

Utility and Value of Flexible Epidemiologists for Enhancing Health Department Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity

OSTLTS Generic Information Collection Request

OMB No. 0920-0879

Supporting Statement – Section B

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Program Official/Project Officer

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Section B – Data Collection Procedures

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The respondent universe consists of 10 Flexible Epidemiologists and 10 Principal Investigators in state health departments who were awarded funding for Flexible Epidemiologist positions. The ELC Principal Investigator and Flexible Epidemiologist will be interviewed from each state health department selected; there will be a total of 20 respondents.

Table B-1: Potential Respondent Universe

Entity	Potential Respondent	N
Health departments awarded funds from CDC’s Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement for Flexible Epidemiology Positions	Principal Investigators	10
	Flexible Epidemiologists	10
Total Universe of Potential Respondents		20

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Data will be collected through a one-time 39 minute in-depth interview with 10 Flexible Epidemiologists and 10 ELC Principal Investigators from 10 state health departments. Of the entire population universe, 20 will be sampled. To reduce travel burden and costs, all interviews will be conducted by telephone. In-depth interviews will allow ELC to yield richer and insightful data about how these positions have contributed to enhanced epidemiology capacity in state and local health departments, and allow the interviewer the opportunity to clarify questions and explore specific topics of interest in-depth. The ELC Principal Investigators will be notified by e-mail (see **Attachment D**) that they were selected to participate in the project; the e-mail will provide details on the purpose, timeline, and logistics of the project. If the ELC Principal Investigator agrees to participate, they will be contacted by phone or email to schedule a time and date to conduct the interview. Confirmation emails (see **Attachment F**) of scheduled appointment dates will also be sent to reduce rescheduling conflicts or no-shows, and an e-mail reminder will be sent to follow-up with those who did not decline or agree to participate (see **Attachment E**). To keep information secure, phone interviews will be conducted with the flexible epidemiologist and the ELC Principal Investigator separately. Each interview will last approximately an average of 39 minutes.

The interviews will be conducted by two members of the ELC assessment team who will be trained to follow a standardized interview protocol and interview guide. The interviews will be digitally recorded so that responses can be accurately transcribed. Once interviews are transcribed, the digital recordings will be destroyed to protect individual anonymity. Digital recordings and transcriptions will not be linked to any individual respondents. Data will be stored on a secure shared drive at CDC and access will be limited to ELC assessment staff only.

Interviews will be prepared for analysis in a qualitative software program like MAXQDA which will help the organization and analysis of data. A qualitative codebook will be developed and used to systematically code the data and analyze it for themes. Data will be presented as categories or themes.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates Deal with Nonresponse

Advance notification of the project will be discussed over the telephone during a regular check-in call, and an email notification with details of the project will be sent to all selected participants. Confirmation emails (see **Attachment F**) of scheduled appointment dates will be sent to reduce rescheduling conflicts or no-shows, and an e-mail reminder will be sent to follow-up with those who did not decline or agree to participate.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

To ensure that the line of inquiry is consistent with the assessment questions, and establish the estimated time required to complete the interviews, the interview protocol and interview guide(s) were pilot tested by two public health professionals. Two state health departments (i.e., two Principal Investigators and two Flexible Epidemiologists) participated in the process. Following the pilot tests, the instrument's questions were revised and reorganized for clarity and brevity. The data collected during the pilot tests was also reviewed to ensure that instrument elicited information consistent with the assessment questions. During the pilot tests, the average time to complete the interview was 39 minutes. On average, the introduction took 4 minutes to complete, questions about the role of the flexible epidemiologist took 7 minutes to complete, questions about activities of the flexible epidemiologist took 8 minutes to complete, questions on the impact of flexible epidemiologists took 9 minutes to complete, and opportunities for improvements took 11 minutes to complete. Based on these results, the estimated time range for actual respondents to complete the survey is 23-57 minutes. For the purposes of estimating burden hours, the average time (i.e., 39 minutes) is used.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

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LIST OF ATTACHMENTS – Section B

Note: Attachments are included as separate files as instructed.

- D. Email invitation to participate**
- E. Email reminder to respond**
- F. Confirmation Email**