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**COVID-19 Health Disparities Activities** (Draft 10/12/21)
Center for Public Health Policy and Practice

DSHS will administer **$45.2M** in CDC funds to **engage** targeted communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and **build sustainable relationships** in those targeted communities leading to improved health among vulnerable populations.

Of the $45.2M, $38.9M is from CDC’s, National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities (CDC-RFA-OT21-2103) and $6.3M is from CDC’s Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) funds.

The project period is 06/01/21 – 05/31/23.

Any entity requesting funding must demonstrate how they plan to do **community engagement** and **build sustainable partnerships**.

In addition, any entity requesting funding must identify how they plan to contribute to each of the following six items:

1. **Infrastructure**…Describe the infrastructure in place (e.g., staff) or to be developed, to engage targeted communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and build sustainable relationships in those communities.

2. **Community Engagement**…Identify communities most impacted by COVID-19. Engage those communities to explore and document, using the voices of community members, the reasons why their community was so impacted.

3. **COVID Vaccinations**…Identify steps to maximize COVID vaccination rates in those same impacted communities.

4. **Partnership Directory**… Identify and document community partners engaged to address health disparities. Build sustainable partnerships among public health, healthcare, and social services.

5. **Health Disparities Improvement Initiative**…Design an intervention aimed at addressing one of the factors that made the community so vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 (e.g., diabetes, obesity, food security, housing, etc.).

6. **Information Sharing and Learning**…Describe efforts to share and learn information on addressing COVID-19 health disparities among populations at high-risk and underserved.

To achieve impact, DSHS will contract with:

• 46 **LHDs** to address health disparities in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 (The 7 LHDs receiving funding directly from CDC are not eligible.);

• Up to 16 **LHDs** to host Texas Public Health Fellows focusing on health disparities in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 (The 7 LHDs receiving funding directly from CDC are not eligible.);

• 4 **Area Health Education Centers** to focus on CHW and workforce health disparities issues in counties/jurisdictions not covered by the 7 LHDs receiving funding directly from CDC;

• Texas A&M System/**Texas AgriLife** to focus on rural communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19;

• **State Office of Rural Health**/Texas Department of Agriculture to focus on expansion of community paramedic pilot program in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19;

• **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department** to advance healthy outdoor living health interventions and to increase diversity of individuals who use state parks; and

• **Communication Entity(ies)** to focus on addressing health disparities in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

To achieve impact, DSHS will also:

• Provide our **PHRs** with funding to address health disparities in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19; and

• Establish an **infrastructure** at the state and regional level to address health disparities in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This infrastructure will include 8 Community Engagement Specialists and 8 Evaluation and Performance Specialists located in the PHRs.

**LHDs**

DSHS plans to contract with the following 46 LHDs in all 8 of the Public Health Regions (PHRs):

* Abilene – Taylor County Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Amarillo Department of Public Health (PHR 1)
* Andrews City – County Health Department (PHR 9/10)
* Angelina County and Cities Health District (PHR 4/5N)
* Bell County Health Department (PHR 7)
* Brazoria County Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Brazos County Health Department (PHR 7)
* Brown County – City of Brownwood Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Cameron County Health Department (PHR 11)
* Chambers County Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Cherokee County Health Department (PHR 4/5N)
* Collin County Health Care (PHR 2/3)
* Comal County Health Department (PHR 8)
* Corpus Christi – Nueces County Public Health District (PHR 11)
* Corsicana – Navarro County Public Health District (PHR 2/3)
* Denton County Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Ector County Health Department (PHR 9/10)
* Fort Bend County Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Galveston County Health District (PHR 6/5S)
* Garland (City of) Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Gregg County Health Department (PHR 4/5N)
* Hardin County Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Hays County Health Department (PHR 7)
* Hidalgo County Health Department (PHR 11)
* Jasper – Newton County Public Health District (PHR 4/5N)
* Jefferson County Public Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Laredo (City of) Health Department (PHR 11)
* Live Oak County Health Department (PHR 11)
* Lubbock (City of) Health Department (PHR 1)
* Marshall – Harrison County Health District (PHR 4/5N)
* Medina County Health Unit (PHR 8)
* Milam County Health Department (PHR 7)
* Montgomery County Public Health District (PHR 6/5S)
* Northeast Texas Public Health District (PHR 4/5N)
* Orange County Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* Paris – Lamar County Health Department (PHR 4/5N)
* Port Arthur City Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* San Patricio County Health Department (PHR 11)
* South Plains Public Health District (PHR 1)
* Sweetwater – Nolan County Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Texarkana – Bowie County Health Department (PHR 4/5N)
* Uvalde County Health Department (PHR 8)
* Victoria County Public Health Department (PHR 8)
* Waco – McLennan County Health Department (PHR 7)
* Wichita Falls – Wichita County Health Department (PHR 2/3)
* Williamson County and Cities Health District (PHR 7)

Each LHD will identify and target at least two communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

For each of the targeted communities, the LHD will:
1. Identify and document the community’s ideas/needs on how to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.
2. Attend and/or facilitate community events to document community feedback.

3. Identify and engage individuals and organizations in the community interested in addressing health disparities.

4. Implement learning and information sharing opportunities on addressing the ideas/needs of the community.
5. Implement activities aimed at addressing an idea/need, identified by the community, to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.

6. Design an intervention to reduce the disproportionate impact of possible future pandemics/disasters on the community.

7. Develop a sustainability plan to stay engaged with the community after funding ends.

The following 7 LHDs were not eligible to contract with DSHS, regarding DSHS’ COVID-19 Health Disparities funding, because they are also an awardee through CDC-RFA-OT21-2103:

* Dallas County Health and Human Services (PHR 2/3)
* Harris County Public Health (PHR 6/5S)
* Houston Health Department (PHR 6/5S)
* San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (PHR 8)
* Tarrant County Public Health (PHR 2/3)
* Austin Public Health (PHR 7)
* City of El Paso Department of Public Health (PHR 9/10)

**PHRs**

DSHS plans to provide funding to the following 7 PHRs:

1. PHR 1 (Headquarters – Lubbock)
2. PHR 2/3 (Headquarters – Arlington)
3. PHR 4/5N (Headquarters – Tyler)
4. PHR 6/5S (Headquarters – Houston)
5. PHR 7 (Headquarters – Temple)
6. PHR 8 (Headquarters – San Antonio)
7. PHR 11 (Headquarters – Harlingen)

Note: PHR 9/10 (Headquarters – El Paso) is not included in the above list.

Each funded PHR and/or their contractor(s) will identify and target at least two communities, in a county without a local health department, disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

For each of the targeted communities, the PHR and/or their contractor(s) will:
1. Identify and document the community’s ideas/needs on how to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.
2. Attend and/or facilitate community events to document community feedback.

3. Identify and engage individuals and organizations in the community interested in addressing health disparities.

4. Implement learning and information sharing opportunities on addressing the ideas/needs of the community.
5. Implement activities aimed at addressing an idea/need, identified by the community, to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.

6. Design an intervention to reduce the disproportionate impact of possible future pandemics/disasters on the community.

7. Develop a sustainability plan to stay engaged with the community after funding ends.

**Regional Community Engagement Specialists and Regional Evaluation and Performance Specialists**

Are you ready to work closely with communities in Texas disproportionately impacted by COVID-19?

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is looking for people to join a team who will work with communities to develop and implement efforts aimed at reducing the impact of COVID-19 on their community. The staff will work on-site at least 50% of the time in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The team will include 16 full-time temporary positions which includes 8 Regional Community Engagement Specialists and 8 Regional Evaluation and Performance Specialists. These positions will be based in our DSHS Public Health Regional (PHR) headquarters/offices (Amarillo, Arlington, El Paso, Harlingen, Houston, San Antonio, Temple, and Tyler).

The Regional Community Engagement Specialists will lead community engagement and partnership efforts and the Regional Evaluation and Performance Specialists will lead evaluation and performance efforts.

The monthly salary range for these positions is $5,258 - $6,941.
Currently, these positions are funded through 05/31/23.

Please click on the following link to learn more about these positions - <https://jobshrportal.hhsc.state.tx.us/ENG/careerportal/default.cfm>.
Once on the Texas Health and Human Services Jobs Center website, select the applicable City and Agency (Dept. of State Health Services).

