

APHA Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Background

What is the purpose of the grant?

APHA seeks to build the capacity of the nation's 53 state and regional public health associations (Affiliates) and the grassroots policy network and improve our nation's ability to respond to new and emerging public health threats through the APHA Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative with funding provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Who has been involved in this grant process to date (the release of the RFP)?

The APHA Executive Director and the Committee on Affiliates (CoA) conceived this project. A CoA work group collaborated with APHA staff to develop multiple versions of the grant request to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. After review by the Kellogg Foundation, the suggested changes were made. APHA then formed a thirteen member Advisory Committee to the APHA Executive Director to advise APHA as the project and the RFP proceeded.

Application Process

Will APHA provide technical assistance for preparation of the proposal?

APHA Staff will answer as many questions as possible. Also, there will be technical assistance conference calls to answer questions about the RFP, the proposal, or the APHA Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative.

Question and Answer Conference Call Schedule

June 28, 2007: Q&A conference call with APHA, 1:00 - 3:00 pm EDT

July 18, 2007: Q&A conference call with APHA, 12:00 - 2:00 pm EDT

August 2, 2007: Q&A conference call with APHA, 1:00 - 3:00 pm EDT

Who can I call to get assistance with my grant applications?

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Is my Affiliate required to have liability insurance purchased before the grant is submitted?

Yes. General liability insurance is a requirement set forth in the MOU. The MOU must be completed before an award is made. If your Affiliate has not acquired the insurance certificate by the submission date, please provide APHA with the necessary documentation that the purchase has been made. Each affiliate in a multi-affiliate application must provide an individual insurance certificate. For affiliates having

difficulty securing insurance coverage, APHA is facilitating a group purchase of general liability insurance at discounted rates.

Does my affiliate have to be incorporated or have a 501 (c)(3) certificate?

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation requires all sub-grantees of the APHA Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative to have a 501 (c)(3) certificate or a fiscal agent with one.

What happens if the agreement between the Affiliate and our fiscal agent is severed, causing us to lose our 501(c)(3) status obligation?

If such action occurs, another fiscal agent must be recruited in a timely manner. If necessary, APHA will hold funds in the interim and may not disburse any additional funding.

If my affiliate is applying as a multi-affiliate applicant, must each affiliate be incorporated or have 501 (c)(3) certificate?

No. As long as the affiliate that will be acting as the fiscal agent has their 501 (c)(3) certificate, the other affiliate(s) are not required to have a certificate.

Does my proposal have to cover the entire life of the grant?

No. Each affiliate or multi-affiliate can apply for a grant shorter than the life of the APHA Capacity-Building Initiative, which is 3½ years, starting October 2007 through February 28, 2011. For example, an affiliate could apply for a grant life from January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008.

Length of Project Period:

Year 1- October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

Year 2- October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009

Year 3- October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

Year 4- October 1, 2010 – February 28, 2011

Can I form a partnership for application with affiliates outside of my region?

How many affiliates must be part of a multi-affiliate proposal?

Yes, a partnership can be formed with affiliates within or outside of your region. This partnership will be considered as a “multi-affiliate” applicant. There is not a minimum or maximum number of affiliates that can participate in a multi-affiliate proposal. The only stipulation with multi-affiliate proposal is in regard to funding. (Maximum award to multi-affiliates is \$60,000 per affiliate over the life of the grant.)

Can an affiliate apply as an individual and a multi-affiliate applicant?

No. An affiliate can only submit one application for the grant, either an individual or multi-affiliate. Submitting two applications may jeopardize your grant application and the multi-affiliate application that you are a part of as well.

Will my affiliate be penalized for required activities that we are already doing or have completed?

No. This will allow an affiliate to request funds for less basic capacity-building activities, such as initiating a state-level grassroots campaign on a complex health issue. If an affiliate has already completed or reached some of the required activities, they should provide the necessary documentation to APHA and/or Policy and Research Group, (PRG), the firm that has been retained by APHA to complete the evaluation of the Initiative. This situation will be taken under consideration, individually.

In regard to Get Ready, will APHA approve of activities that have taken place before the beginning of this grant cycle?

Activities including and similar to writing letters to the editor or participating in vaccine drives, that take place before the grant cycle starts, will not count towards completion of the Get Ready objective listed in the RFP. However, an affiliate can continue any ongoing collaborative plan that will coincide with the grant cycle that the affiliate is applying for. For example, if an affiliate has a link on their website to the Get Ready site, APHA will give credit for this activity as it is an ongoing effort. The affiliates are encouraged to incorporate the tools and resources provided for the Get Ready campaign in any ongoing efforts.

Can we add activities that are not listed?

Most activities are listed as suggested program ideas. APHA encourages each affiliate to design their proposal to address the need in their particular geographical region. However, grant recipients must complete or have already completed the activities that are labeled “required” in the RFP in order to be regarded as meeting the goals and objectives of this grant.

Can my affiliate change the program design after it has been awarded?

Yes, it is possible that a proposal can be adjusted. These situations will be reviewed on an individual basis. The key factor will be if the revised program design will increase the chances to meet the requirements of the Initiative or expand the scope of service provided.

What should be included in a “completed” application?

A completed application is considered to include the following:

- A signed cover letter
- A completed proposal using the application and budget templates provided that address all of the required areas
- A detailed budget justification explaining the proposed budget allocations
- A copy of your Affiliate’s 501(c)(3) certificate or your selected fiscal agent’s 501(c)(3) certificate
- A completed Appendix A, prioritizing technical assistance need

Selection Process

Will every affiliate receive some funding?

Currently, it is not possible to provide funding for each affiliate. The number of initial applications APHA receives will determine how many affiliates will receive direct funding but the overall project is structured so that all affiliates can benefit from this initiative through technical assistance, enhanced support from APHA staff, better communication and technology tools.

Who will evaluate the application?

A review committee of volunteers from Past Affiliate Presidents and the Council on Emeritus Members, who are not currently members of their Affiliate Board, will evaluate each eligible grant application. The APHA Affiliate Staff and the Kellogg Grant Advisory Committee will review recommendations from the review committee before the awards are finalized.

What efforts will be made to avoid conflict of interests during the review process?

The review committee will be comprised of all volunteers who have had no involvement with the process to date. However, this group will be knowledgeable of Affiliates operations and have a general experience with the proposal review process.

Who is making the final decision on the grantees?

The review committee will provide their recommendations to fund or not and score each proposal. The Advisory Committee will review the recommendations made by the review committee to verify that affiliates at each level of development will be represented. Based on the previously mentioned factors, the APHA Executive Director and Staff will make the final decision for funding.

Will my affiliate be competing with others that are more developed/organized than mine?

The review committee will evaluate and score all proposals. Next, each affiliate proposal will be grouped according to their Quartile ranking, which is based on their annual budget. Ideally, APHA will offer grants in each Quartile.

How can I be sure that my grant proposal receives fair and equal consideration?

The review panel will be compiled of three (3) volunteers from Past Affiliate Leadership and the Council of Emeritus Members. Each panel will be individually constituted to be as fair as possible. All reviewers cannot review their own affiliate grant and must declare any conflict of interest in advance.

What is the procedure or timeline for the selection process?

Individual affiliate and multi-affiliate grant proposals will be reviewed, evaluated and weighted on the merits listed in the RFP. Proposals are due to APHA on August 17,

2007, and the review committee will process them from mid-August to mid-September. APHA plans to announce and release grant awards mid-October 2007.

Will applications be considered if they do not address all of the required activities?

Each affiliate must complete all activities or objectives that are labeled “required” in the RFP. If there are required activities that have already been completed, the affiliate may simply provide the necessary documentation to receive credit for the activity.

Award Process

When will the grant be implemented?

The grant awards will be announced mid-October. Implementation of the proposed activities may begin immediately. The fiscal year for the grants will be from October 1 – September 30, annually, and from October 1, 2010 to February 28, 2011, for the last 4 months in the grant cycle.

How will the grant monies be distributed?

Currently, APHA has about \$1 million in grant funds available. Once APHA receives all requests, we will request additional funds from the Kellogg Foundation to fully fund projects for year one. If APHA is awarded this request, it is our plan to disburse funds as an annual installment. Funds will be released contingent upon proper documentation and completion of annual program objectives.

What date can Affiliates expect their initial installment?

APHA plans to distribute funds in late October.

Will there be awards after the first round has been distributed?

Perhaps. There are several situations that may occur to allow unexpended funds to be awarded later. If there are funds remaining after the initial awards are given, APHA will likely issue future grants. However, for the greatest opportunity of funding, an affiliate should apply during this initial process.

Implementation Process

What happens if my Affiliate can't meet the contractual obligations to which we had previously agreed? Do we have to return the funds to Kellogg or to APHA?

If funds are spent toward meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the Affiliate's proposal but the Affiliate is not able to achieve those goals and objectives, the Affiliate will not be required to return the funds. However, if the Affiliate spends funds toward projects unrelated to the goals and objectives of their proposal, they will be required to return the funds to APHA. All situations will be determined on an individual basis.

What if the goals and objectives change over the course of the grant, can the dollars be reprogrammed to meet the new goals and objectives if still related to the project?

Yes. The adjustments will have to be approved by APHA.

Why do we have to participate in the Get Ready campaign?

The agreement between the Kellogg Foundation and APHA requires all recipients of funding to participate in the Get Ready campaign.

Where can we get more information about the Get Ready campaign?

Affiliates seeking additional information regarding the Get Ready campaign can log on to the Get Ready website at, <http://www.getreadyforflu.org/newsite.htm>. This link is also available on the APHA website by clicking on the Get Ready icon on the main page, www.apha.org. Periodic updates will also be available in the various APHA publications.

When, where, and how will technical assistance be provided, and is there a charge for it?

Technical assistance will be provided through out the life of the grant, at no charge. If travel is required, funded Affiliates may be asked to cover the cost of their travel expense. Each affiliate will be notified in a timely manner of all technical assistance opportunities. The logistics and specific training sessions will be determined after the affiliates return Appendix A of the RFP.

Who will be eligible to participate in the technical assistance offered or arranged by APHA?

All 53 state and regional Affiliates are eligible to participate in the technical assistance offered by APHA. One of the primary concerns of this Initiative is to enhance the capacity of all affiliates and providing technical assistance will help APHA reach this goal.

What is iMIS?

Integrated Management Information System (iMIS) is the membership database software currently being used by APHA. It uses a relational table structure to store data and it maintains a subsidiary ledger to handle customer-level financial transactions. Potentially, an affiliate could purchase this system to manage their database.

Financial Support

Are “in kind” services required to receive funds?

No. In-kind services are not required to receive funds; however, this allocation will be considered during the review and selection process and may likely increase the success of your request.

Do I have to include a budget for evaluation in my proposal?

No. APHA has contracted with an external evaluator, The Policy and Research Group, to complete the necessary evaluative review for this initiative. Therefore, each grant recipient is not required to expend any of its funds to cover evaluation costs.

Can affiliates use grant funds to attend the APHA annual meeting?

Yes. A representative from the affiliate must attend the APHA annual meeting during the affiliate's grant life. Therefore, funds from the grant can be allocated to cover travel and registration for the annual meeting for that representative but not to cover the cost of APHA membership.

Can I use grant funds to hire staff?

Yes. Funds can be allocated to compensate for staff that will be working towards the completion of the goals for the grant. The Affiliate is not required to employ full-time staff, nor is it required to staff an executive director. (Other positions are also allowable) If grant funds are used to hire staff, the affiliate needs to explain how the position will be sustained after the grant is concluded.

If the grant funding in part or fully funds staff, is a benefit package (i.e. health insurance) required?

APHA strongly supports all Americans having health insurance. However, it is the decision of the affiliate to provide a benefit package.

Can my affiliate use grant funds to purchase capital equipment?

Yes, purchasing capital equipment is allowable with grant funds. It is recommended that the most necessary and cost-effective items be purchased.

Can I adjust each year's budget to account for cost of living adjustment (COLA)?

Yes.

How many grants will be offered under the APHA Capacity-Building Initiative?

This process is competitive and APHA seeks to fund as many quality proposals as possible in an effort to achieve the optimal results in this initiative.

Based on the funds approved from the Kellogg Foundation, APHA estimates 25 or more direct grants will be awarded to eligible affiliates.

How much money can my affiliate apply for?

The maximum award that an individual affiliate can receive is \$90,000 over the course of the grant. The maximum award that an affiliate in a multi-affiliate proposal can receive is \$60,000 per affiliate that is participating, over the course of the grant.

Why are indirect costs not allowed?

W.K. Kellogg Foundation does not allow indirect costs in any of its grants.

What are the non-fundable (non-allowable) aspects through the grant?

Funds are limited to the activities stated in the approved proposal. The Kellogg Foundation restricts grantees and sub-grantees from using any funds for the purpose of lobbying.

As a charitable organization with a 501 (c)(3) status, there are other limitations for financial expenditures. Those limitations are as follows:

1. Organizational testing.
2. Operational testing (I.e., charitable, educational, scientific, literary).
3. Inurement prohibition.
4. Political activities prohibition.
5. Lobbying limitation.
6. Required disclosures.
7. Dissolution constraint.

Please consult your legal counsel for additional details.

How will the grant money that is not going to direct grants be used? (e.g. APHA received \$5.9 million; only \$2.28 million is going to Affiliate grants)

After rounds of grant submissions, requests for more detail, and required changes, the Kellogg Foundation decided the total funds should be divided in the following categories:

1. Direct grants to the affiliates.
2. Support services for all affiliates: technical assistance, IT, and enhanced communication technology.
3. Infrastructure and staff at APHA to administer this initiative.
4. An independent external evaluator.
5. Collaborative project on animal borne infectious disease.

Project Evaluation

Who will be evaluating the success of this Initiative?

As stated earlier, APHA has contracted with an external evaluator, The Policy and Research Group, to complete the necessary evaluative review for this initiative.

What will my affiliate have to do to support the evaluation?

Grant recipients are not required to expend any funds to cover evaluation costs. However, each grant recipient is required to participate in evaluation activities by completing all evaluation forms, data collections, surveys, webinars, and/or trainings, etc.

Will my affiliate have to participate in the evaluation by PRG even if we are not awarded a direct grant?

Yes, it is APHA's request that all affiliates will participate in some evaluation activities, as all will benefit from the technical assistance and direct services.