capacity to deliver the project requirements on time and on budget
- Staffing plan to meet the Scope of Work deliverables

Applicant Responsibilities:

- Schedule a minimum of 40 investigators per day for an 8-hour work day per investigator from 8 AM – 8 PM. Shift work is acceptable. Ability to scale up to 80 investigators per day preferred.
- Ensure no phone calls are made before 8 AM and after 8 PM
- Provide secure internet services for both *remote work or work from office site
- Supply staff with computers, phones and secure internet service
- Monitor staff performance on a daily basis through spot checks and following ADPH quality assurance processes
- Maintain private health information in secure place
- Use only Alabama area code numbers when making phone calls (preference is 334)
- Ensure phone calls are not being recorded
- Ensure call backs can be received
- **Must include the type of phone service you will be using in the proposal**
- Must not save any case or contact information on any server or computer
- Must not print or copy case or contact information or records with the exception of the name and address used to mail information or letters using the U.S. Postal Service
- All lead staff and investigative staff must complete the COVID-19 Contact Tracing course from either the John Hopkins University or CDC (at no cost to the ADPH)
- Must sign and follow ADPH confidentiality and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) documents
- Must follow approved ADPH developed and/or approved guidance and instruction. **Cannot alter** guidance **or disseminate** information to others not employed through this project.
- Must attend Train the Trainer session (team leads) with ADPH
- Must provide training to hired investigators and monitor their performance
- Must make corrections within a week of receiving an error report (at no cost to ADPH)
- Must follow up on complaints within the same day as received
- Use only the ADPH email, which will be set up for team leads and team investigators
- **Cannot use** an email system outside ADPH or company when transmitting case or contact information to ADPH or a case or contact

**If employees work remotely, you must be able to ensure private health information can be kept confidential, you can monitor their performance, and they have been provided with a secure internet service*

Investigator Expertise:

Minimum Qualifications

- High school diploma, GED
- Exceptional oral communication skills

- Proficient in computer skills (e.g., Microsoft 365, data entry, etc.)
- Able to work remotely and/or from an office
- Exceptional organizational skills and sound judgment
- Excellent interpersonal skills and can work with difficult or stressed individuals from different cultural backgrounds
- Ability to comply with regulations and communicate official information in an appropriate manner

Preferred Qualifications

- Current Alabama resident
- Experience in conducting interviews or surveys
- Bilingual or multilingual (e.g., full fluency in a language other than English)
- College-level education
- High proficiency in computer skills (e.g., Microsoft 365, data entry, etc.)
- Experience in the health field or social work or related industry

Investigator Supervisor:

Minimum Qualifications

- College-level education
- Proficient in computer skills (e.g., Microsoft 365, data entry, etc.)
- Strong leadership, coaching and mentoring skills
- 12 months experience in supervising staff
- 12 months experience in public relations or customer service that include techniques for critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and the ability to use sound judgment when responding to client issues and concerns

Preferred Qualifications

- Current Alabama resident
- Bilingual or multilingual (e.g., full fluency in a language other than English)
- Experience with conducting interviews
- Experience working in a remote setting
- Experience working with diverse populations and individuals with complex needs
- High proficiency in the use of a personal computer, data entry, Office 365, telephone and video conferencing programs (e.g., Microsoft Team and Cisco Webex)
- Previous experience working closely with a governmental agency

SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The proposal should address all items in the Scope of Work and Deliverables section as well as incorporate items listed in the Requirements section. Proposals should be concise, and complete in describing how the applicant intends to complete the Scope of Work and achieve the deliverable due dates. Emphasis should be on completeness, specificity, and clarity of content.

Scope of Work

Scope of Work
1. Establish a team of staff to conduct case interviewing and contact tracing and work with public health staff at the state and local level.
2. Rapidly hire additional qualified staff who can demonstrate racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic competencies which reflect the varied communities in Alabama.
3. Provide daily supervision for the team(s) assigned to interview COVID-19 cases and contacts tracing.
4. Collaborate with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) to conduct team training on case interviewing and contact tracing.
5. Ensure team coverage seven days a week between the hours of 8:00AM and 8:00PM.
6. Monitor team performance to ensure each team members' work is of high quality and data entry of investigation and tracing information is accurate, timely, and logical.
7. Provide ongoing technical assistance for team members by ensuring access to a supervisor with expert knowledge of ADPH's guidance during all operational hours, holding regular team meetings, and reviewing a selection of each team member's case interviews, including contact tracing on a regular basis to ensure compliance with ADPH's guidance.
8. Provide progress reports to ADPH including summaries of the number of cases interviewed and contacts traced weekly or upon request by ADPH.
9. Comply with all relevant privacy and confidentiality laws and provide all necessary security and confidentiality paperwork necessary for access to state designated systems.
10. Ensure team members will use the state designated technologies and surveillance systems to assign, look up patient contact information, interview cases and contacts and document and report findings.
11. Train and assign team members to print letters to send to close contacts and cases who could not be reached by phone. Ensure return calls from cases and close contacts are managed.
12. Ensure team members will follow the ADPH disease investigation and contact tracing processes, guidance, and relevant state laws, and conduct empathetic, confidential, and timely case interviews and close contact notifications.
13. Provide reports and data as designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ADPH. ADPH requires periodic reporting of compliance with provision of services and incurred expenses. Anticipated reports include but are not limited to reports and data related to cases interviewed and contacts traced. The reports, timing, and submission requirements are subject to change at the sole discretion of ADPH.

Deliverables and Due Dates

Deliverables		Due Date
1.	Establish a team of staff to conduct contact tracing and case interviewing.	Within two weeks of contract execution
2.	Hire additional qualified staff as needed in contact tracing and case interviewing.	Ongoing
3.	Provide supervision for the team assigned.	Ongoing
4.	Conduct team training on contact tracing and case interviewing.	Initial training within two weeks of contract execution then ongoing
5.	Ensure team coverage seven days a week 8:00AM and 8:00PM.	Ongoing
6.	Monitor team performance.	Ongoing
7.	Provide ongoing technical assistance for team members.	Ongoing
8.	Provide progress reports to ADPH as required.	Ongoing
9.	Provide all necessary security and confidentiality paperwork necessary for access to state designated systems.	Ongoing
10.	Investigate cases and contacts using state designated technology	Ongoing
11.	Conduct empathetic, confidential, and timely case interviews and close contact notifications following the ADPH guidance and relevant state laws.	Ongoing
12.	Provide reports and data as designated by CDC and ADPH.	Ongoing

BUDGET

The applicant must include a budget detailing the costs associated with completing the scope of work, fulfilling the requirements, and achieving the deliverable due dates. The costs associated with phone usage and mail charges are allowable and should be included in the budget. Personnel costs should be calculated by the hour per position.

If unit costs are used, do not insert a unit cost with more than two (2) digits to the right of the decimal point. Digits beyond the two (2) will be dropped and not used in the evaluation of the proposal.

Proposed costs must be reasonable in nature and amount and cannot exceed the market price. For a list of unallowable costs, please refer to the OMB Part 200 – Uniform Administrative requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit requirements for Federal Awards, and the 45 CFR Part 75 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal must be typed in the English language using the Font size 12, pages numbered, and double spacing is preferred with a 25 page limit. The proposal should address all items in the Scope of Work and Deliverables section as well as incorporate items listed in the

Requirements section. Failure to fully address the RFP requirements will result in the submittal of an incomplete and nonresponsive proposal. If the proposal contains elements that exceed the requirements of the RFP, it is incumbent upon the applicant to clearly state this in the proposal and explain how this will be achieved. Proposals should be concise, and complete in describing how the applicant intends to complete the Scope of Work and achieve the Deliverable due dates. Emphasis should be on completeness, specificity, and clarity of content.

COST OF PREPARATION

The ADPH is not responsible for, and will not pay any costs associated with, the preparation and submission of the applicant's proposal, regardless of whether the applicant is selected. Any costs associated with the applicant's participation in this procurement process is the sole responsibility of the applicant and will not be charged to ADPH.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Applications must be received by **May 24, 2021, 5:00 PM CST**. Applications submitted after the deadline **will not be accepted**. Proposals shall be submitted by email to Epidemiology@adph.state.al.us to the attention of Kelly Stevens, Director of Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks. A confirmation email will be sent to the applicant.

Each applicant is solely responsible for assuring its Proposal is received by ADPH. Proposals received after the Proposal Due Date may be rejected. The time of receipt shall be determined by the time received by ADPH at its email address. ADPH will not be responsible for any delays in delivery beyond ADPH's control, including those involving not allowing enough time for the email to be sent, connection problems, and using an incorrect email address. An acknowledgement receipt will be sent to each proposer upon receiving their electronic proposal.

Mailed, faxed or oral proposals **will not be accepted**.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from **May 25, 2021 to June 11, 2021**. A review panel comprised of staff from the ADPH BCD will review the proposals. If additional information or discussions are needed with any applicants, the applicant(s) will be notified during this two-week period.

Proposals will be based upon the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability (20 points)
- Technical expertise and experience (20 points)
- Previous work completed (20 points)
- Proposed work plan (20 points)

- Budget (20 points)

The score sheet, which will be used during the evaluation process, can be found in the Additional Information section.

A selection decision should be made by **June 12, 2021**. All applicants will receive an official letter notifying them of their status.

COST OF THE CONTRACT

When a contract is entered into with the applicant, at no time shall the total cost of the contract exceed the total price quoted in the applicant's proposal.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Submissions and any questions concerning this RFP must be submitted by email to Epidemiology@adph.state.al.us to the attention of Kelly Stevens, Director of Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks.

For additional information on contact tracing and case investigation, visit our website at <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/contact-tracing.html>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Funding for this contract comes from federal grants awarded by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (ELC) Program. As part of the "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-139, Title I)", the ELC awarded funds nationwide to its recipient base in a program-initiated component funding under the Emerging Issues (E) Project of CK19-1904, henceforth, "ELC Enhancing Detection" and "ELC Enhancing Detection Expansion" supplements. The applicable regulations and policies are:

- 2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
- 45 CFR Part 75 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards
- HHS Grants Policy Regulations
- HHS Grants Policy Statement
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)
- Trafficking in Persons: Consistent with 2 CFR 175, awards are subject to the requirements of the Trafficking Victims Protection of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. Part 7104(g))

- CDC Additional Requirements (AR) may apply.

FORMS

- As part of this RFP, submission should also include a completed and executed State of Alabama Disclosure form.
- The awarded applicant will be required to submit a completed Certificate of Compliance with the Beason-Hammon Act form with corresponding eVerify and be registered in the State of Alabama Accounting and Resource System (STAARS) Vendor Self Service (VSS) portal.

**COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION &
CONTACT TRACING SERVICES
PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST**

Proposal Criteria	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Eligibility Requirements			
Is your entity a nonprofit or for-profit entity?			
Does your entity have experience in contact tracing and case investigation?			
Overall Proposal Suitability			
Does your proposal meet ADPH's requested services?			
Can your entity deliver the services described in your proposal?			
Technical Expertise and Experience			
Have you provided information on your entity's history, years in business, number of employees, and capacity to do the work?			
Have you shown your entity is financially stable?			
Previous Work Completed			
Does your previous work experience align with the RFP?			
Have you provided a detailed summary of your past projects?			
Proposed Work Plan			
Does your work plan meet the minimum requirements (e.g. scheduling 40 investigators per day for an 8-hour work period 8 AM – 8 PM)?			
Have you addressed the tasks from the Technical Requirements & Expertise Section?			
Does your work plan address the tasks listed in the Scope of Work Section?			
Have you included a Staff Plan?			
Does your work plan show how you will achieve the Deliverable Due Dates?			
Did you address any contingency plans for completing the project, should the lead or key project personnel become unavailable for any reason?			
Did you include the location and principal office, from which the work is to be performed?			
Have you included the use of technology in your work plan (e.g. computers, secured internet service, phone) for onsite and remote work?			
Does your work plan address how you will ensure compliance with ADPH confidentiality and HIPAA?			
Does your work plan address how you will comply with reporting requirements, applicable policies and regulations, guidance and instruction?			
Budget			
Does your budget detail the costs associated with providing these services?			
Are your costs allowable, reasonable and allocable?			
Does your budget include any unallowable costs?			
Required Forms			
Have you included a completed and executed State of Alabama Disclosure form?			

**COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION &
CONTACT TRACING SERVICES
SCORE SHEET**

Proposals shall be evaluated on the following criteria:

Proposer: _____

Reviewer: _____

Proposed Amount: \$_____

Date: _____

Requirements		Notes	
Is the applicant a nonprofit or for-profit entity?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Does the proposal meet the RFP's requirements?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the State of Alabama Disclosure form completed and executed?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the proposal complete and responsive?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Proposal Contents		Points	Score
Overall Proposal Suitability (20 points)			
Does the proposal meet the ADPH's needs?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Is the proposed program realistic and achievable?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Technical Expertise and Experience (20 points)			
Was documentation provided showing the applicant's history, years in business, and number of employees?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>5</u>	
Was documentation provided showing the applicant's soundness and financial capability to perform the work?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>5</u>	
Does the applicant meet the requirements listed in the Technical and Experience Section of the RFP?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Previous Work Completed (20 points)			
Does the applicant have experience and expertise conducting projects of similar size and scope?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Was information provided on the applicant's past projects?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Proposed Work Plan (20 points)			
Does the proposed work plan clearly identify and discuss how the applicant will perform the requirements specific to this project, including each item under Scope of Work and Deliverables?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Was a description of the location and principal office from which work is to be performed provided?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>5</u>	
Was there an identification of the amount of time that lead, and key project personnel will be expected to work on the project, and was a description of contingency plans provided, should the lead or key project personnel become unavailable?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>5</u>	
Budget (20 points)			
Does the budget provide a detailed breakdown of costs associated with performing the proposed services?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Are the proposed costs reasonable and allowable?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>10</u>	
Total		100	