

2024-2028 PHEP Notice of Funding Opportunity: Laboratory Response Network for Biological Threats Supplemental Guidance

February 2024

Overview

In Budget Period 1, standard and advanced biological reference laboratories must meet minimum requirements to maintain Laboratory Response Network for Biological Threats (LRN-B) membership. Of the approximately 120 LRN-B laboratories, 53 public health laboratories located in the 50 states and the directly funded localities of Los Angeles County, New York City, and Washington D.C., are supported by the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement.

Standard reference laboratories must meet LRN-B standard reference laboratory requirements outlined in the Standard Laboratory Checklist located on the LRN Secure Information Hub. Designated LRN-B advanced reference laboratories must comply with the eligibility requirements set by the CDC LRN Program.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide supplemental guidance to the public health laboratory capacity (LAB) activities in the [2024-2028 PHEP NOFO](#).

Programmatic Requirements

PHEP recipients are required to work with public health laboratory staff to ensure adherence to LRN-B requirements and to maintain the tools and resources necessary for LRN-B participation. At a minimum, recipients are required to work with laboratory staff to complete the following activities.

Meet PHEP Bench: LRN-B Challenge Panel

- All 53 PHEP-funded LRN-B laboratories must successfully pass CDC challenge panels (CP) for requested agents/assays that they are capable of testing for during each budget period of the PHEP NOFO performance period. Recipients must also ensure that PHEP-funded public health LRN-B laboratories have the necessary resources to successfully pass the challenge panels. The minimum performance requirement is that the LRN-B laboratory cannot fail more than one CP during the PHEP cooperative agreement budget period (July 1 through June 30).

Meet and Sustain Standard Reference Laboratory Requirements

- Recipients must plan activities to meet standard reference laboratory requirements in their work plans and budgets. A checklist located on the LRN Secure Information Hub outlines the minimum requirements of multiple-agent screening on high-risk environmental samples and other required capabilities. Minimum requirements for standard reference LRN-B laboratories describe the tools and resources necessary for LRN-B standards, including:
 - staffing and equipment requirements;
 - attending national meetings;
 - maintaining partnerships;
 - meeting CDC PHEP benchmark requirements;
 - maintaining proficiency;
 - maintaining communications with sentinel laboratories, and
 - providing support for the detection of emerging infectious diseases.



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Meet and Sustain Advanced Reference Laboratory Requirements (If Applicable)

- These laboratories must meet standard laboratory requirements, maintain registration in the Federal Select Agent Program, and provide support for LRN-B program activities. The designated LRN-B advanced reference laboratories must comply with the eligibility requirements set for by the CDC LRN-B Program.

Participate in Exercises

Recipients must ensure LRN-B laboratories participate in the following exercises.

- Biological incident discussion-based exercise,
- Biological incident drill operation-based exercise, and
- Critical contact drill operation-based exercise.

Details are provided in the 2024-2028 PHEP NOFO exercise supplemental guidance.

Other Minimum Requirements

- Attend National Meetings: Standard and advanced laboratories can use PHEP funding to send at least one representative (e.g., laboratory director, PHEP director, or appropriate designees) to the LRN-B national meeting held approximately every 18 months.
- Ensure National Coverage: PHEP-funded laboratories must ensure ability to expeditiously transport, test, and report threat samples electronically to CDC within 24 hours.
- Maintain Partnerships
- Maintain Communication with Sentinel Laboratories

Meeting the requirements of the PHEP NOFO and subsequent continuation guidance will help jurisdictions strengthen their biosurveillance capacity. More specific details regarding the requirements are found in the 2024-2028 PHEP NOFO.

Funding Strategy

PHEP recipients can use funds to support LRN-B personnel, supplies, equipment (including service and maintenance contracts), travel, and other contracts. Because recipients receive substantial assistance from CDC through other programs, recipients should ensure that requested line items are funded under the appropriate program. The following are examples of items that are not typically funded under the PHEP cooperative agreement.

- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for COVID-19 testing;
- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for seasonal influenza testing;
- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for rabies testing;
- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for routine food testing (surveillance);
- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for testing vaccine-preventable diseases including measles and mumps;
- Instruments, reagents, and supplies for routine testing of vector-borne illnesses (both clinical and vector surveillance);
- Routine drug screening of laboratory staff; and



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- Influenza vaccines for the general public.

Suggested Resources

Title	Description	Link/Location
LRN-B Website	The Laboratory Response Network Partners in Preparedness	https://emergency.cdc.gov/lrn/
APHL Website	Laboratory Response Network	www.aphl.org/programs/preparedness/Pages/LRN.aspx

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