

Request for Proposals (RFP): Polio Containment Biorisk Management Technical Assistance Program

Application Due date: March 6, 2026

Submit to: Liz Toure, Senior Specialist, Infectious Diseases (elizabeth.toure@aphl.org) with copy to infectious.diseases@aphl.org

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Summary

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is seeking one highly qualified organization to develop and deliver specialized biosafety guidance and technical assistance for US-based facilities that handle live poliovirus materials. This effort is designed to support these facilities – known as poliovirus designated facilities – in strengthening their biorisk management systems in alignment with updated national and international containment standards. This initiative is part of ongoing national efforts to uphold and enhance poliovirus containment as global eradication of the disease nears completion.

The selected applicant will be responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive technical assistance program focused on strengthening biorisk management practices and supporting comprehensive, facility-wide risk assessments at designated facilities. Potential formats may include but are not limited to a series of regularly scheduled individual or cohorted interactive group meetings/lectures, targeted technical assistance provision directly with facilities, working sessions and provision of practical tools such as fact sheets, checklists, templates and other guidance documents. Over a nine to twelve month period, technical assistance will be delivered to up to ten poliovirus designated facilities, with the goal of helping each facility make measurable progress toward meeting key milestones of the U.S. National Authority for Containment of Poliovirus (US NAC) Biorisk Management Systems Framework.

Additionally, the selected applicant will develop supplemental educational and guidance materials—such as factsheets or templates—that can be shared more broadly with both participating facilities and the wider high-containment laboratory community. The overall goal of this program is to support facilities in improving biorisk management and bio-containment practices.

Background

APHL is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that works to safeguard the public's health by strengthening public health laboratories in the United States and globally. The Association's members include state and local laboratories, state environmental and agricultural laboratories and other government laboratories that conduct testing of public health significance. To obtain more information about APHL, please visit <http://www.aphl.org>.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is the largest international public health effort ever undertaken and has led to the elimination of wild poliovirus from most countries, including the US. Given the near worldwide eradication of poliovirus, it is critical to ensure that any facility that retains live poliovirus materials adhere to strict containment requirements to prevent accidental exposure and release of the virus.

Polio designated facilities serve critical functions in public health, including vaccine production, vaccine quality assurance, public health and virologic research and diagnostics. These facilities are a part of the public and private sectors, including commercial companies and academic institutions. The US National

Authority for Containment of Poliovirus (US NAC), located at CDC, oversees poliovirus containment in the US. The US NAC's mission is to minimize the risk of facility-associated poliovirus release by ensuring that poliovirus designated facilities adhere to strict containment guidelines and maintain their poliovirus containment certification.

To enhance containment readiness and support the safe handling of poliovirus, the US NAC is updating its Biorisk Management Systems Framework for laboratories. The revised framework incorporates elements from the WHO Global Action Plan for Poliovirus Containment (GAPIV), ISO35001 (Biorisk Management), ISO15190 (Laboratory Safety), ISO15189 (Medical Laboratory Quality and Competence), ISO9001 (Quality Management Systems), ISO45001 (Occupational Health and Safety) and other standards.

In order to support poliovirus designated facilities in improving biorisk management and biocontainment practices, additional mentorship, guidance and/or technical assistance are needed, particularly with key components of biorisk management and facility-wide risk assessments. The anticipated activities of the applicant selected to work on of the Polio Containment Biorisk Management Technical Assistance Program are to:

1. Develop a technical assistance approach to assist poliovirus designated facilities with strengthening their biorisk management programs, conducting comprehensive, facility-wide risk assessments and addressing other identified priority areas with their poliovirus containment program. Potential approaches may include but are not limited a series of regularly scheduled individual or cohorted group meetings/lectures, targeted technical assistance provision directly with facilities, working sessions and provision of fact sheets, checklists and other written guidelines, etc.
2. Deliver the technical assistance to up to ten poliovirus designated facilities over the course of nine to twelve months. The goal is to support each facility in achieving incremental progress towards meeting the requirements of the US NAC Biorisk Management Systems Framework throughout the program. Specific, achievable milestones for each facility will be identified in the early phase of the project.
3. Develop additional guidance materials (e.g., factsheets, checklists, templates etc.) that can be shared with participating and future poliovirus essential facilities and other high-containment biological laboratories. The resources will focus on key concepts of biorisk management, risk assessment and other topics as identified.

Eligibility

This is an open and competitive process. Successful applicants must be able to meet the expectations outlined in [Appendix A](#). To be considered, applicants must ensure APHL has the complete proposal by no later than the Proposal Due Date specified in the Anticipated RFP Schedule section below.

Anticipated RFP Schedule

February 9, 2026	–	RFP Issued
February 19, 2026	–	Informational Teleconference at 12:00 pm ET (optional)
February 25, 2026	–	Letter of Intent Due to APHL by 11:59 pm ET
March 6, 2026	–	RFP Responses Due to APHL by 11:59 pm ET
March 20, 2026	–	Proposal review completed
March 23-26, 2026	–	Follow-up interviews as needed
March 27, 2026	–	Final review completed and awardees selected
May 1, 2026	–	Anticipated Contract Start Date

APHL will communicate any modification to this anticipated schedule on APHL’s procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp).

Response Submittal

Confirmation of Intent to Respond

APHL requires that prospective applicants submit a brief email statement to elizabeth.toure@aphl.org and infectious.diseases@aphl.org indicating an intent to submit a proposal. APHL must receive this email by no later than **11:59 pm ET on February 25, 2026**. To allow for appropriate review process planning, **a letter of intent is required for consideration.**

Final Response

APHL must receive complete responses by **11:59 pm ET on March 6, 2026**. Please see the [Proposal-Required Submissions](#) section for items that must be included in the completed proposal. Applicants should send proposals via email to elizabeth.toure@aphl.org and infectious.diseases@aphl.org.

APHL will send an email acknowledging receipt of your application; if you do not receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours, please call Liz Toure at (240) 485-3860 to confirm receipt.

Award

Funding will be distributed via a contract administered by APHL up to a maximum amount of \$250,000.

Term of Project

The project term will be from approximately May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027.

Evaluation Team

APHL staff members will conduct an initial review of all proposals for completeness. Incomplete proposals will not receive a formal evaluation.

Complete proposals will be reviewed by a team of five subject matter experts (SMEs). Once potential reviewers have been identified, APHL's Senior Director, Infectious Diseases will have final approval over the review team's composition.

Conflict of Interest

APHL will ask potential reviewers to complete and sign APHL's Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement in order to disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to the start of the evaluation process and to affirm that they have no conflict of interest that would preclude an unbiased and objective review of the proposals received. APHL will not select reviewers with a perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation team will evaluate proposals based on responses to the questions in the [Proposal – Required Submissions](#) section and will give a numeric score of up to 100 maximum points based on the score card template in [Appendix D](#).

Evaluation Process

The evaluation team will conduct the review via a combination of communication mechanisms (e.g., email, teleconference) between APHL's Senior Specialist, Infectious Diseases and the members of the evaluation team. APHL's Senior Specialist, Infectious Diseases will coordinate the review process and the evaluation sessions.

The reviewers may request follow-up interviews with all or some of the applicants and, following these interviews, may request supplemental information on an applicant's proposal. The evaluation team will use these interviews and any supplemental information to clarify an applicant's capacity or experience in one or more of the evaluation criteria, or to explain other information contained in an applicant's proposal.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

APHL staff will notify the selected vendor within 10 business days of the completion of the evaluation and will post the name of the recipient to APHL's procurement website, www.aphl.org/rfp, within three business days of the vendor's acceptance of the award. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of these results by e-mail or by US mail within 30 days of the date the name of the selected applicant is posted.

All applicants are entitled to utilize APHL's RFP Appeals Process to formulate a protest regarding alleged irregularities or improprieties during the procurement process. Specific details of this policy are located on APHL's procurement website.

Conditions of Award Acceptance

The selected applicant must be able to contract directly with APHL or have an existing relationship with a third-party organization that can contract directly with APHL on behalf of the applicant. The selected applicant must agree to comply with expectations outlined in [Appendix A](#).

Proposal – Required Submissions

To be considered for selection, interested applicants must submit a letter of intent to apply (due 2/25/2026) and a proposal (due 3/06/2026) with the following items:

- **A completed response to the application questions, found in [Appendix B](#).**
 - Responses should be limited to no more than eight (8) single-spaced pages (font size \geq 11pt and page margins of \geq 1 inch).
- **A cost proposal, see guidance in [Appendix C](#).**
 - Please limit your cost proposal to no more than two (2) single-spaced pages. The cost proposal is not included in the eight (8) page limit for application responses.

All submissions must comply with the requirements set out in the [Additional Information and Deadlines for Application Submission](#) below.

Additional Information and Deadlines for Application Submission

Applicants must direct all questions to the APHL Senior Specialist, Infectious Diseases, Liz Toure (elizabeth.toure@aphl.org) and infectious.diseases@aphl.org. APHL will post questions received, together with the answers provided by APHL or CDC staff to APHL's procurement website (www.aphl.org/rfp).

APHL will hold an optional teleconference on **Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 12:00 pm (noon) ET**. The purpose of this call will be to provide a brief overview of the project and to allow potential applicants to ask CDC and APHL questions. Please come with questions prepared.

Please click the link below to register for the teleconference and receive a calendar invitation.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://aphl.zoom.us/meeting/register/BD5mCWaLR5KMpqR-nM5mrg#/registration>

To allow for appropriate review process planning, a letter of intent is required for consideration. Letters should be submitted by email to Liz Toure (elizabeth.toure@aphl.org) and infectious.diseases@aphl.org no later than **11:59 pm ET on Wednesday, February 25, 2026**.

Applications should be submitted to Liz Toure at APHL (elizabeth.toure@aphl.org) and infectious.diseases@aphl.org no later than **11:59 pm ET on Friday, March 6, 2026**. APHL will send an email acknowledging the receipt of your application; if you do not receive an acknowledgement within two business days, call Liz Toure at 240-485-3860 to confirm receipt.

Appendix A: Content, Scope and Expectations

The content of the program will be developed in close coordination with the US NAC and APHL. The selected applicant should develop content based on existing resources including the WHO GAPIV, ISO35001, ISO15190, ISO15189, ISO9001, ISO45001 and other standards as identified. The content will be aligned with CDC's Biorisk Systems Management framework when that document is finalized.

The scope and expectations of the selected applicant are outlined below.

Goal 1: Develop a technical assistance approach and content to assist poliovirus designated facilities with strengthening their biorisk management programs, conducting comprehensive, facility-wide risk assessments and addressing other identified priority areas with their poliovirus containment program.

- Close coordination with APHL and CDC's NAC will be required.
- The selected applicant will engage with the poliovirus designated facilities to collect information on their current biocontainment practices and establish goals for improvements or enhancements.
- Based on information gathered from the poliovirus designated facilities, the selected applicant will develop content and design a technical assistance approach that should include an action plan for each facility outlining their priority areas and proposed milestones, methods for engaging facilities (e.g., workshops, individual or group sessions, technical consultations, written guidance) and mechanisms for tracking incremental progress.
 - Priority content areas include but are not limited to:
 - i. Biorisk Management Systems
 - ii. Risk Assessments*
 - iii. Worker Health
 - iv. Emergency Response
 - v. Waste Management
 - * The technical assistance should emphasize the topic of risk assessment in particular and should include both the depth and breadth of risk assessments as well as provision of tools and guidance for the poliovirus designated facilities to conduct the assessments.
- Supporting materials may include but are not limited to:
 - Training and lecture materials
 - Templates (e.g., risk assessment templates, policy templates, checklists)
 - Fact sheets and technical guidelines
 - Assignments or exercises to support skill-building
 - Meeting or workshop agendas
 - Crosswalks or summaries aligning the WHO GAPIV with the US NAC Biorisk Management Systems Framework

Goal 2: Deliver the technical assistance to up to ten poliovirus designated facilities over the course of nine to twelve months to support each facility in achieving incremental progress towards meeting the requirements of the US NAC Biorisk Management Systems Framework.

- The selected applicant will deliver the technical assistance to participating facilities according to the approach and plan identified from Goal 1.
- The selected applicant is expected to have frequent touch points with the facilities on an individual and/or group(cohort) level.

- The selected applicant should closely monitor facility progress to ensure milestones are being met.
- The selected applicant is expected to maintain frequent communication with the US NAC and APHL throughout the duration of the program.

Goal 3: Develop additional resources (e.g., factsheets, checklists, templates etc.) that can be shared with participating and future poliovirus essential facilities and other high-containment biological laboratories. The resources will focus on key concepts of biorisk management and risk assessment.

- Content developed for the training or technical assistance can be modified as needed to create more general/universal resources applicable to a larger audience.
- Additional content (e.g., factsheets, checklists, templates) should be developed as identified in coordination with the US NAC and APHL.

Appendix B: Application

The applicant must ensure that APHL receives its complete response by the due dates set out in the Anticipated RFP Schedule above. APHL's evaluation team will not review incomplete applications. There is no designated response format or outline for responding to this RFP. However, regardless of the chosen format, an applicant's proposal must be limited to eight (8) pages of narrative and visuals. If an application exceeds this eight (8) page limit, only the first eight (8) pages will be sent to the evaluation team, and scoring will be based solely on the portion of the proposal submitted for review. *Note:* Neither the two(2) page Cost Proposal ([Appendix C](#)) nor anything included as an appendix will count as part of the eight (8) page count (material included as an appendix will only be used as reference material and will not be reviewed as part of the evaluation process).

The applicant must include the following in their eight (8) page response:

1. An executive summary including a brief description of the applicant's qualifications and relevant experience, as well as the following:
 - a. A description of the applicant's organizational capacity including the proposed project teams, roles, project management capacity, level of effort and ability to design, manage and administer a multi-month technical assistance program.
 - b. Reference information for two (2) current or former clients that can speak to the applicant's ability to deliver biosafety or containment-related training or technical assistance. Include company name, contact person's name, contact person's phone number and/or email address and a description of the product delivered;
2. A description of the applicant's experience in producing training programs, mentorship programs, technical assistance and/or content that includes highly technical or scientific content (please include two examples of past programs and/or content developed in the appendix);
3. A description of the applicant's experience and subject matter expertise in biosafety, risk assessment, ISO standards, polio containment and/or other high-level containment (e.g., select agents);
4. A realistic and clearly defined timeline for the full program including key phases and milestones for:
 - a. Gathering background information and partner engagement.
 - b. Developing action plans and technical assistance approach(es).

- c. Content development.
 - d. Program delivery and ongoing support; and
5. A clear description of the applicant's proposed approach and understanding of the scope and content outlined in the RFP (see [Appendix A](#)). Please include:
- a. How technical assistance aspects of the program will be structured and delivered (proposed approaches/modalities).
 - b. An example facility action plan with three (3) to five (5) example priority areas (including example milestones for the facility). The approach should demonstrate feasibility, flexibility and alignment with biosafety and biorisk management best practices.

Appendix C: Cost Proposal

The applicant should provide a detailed cost estimate and explanation/justification of costs. The cost proposal must be no longer than two (2) pages. There is no required format - the cost proposal can be submitted in the format of the applicant's choice.

The cost proposal should include the staff involved in this project, roles and responsibilities, hourly rates and hours dedicated per week to this project.

The applicant should provide estimates for this RFP that hold some level of reasonable accuracy for time and cost based on the information provided.

Appendix D: Score Card (For Completion by Reviewers Only – Applicants Do Not Need to Complete)

The following table is a copy of the score card that will be used to evaluate RFP responses.

Category/Question	Maximum Value	Score	Comments (REQUIRED)
<p>Suitability of the Proposal and Organizational Capacity (Question 1): Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the project and sufficient organizational capacity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the applicant’s experiences and qualifications articulated at a quality level? (Company profile, length of time in business, relevant experience)? • Does the applicant have the appropriate staff and organizational capacity to develop and deliver the technical assistance in the timeframe needed? • Does the applicant demonstrate project management experience relevant to completion of rapid content development? • Did the applicant provide references for two former or current clients? • Did the applicant follow instructions? (i.e., stay in page count, include required information, etc.) • Is the information presented in a clear, logical manner and is it well organized? <p>Outstanding — Applicant clearly articulates experiences and qualifications at a quality level, demonstrates exceptional organizational capacity, has significant project management experience, includes two references and outlines a clear and logical approach to executing the project (12-15 points).</p> <p>Excellent— Minor concerns with applicant’s description of experience and qualifications, demonstrates strong organizational capacity, a high degree of project management experience but lacks clarity or specifics in some areas. Includes two references. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is clear and appropriate (8-11 points).</p> <p>Fair — Minor concerns with applicant’s description of experience and qualifications, demonstrates adequate organizational capacity and project management experience, but approach is unclear or insufficient. Includes two references. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate (5-8 points).</p> <p>Poor — Major concerns with applicant’s description of experience and qualifications, demonstrates limited organizational capacity and project management experience, approach is unclear or insufficient or does not include two references. Allocation of staff assigned to the project is unclear or inappropriate (1-4).</p> <p>Unacceptable (0 points).</p>	15		

<p>Technical Assistance and Content Development Experience and Technical Expertise (Questions 2-3): Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate sufficient experience with delivery of technical assistance and/or content development? Does the applicant's proposal demonstrate sufficient technical expertise in biorisk management, risk assessment, ISO standards, polio containment and/or other high-level containment (e.g., select agents)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the applicant's experience in training, technical assistance and/or content development as described in the proposal relevant to the project and sufficient to execute the project? • Are the two example past training or technical assistance programs provided at a quality level? • Does the applicant have knowledge and experience with biorisk management? • Does the applicant have knowledge and experience with risk assessment, specifically comprehensive, facility-wide risk assessments? • Does the applicant have knowledge and experience with ISO standards? • Does the applicant have knowledge and experience with polio containment or other high-level containment (e.g., select agents). <p>Outstanding— Applicant describes extensive experience with technical assistance and content development and demonstrates knowledge and expertise that is highly relevant to the project (20-25points).</p> <p>Excellent— Applicant describes strong experience with technical assistance or content development and demonstrates a high degree of relevant knowledge and expertise in most areas but has a lesser degree of experience in some areas (13-19 points).</p> <p>Fair — Applicant describes limited experience with technical assistance or content development or demonstrates relevant knowledge and expertise in a limited scope (6-12 points).</p> <p>Poor — Applicant lacks experience with technical assistance or content development or does not demonstrate relevant scientific/technical knowledge or expertise (1-5 points).</p> <p>Unacceptable (0 points).</p>	25		
<p>Timeline (Questions 4): Does the applicant present a realistic timeline to achieve the goals of the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant present a realistic and achievable timeline and milestones for gathering background information, curating partner input, developing the technical assistance approach, generating content and delivering a 9-12 month technical assistance program? 	15		

<p>Outstanding —Applicant proposes a detailed, realistic and achievable timeline with milestones for the key phases of the project (13-15 points).</p> <p>Excellent— Applicant proposes a somewhat realistic and achievable timeline with milestones for the key phases of the project, however there are some minor concerns with the timeline or milestones (10-12 points).</p> <p>Fair — Applicant proposes a timeline that does not appear to be realistic or achievable or is missing milestones for the key phases of the project (6-9 points).</p> <p>Poor —Significant information missing to fully assess the timeline and/or major concerns with the timeline or milestones (1-5 points).</p> <p>Insufficient information to assess timeline (0 points)</p>			
<p>Proposed Approach (Question 5): Does the applicant present a suitable approach to achieve the goals of the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant’s proposed approach align with the expectations and goals of the program? • Is there a clear strategy for achieving incremental progress with biorisk management and associated topics at the facilities? • Does the applicant propose appropriate modalities that may be considered for the technical assistance program? • Does the applicant include an example action plan with 3-5 priority areas to address with the facilities that demonstrates the applicant’s understanding of the technical content and scope? <p>Outstanding—Applicant proposes a strategic and logical approach to achieving the goals of the program, describes the technical assistance modalities that will be considered and proposes an excellent and realistic example action plan outlining 3-5 priority areas and associated milestones (28-35 points).</p> <p>Excellent— Applicant outlines the approach to achieving the goals of the program but lacks some detail or clarity. Applicant describes the technical assistance modalities that will be considered and proposes a realistic action plan outlining 3-5 priority areas and associated milestones (20-27 points).</p> <p>Fair — Applicant outlines an approach that is not comprehensive. The applicant describes the technical assistance modalities that will be considered but their action plan lacks detail (11-19 points).</p> <p>Poor— Applicant’s proposed approach is insufficient. The applicant describes the technical assistance modalities that will be considered but their example action plan is not comprehensive or does not demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of the scope and content (1-10 points).</p> <p>Unacceptable (0 points).</p>	35		

<p>Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels: Is the price commensurate with the value offered by the applicant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are time and costs allocated in the budget reasonable for the project? <p>No concerns with budget (9-10 points). Minor Concerns with budget (5-8 points). Major Concerns with budget (1-4 points). Budget not appropriate for proposal (0 points).</p>	10		
TOTAL SCORE	100		