

CDC & APHL Cooperative Agreement OE20-2001 Performance Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: JULY – DECEMBER 2020

OE20-2001: Enhancing Public Health Laboratory Capabilities and Increasing Capacity

Building upon previous and currently funded Cooperative Agreements (CoAg) between CDC and the [Association of Public Health Laboratories \(APHL\)](#), [OE20-2001](#) aims to improve public health in the United States and globally by enhancing the effectiveness and functionality of public health laboratories (PHLs), individually and as components of a national system. This CoAg supports four key strategies and activities that will enhance the capabilities and increase the capacities of PHLs in nine focus areas.

9 FOCUS AREAS

- A. Foundational Leadership and Support
- B. Environmental Health
- C. Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmentally Transmitted Diseases
- D. Infectious Diseases
- E. Informatics
- F. Newborn Screening and Genetics
- G. Preparedness and Response
- H. Quality and Safety Systems
- I. Workforce Development



STRATEGY 1

Science, Management and Operations



STRATEGY 2

Policy, Partnership and Communications



STRATEGY 3

Training and Capacity Building



STRATEGY 4

Laboratory Quality, Safety, and Informatics

SELECTED STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

POLICY, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS



- Develop policy and issues analyses to promote public health laboratory interests.
- Facilitate information exchange and dissemination between laboratory professionals and other stakeholders in public health, healthcare and beyond.
- Collect and analyze information, create content, and disseminate products to inform stakeholders about the role of public health laboratories and the tools and resources available to them.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING



- Identify training and workforce development needs among laboratory professionals in diverse settings.
- Develop curriculum frameworks and training and workforce development resources for laboratory professionals in diverse settings.
- Design and implement programs to strengthen the public health laboratory workforce pipeline.

LABORATORY QUALITY, SAFETY, AND INFORMATICS



- Develop and implement solutions and standards to improve data exchange and interoperability.
- Improve the practice of laboratory quality and safety in public health laboratories.
- Employ emerging methodologies and process improvements in public health laboratories.
- Provide technical assistance to public health laboratories and other stakeholders.
- Identify and address gaps in laboratory preparedness and response to public health threats.

ABOUT THE RECIPIENT: Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)



APHL works to strengthen laboratory systems serving the public's health in the United States and globally. Its members, known as "public health laboratories," monitor, detect, and respond to health threats. With over 20 years' experience in more than 30 countries, APHL is recognized internationally as a leader in laboratory science and practice.

FOCUS AREA PERFORMANCE MEASURE HIGHLIGHTS JULY-DECEMBER 2020



Training and Capacity Building

2,711

Number of individuals who participated in different training and workforce development opportunities at APHL.

90%

Proportion of learners who self-reported an increase in knowledge, skills, and/or abilities.

1st ever

“Boot Camp” to prepare APHL members for board certification exams was completed (averaged 15-30 participants per session).

77%

Response rate for a COVID-19 training needs assessment (see “Highlight” section below for additional information).

SUCCESS STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation Successes

Emerging Leader Program:

- Recruited 13th cohort class, for virtual delivery: 12 participants in fall class & 10 participants in spring class. Peer-to-peer coaches recruited and matched with fellows.

COVID-19 Laboratory Associate Program

- Designed and launched program to fast-track workforce support to APHL member laboratories. 30 COVID Associates recruited to assist PHLs in specific areas of pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical testing.

APHL Laboratory Fellowship Program

- Conducted a fellowship redesign to continue strengthening the overarching administrative framework.

Implementation Challenges

- Travel restrictions and shift in priorities due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- APHL staffing shortages.
- APHL members experiencing competing priorities and unable to participate in lengthy or time-intensive training opportunities during the pandemic (e.g., “Boot Camp” board certification training; New Lab Director Orientation).

HIGHLIGHT

A [COVID-19 training needs assessment](#) was completed with a 77% response rate. Results were analyzed and prioritized for developing action plans.

PHL Type	Percentage
Local PHLs	39%
State PHLs	61%
Territorial PHLs	0%

Implementation Solutions

- Adapted to changing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic by pivoting to a virtual format. For example, Packaging & Shipping in-person courses were transitioned to Saf-T-Pak virtual seminars. Additionally, the Public Health Laboratory Training Conference was held virtually in June 2021.
- While activities were delayed due to the pandemic, many activities (e.g., development of multi-tiered curriculum framework) are expected to be accomplished in the next implementation year.

