

Responses to Questions for Wastewater Monitoring RFP

Question 1. Is the proponent expected to install and maintain sampling / monitoring devices in the manholes, collect samples, analyze samples, and report data, all within the budget?

Answer 1: Yes.

Question 2. a) Is the proponent expected to have a web-ready interface for reporting wastewater testing results at the time of proposal submission? Also, which results are being referenced (drug data in wastewater?), and for which locations? The latter is tricky because the neighborhoods are yet to be identified, and the choice of sub-sewershed may raise ethical concerns that we normally would need to clarify with a client (e.g., BPHC) before we publicly release any monitoring data.

Question 2. b) Reporting is listed as a minimum qualification. Has BPHC developed a dashboard for sharing results or is the contractor responsible for providing this? Have the recipients of results been identified yet? Is the contractor responsible for reporting results to stakeholders or will BPHC do this?

Answer 2. a): No, a web-ready interface is not assumed to be available at the time of proposal submission. "Results" are the concentration of the specified compounds and their metabolites, including any adjustments such as normalization, as well as sample collection metadata (location, date, time, etc.). We anticipate working with the successful applicant to consider and address ethical concerns as we identify suitable sampling locations.

Answer 2. b): BPHC will be responsible for communicating results to stakeholders.

Question 3. a) The RFP states the funding is available until the end of 2026, but what duration should the pilot be? Is there a minimum or maximum pilot length BPHC has in mind?

Question 3. b) What is the intended duration of the pilot?

Question 3. c) At \$180K, what sampling frequency is being assumed? Once every second week or month? Will sampling occur during special events?

Question 3. d) What is the volume and frequency of sampling?

Answer 3. a) b) & c): Proponents may describe their program in terms of the price per sample and the number of anticipated samples given the budget. BPHC intends to discuss these details with the proponent (number of sites, frequency, pilot duration, etc.). While we are willing to discuss the duration of the pilot, we would prefer a pilot that lasts a minimum of 4 months (17 weeks).

Answer 3. c): We do not expect sampling that focuses on specific events. Sampling may not be possible during certain events, such as the Boston marathon, where access to sampling locations may be limited.

Answer 3. d): We anticipate weekly sampling. BPHC does not own or operate wastewater sampling or laboratory equipment and so cannot provide an estimate of the sample volume required for these analyses.

Question 4. a) Is there a minimum number of sites or neighborhoods that has been identified for this pilot?

Question 4. b) How many sites is BPHC looking to collect samples from?

Question 4. c) Is there a list of potential locations that can be shared along with some parameters?

Question 4. d) Would sample sites include both wastewater treatment facilities and sites within the sewershed such as pump stations or manholes?

Question 4. e) Which regions of the city are you focusing on?

Question 4. f) Would sampling locations align with previous SARS-CoV-2 testing? Samples from - 11 testing sites in Brighton, Back Bay, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roslindale, Roxbury, and South Boston.

Question 4. g) Is BPHC looking for guidance in the proposal response on sampling strategy?

Question 4. h) Have the sites been identified already and have they been confirmed as suitable for autosampler installation?

Answer a) b) & f): Broadly, we seek to understand whether wastewater sampling for the specified compounds can be used as a proxy for spatial and temporal trends in substance use behavior in Boston. Sampling locations need not necessarily correspond to the existing BPHC wastewater surveillance program for infectious disease.

Answer 4. c) e) & h): See answer 3. a) as we anticipate discussing and identifying sampling locations with the successful applicant once proposed sampling costs have been identified. In general, we prioritize sites that are accessible without a need for traffic control, with a suitable depth and flow for an autosampler to function, and which do not require manned entry for sample collection.

Answer 4. d & g): We are open to suggestion for proposed sampling locations, but the objective of this pilot is to understand substance use behavior and treatment within the city of Boston itself, so some potential sampling locations, like the regional wastewater treatment facility, would not be appropriate for the objective of this pilot.

Question 5. Is a security or police detail required for safety/traffic control for the sites of interest during manhole sampling? If so, will they be provided by BPHC or is the contractor responsible for providing them?

Answer 5: We actively encourage selection of sites that do not require security/traffic control. BPHC does not provide safety/traffic control.

Question 6. What outreach has been done in the communities related to the high-risk substance monitoring? Will BPHC be responsible for all outreach or is the contractor responsible for this?

Answer 6: BPHC will be responsible for all community outreach for this pilot.

Question 7. Do we need to provide proof of concept?

Answer 7: No, a proof of concept is not necessary. However, the proposal should include enough information about the proposed approach to demonstrate capability to measure the specified compounds.

Question 8. a) Are you planning to expand beyond fentanyl?

Question 8. b) Is there interest in testing the samples for targets beyond fentanyl, xylazine, naloxone, methadone, cocaine, methamphetamine, and their metabolites?

Answer 8 a) & b): Currently we do not anticipate testing for other targets in this pilot, but welcome information about each applicant's capabilities for wastewater testing.

Question 9. What are the minimum wage expectations to factor into pricing?

Answer 9: All service contracts awarded by the Boston Public Health Commission may be subject to following the City of Boston's living wage ordinance. This ordinance requires that all employees working on sizable city contracts earn an hourly wage that is enough for a family of four to live at or above the federal poverty level. The City refers to this as the living wage. As of July 1, 2023, the living wage is \$17.55 per hour. For more information, please visit <https://www.boston.gov/worker-empowerment/living-wage-division>.