

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

CSTE Data Science Team Training Program (DSTT) Cohort 6: Consultants to provide data science expertise and coaching to applied epidemiologists

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PART I: OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Issuing Organization: Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) at www.cste.org

Participating Organizations: CSTE and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Cooperative Agreement number { 6 NU38PW000005}.

PART II: FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

Statement of Purpose

Consultants will provide subject matter expertise for teams participating in a data science upskilling program for current STLT public health professionals. The training program will be delivered in a virtual setting. These consultants will henceforth be referred to as “project coaches”. This announcement is to recruit multiple project coaches for cohort 5 of the Data Science Team Training (DSTT) program. There will be approximately 25 teams from state, local, tribal, and territorial (STLT) health departments participating in the program. CSTE is open to proposals from individual consultants and firms willing to provide this service.

Background

CSTE, in collaboration with and funded by CDC, administers DSTT (Data Science Team Training program) which is a team-based on-the job data science training program to build data science capacity at STLT public health agencies. More information about this program can be found on the [website](#). This program is now recruiting for its sixth cohort. Interdisciplinary teams of 3-5 members from health departments (which can include individuals from outside the organization such as academic, clinical, or private sector partners) work collaboratively on a [data modernization initiative](#) project focused on building data science capacity. The program includes team-directed learning through online coursework on the Coursera platform, work with subject matter expert consultant coaches, an online community of practice and concludes with presentations by the teams. Previous team projects included: updating data systems, implementing electronic case reporting, creating dashboards for a variety of data reporting needs, and spatiotemporal modeling of the spread of COVID-19. For more information on our previous teams and their projects, please see the [website](#). Possible areas of data science upskilling include computation, statistics, data visualization, and machine learning. The role of project coaches will be to provide high-level guidance to teams. CSTE will match coaches with teams based on shared interest and expertise. Each coach will work with a set number of teams to be determined based on consultants' bandwidth, but usually 2-6 teams per coach. This opportunity is also open for firms that have the staffing capacity to support all teams. The coaches will meet virtually with each of their assigned teams at least monthly and provide detailed feedback to CSTE. Teams are seeking guidance on a variety of data science topics, including but not limited to making data-informed decisions, change management, cloud-based analytics, geocoding, building dashboards and other visualizations, developing interoperable data systems, using non-traditional data sources (Google trends, social media data), and applying machine learning to leverage data. Project coaches provide value to teams through regular check-ins, project scoping and project management, and providing an outside perspective to work through roadblocks. While CSTE will strive to match teams with coaches

based on mutual interest and experience, projects are subject to change and an exact match is not guaranteed. Ideal project coaches will have a variety of data science skills and be flexible.

Project coaches will work in an advisory role with their teams. Coaches are not expected to provide day-to-day technical assistance, conduct data analysis, create data products, or deliver course content. Project coaches will establish communication norms with their assigned teams. Ideal candidates will have data science and/or informatics expertise, facilitation skills, project management skills, and knowledge of local and state public health. Coaches should expect to spend about 3 hours per week in this role distributed across working directly with teams (meetings, calls, emails). as well as contributing to the online community of practice.

Objectives

From October 2025 to September 2026, the consultant will provide data science subject matter expertise and coaching to the DSTT participants related to their health department projects and facilitate a community of practice for all participants.

Deliverables

To meet the above stated objectives, consultants will:

- Review background material provided by CSTE.
- Attend a kick-off call with CSTE staff and other SME coaches to learn about the program and expectations during the year.
- Meet at least monthly with their assigned teams to review progress and provide advice on next steps for the team's project progress.
- Be available to provide high level technical support to their team(s) via email or planned calls.
- Contribute to and participate in virtual community of practice.
- Provide detailed monthly updates to CSTE on their contact with assigned teams and participate in evaluation activities as requested.

Timeline

Timeline*	
Monday, August 25, 2025	RFP Posted
Friday, September 26, 2025(11:59 PM EST)	Application Due Date
October 8, 2025	Anticipated Notification of Award
October 2025	Assignment to teams
November 2025	Kick off call with CSTE
November/December 2025	Hold initial meetings with assigned teams
November 2025-October 2026	Hold monthly office hours/meet with assigned teams, post within the community of practice, consult with assigned teams, submit detailed monthly reports to CSTE, participate in evaluation activities and attend final presentations

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Section II. Award Mechanism

Mechanism(s) of Support

CSTE will manage matters related to financial support for this project.

Funds Available

The final contract amount is contingent upon submission of a detailed and reasonable budget proposal to be approved by CSTE and the availability of funds. Successful applicants are expected to return a signed contract within 30 days of receiving it. See Attachment I for CSTE's standard terms and conditions.

Section III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Applicants should be non-federal public health professionals (including, but not limited to, those from institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, communication firms, public health agencies, or private consultants) with advanced knowledge and experience with public health informatics, epidemiology, or laboratory programs.

Applicants who are employed or work on behalf of state, local, tribal or territorial (STLT) health agencies are required to submit an outside activity form or secondary employment request (actual form may vary) that has been approved by their employer with their application.

Current CSTE policy states that contracts should not be made with former CSTE staff unless approved by the CSTE Executive Director for extenuating circumstances. Please contact Kacy Chrestman (kchrestman@cste.org) if you have any questions about this policy or request an exemption.

Section IV. Application and Submission Information

Content and Form of Application Submission

The application should be no longer than 12 pages, and should be written using a 12-point, double-spaced, unrounded, Times New Roman font, on 8.5x11 inch paged paper with one-inch margins. Additional pages or appendices that are not required may not be reviewed. Please include the headings below in the order listed and address all the issues included under each heading.

1. Contact Information (½ page maximum)
2. Experience (4 pg maximum)
3. Work Plan (5 pg maximum)
4. Budget and Justification (2 ½ pg maximum)
 - a. Applicants should include in the budget how many teams they are willing to take on
5. Applicant CV or resumes (not included in page count)

For further assistance, technical questions, or inquiries about the application, contact Kacy Chrestman, kchrestman@cste.org (470-816-6966). Representatives from CSTE will be available to speak to potential applicants to discuss technical or administrative questions. All questions and answers will be made available to all potential applicants upon request.

Submission Dates and Times

Submission, Review, and Anticipated Start Dates:

- Application Submission Notification Date: within 5 days of submission
- Award Notification Date: anticipated to be by October 8, 2025
- Anticipated Start Date: November 2025

Submitting an Application:

All applications are due by 11:59 pm ET, 9/26/2025.

Application materials should be sent to Kacy Chrestman (kchrestman@cste.org). Notification of successful receipt of the application will be sent to the applicant upon request. Electronic applications are encouraged, however, CSTE will accept applications mailed to CSTE National Office at the following address:

Kacy Chrestman, MS, CHES
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2635 Century Parkway NE, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30345

Mailed applications must still arrive by the stated deadline.

Section V. Application Review Information

Application Rubric

Define rubric that matches project scope and application submission requirements on 100-point scale.

1. Ability of the applicant to meet the objectives of the project described in Section I, above, satisfactorily (25%)
 - a. Prior experience
 - b. Qualifications
 - c. Describes areas of coaching expertise
2. Applicant's understanding of the project deliverables (25%)
 - a. Providing guidance to teams
3. Proposed work plan (30%)
 - a. How the coach plans to structure meetings with teams
 - b. Detail how the coach intends to help teams plan to spend their training stipend
 - c. Whether they have a plan for times when teams have an emergency response or other priorities change meeting schedules.
 - d. Help teams determine if there are other teams in the cohort that have similar projects and possibly connect those teams.
 - e. Feasibility
 - i. Includes approaches for engaging in project coaching in the virtual environment
 - ii. Project coaching services include calls, email communication, sharing documents and should incorporate flexibility to accommodate trainee needs
 - f. Ability to meet the timeline
 - g. Quality of submitted proposal
4. Budget and Justifications (15%)

- a. Addresses number of teams applicant is willing to coach
5. Completeness of the application (5%)

Review and Selection Process

Eligible applications that are complete will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by CSTE in accordance with the review criteria stated above. Submissions that do not comply with the technical requirements set in the RFP are considered nonresponsive and will be rejected. A review panel of CSTE National Office staff, CSTE Steering Committee members, and subject matter experts may score the applications. Funding awards will be made based upon the quality of the submitted proposal and the ability of the applicant to meet the criteria stated above.

Section VI. Award Admission Information

Award Notices

All applicants will be notified via email no later than **October 8, 2025**.

Award Recipient Responsibilities

The award recipient will have primary responsibility for the following:

- 1) Accomplishing the objectives and completing the deliverables listed in this announcement
- 2) Providing detailed written progress reports and invoices to CSTE as required in the contract agreement
- 3) Communicating through multiple avenues on a regular basis for feedback and discussion (e.g., conference calls, emails, etc.)

CSTE Responsibilities

CSTE will have the primary responsibility for the following:

- 1) Serving as the awardee's principal point of contact between participants, CDC, and other stakeholders
- 2) Facilitating work and providing avenues for communication between awardee and stakeholders
- 3) Monitoring the terms of the agreement
- 4) Funding according to the terms of the contract agreement

For More Information

For more information, contact:

Kacy Chrestman, Program Analyst
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2635 Century Parkway NE, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30345
kchrestman@cste.org
(470)816-6966