



PACIFIC ISLAND HEALTH OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Consultant Position Announcement

POSITION TITLE: Strengthening Health Interventions in the Pacific Epidemiology Mentor
POSITION STATUS: Temporary Consultant
POSITION PERIOD: Immediate through to July 31, 2023, with possible extension contingent on funding agency approval
DUTY STATION: Koror, Republic of Palau

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND: Established in 1986 by the chief health officials of the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPIs) of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau, the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA) is a 501(c)3 headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, with a field office in Hagåtña, Guam. PIHOA's mission is to provide, through collective action and decision-making, a credible regional voice for health advocacy in and for the Pacific.

Today, PIHOA's membership is comprised of the ministers/directors/secretaries of health (executive governing board) of the six USAPIs, their deputies and Chief Executive Officers of local public hospitals (associates), and Pacific regional professional associations (affiliates). PIHOA's Secretariat, comprised of executive, administrative and technical staff and a number of short and long-term consultants, have been tasked to provide technical assistance to the USAPI health ministries and departments in the following health systems strengthening areas: 1) health workforce development/human resources for health; 2) epidemiology and surveillance; 3) performance improvement; 4) laboratory services; 5) regional health policy and advocacy; 6) health security; and 7) leadership development.

The Strengthening Health Interventions in the Pacific (SHIP) is a Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) program led by the Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with the Fiji National University (FNU), World Health Organization (WHO) and PIHOA. As a permanent Coordinating Body (CB) member of the PPHSN, PIHOA implements SHIP in the USAPIs in partnership with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the primary funding agency. SHIP is a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) adapted for the Pacific region and is comprised of three tiers: Tier 1 Data for Decision-Making (DDM) Post-Graduate Certificate (PGC) in Field Epidemiology (Epidemiology Technician); Tier 2 Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Applied Epidemiology; and Tier 3 Master's in Applied Epidemiology (MAE). While all three tiers are accredited by FNU, SHIP is distinguished from typical academic programs by the involvement of health leadership and emphasis on making tangible improvements in surveillance and health information systems within member hospitals and health departments. Since August 2015, PIHOA has successfully trained 95 PGC Epidemiology Technicians across all six USAPI health departments, and six are pursuing the PGD in Applied Epidemiology. With continued funding from CDC, PIHOA will soon be establishing and implementing the MAE for USAPI health staff interested in and eligible to enter a master's level training and mentorship program with an assigned PIHOA Epidemiology Mentor, while continuing to roll-out national/state-level Tier 1 and Tier 2 SHIP courses.

SUMMARY OF DUTIES: PIHOA is seeking an experienced epidemiologist to work with the Palau Ministry of

Health and Human Services leaders to identify suitable SHIP participants, identify aspects of hospital and public health information systems needing improvement, deliver SHIP courses and mentor SHIP participants as they tackle their information system improvement projects. The Epidemiology Mentor will be placed on-site at the Ministry of Health and Human Services in the Republic of Palau.

SCOPE OF POSITION:

1. **PIHOA Monitoring and Oversight Lead:** SHIP Faculty Lead
2. **Signature Authorities:** None
3. **Level of Interaction:** Interactions with USAPI department/ministries of health leadership, staff, PIHOA, CDC, national health leadership, including the USAPI Directors and Secretaries of Health and regional/international technical partners is expected. Must be able to work independently and in collaboration with other team members and project stakeholders. Must be able to follow complex instructions and have the initiative to complete multiple competing tasks. Knowledge of acceptable office practices and procedures a plus. Must possess exceptional organizational, communication, and time management skills. Must be flexible and capable of working in resource-limited settings with limited communications and other infrastructure. Must also be able to work in varying cultural, social, and political settings where English fluency is variable.
4. **Special Requirements:** Given the nature of PIHOA work in the Pacific region and travel requirements for the position, PIHOA contractors may potentially be exposed to vector-borne and local infectious diseases, rough terrain, inclement weather conditions, high humidity, intense heat and sun, vicious animals, poisonous plants/sea creatures, and travel in small commuter planes and small boats. Position will be required to travel from duty station for short and long periods of time, and often to multiple locations at any given time. Candidate must be able to work in resource-limited, rural island environments with limited public infrastructure and communications, and often less than 1 to 2-star accommodation with little to no disability access.

SCOPE OF SERVICE:

The SHIP Epidemiology Mentor consultant will be placed in-country and work in collaboration with the SHIP Faculty Lead, SHIP Program Manager, PIHOA Health Information Systems (HIS) and Performance Management (PM) Coordinator, PIHOA Regional Epidemiology Unit, the Republic of Palau Ministry of Health and Human Services, CDC, and other local, regional and international partners to:

- Oversee, mentor and coach health department staff who are enrolled in the MAE.
- Provide training and technical expertise to MAE students in their completion of MAE required projects and their work on improving routine surveillance and other routine reporting systems across the host health department.
- Supervise and evaluate MAE students' field activities. Troubleshoot barriers to complete MAE projects and other SHIP Program activities, assist with planning and implementing recommendations to alleviate and/or reduce barriers.
- Assist with delivery of and coach MAE students in the delivery of Data for Decision Making program (SHIP Tier 1) to new cohort of staff at the host health department and in other jurisdictions.
- Coach and provide technical assistance to MAE students who may be deployed as member of an outbreak response or community healthy survey team in-country and/or other USAPIs. Participate in disease surveillance and outbreak investigation with MAE students and health agency staff to demonstrate best practices and skills.
- Confer with Ministry of Health and Human Services (MHHS) leadership to identify elements of hospital

and public health information systems to target for improvement through the SHIP program.

- Regularly report progress and obtain feedback from MHHS leadership needed to guide SHIP HIS projects to assure usefulness and implementation.
- Confer with MHHS and PIHOA team to plan SHIP Program courses (Tier 1 and Tier 2), lead and/or co-facilitate delivery of SHIP Tiers 1 and 2 courses on-site (country of placement and other jurisdictions) and via distance learning (using Moodle, Zoom or other learning and distance communication platforms). Provide technical assistance and mentor students of SHIP Tier 1 and Tier 2 courses onsite and remotely.
- Provide onsite and remote coaching, mentoring and related technical assistance to successful SHIP-PGFCE, PGDAE and MAE students and graduates to encourage research, and publication and dissemination of products.
- Collaborate and communicate with MAE programs in other USAPIs.
- Assist with monitoring and evaluation of SHIP Program, quality improvement and accreditation process.
- Assist with review and updates of SHIP curriculum and training resources as may be needed.
- Participate in PIHOA Board meetings, Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), regional, national or international meetings.
- Prepare regular and timely technical reports for submission to PIHOA. Contribute to SHIP Program technical and programmatic reports.
- Regularly communicate with Palau Ministry of Health, MAE students, SHIP Faculty Lead, SHIP Program Manager and PIHOA REU team via email, virtual and in-person meetings, and monthly/quarterly reports.

DELIVERABLES:

- Summary of senior leader consultation outcomes at start of each new DDM, Diploma, and MAE-SHIP cohort
- Monthly progress reports including status of currently enrolled students, progress regarding HIS projects, notes regarding feedback received from student supervisors and senior leaders, challenges, successes and recommendations.
- End-of-module reports upon completion of each DDM, Diploma or MAE-SHIP module, using standard format
- If consultant travels, invoices to include travel/trip reports and other supporting documentation.

ADDITIONAL DELIVERABLES:

- Submission of monthly consultant invoices.
- When completed, submission of all final and approved deliverables and reports to PIHOA and CDC.

PRIMARY QUALIFICATIONS:

Education: Minimum of a master's level degree in epidemiology, public health, or other social or health sciences related field from an accredited academic institution. Doctoral or MD level degree preferred.

Experience: Minimum 5 years of professional experience in field/research work in epidemiology and related fields. Experience in strengthening public health systems in the Pacific region desirable. Experience working with a Field Epidemiology Training Program preferred.

Knowledge Competencies:

- Expert knowledge of the principles and best practices of public health, public health surveillance system in low-resource settings.
- Knowledge in mentoring skills (classroom and field) and facilitation methods. Knowledge and experience in training and mentoring public health professionals.
- Knowledge and experience in developing, analyzing, strengthening public health surveillance systems, conducting outbreak investigation and response, conducting community-based surveys, managing field epidemiology projects.

- Knowledge and experience in planning and conducting epidemiological studies and communicating findings.
- Knowledge and experience in use of data for quality improvement projects.
- Knowledge and experience in use of data for management of hospital, primary care and public health services delivery, and planning and implementing public health programs and policies.
- Experience with drafting, editing, submitting, and publishing peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Experience working with multi-disciplinary teams working across multiple locations; and able to effectively communicate with respect and diplomacy with a range of people from differing backgrounds, value systems, cultures, religious affiliations, and varying degrees of English-speaking and writing competencies.

Abilities and Skills: Must have excellent English oral and written communication skills; must be able to effectively communicate with respect and diplomacy with a range of people from differing backgrounds, value systems, cultures, religious affiliations, and varying degrees of English-speaking and writing competencies; Experience working with public health agencies and systems in the USAPIs or other countries with similar challenges and unique needs; Experience working with Field Epidemiology Training Programs in the USAPIs or other countries with similar challenges and unique needs.

Relocation and Travel: Must be able to relocate to the Republic of Palau for the duration of the contract. Must be willing and able to travel in the US, Pacific region and internationally, when required, with possible long durations away from duty station.

Other Requirements:

Must have a valid driver's license.

PHYSICAL/MENTAL DEMANDS: Requires prolonged sitting and some standing, walking, kneeling, and bending, requires eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity sufficient to operate computer keyboard and office equipment; and travel to resource limited and/or rural and jungle/atoll/mountainous environments. Requires occasional lifting up to 45 pounds. Must be able to drive a vehicle.

COMPENSATION: Commensurate with qualifications and experience, up to a flat rate consultancy fee of \$8,500 USD per month. Fringe and other benefits are not covered under PIHOA consultancy contracts.

TERM OF POSITION: This position is a temporary consultancy from contract effective date to July 31, 2023, with the possibility of renewal/extension based on performance and funding agency approval.

APPLICATION: Submit the following electronically with attention to Janet Camacho (janetc@pihoa.org), PIHOA Deputy Director:

1. **Letter of Interest** that outlines your overall qualifications and professional experience in response to the Primary Qualifications listed above;
2. **Curriculum Vitae or Resume**; and
3. **Minimum of three (3) professional references** - these references must be from current and past employment supervisors based on the last 5 years of employment.

For any enquiries related to this consultancy position, please direct them to Janet Camacho at janetc@pihoa.org.