



AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 18, 2024

SUBJECT: CDC Environmental Health Specialist Network Grant Application

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move approval to apply for an Environmental Health Specialist Network grant from the CDC.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Grant Opportunity: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice has posted a notice of funding opportunity for its Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net) - Practice-based Research to Improve Food Safety Grant. The grant supports programs in public health departments to:

- Promote collaboration with other EHS-Net recipients and partners to develop and conduct multisite research projects focused on improving retail food safety.
- Develop and conduct individual research projects focused on improving retail food safety. These projects will be unique to each recipient's needs.
- Include an environmental health component in foodborne outbreak investigations and report data from outbreak investigations to CDC's National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS).

The focus of these research and investigation efforts is retail food safety. Awardees are required to collaborate with epidemiology and laboratory staff in their health departments or in other agencies that conduct foodborne outbreak investigations.

The CDC will award recipients a maximum of \$200,00 per applicant per 12-month budget period for a five-year period of performance. Year two (2) through five (5) period awards will be dependent on the availability of funds and whether the recipient's progress is satisfactory.

DCHS Project: In the United States between 2009-2019, 53% of Norovirus outbreaks occurred in Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) and 11% of Norovirus outbreaks occurred in Schools and Daycares, compared to only 10% of Norovirus outbreaks occurring in restaurant settings. Unfortunately, Long Term Care Facilities, Assisted Living Facilities

(ALFs), Schools and Daycares are not licensed by Local Public Health Authorities in the state of Oregon or in many other states throughout the US. This deprives these facilities of the benefit of ongoing, regular educational and consultative support that occurs during regulatory inspections and a close working relationship with the local public health department. Ironically, these LTCFs, schools and daycares serve the most vulnerable populations in our community.

In order to address this massive communicable disease health burden and in an effort to improve the conditions of the most vulnerable populations in our community, we propose to study hygiene and sanitation in LTCFs, ALFs, schools and daycares in an effort to create a model for public health educational and consultative intervention that can be implemented in jurisdictions where congregate settings for these vulnerable populations are not subject to licensing and inspection. This project will not be regulatory in nature, but rather a research study aimed at developing a model for public health educational intervention that can be used in the absence of regulations.

EHS-Net funding is projected to be available for five years. Therefore, we have divided this project into several stages that will take place over five years. In year 1 (September 30, 2025-September 30, 2026) we propose creating a gap analysis tool for assessing Norovirus intervention strategies and conducting a series of non-regulatory assessments in LTCFs, ALFs, Schools and Daycares to assess the presence of those Norovirus intervention strategies. The gap analysis tool will assess things such as handwashing training, observations of handwashing among various staff, training about communicable diseases, presence of an employee illness policy, assessing who receives training and education, gaps in training policies, active managerial control, food safety training among kitchen staff, exclusion and restriction policies, types of chemicals used to clean up body fluid spills, the presence of a body fluid spill kit at the establishment, cleaning practices, etc.

Deschutes County Health Services (DCHS) seeks approval to apply for the CDC's Environmental Health Specialist network Grant. If awarded the grant, DCHS intends to use the \$200,000, year 1, funding as follows:

- \$23,913 to provide subsidized Certified Food Manager Training courses to anyone in the facilities who works with food and is interested in obtaining advanced training, subsidize the cost of study materials and registration for one person from each facility to obtain either their Associate in Infection Prevention and Control (a-IPC) or Long term Care Facility Certified in Infection Prevention (LTC-CIP), and provide food safety tools (such as thermocouples, sanitizer test strips and body fluid spill kits) to facility operators who lack these fundamental tools.
- \$150,000 to support a current Environmental Health Specialist II.
- \$26,087 toward indirect costs.

DCHS would apply for continuation funding for years 2-5. This funding would allow us to analyze the collected data, write a comprehensive report, and develop intervention

strategies based on our findings. Additionally, we would conduct a post-assessment and develop research-based materials that can be shared nationally with other jurisdictions aiming to reduce the Norovirus disease burden among vulnerable populations in unlicensed LTCFs, ALFs, daycares and schools.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

If awarded, the budget impact would be \$200,000 revenue for the period September 30, 2025, through September 29, 2026. An additional \$200,000 of revenue per year, for four additional years, would be anticipated.

ATTENDANCE:

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