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DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
ASTHMA-SAFE HOMES PROGRAM

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**Request for Applications:** Asthma Education Services Providers

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**Grant Period:** September 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

**Total Available Funds:** \$1 Million

**Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to solicit local partner organizations to provide in-home asthma education services as part of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' (WI-DHS) Asthma-Safe Homes Program. This program is available through a new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) health services initiative (HSI) funded through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). WI-DHS will select organizations with capacity to provide outreach, in-home asthma self-management education, and home assessment to identify environmental asthma triggers for children and pregnant women with asthma. The Asthma-Safe Homes Program's targeted service areas for 2022-2023 are Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties, based on high asthma rates as described below. The grant is expected to begin on September 1, 2022.

**Background**

Through the new HSI, WI-DHS has funding available to improve asthma outcomes and reduce disparities for children ages 2-18 years and pregnant women who are diagnosed with asthma and enrolled in Wisconsin BadgerCare Plus (Medicaid or CHIP). There are more than 500,000 children and adults who have asthma in Wisconsin, and asthma remains the most common chronic disease for children with a statewide prevalence of 8.4%.<sup>i</sup>

Milwaukee County experiences the greatest asthma burden statewide, with the highest rate of both emergency department (ED) visits (74.8 per 10,000) and hospitalizations (6.7 per 10,000). Racine and Kenosha counties also have among the highest rates of ED visits (50.4 per 10,000 and 46.4 per 10,000 respectively) and hospitalization rates (6.2 per 10,000 and 4.7 per 10,000

respectively) in the state. For comparison, the statewide asthma ED visit and hospitalization rates are 34 and 3.6 per 10,000, respectively.

Asthma burden disproportionately falls upon racial and ethnic minority populations, with Black and American Indian populations having 1.5-2 times the current prevalence of the White population (13% and 15%, respectively, versus 9%). These same populations also experience disparities in asthma control, with only 30% of non-White populations reporting well-controlled asthma compared to 64% of the White population. High rates of uncontrolled asthma result in even more disparate poor health care outcomes among minority populations. In Wisconsin, health care utilization for ED visits and hospitalizations among the Black population are 8 and 5 times higher, respectively, than among the White population. The American Indian population in Wisconsin has rates over twice that of the White population. Annual household income is another factor that contributes to asthma disparities, with the lowest income group (earning less than \$15,000) having over twice the asthma prevalence of those in the highest income group (greater than \$75,000).<sup>ii</sup>

Social determinants of health such as poor-quality housing, poverty, and historical-structural racism are known factors contributing to the disparity in asthma outcomes. This HSI funding opportunity aims to reduce disparities and alleviate the burden of asthma in Wisconsin by ensuring people with asthma have equal access to guideline-based medical management, pharmacotherapy, and healthy living environments.<sup>iii</sup> For the segment of the population whose asthma remains poorly controlled, additional steps must be taken to provide more individualized services (e.g., intensive self-management education, home environmental assessment, trigger reduction services, environmental management strategies).

This funding opportunity will allow qualified local organizations to provide outreach, in-home asthma self-management education, and home assessment to identify environmental asthma triggers for children and pregnant women with asthma in Milwaukee, Racine, and/or Kenosha counties.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

An eligible organization must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Is located in the state of Wisconsin and provides services in Milwaukee, Racine, and/or Kenosha counties
- Is a 501(c)(3) community-based organization, local or Tribal health department, community-based healthcare provider, or Medicaid Managed Care Organization; community-based organizations with deep community ties are encouraged to apply
- Has technical and administrative capacity to deliver the full menu of services listed in the Grant Budget and Use of Program Funds section of this document
- Has staff member(s) with prior training and/or experience in asthma education and/or case management or is willing to obtain required training within first month of grant
- Has access to a care team that can provide clinical consultation on asthma management

- Provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services and reflect the community and population served
- Has working capital to finance operations; must have own financial resources/capacity to provide services prior to invoicing for reimbursement

Applicant organizations and their partners must be inclusive and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations.

**Scope of Work**

Activities supported by this funding opportunity must be related to outreach, in-home asthma self-management education, and home assessment to identify environmental asthma triggers (e.g., pests, mold, etc.), and must be focused on the following outcomes:

1. Improve asthma management
2. Reduce disparities in housing quality
3. Decrease exposure to environmental asthma triggers
4. Improve asthma outcomes

Asthma education and self-management are essential components of successful asthma management. Asthma education for patients must include pathophysiology of asthma, prevention and treatment of symptoms, and appropriate use of medication and devices (e.g., inhalers, spacers) utilizing the teach-back method.

In-home environmental assessment means the identification of environmental asthma triggers commonly found in and around the home, including allergens, irritants, and moisture sources. This assessment shall inform and guide asthma education about actions to mitigate or control environmental exposures.

Grantees will be expected to:

- Provide in-home asthma education (using WI-DHS protocol) within a minimum of two and maximum of six home visits per client as well as a 2-week and 3-month post intervention follow-up. The number of home visits is a function of the child’s/pregnant woman’s underlying condition and severity. For children with asthma, the literature supports a range of home visits up to six, depending on the severity of the asthma symptoms. Several visits will be required to be in-person in the client’s home. Home visits will focus on engaging and supporting families to:
  - Identify and reduce environmental asthma triggers.
  - Track respiratory symptoms and recognize early warning signs of asthma attacks.
  - Take medications, as prescribed, with the correct technique.
  - Improve coordination with medical providers.
- Conduct outreach within health care systems in the target area to solicit referrals for program participation.

- Enroll Medicaid-eligible children or pregnant women with uncontrolled asthma into Asthma-Safe Homes Program.
- Collect and record all required program information to include consent forms, intake demographics, asthma screening tool and asthma control assessment.
- Conduct asthma self-management education with families to include symptom identification and medication use teach-backs.
- Create, review, share, and update asthma action plan with family members and care providers.
- Purchase and distribute durables not already covered by Medicaid to families and provide instruction on their use.
- Conduct initial home assessment to identify and document asthma triggers in the home and recommend basic modifications to reduce triggers.
- Refer homes to Asthma Safe-Homes Program's comprehensive home assessment and remediation, determined by prioritization of home assessment findings.
- Provide additional social and/or health resources to families as needed.
- Participate in trainings related to asthma, healthy homes assessment, and capacity development (dates to be determined) designed to prepare participating organizations to engage in sustainable practices for asthma education services. Trainings will be tailored to the organization's existing training and certifications.
- Participate in WI-DHS Asthma-Safe Homes Program protocols and database entry training.
- Enter data into the Asthma-Safe Homes Program database in a timely manner.
- Meet with Asthma-Safe Homes Program staff on a monthly basis for project monitoring.
- Submit invoices for payment on monthly basis for work completed and related expenses, including mileage costs.

**Grant Budget and Use of Program Funds**

A total of \$1 Million will be available starting September 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, contingent on state and federal funding, to conduct outreach, in-home asthma self-management education and home assessments to reduce environmental asthma triggers (e.g., pests, mold, etc.) for approximately 400 children and/or pregnant women with asthma across the target area. Multiple grants may be awarded from this request. The total grant dollars will be distributed between selected grantee organizations across the target area (Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties).

Grants are awarded in the form of reimbursement for actual services provided and related expenses incurred during the funding period. The grants resulting from this request for applications will be stand-alone grants. There is no match requirement for this grant.

Grantees must have their own financial resources/capacity to conduct asthma education services prior to invoicing for reimbursement. No reimbursement is provided as a prior or upfront

payment of any kind in any circumstance. The awarded total grant amount for selected organizations will be determined in the selection process and is the maximum that can be reimbursed. There is no carryover funding as part of this opportunity. All funds must be spent during the grant period.

Grant funds are required to be used to conduct outreach, in-home asthma self-management education, and home assessment to reduce asthma triggers including:

- In-home asthma education within a minimum of two and maximum of six home visits per client as well as a 2-week and 3-month post intervention follow-up ranging from \$1400 to \$1500, on average, per client that completes program.
- Up to \$1000 per client's household allocated to purchase and distribute durables to reduce exposure to environmental hazards and improve asthma management. Examples of common durables:
  - HEPA vacuum
  - Mattress and pillow dust mite covers
  - Green Cleaning Kit (bucket, mop, micro-fiber cleaning cloths, soap, sponges, spray bottle, baking soda, vinegar, GreenWorks cleaner)
  - Integrated pest management supplies (e.g., mouse traps, sticky traps; cockroach traps/baits)
  - Doormat
  - Caulk
  - Copper mesh
  - Dehumidifier
  - Room air purifier

In addition, funds will cover mileage reimbursement and a 10% indirect cost rate.

#### **Application Materials and Selection Criteria**

To be considered for funding, organizations must submit the following documents and information by email to [DHSAsthmaSafeHomes@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSAsthmaSafeHomes@dhs.wisconsin.gov) by August 2, 2022 by 5:00PM CT. Please include a table of contents as the first page.

- Application, download here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/f-03031.htm>. Must be no more than 10 pages in length (table of contents not included in 10 pages)
- Most recent A-133 audit, if applicable
- Financial statement to show available capital to finance operations
- Resumes of the key personnel and job descriptions for planned key personnel, including the person responsible for the financial management of the grant
- Three letters of reference from community partners that support the organization's capacity and commitment to delivering asthma education services to the priority population (i.e., children and families impacted by asthma disparities).

Upon submission, an email confirmation will be sent within two business days confirming receipt. If you do not receive an email confirmation in three business days, contact Molly Zemke at 608-400-0696.

The application will be scored according to the points indicated for each section (totaling 100 points), organized by three Response Review Criteria. Review Criteria 1 will assess the applicant's capacity and experience. Review Criteria 2 will assess the applicant's ability and plan to deliver the needed education and related services. Review Criteria 3 will assess the applicant's proposed referral partners. Grants will be awarded to the applications with the highest scores, and the number of grants awarded will depend on available funding.

Review Criteria 1. Applicant Capacity and Experience (45 points)

- a. Key Personnel (10 points). Key personnel must include a Project Director (PD) or a Program Manager (PM). Unless financial management of the grant falls under the responsibility of the PD or PM, the applicant must also identify the person responsible for the financial management of the grant. Resumes of the key personnel and job descriptions for planned key personnel, including the person responsible for the financial management of the grant are required at time of application submission. Furthermore, the applicant must describe the roles and responsibilities of each key personnel for the project.
- b. Program Administration and Oversight (10 points). The applicant must briefly describe how oversight and targeted monitoring of all organizational staff and partner organizations will be met.
- c. Relevant Organization Experience (15 points). List federal, state, and local projects completed by the applicant's organization that demonstrate experience in implementing asthma education, home visiting, public health, and/or environmental health programs in the last three years. Describe how the applicant administered similar programs, including whether performance benchmarks were achieved, program oversight was addressed and if financial management controls were successfully implemented. Indicate whether the organization currently provides in-home asthma education services and how those services are funded.
- d. Health Equity (10 points). Demonstrate commitment to diversity, inclusion, health and racial equity, and environmental justice by describing how you plan to incorporate diversity into your work plan for hiring, training, management, operations and/or community engagement. Clearly describe the organization's mission as it relates to any history of and ability to authentically engage and positively impact community members, including the priority populations mentioned above. Priority will be given to applicants that have clear goals for meaningful impact, directly with the priority population.

Review Criteria 2. Qualification Statement (40 points)

- a. Planned Approach (15 points). The applicant will describe a work plan or procedures to address start-up and implementation that includes objectives for each major program

activity (e.g., outreach, in-home asthma self-management education, and home assessment to identify environmental asthma triggers). Applicants will indicate approximately how many clients they anticipate serving in a year.

- b. Outreach (5 points). List any experience and qualifications that organizational staff may have related to providing outreach regarding clinical services and collaboration with community partners.
- c. In-Home Asthma Self-Management Education (5 points). List any experience, certifications, or qualifications that organizational staff may have related to providing in-home asthma self-management education.
- d. Home Assessment to Identify Asthma Triggers (5 points). List any experience, certifications, or qualifications that organizational staff may have related to conducting home assessments and providing asthma trigger reduction strategies.
- e. Program Financial Management (10 points). Applicants must discuss how they will ensure financial accountability throughout the grant period for this federal award. Identify who is responsible for establishing, administering, and overseeing the financial aspect of the program, and the role of other resources such as public/private sector financing.

**Review Criteria 3. Partnerships (15 points)**

- a. Partner Description (5 points). List and describe any partners (within or outside the applicant's organization) that the applicant will work with to receive client referrals to the Asthma-Safe Homes Program. Also list and describe any partners that the applicant organization will work with for client referrals to other health care and community resources.
- b. Partnership Capacity (10 points). Describe how the applicant organization and identified partners have coordinated on similar programs and activities in the past and whether objectives were achieved.

**Funding Terms and Conditions**

DHS reserves the right to reject any and all applications. DHS may negotiate the terms of the grant agreement, including the award amount, with the selected applicant prior to entering into a grant agreement. If grant negotiations cannot be concluded successfully with a recommended applicant, DHS may terminate grant negotiations with that applicant.

**Contact Information**

Please direct all questions about this memo to Molly Zemke, Program Manager, and Pat Batemon, Grants Specialist at [DHS.AsthmaSafeHomes@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHS.AsthmaSafeHomes@dhs.wisconsin.gov).

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<sup>i</sup> Asthma in Wisconsin 2020. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Asthma Program, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02412-20.pdf>  
<sup>ii</sup> Asthma in Wisconsin 2020. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Asthma Program, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02412-20.pdf>  
<sup>iii</sup> Wisconsin Asthma Plan 2021-2025. Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin. <http://www.chawisconsin.org/?wpdmdl=1821&ind=1604686177411>