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

Request for Applications: Environmental Services Providers

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

Total Available Funds: \$900,000

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to solicit local partner organizations to perform asthma-related environmental management 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 in-home environmental assessment, remediation of home asthma triggers, and coordination of these environmental management services 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%.ⁱ

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 population 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).ⁱⁱ

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.ⁱⁱⁱ 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 environmental management services for children and pregnant women with asthma in Milwaukee, Racine, and/or Kenosha counties who have received in-home asthma self-management education through the Asthma-Safe Homes Program.

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, or local housing department that provides housing services; community-based organizations with deep community ties are encouraged to apply
- Has technical and administrative capacity to deliver, or willingness to subcontract with appropriately licensed and accredited parties for the full menu of services listed in the Grant Budget and Use of Program Funds section of this document

- Has at least one staff member with Building Performance Institute Healthy Homes Evaluator (HHE) certification or Healthy Home Specialist or equivalent training or is willing to obtain required training within first month of grant
- 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 in-home environmental assessment, remediation of home asthma triggers, and coordination of these environmental management services for children and pregnant women with asthma, and must be focused on the following outcomes:

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

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.

Remediation of home asthma triggers means conducting specific actions to mitigate or control environmental hazards in the home. Examples of environmental home hazards that may be addressed include those related to temperature, humidity, mold, air quality, and pests.

Coordination of environmental management services means receiving referrals, scheduling, coordinating, and overseeing services, limiting gaps between service providers, and communicating assessment findings and remediation results with asthma education partners and WI-DHS staff.

Grantees will be expected to:

- Manage, oversee, and provide home environmental assessment and remediation across Milwaukee, Racine, and/or Kenosha counties.
- Identify and prioritize acute environmental hazards in the home for remediation through a focused home assessment conducted by a professional/experienced environmental home assessor.
- Develop a detailed report of hazards identified in each home and create a scope of work.

- Identify sub-contractors, coordinate bidding process, and oversee remediation work in the homes.
- Verify the work is complete and meets work specifications.
- Have capacity to pay sub-contractors prior to receiving reimbursement from WI-DHS.
- 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 environmental management services. Trainings will be tailored to the organization's existing training and certifications.
- Participate in WI-DHS Asthma-Safe Home 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 quarterly 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 \$900,000 will be available starting September 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, contingent on state and federal funding, to conduct in-home environmental assessment, remediation of home asthma triggers, and coordination of these environmental services for approximately 135 homes of individuals with asthma. 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 environmental 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 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 and coordinate home visits for environmental assessments, asthma trigger remediation services/oversight, and quality assurance/control to include:

- One (3 hour) home visit for environmental assessment
- Home visits for asthma trigger remediation services as needed to complete scope of work
- One home visit for quality assurance and quality control after remediation services are complete

Up to \$5,000 per client's household is allocated to address asthma triggers related to determinants of health in housing, which can include pest infestations, temperature, humidity, mold, air quality and pests. Covered repairs in homes will vary and may include the following:

- Integrated pest management, including performing or referring for the provision of minor repairs to the home's structure, such as patching cracks and small holes through which pests gain entry to the home
- Repairing or replacing ventilation (kitchen, bath, whole house)
- Removal and remediation of mold and water damage
- Moisture control measures to repair leaking or broken pipes, leaking windows, gutter, and roof repair
- Carpet removal and floor replacement
- Weatherization improvements to reduce environmental hazards in the home that adversely affect health outcomes associated with asthma

Any lead hazards identified within the home assessment will be referred to the WI-DHS Lead-Safe Homes Program and will not be the focus of remediation efforts under this funding.

Grantee organizations can use funding to subcontract remediation services if the organization does not have the capacity to provide a service. 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 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-03032.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 or sub-contractors that support the organization's capacity and commitment to delivering environmental management 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 environmental and related services. Review Criteria 3 will assess the applicant's proposed partners that will participate in the program. 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, at a minimum, 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, partner organizations and subcontractors will be met. Describe how funding will flow from the applicant to those who will perform work as sub-recipients or contractors. Outline how scopes of work will be approved and quality of work will be verified prior to the payment of invoices for services and before invoices are submitted to WI-DHS for reimbursement.
- c. Relevant Organization Experience (15 points). List federal, state, and local projects completed by the applicant organization in the last three years that demonstrate experience in implementing public health, environmental health, weatherization, environmental, health or housing programs (e.g., Community Development Block Grant's housing rehabilitation activities, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Healthy Homes Production, Weatherization, public health work with local health departments, comparable state or local Healthy Homes programs, etc.). Describe how the applicant has administered similar programs, including whether performance benchmarks were achieved, program oversight was addressed, and if financial management controls were successfully implemented.
- d. Health Equity (10 points). Demonstrate commitment to diversity, inclusion, health and racial equity, and environmental justice by describing how applicant plans to incorporate diversity into the 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 population(s) 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 (20 points). Describe a work plan or procedures to address start-up and implementation that includes objectives for each major program activity (in-home environmental assessment, remediation of home asthma triggers, and coordination of these environmental services).
- b. Environmental Assessment (5 points). List any experience, certifications, or qualifications that organizational staff may have related to environmental assessment or housing work.
- c. Home Modifications (5 points). List any experience, certifications, or qualifications that organizational staff may have related to housing remediation services. Please describe management of sub-contracting services.
- d. Program Financial Management (10 points). Discuss how the organization will ensure financial accountability throughout the grant period for this federal award. Identify who is responsible for establishing, administering, and overseeing the financial management 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 or sub-contractors that the organization will work with to provide environmental management services and activities under this funding opportunity. These activities may include coordination of services, inspection, and housing repairs. Examples of partnerships could include other Housing Services Providers, Housing Departments, Health Departments, Housing Authorities, Code Enforcement, Community Development Organizations, etc.
- b. Partnership Capacity (10 points). Describe how the 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 Bateman, Grants Specialist at DHSAsthmaSafeHomes@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

¹ 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>

ⁱⁱ 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>

ⁱⁱⁱ Wisconsin Asthma Plan 2021-2025. Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin. <http://www.chawisconsin.org/?wpdmdl=1821&ind=1604686177411>