

# Requesting an Epi-Aid

An Epi-Aid enables rapid response by CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers in investigating urgent public health problems, such as infectious and noninfectious disease outbreaks, unexplained illnesses, or natural or manmade disasters.

## What is an Epi-Aid?

An Epi-Aid is an investigation of an urgent public health problem, such as infectious or noninfectious disease outbreaks, unexplained illnesses, or natural or manmade disasters. When officials with authority for public health requests assistance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an Epi-Aid enables rapid, short-term (1–3 weeks), generally onsite, technical assistance by EIS officers and other CDC subject matter experts. The focus of an Epi-Aid investigation is to assist partners in making rapid, practical decisions for actions to control and prevent the public health problem.

## Who participates?

An Epi-Aid team must include at least one EIS officer from outside the jurisdiction requesting assistance. The CDC team might include additional fellows and staff who are supervised by CDC subject matter experts. This team works closely with local staff in the jurisdiction that requested assistance. The requesting public health authority provides overall leadership for the investigation, while the Epi-Aid team provides technical assistance.

## Who can request an Epi-Aid?

Various officials with authority for public health can request an Epi-Aid.

- State and territorial public health authorities
- Local public health authorities, in coordination with the state authorities
- Elected tribal leaders of federally recognized tribes
- Foreign countries' ministry of health authorities
- Federal agency officials
- American military base commanding generals
- CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program officials

## Can a local jurisdiction request an Epi-Aid?

Yes. CDC responds to direct requests from local jurisdictions. When a local jurisdiction requests an Epi-Aid, CDC is committed to ensuring the state is aware of the request and is appropriately engaged in the Epi-Aid. The EIS program frequently helps with coordination among the state and local jurisdictions and CDC programs.



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## How can a public health authority request an Epi-Aid?

1. The requesting official with authority for public health contacts the subject matter expert at CDC or the EIS program ([EpiAid@cdc.gov](mailto:EpiAid@cdc.gov)) for an initial discussion of the technical assistance needed.
2. The CDC subject matter expert and the EIS program discuss the Epi-Aid request and determine whether CDC can support the Epi-Aid.
3. If CDC can support the Epi-Aid, the requesting official is notified. The official must send a written invitation by email to the CDC subject matter expert or to the EIS Program at [EpiAid@cdc.gov](mailto:EpiAid@cdc.gov).
4. If CDC cannot support the Epi-Aid, the EIS program notifies the requesting official of the decision.

## How do Epi-Aids benefit public health?

An Epi-Aid benefits public health in several ways. Epi-Aids can:

- Increase the technical capacity and workforce available for rapid response
- Streamline access to CDC subject matter experts and laboratory resources
- Build epidemiologic capacity through collaboration
- Enhance public health relationships
- Contribute to practical understanding about the problem being addressed

## What is the role of the requesting public health authority?

The public health authority provides overall leadership of the Epi-Aid investigation while benefitting from a collaborative relationship with the Epi-Aid team. The public health authority generally retains custody and control over all data collected as part of the investigation. After the Epi-Aid is completed, the public health authority often requests CDC's continued collaboration and assistance in data analysis, report writing, presentation preparation, and additional programmatic technical assistance.

## How can I get more information?

For more information about Epi-Aids, send an e-mail to [EpiAid@cdc.gov](mailto:EpiAid@cdc.gov).