

Analysis

Oregon Health Authority

Domestic Well Testing Information

Analyst: Tom MacDonald

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the amount of up to \$300,00 over one year for modernizing OHA's domestic well testing data system.

Analysis: Under Oregon law, the sale or exchange of real estate with a domestic well requires the owner to have the well water tested for certain contaminants. The results of these tests are submitted to the Public Health Division and are used to assess the status of groundwater in Oregon and help protect the health of people who rely on private wells for their household water. The division currently relies on a database with limited data entry and reporting functionality to house this data. OHA is requesting permission to apply for the CDC Environmental Public Health Tracking grant to improve this database according to the following goals:

- Automate data entry into the system to minimize manual entry by staff;
- Improve data privacy through the separation of personal information from water quality data;
- Realign the database structure to meet current data standards; and
- Create dashboards of domestic well data showing results combined at a meaningful geographic level.

These actions will allow OHA to better manage and report on program activities and water quality data from the routine submission of testing data, as well as from special projects like domestic well testing currently underway in regions impacted by wildfires. OHA's grant proposal includes an estimated budget of \$244,600 to make the database improvements. This work will be done in-house and mostly by staff in the Office of Information Services, which is part of the shared service arrangement between OHA and the Department of Human Services. A total of five existing staff members (1.35 FTE) comprise the largest share of the estimated project costs.

The federal grant application is due June 21, 2021 for the one-year grant period beginning August 1, 2021. The grant does not require a state match or cost-sharing. If OHA receives an award, the agency will return to the Legislature for expenditure limitation, as needed.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: Approve the request.

Oregon Health Authority Heath

Request: Authorize the Oregon Health Authority to apply for a one year, up to \$300,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control for environmental public health data system improvements.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) requests approval to apply for a one year, up to \$300,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control for the Enhancing Innovation and Capabilities of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network grant. OHA found out about the grant on April 22, 2021, and applications are due on June 21, 2021.

OHA plans to use the grant funds to improve its domestic well testing information system by automating data entry, improving data privacy, realigning the data structure to meet current standards, and adding a dashboard feature to display the information at a geographic level. OHA would use the funds to support existing staff within the Public Health Division who would serve as subject matter experts and for staff and contracts with the Office of Information Services to enhance the current database.

There is no maintenance of effort or match required to accept this funding. OHA's ability to accomplish this work is not dependent on receiving any additional funding for the domestic well program; for example, additional funding for enhanced domestic well testing in the wake of the September 2020 wildfires is not needed to complete this work.



Office of the Director

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon
Health
Authority

500 Summer Street NE E20

Salem, OR 97301

Voice: 503-947-2340

Fax: 503-947-2341

TTY: 503-947-5080

May 25, 2021

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the Enhancing Innovation and Capabilities of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network; Approaches to Data Modernization grant administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This new funding opportunity would increase Oregon's ability to modernize the collection, analysis and sharing of domestic well testing information. The grant would fund up to \$300,000 for one year, ending July 30, 2022. OHA received the request for proposals on April 22, 2021. Applications are due on June 21, 2021.

This grant funding requires no matching funds and maintenance of effort is not required. The grant opportunity requires no additional staff.

Agency Action

The purpose of this grant is to modernize the OHA domestic well testing information system in four ways: automate data entry into the system to minimize manual entry by staff, improve data privacy to separate program and personal information from water quality data, realign the database structure to meet current data standards and create dashboards of domestic well data showing results combined at a meaningful geographic level. This will allow OHA to better manage and report on program activities and water quality data from routine Domestic Well Testing Act data submissions as well as from special projects like the Wildfire-Impacted Domestic Wells Testing Voucher project.

This funding opportunity would improve reporting of domestic well-related program activity, which would inform evaluation of program performance to achieve and demonstrate service excellence. Domestic well information system improvements would facilitate innovative data visualization and make routinely updated domestic well information more accessible to the public. This work will improve transparency of public health work while ensuring data privacy. To meet these outcomes, the funding opportunity would support existing staff within the Public Health Division and the Office of Information Services (OIS). The funding would support a total of 1.35 FTE of existing staff:

Public Health Division

- 0.1 FTE Program Manager (Principle Executive/Manager D)
- 0.15 FTE Program Coordinator (Program Analyst 2)
- 0.1 FTE Research Analyst (Research Analyst 3)

Office of Information Systems

- 0.75 FTE Systems Analyst (ISS 7)
- 0.25 FTE Business Intelligence Developer (ISS 7).

This funding opportunity furthers the OHA mission of a healthy Oregon and the mission of ensuring all people and communities can achieve optimum physical, mental and social well-being through partnership, prevention and access to quality, affordable health care. It prioritizes health equity, aligning with the OHA strategic plan goal of eliminating health inequities by 2030. OHA estimates that nearly 23 percent of Oregonians rely on domestic wells as their primary source of drinking water, concentrated in rural areas of the state. Oregon's rural populations experience elevated levels of poverty and compromised health status, particularly among people of color. This makes outreach and support for domestic well owners of critical public health importance. OHA uses domestic well water quality data to assess drinking water hazards and tailor outreach and education to domestic well users and key intermediary audiences including local environmental and public health staff, realtors, well drilling and repair professionals and environmental laboratories.

Action Requested

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Public Health Division requests permission to apply for the Enhancing Innovation and Capabilities of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network; Approaches to Data Modernization grant.

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Rayfield Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
May 25, 2021
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Legislation Affected

None.

For additional information, please contact Andre Ourso, Administrator, Center for Health Protection at Andre.Ourso@dhsosha.state.or.us or 971-673-0403.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Allen
Director

EC: Patrick Heath, Department of Administrative Services
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Tom MacDonald, Legislative Fiscal Office
Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office