

NHLBI’s *Learn More Breathe Better*[®] 2025-2026 Community Subcontract Program Request for Proposals

Through the *Learn More Breathe Better*[®] Community Subcontract Program, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is issuing a call for proposals focused on educational initiatives and programs aimed at increasing awareness about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) as a serious lung disease and a leading cause of death and disability in the United States and that furthers implementation of the COPD National Action Plan.

RFP Details:

RFP Issued:	January 7, 2025
Questions Due:	January 14, 2025 3pm ET
Letter of Intent:	January 21, 2025 3pm ET
Proposal Responses Due:	February 11, 2025 3pm ET
Primary Contact:	Greta Gorman, Westat, Inc. GretaGorman@Westat.com Maria Sanchez, Westat, Inc. MariaSanchez@Westat.com
Anticipated Period of Performance:	March 25, 2025 – February 27, 2026

1. BACKGROUND

THE DISEASE: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), also known as chronic bronchitis or emphysema, is a serious lung disease and a leading cause of death in the United States.¹ More than 17 million people are diagnosed,² and millions more may have it and do not know it. The burden on the nation’s health care system is enormous. Americans spent more than \$31 billion on COPD-related patient care in 2019, and those costs are projected to increase to \$60 billion by 2029.³

¹ Murphy SL, Kochanek KD, Xu JQ, Arias E. Mortality in the United States, 2020. NCHS Data Brief, no 427. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2021.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Survey Data, 2022.

³ [https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692\(23\)05832-4/fulltext](https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692(23)05832-4/fulltext)

THE COPD NATIONAL ACTION PLAN: At the request of Congress, federal agencies worked in collaboration with the COPD stakeholder community to develop the [COPD National Action Plan](#)—the nation’s first-ever blueprint to address the burden of COPD. The Action Plan is organized into five goals that address individual and public needs, healthcare delivery and practice guidelines, data collection and dissemination, research, and legislative requirements.

LEARN MORE BREATHE BETTER®: NHLBI’s *Learn More Breathe Better (LMBB)* program is a national health education program that aims to bring greater visibility to lung health by translating research into public and professional education programs. The program has facilitated the efforts of more than 90 partners in all 50 states among patient advocacy groups, state and local public health agencies, and healthcare professional societies, who have been instrumental in lung health education, particularly around COPD. Program materials continue to be developed with easy-to-understand information designed to address the needs of the public and those at risk for COPD, as well as those living with COPD – both diagnosed and undiagnosed. In addition, the program strives to reach healthcare professionals, specifically in the primary care community, to increase early detection, proper diagnosis, and appropriate treatment. Despite this progress, COPD remains a significant health issue that will continue to grow without successful interventions. Substantial unmet needs remain for providers and patients.

Through the *LMBB* Community Subcontract Program, NHLBI is supporting the implementation of the COPD National Action Plan in areas that align with its overall program goals.

The National Action Plan goals are as follows:

- **Goal 1:**
 - Empower people with COPD, their families, and caregivers to recognize and reduce the burden of COPD.
- **Goal 2:**
 - Improve the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and management of COPD by improving the quality of care delivered across the healthcare continuum.
- **Goal 3:**
 - Collect, analyze, report, and disseminate COPD-related public health data that drive change and track progress.
- **Goal 4:**
 - Increase and sustain research to better understand the prevention, pathogenesis, diagnosis, treatment, and management of COPD.
- **Goal 5:**
 - Translate national policy, educational, and program recommendations into research and public healthcare actions.

Through its COPD initiatives, *LMBB* focuses on the following target audiences:

- **Healthcare providers (HCPs)**
 - **Primary HCP audiences: primary care providers and associated allied health professionals**
 - **Secondary HCP audiences: relevant specialty providers (e.g., pulmonology) and respiratory therapists**
- **Men and women over age 35 at higher risk such as:**
 - **Current and former smokers**
 - **People at higher risk based on genetics or environmental/occupational exposures**
- **People who have been diagnosed with COPD and their family and loved ones**

BREATHE BETTER NETWORK:

The program's partnership network – the [Breathe Better Network](#), a staple of the *LMBB* program – is a group of more than 90 organizations nationwide that are working to integrate *LMBB* program messages and materials with their outreach efforts.

Organizations representing states, cities, or communities that are engaged in lung

health education and awareness through the *LMBB* program are eligible to join the *Network* and may take advantage of program support, including:



- **Educational materials and social media resources:** Including *LMBB* materials that partners can co-brand with their organization's name and logo, in accordance with NHLBI guidelines.
- **Templates and models:** To produce COPD events for both public and health care provider audiences.
- **Media outreach materials:** Materials in template form that can be tailored for local use, including the use of national media experts and subject matter experts, as available.
- **Notification of national program activity:** Regularly receive program updates, with the option of building upon national activity to create local activities.

Whereas membership is not required to be eligible to participate in this RFP and receive a subcontract award, each respondent is encouraged to consider participation in the *Breathe Better Network*. Requests to join the *Network* can be directed to HealthEdu@nhlbi.nih.gov.

2. GOALS AND ELIGIBILITY

The primary goal of *LMBB's* Community Subcontract Program for 2025-2026 is to increase the capacity to support the development and execution of activities focused on advancing the goals and objectives of the [COPD National Action Plan](#). Realizing that NHLBI is only one of many organizations helping to implement the Action Plan, we believe these Subcontract Agreements could play an important role in supporting some of the Action Plan's goals specifically, but not limited to, the first two goals:

Goal 1 Empower people with COPD, their families, and caregivers to recognize and reduce the burden of COPD.

Goal 2 Improve the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and management of COPD by improving the quality of care delivered across the healthcare continuum.

Applicants must be nonprofit organizations or state, county, or municipal government agencies. When a task force, working group, consortium, or coalition is involved, one organization must be the lead, with a single point of contact.

As NHLBI's contractor for the *LMBB* program, Westat, Inc. anticipates administering multiple Subcontract Agreements to support NHLBI and *LMBB* program goals. The number of awards will be dependent on the number of applications and funds available.

Collaboration and the ability to establish regional capacity and sustainability are paramount. Preference will be given to recipients who partner with at least two other organizations in the region to broaden the reach of their plan. Additionally, programs serving U.S. populations and communities with a demonstrated need for COPD intervention and education will be provided special consideration. These may include women, people in rural communities, those with a smoking history, or adults ages 75 and older, for example. For more information on COPD age-adjusted prevalence among adults aged ≥ 18 years across the United States,⁴ review available data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/index.html>. For additional information on COPD prevalence trends, see this [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.⁵

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2022.

⁵ Liu Y, Carlson SA, Watson KB, Xu F, Greenlund KJ. Trends in the Prevalence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years — United States, 2011–2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2023;72:1250–1256. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7246a1>

Plans that include new ideas, new approaches, or the adoption of evidence-based strategies for COPD education will be given preference over ideas already being executed by the recipient. Preference will also be given to organizations demonstrating how the funding will contribute to increased accessibility of health education materials to target populations. Special consideration will be given to initiatives relying on integration of [Learn More Breathe Better materials](#) in their programming. Additionally, preference will be given to organizations that have not previously received funds through this Community Subcontract Program.

Applicants are encouraged to seek collaborations with additional partners including, but not limited to, local or state health departments, fellow members of the *Breathe Better Network* (for a current list of *Breathe Better Network* members, please visit <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/LMBBnetwork>), health systems, area employers (e.g., plants, factories, corporations), and community partners. Awarded organizations must identify a point of contact for their program. Written commitment from proposed partnering organizations in the state, and evidence of those partners' capacity to implement what was proposed, must be demonstrated at the time of proposal submission.

Applicants are encouraged to review [prior Community Subcontract Program Awardee projects](#) and visit the [COPD National Action Plan Community Action Tool](#) to review existing programs by organizations working towards implementation of the Action Plan.

REQUIREMENTS:

- **Demonstrate Relevance and Alignment** – Applicants must show how their proposed solutions will further the goals of the [COPD National Action Plan](#) related to awareness and education, especially goals 1 and 2.
- **Target Unmet Needs** – Applicants are asked to describe how their proposed solutions address needs not currently being met by current resources, infrastructure, and/or tools.
- **Leverage Existing Program Materials** – The *LMBB* program has carefully developed a series of digital and print materials for use in consumer and provider outreach. To ensure efficiency and consistency in messaging, applicants are encouraged to outline in their proposals how they will incorporate these resources into their outreach. Visit copd.nhlbi.nih.gov to access available tools and materials, which can be downloaded free of charge and customized with partner logos in accordance with NHLBI guidelines. We also encourage applicants to update and enhance/adapt materials and/or develop new resources tailored to diverse populations and languages.
- **Evaluation/Sustainability** – Applicants must show how they will measure the impact of their program, including how it supports the COPD National Action Plan, the *LMBB* program's objectives (as outlined in this RFP), and addresses an unmet need. Please note all Awardees will be required to provide a **final evaluation of their projects to Westat by February 13, 2026**.

- **Address Human Subjects Protection** – Applicants must submit a completed Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary document as an appendix to the core proposal. See “Human Subjects Protection” in Section 6: Proposal Instructions.

3. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

March 25, 2025 – February 27, 2026

4. SUPPORT PROVIDED BY NHLBI CONTRACTOR WESTAT, INC. FOR AWARDEES

Financial

Awardees will receive funds to support COPD education activity in their communities, to be paid in increments based on a schedule and deliverables to be mutually agreed upon at the onset of the Agreement.

Technical Assistance

The NHLBI contractor, Westat, Inc., will provide technical assistance to Awardees as needed in the form of counsel on strategic planning, including target audience data, communications, media relations, event planning, and reporting.

Operations

Upon receiving the announcement of their award, Awardees will receive schedules for conference calls, reports, and activities, along with reporting templates, contact information, and opportunities for sharing questions and information with other Awardees. Quarterly conference calls with all Awardees will also support streamlined operations.

Program Support

NHLBI’s *LMBB* program has produced, and will continue to produce, print and radio public service announcements, fact sheets, digital animations, videos, PowerPoint presentations, infographics and info cards, social media resources, templates for events and local media outreach, and other materials that can be used by Awardees.

Awardees may download print-ready materials from the *LMBB* website and customize them by co-branding with their own logos and contact information. See NHLBI’s COPD resource webpage (copd.nhlbi.nih.gov) to access tools and materials.

5. REPORTING

Activity Reports

Awardees will be required to submit brief reports reflecting 60 days of activity on the 7th day of the month, every other month. A report template will be provided to describe activity since the last report.

Report components:

- New contacts made: organizations, with individual(s)' name(s) and title(s)
- Meetings and/or conference calls held
- Presentations or exhibits: forum, estimated number of people in attendance, information about the audience, number of COPD-related *LMBB* program materials distributed
- Media coverage: media outlet, content and tone of coverage, and estimated audience
- Other accomplishments and progress
- Areas of challenge and plans to address the challenge
- Budget updates/tracking of budget spend
- How are you progressing on achieving your goals?
- Do you see any need to adjust your initial goals?
- What aspects of managing the program are most difficult?
- What aspects are most successful?
- What lessons have you learned to date that you would share with other Awardees to facilitate a successful outcome?
- How else could *LMBB* support your current efforts?
- Dollars expended and other resources used

In each report, those awarded agreements must track and provide an update on each deliverable outlined in their proposal/award. Reports must also include a brief description of plans and goals for the upcoming reporting period.

Final Report

Each Awardee will be encouraged to enter their final results and project summary in the [COPD National Action Plan Community Action Tool](#).

In addition, upon completion of the project, each Awardee's final report will include the following sections:

- A summary of all project activity
- Audiences reached
- Dollars expended and other resources used

- Evaluation methods and data
- Observations on project successes and lessons learned
- Sustainability plans
- Replication guidelines

6. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The proposal should include the following sections, organized as follows:

Approach to the Statement of Work

Objectives:

This section should include:

- ***Understanding of the challenge and the current COPD landscape:*** Your interpretation of, and your insights about the program goals and objectives, as it relates to the current state of COPD.
- ***Strategies and Methods:*** Your proposed strategies and specific methods, including but not limited to, information about the U.S. audience(s) you would target and geographic reach, events to be developed or utilized, organizations you would partner with, and how you would promote your activities to your audience(s). In addition, this section should, where appropriate, address how you will build sustainability into your project, so that it can be continued in the future without NHLBI funds, utilizing community resources. This section should also address how you will document the project so that it can be replicated in other communities.
- ***Monitoring and Evaluation:*** How you will monitor and evaluate the quality and progress of your work.

Schedule: A timetable or schedule with enough detail to demonstrate your understanding of the tasks, from the time the Agreement will be awarded to its conclusion.

Organization:

This section should include:

- Proposed management structure for the project. This should include a Project Director who oversees the entire project, and who will become the signee on the Agreement with Westat.
 - Only a maximum of one day-to-day contact, and a backup, will be accepted.
- Proposed personnel and their proposed roles.

Budget:

- Identify the total budget required to implement the proposed plan. NHLBI expects to award multiple organizations, with each award not to exceed \$50,000.
- Provide line item detail for estimated costs for specific activities, including direct labor and allowable direct expenses, in accordance with [FAR Part 31](#), necessary to complete your proposed program. Proposals should include detailed descriptions of expenses along with cost backup for each item. If travel is required, it shall be in accordance with [Federal Travel Regulations](#).
- NHLBI expects a cost-sharing arrangement with successful organizations. Identify other sources of revenue to help support this project and indicate whether they are funds or in-kind support.

A budget template (Appendix A) is provided in the attachment. The template is also available on the *LMBB* Community Subcontract Program webpage (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/LMBBsubcontracts).

Appendix (as brief as possible while conveying your credentials):

- Resumes of proposed staff or job descriptions of staff to be hired.
- Description of your organization, organizational capabilities, resources, and facilities.
- Description of success in conducting similar programs, utilizing community resources, and demonstrating the usage of other revenue streams, effectively.
- Three letters of reference from leaders of organizations, media, or communities not directly associated with your organization.
- Letters of commitment from other organizations with whom you intend to partner.

Length of Proposal: The entire proposal Section 1 “Approach to Statement of Work: Understanding of the Problem, Strategies and Methods, and Monitoring and Evaluation,” should not exceed 10 pages single-spaced in Arial/Times New Roman font size 12, with 1-inch margins. Diagrams, tables, and graphics may use smaller type if needed.

Schedule, Organization, Budget, and Appendix sections may be of the length the proposal team deems necessary, but brevity is encouraged. The Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary (Appendix B) must be included as an appendix to the core proposal and should be no more than 4 pages in length. This document does not count toward the 10-page limit for the core RFP response.

Human Subjects Protections: All applicants must complete and submit the Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary document (Appendix B).

Review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required of all awarded projects and activities that involve research with human subjects. Regulations define research as a systematic

investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. (See 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(d)). Human subjects are living individuals about whom: (1) data is obtained through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) information is obtained that is both private and identifiable. (See 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(f)).

IRB review is required if any aspect of the proposal involves research with human subjects, such as the following:

- Collecting qualitative data using focus groups, one-on-one interviews, or site visits;
- Analyzing or storing data with personal identifiers (e.g., name, address);
- Collecting physical measurements (e.g., height, weight, peak flow rate);
- Using invasive procedures (e.g., blood draw);
- Collecting survey data via telephone, web, mail, ACASI, or other methods with identifiers retained;
- Requesting humans to ingest any substance; or
- Using humans as study subjects in an experiment.

If the applicant determines that IRB oversight is not required, based on the definitions outlined above, the Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary should still be submitted indicating the applicant's assessment that IRB approval is not required. Please refer to the Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary (Appendix B) for further instruction on completing that document.

Submission:

All proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m. ET on February 11, 2025. Proposals can be Microsoft Word or PDF files and should be emailed to GretaGorman@Westat.com and MariaSanchez@westat.com.

LETTERS OF INTENT

We request that applicants submit a non-binding letter of intent by 3:00 p.m. ET on January 21, 2025. The letter of intent will give us a sense of the number of proposals to expect, and allow us to plan accordingly.

Letters should be emailed to GretaGorman@Westat.com and MariaSanchez@Westat.com.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR AWARD

The following point system will be applied to determine selection of Awardees:

Criteria	Point Value
Established presence in the community that will attract coalition partners and/or program participants; prior success conducting public education efforts at the community level and proven results; proven ability to coalesce partners around a common goal (specific to COPD); references and community support; has not previously received funds through this Community Subcontract program [see Strategies and Methods; Appendix]	20
Demonstrated knowledge, via the proposal, of processes that will support success (e.g., communication, project monitoring, evaluation, fiscal management) and alignment with National COPD Action Plan goals [see Understanding of the Challenge; Strategies and Methods]	20
Specific plan for implementing novel solutions; description of how program serves current unmet needs; explanation of approaches/rationale that will reach at-risk audiences and/or health care professionals; inclusion of specific deliverables, milestones, and timeline indicating steps from inception to end of period of performance; integration of <i>Learn More Breathe Better</i> materials; demonstrated application of funding to increasing accessibility of materials among target populations [see Strategies and Methods; Schedule]	30
Qualifications of key personnel and project staff [see Organization; Appendix]	10
Proposed budget and use of funds [see Budget]	10
Plans for ensuring sustainability of the project in the community and replicability in other communities; inclusion of Human Subjects Protection Review Executive Summary [see Strategies and Methods]	10
Total Points Value	100

7. CONTACT INFORMATION For questions, please contact:

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