

# Requesting a Lab-Aid

## Laboratory assistance from CDC

### 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?

A Lab-Aid is a mechanism for providing rapid, short-term support to state, local, and federal public health labs for critical laboratory testing or operational needs. During a Lab-Aid, an LLS fellow takes a leadership role, supported by a CDC subject matter expert, to address an urgent public health concern. A Lab-Aid may involve:

- Conducting laboratory safety risk assessment
- Advising on lab quality issues or systems to help improve the reliability and reproducibility of lab data
- Standing up or strengthening the lab component of a surveillance program
- Assisting with bioinformatics or advanced molecular detection (AMD) workflows or analyse
- Providing lab expertise or assistance for outbreak investigation
- Capacity building or laboratory operations support



LLS fellow Stephen LaVoie (Class of 2020), far left, trains staff in a U.S. Virgin Islands public health laboratory on COVID testing instruments.

### 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.



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology,  
and Laboratory Services

## How can a public health laboratory request a Lab-Aid?

1. The requesting laboratory contacts the LLS program ([LLS@cdc.gov](mailto:LLS@cdc.gov)) or the subject matter expert at CDC about potential laboratory needs. Requesting laboratories are encouraged to reach out to the LLS program to discuss laboratory needs not listed here.
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](mailto: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 urgent public health laboratory needs but is not limited to public health responses, such as outbreak investigations. Some public health threats may warrant a joint response where a Lab-Aid is paired with an Epi-Aid for an integrated approach to investigations and resolution.

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

## Additional Information

 [LLS@cdc.gov](mailto:LLS@cdc.gov)

 404-498-6110

 [www.cdc.gov/lls](http://www.cdc.gov/lls)

