

Request for Information



State of Alaska
Department of Health
Division of Public Health

Date Issued: 12/20/2024
RFI 25-005

HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS (HAI) SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT CONSULTANT

Introduction:

The Alaska Division of Public Health (DPH) is seeking information from parties interested in supporting and leading efforts to establish and sustain a statewide healthcare-acquired infection (HAI) advisory committee of governmental, non-profit, and private organization participants/stakeholders. Additional activities would include facilitating statewide antimicrobial stewardship initiatives, serving as a subject matter expert on multi-drug-resistant organisms (MDROs), and providing ad-hoc infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance.

Background Information:

DPH's Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program was established to support the detection, prevention, and containment of HAIs and antimicrobial-resistant pathogens in healthcare settings. Since its inception, the program has worked collaboratively with healthcare facilities, laboratories, and public health stakeholders to enhance surveillance, improve infection control practices, and provide education and technical assistance.

The program has successfully implemented statewide HAI surveillance, developed educational resources for healthcare providers, and fostered partnerships to address emerging threats like multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs). As the program continues to evolve, we are seeking input from potential vendors to identify innovative tools and services to enhance capabilities for pathogen detection, reporting, and to expand support for infection control and prevention activities across Alaska. Specifically – the Alaska DPH's HAI program is seeking expert-level services to assist and lead efforts focused on antimicrobial stewardship, relaunching a statewide HAI advisory board, and providing additional capacity to effectively respond to both MDRO and non-MDRO HAI outbreaks in healthcare facilities throughout Alaska.

For more information about Alaska's HAI Program, please visit:

<https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/hai/default.aspx>

If DPH chooses to conduct a competitive solicitation for these services, it may require education, experience, scope of work, and deliverables. Please see the following:

Education:

- Master's degree or higher in epidemiology, public health, microbiology, biostatistics, or a related field.
- A doctoral degree (PhD, DrPH, or MD) with training in epidemiology (preferred but not required).
- Certification in infection control (CIC) within six months of contract start date.

Experience:

- At least 4-5 years of professional experience in epidemiology, infection prevention, healthcare-associated infections, or antimicrobial resistance.
- Experience in public health surveillance, data analysis, and outbreak investigation, particularly in healthcare settings.
- Familiarity with HAI surveillance systems such as the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).
- Familiarity with infection prevention education programs such as CDC's Project Firstline (PFL).
- Knowledge and skillset to provide expert level antimicrobial stewardship guidance on current and emerging best-practices.
- A thorough understanding of how healthcare is delivered within the State of Alaska – with an emphasis on rural community settings with critical access hospital (CAH) designations.
- Experience working with a diverse group of stakeholders and participants – with an emphasis on Alaskan Native and American Indian organizations and people.

Scope of Work:

The vendor would lead in the development of several federally funded healthcare-acquired infections and antimicrobial resistance (HAI/AR) initiatives/projects:

- 1) Relaunch and sustain the Alaska Infection Control and Prevention Advisory Council (AK-ICPAC) – an HAI advisory committee consisting of members from government, non-profit, and private sector organizations. We seek increased engagement and participation from various partners throughout the state.
- 2) Support and lead A2SC (Alaska Antimicrobial Stewardship Collaborative), which is a multi-partner initiative with the goal of improving prescribing habits of practitioners statewide and promoting best practices throughout the state.
- 3) Ad hoc outbreak response – increased program capacity to effectively respond to both MDRO and non-MDRO HAI outbreaks throughout healthcare facilities within Alaska. The vendor will serve as subject matter experts on HAI prevention, containment, and response efforts. Additionally, vendor will act as an infection prevention and control (IPC) subject matter expert - providing guidance to healthcare facility infection prevention staff as needed.

Deliverables:

- 1) Relaunch and stand-up Alaska DPH's HAI Advisory Committee, aka AK-ICPAC. Activities tied to this include the following:
 - a. Outreach and engage potential partners and request their participation in this endeavor.
 - b. Schedule a project to launch the initial meeting for February 2025 (no later than March 2025) and facilitate this meeting.
 - c. Set a meeting schedule and cadence for subsequent meetings – meeting cadence could be monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly.
 - d. Sustain engagement and participation of program partners.
- 2) Assist and lead efforts focused on antimicrobial stewardship throughout the state. Activities tied to this include the following:
 - a. Connect with A2SC (Alaska Antimicrobial Stewardship Collaborative) program partners and help lead efforts focused on A2SC activities. Program partners include the Alaska Healthcare and Hospital Association (AHHA), APIC Midnight Sun Chapter, and other government and non-government organizations.

- b. Use IQVIA data (or other data set) to identify potential prescribers for targeted outreach and consultations. The anticipated deliverable is to contact and provide consultation to at least two (2) prescribers per month.
 - c. Other stewardship activities, as assigned.
- 3) Increase Alaska HAI Program's capacity to respond to HAI outbreaks within healthcare facilities statewide. Activities tied to this include the following:
 - a. Participate in weekly meetings with the core staff of the HAI program.
 - b. Respond to HAI outbreaks, as assigned, and provide onsite and virtual SME guidance to facility staff.
 - c. Assist HAI Program staff in the development of various guidance documents.
 - d. Assist HAI Program staff in tracking and reporting federal performance measures and program milestones.
 - e. Other duties as assigned.

Response Information:

- 1) Interested parties are invited to submit responses to the following request: Please provide the vendor's complete company name, address, telephone number, and email address for the designated contact person for this RFI response.
- 2) Provide a general overview of the vendor's profile, including a detailed description of its capabilities and experience in providing the requested services, including but not limited to MDRO prevention, response, containment, and all necessary infection prevention and control (IPC) best practices.
- 3) Describe any specific previous HAI program experiences provided by the vendor within the past five years and identify the states and jurisdictions in which the services were provided, including the name of the agency or department utilizing the vendor's services.
- 4) Please detail your previous experience working within an established HAI program (or similar).
- 5) Please describe your familiarity with healthcare delivery within Alaska – specifically the unique challenges experienced.
- 6) Please describe your ability to launch and lead a multidisciplinary collaboration amongst a diverse group of stakeholders. Specifically – experience and/or knowledge working with tribal groups such as Alaskan Native people.
- 7) Do you anticipate difficulties performing the duties and accomplishing the deliverables listed within this document? If so, what challenges or gaps do you anticipate?
- 8) Describe your overall staffing plan, estimated costs, and timeline for this project.

Interested parties who believe they can provide the services described in this RFI must submit their response in writing via email by 2:00 pm Alaska time, January 7, 2025 to the following person:

Dorothy Tauaese-Puletapuai
Procurement Specialist
Department of Health
Division of Finance and Management Services
Email: dorothy.v.tauaese-puletapuai@alaska.gov

Important Notice:

This RFI does not extend any rights to prospective vendors or obligate the state to conduct a solicitation or purchase any goods or services. Nor will the State be financially responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of any response for the requested information. This RFI is issued for the sole purpose of obtaining information as described in this notice. However, the information obtained from this request may be used to prepare a purchase, contract, or solicitation in the future.