Requesting a Lab-Aid

What is a Lab-Aid?
A Lab-Aid provides a mechanism for a public health laboratory to request assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address an associated need. A Lab-Aid is short-term (1-3 weeks), generally onsite, technical assistance by trained Laboratory Leadership Service (LLS) fellows and appropriate CDC subject matter experts.

What activities can LLS fellows perform during a Lab-Aid?
The focus of a Lab-Aid is to provide requested assistance to public health laboratories with improvements to laboratory testing, safety, and quality management systems, as well as to provide laboratory support during outbreak investigations. Examples of activities that LLS fellows may perform during a Lab-Aid include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting laboratory safety risk assessments
- Assessing and advising on laboratory quality and/or safety issues
- Evaluating and strengthening the laboratory component of a surveillance network
- Providing assistance on laboratory informatics and advanced molecular detection techniques
- Providing critical laboratory assistance during outbreak investigations

Who participates?
A Lab-Aid team includes at least one LLS fellow and CDC laboratory subject matter experts, based on the laboratory needs. The Lab-Aid team collaborates closely with public health laboratory staff from which the assistance is requested. The requesting public health laboratory provides overall leadership for the Lab-Aid while the Lab-Aid team provides technical assistance.

Who can request a Lab-Aid?
A Lab-Aid must be requested by the director of a public health laboratory.

What is the role of the requesting public health laboratory?
The public health laboratory requesting the Lab-Aid provides overall leadership of the assistance while benefitting from a collaborative relationship with the Lab-Aid team. The public health laboratory generally retains custody and control over all data collected as part of the association. After the Lab-Aid is completed, the public health laboratory can request CDC’s continued collaboration and assistance in data analysis, report writing, presentation preparation, and additional programmatic technical assistance.
How can a public health laboratory request a Lab-Aid?

1. The requesting laboratory contacts the LLS program, the CDC Division of Laboratory Systems, or the subject matter expert at CDC about potential laboratory needs.

2. The CDC subject matter expert contacts the LLS program (or vice versa) to discuss the Lab-Aid request. Once CDC decides it can support the Lab-Aid, the CDC subject matter expert notifies the requesting laboratory.

3. If CDC can support the Lab-Aid, upon notification, the requesting laboratory sends a letter of intent via email to the LLS program at LLS@cdc.gov.

4. The LLS program approves the Lab-Aid.

How do Lab-Aids benefit public health?

A Lab-Aid benefits public health in several ways. Lab-Aids can:

- Streamline access to CDC subject matter experts and laboratory resources
- Increase the technical capacity and workforce available for rapid, laboratory response
- Build capacity for laboratory safety and quality through collaboration
- Enhance relationships between CDC and public health laboratories

What is the difference between a Lab-Aid and an Epi-Aid?

A Lab-Aid focuses on addressing public health laboratory needs and is not limited to urgent public health responses, such as outbreak investigations.

An Epi-Aid provides rapid, short-term epidemiologic assistance by EIS officers for response to an urgent public health problem.

Additional Information

(LLS@cdc.gov)

(404-498-6110)

(www.cdc.gov/lls)

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