Request for Application (RFA)

Medicolegal Death Investigation FHIR® Implementation
Collaborative (MDI FIC) Cohort 2

Date Issued: June 16, 2023

Date Response Due: August 18, 2023, by 11:59pm ET

CDC FOUNDATION CONTACT

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ABOUT THE CDC FOUNDATION

The CDC Foundation helps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) save and improve lives by unleashing the power of collaboration between CDC, philanthropies, corporations, organizations and individuals to protect the health, safety and security of America and the world. The CDC Foundation is the go-to nonprofit authorized by Congress to mobilize philanthropic partners and private-sector resources to support CDC’s critical health protection mission. Since 1995, the CDC Foundation has raised over $1.2 billion and launched more than 1,200 programs impacting a variety of health threats from chronic disease conditions including cardiovascular disease and cancer to infectious diseases like rotavirus and HIV, to emergency responses, including COVID-19 and Ebola. The CDC Foundation managed hundreds of CDC-led programs in the United States and in more than 140 countries last year. To learn more about CDC Foundation, visit: http://www.cdcfoundation.org/.

PURPOSE

To transform the medicolegal death investigations (MDI) data landscape and reduce the resources needed by an MDI office to collaborate with data sharing partners, CDC is prioritizing data modernization. Information obtained through the course of medicolegal death investigations (MDIs) is crucial to understanding causes of deaths, monitoring evolving health challenges, including the drug overdose epidemic, and ultimately saving lives. It is not just about technology, but about putting the right people, processes and policies in place. The goal is to move from siloed data systems to connected, resilient, adoptable and sustainable systems.

Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR®) is a standard created for health care data exchange. These FHIR® standards can be used to achieve exchange of data between MDI case management systems and data sharing partners, such as jurisdictional electronic death registration system (EDRS), toxicology and other laboratory information management systems (LIMS) and ancillary workflows whose systems have the capability of utilizing FHIR®. FHIR® will not only improve data exchange but will also reduce the burden of data entry. For more background on the vision for MDI data modernization, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/comec/modernizing-mec-data-systems.htm.

This funding opportunity will allow selected MDI offices to work collaboratively with other MDI offices, data sharing partners and FHIR® subject matter experts to pilot the use of FHIR® to improve the efficiency of data transmission between MDI offices and other data sharing partners.

Below are additional resources about HL7 FHIR® and how it can be used by MDI offices.

- For information on HL7 FHIR®, visit: https://hl7.org/fhir/.
- For more information about the importance of data standards and FHIR® in advancing MDI, watch: https://clipchamp.com/watch/2IikuZyO7w8.
- For more information on the first MDI FIC cohort, visit: https://www.cdcfoundation.org/blog/cdc-foundation-announces-awardees-collaborative-aimed-improving-data-health-systems-medical.
- To learn more about a site’s use case from the first MDI FIC cohort, watch:
  - DeKalb County (Georgia) Medical Examiner: https://clipchamp.com/watch/A7pLfdBkgMI
  - Jefferson County (Alabama) Coroner/Medical Examiner: https://clipchamp.com/watch/rB5kpEcb0
  - Sparrow (Michigan) Forensic Pathology & Medical Examiner: https://clipchamp.com/watch/fV3spFbVwBX
  - State of Alaska Medical Examiner: https://clipchamp.com/watch/9guCoxrJ4ro
- For HL7 FHIR® implementation guidance on the exchange of information to and from medicolegal death investigation (MDI) case management systems (CMS), visit: http://hl7.org/fhir/us/mdi/.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CDC Foundation is issuing a Request for Application (RFA) to identify participants for the second cohort of the Medicolegal Death Investigation FHIR® Implementation Collaborative (MDI FIC). MDI offices, not-for-profit forensic science centers and not-for-profit regional autopsy facilities may apply for the funding. Applicants must work on a project related to improving data exchange with an MDI office. An MDI authority is a person or persons or office whose duty it is to perform medicolegal death investigations for a designated jurisdiction and ensure certification of cause and manner of death; duties vary based on local enabling statutes. This is usually a medical examiner or coroner’s office.

The CDC Foundation will award $100,000 to up to 12 applicants to support their participation in this second cohort of MDI FIC to design, build and test FHIR®-based, Application Programming Interface (API) enabled data exchange with an identified data sharing partner such as: state vital records offices, toxicology labs and/or other entities. These projects must work with the office’s existing MDI electronic case management systems (CMS) in accordance with HL7®-FHIR® open standards and the MDI FHIR® IG to facilitate innovation and capability to be replicated in other MDI offices.

The CDC Collaborating Office for Medical Examiners and Coroners (COMEC), CDC Foundation, Georgia Technical Research Institute (GTRI) and other technical partners will provide support for project development, implementation and documentation.

PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

Selected participants will be expected to:

1. Collaborate with:
   o At least one data sharing partner with whom MDI data is currently being exchanged such as jurisdictional electronic death registration system (EDRS), toxicology and other laboratory information management systems (LIMS) and ancillary workflows whose systems are willing to explore use of FHIR®. If the applicant is not an MDI office but they...
are a not-for-profit regional forensic science center or a not-for-profit regional autopsy facility, the data sharing partner must be an MDI office. It is recommended that this collaboration be formalized by an MOU/MOA outlining the responsibilities of both the awardee and the data partner prior to or as soon as the award period begins.

- Software vendors of MDI electronic CMS commercial off-the-shelf products or information technology/IT staff of internally developed CMS.
  - Responsibilities of vendor IT personnel, data sharing partner IT personnel or their vendors need to be established in writing by creating a scope of work for each.
  - The draft scope of work should be included in the application.

2. Identify a minimum of two people for the project who can support: 1) project management/award administration/operations/implementation, and 2) information technology/IT (can be a vendor).

3. Participate in quarterly collaborative all-site calls. During these meetings, share progress made to date, challenges and lessons learned.

4. Participate in monthly 30-minute site check-in calls.

5. Attend a one and one-half-day meeting, in-person during the first week of December 2023; location is TBD. Required attendees include the awardee and their data sharing partner as required in project expectations number 1 above.

6. Utilize office hours with technical assistance provider for additional real-time support, as needed. Recommended for IT and technical staff.

7. Utilize cohort office hours for additional time to connect with other sites about projects, as needed. Recommended for project staff.

8. Test various approaches to data modernization in real-world settings in a collaborative environment. Participate in at least two MDI FIC virtual testing events. Actively test solutions during at least one event.

9. Provide input into communications documents that support the work of MDI FIC.

10. Submit timely project deliverables and invoices to the CDC Foundation.

See Project Activities below for further details.

**AT-A-GLANCE: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES TIMELINE**

The timeline below is subject to change at the sole discretion of the CDC Foundation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date/Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Start and Virtual Kick-off Meeting</td>
<td>September/October 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Collaborative Meetings</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-in calls</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Person, 1 ½ Day Learning Collaborative Meeting (Location: TBD)</td>
<td>First week of December 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours with technical assistance provider</td>
<td>Weekly, as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Office Hours</td>
<td>Monthly, as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDI FIC virtual testing events</td>
<td>At least 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project End and Virtual Closing Meeting</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report and documentation submitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

From September 30, 2023, through June 30, 2024, participants will be expected to:

**Project leads and data sharing partners will actively participate in the MDI FHIR® Implementation Collaborative:**
a. Attend quarterly synchronous virtual meetings with the other awardees.
b. Attend monthly virtual check-in meetings of approximately 30 minutes with CDC Foundation Project Manager to verbally report on progress and challenges.
c. Designate at least two, and up to five people to attend a one and one half-day, in-person meeting during the first week of December 2023 in TBD for all awardees to be convened by a consultant in collaboration with CDC and CDC Foundation. Attendees must be employed by the awarded organization or their data sharing partner.
d. Utilize cohort office hours for additional real-time support, as needed.
e. Present learnings/accomplishments to peers participating in MDI FIC.

Systems Developers will develop and test FHIR® and enhanced data sharing (API-enabled) for their use case:

a. Identify the detailed information to be exchanged with the data sharing partner. This should be outlined in a collaboratively created IT Scope of Work (see Required Attachments).
b. Design, build and test electronic data exchange solutions that use FHIR®-based interoperability between MDI case management systems and identified data sharing partner and their data system (e.g., jurisdictional electronic death registration system (EDRS), toxicology and other laboratory information management systems (LIMS), and ancillary workflows whose systems have the capability of utilizing FHIR®). Data exchange will follow standards and best practices described in the MDI FHIR® Implementation Guide.
c. Utilize technical assistance office hours for additional real-time support, as needed.
d. Participate in at least two MDI FIC virtual testing events. (Additional information about testing events, test plans and minimum requirements will be provided at least one month prior to each testing event.) Actively test solutions during at least one event. Step-wise tests will be attempted and results documented. The minimum requirements are:
   i. The successful completion of a FHIR® Data Model test and Security Framework test.
   ii. Documentation of testing attempts for workflow using Raven (https://apps.hdap.gatech.edu/raven/).

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

1. Complete project documentation and onboarding activities
   a. Identify key staff to participate in the MDI FIC.
   b. Execute CDC Foundation agreement.
   c. Project lead, data sharing partner, data sharing partner vendor and case management system vendor attend the virtual kick-off meeting.
   d. Collaboratively create a project workplan with the data sharing partner and vendor that includes activities, outputs (such as variables to be exchanged), outcomes and timeline, along with responsible party for completion.

2. Participation in MDI FIC
   Actively participate in at least 80% of required virtual and in-person meetings (including collaborative wide meetings and one-on-one meetings). This may include creating short presentations, participating in breakout rooms and engaging in peer-to-peer interactions.

3. Participation in Virtual Testing Events
   System developers for both the case management system and the data sharing partner must participate in at least two virtual testing events and have documentation of passing minimum testing requirements.

4. Complete reporting and dissemination activities
   a. Provide feedback on the structure, activities and technical assistance provided in MDI FIC to improve format and effectiveness for future efforts (template to be provided).
b. Document accomplishments, barriers and lessons learned in a final report (template to be provided).

c. Disseminate findings from MDI FIC during at least one meeting or conference (virtual, in-person, or written) OR have at least one news release (social media, coroner newsletter, etc.) that discusses either the funding received for the project or the specific use case worked on for this project.

**SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

**Eligibility Criteria**

- MDI office, regional autopsy facility or forensic science center (e.g., Agency with the authority to perform medicolegal death investigations (MDIs) or is a public agency/organization that provides regionalized integration of MDI offices); *private and commercially owned entities are not eligible.*
- Currently using electronic CMS, either commercial or internally developed, with no plans of changing systems during the funding period (For background see: [https://forensiccoe.org/electronic-case-management-system-mdi/](https://forensiccoe.org/electronic-case-management-system-mdi/)).
- Confirmation of being headquartered in US or US territories.
- Confirmation of being in good financial standing/having sustainable operations.
- Governmental entity.
- Previously funded MDI FIC participants are not eligible for this opportunity (if applicable).
- SAMs/UEI

Respondents to this Request for Applications (RFA) that are found to be technically capable will be evaluated and scored according to the evaluation criteria listed in the RFA. Up to 12 sites will be invited to contract.

**RFA TIMELINE**

The timeline below is subject to change at the sole discretion of the CDC Foundation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RFA Released</td>
<td>June 16, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for Respondents’ Inquiries</td>
<td>July 6, 2023, 11:59 pm ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release of Responses to Respondents’ Inquiries via Supplement</td>
<td>July 28, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Submission Deadline</td>
<td>August 18, 2023, 11:59 pm ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Notification</td>
<td>September 8, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Date of Resulting Agreement</td>
<td>September 30, 2023</td>
</tr>
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**MAXIMUM PAYABLE AMOUNT**

CDC Foundation will pay the contractor a fee not to exceed a Maximum Payable Amount (MPA) of $100,000 or the ceiling price. The MPA will be based on the fee proposed and awarded and will be negotiated as part of the resulting contract.

Selected sites may use the funding for staff, consultants, innovative electronic CMS enhancements, funding support of data sharing partner, other data infrastructure modernization needs, training and travel and accommodations required to participate in the project activities. A video on how to create a budget is provided (see Required Attachments).

**TYPE OF CONTRACT**
The CDC Foundation anticipates awarding a Fixed Price/Deliverables agreement with a payment schedule. CDC Foundation reserves the right to change the method of payment. An invoice template will be provided after the contract is awarded.

**REQUESTED INFORMATION**

Applicants will be required to submit an online application, using the following URL: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2865162c92da49089d4ad089c6fd6615. Please note, the Smartsheet online form and attachments must be completed in one session.

The application will request the following information:

- Legal Organization Name
- Abbreviated Name, if applicable
- Street Address, City, State, Zip Code
- Year Established
- Confirmation of being headquartered in US (or US territory) and a government entity
- Confirmation of being in good financial standing/having sustainable operations
- MDI affiliation
- Description of MDI electronic CMS which can be either a commercial off-the-shelf product or internally developed
- Primary Point of Contact: Name, Title, Organization, Email address, Phone number
- Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number (if applicable)
- Federal Tax Identification (ID) Number/Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Number of Employees
- Verification that the agency receiving funding can accept ACH payment or wire transfer of funds. If this is a barrier, it must be disclosed in the application process.

**Required Attachments**

Applicants should upload the following required attachments to the online form.

- **Appendix A – Application and IT Scope of Work**
  - Narrative responses to application questions
  - Example IT Scope of Work document is provided here: Vendor Project Scope Template.
  - IT Scope of Work must be reviewed by the data sharing partner vendor and CMS vendor and acknowledged in their letter of support.

- **Appendix B – Budget and Budget Narrative**
  - See the enclosed required template.
  - A brief video tutorial on creating a budget can be found here: https://clipchamp.com/watch/3Ge2VyKTInt.

- **Appendix C – Letters of Support (These must state that they have reviewed and agree to the required deliverables)**
  - Letter of support from electronic CMS commercial vendor or IT staff of internally developed CMS.
  - Letter of support from data sharing partner.
  - Letter of support from data sharing partner software vendor or IT staff.

- **Appendix D – List of Key Personnel**
  - List the names and titles of staff/consultants participating in the project activities.
Appendix E – Financial Statements

• Audited financial statements or most recent balance sheet or any other documentation available to assess your financial standing.

INSTRUCTIONS

Applications should be submitted to the CDC Foundation online, using the following URL: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2865162c92da49089d4d089c6fd6615 by 11:59 pm ET on August 18, 2023. Submissions will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The MDI FIC is designed for awardees that have the capacity, infrastructure and data systems to begin the project immediately. The CDC Foundation will select a diverse group of awardees. Each response will be evaluated and given a rating of Technically Capable or Not Technically Capable with consideration for the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>• Appropriate CMS support demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight: 20%</td>
<td>• Appropriate data sharing IT support demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Capacity</td>
<td>• Authorized Letters of Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight: 30%</td>
<td>• Appropriate staff and partners identified to participate in MDI FIC activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commitment to attend in-person and virtual meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ability to accept and administer the funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>• Cost effective and detailed budget of costs related to FHIR® implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight: 10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness/Previous Experience</td>
<td>• Well-articulated use case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weights: 40%</td>
<td>• Innovative use-case concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrated willingness to support FHIR® from selected data sharing partner</td>
</tr>
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COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE RFA PERIOD

The CDC Foundation will accept questions regarding the RFA until July 6, 2023, 11:59 pm ET, upon which time responses will be prepared for all applicants. Questions and answers from the previous RFA posting for the MDI FIC can be found here: https://www.cdcfoundation.org/RFA-MDI-FIC-SupplementalQA?inline. Responses will be provided by July 28, 2023, 11:59 pm ET. Please submit questions by Thursday, July 6, 2023: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a777e15bf1b04b7bb864a642bb89c95d. Please contact mdi_data systems@cdcfoundation.org if you have trouble accessing or submitting. The CDC Foundation will notify the candidate directly if they are selected by September 8, 2023.

*The CDC Foundation will not provide debrief sessions for those not awarded.*
PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The performance will be monitored in line with the agreed project plan. Contract deliverables will be monitored by the project manager via monthly check-ins at the program outset until a decreased or change in cadence is warranted. Mutually agreed upon timelines, expectations and estimated costs will be established at the outset with the contractor. The contractor will be expected to collaborate closely with the CDC Foundation, the CDC and other CDC Foundation contractors working on this project. Furthermore, regular reviews/coordination, as agreed, will be undertaken, as work progresses.

FUNDING SOURCE

The resulting award will be supported by either:

1. Federal funding through a Cooperative Agreement between the CDC Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-RFA-OT18-18020501SUPP22). The CDC Foundation anticipates the award will meet the criteria of “contractor” as defined by 2 CFR 200.331. A final determination will be made at the time of the award.

2. A grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies provided to the CDC Foundation for the Overdose Prevention Initiative.

The decision of which funding source is used will be made during the award determination process and will be communicated with the notice of award.