

AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID-19 Award

Questions & Answers

As of June 2, 2021

All questions are hyperlinked to their respective answers below; click on a question to be brought to its answer. Appendices available at the end which include allowable expense comparisons between ELC Core funding (CK19-1904) under *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab Capacity* (A2 budget) for AMD Cross-cutting Activities (BP3) and AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID-19 Award.

Budget and Allowable Costs

1. Is there a budget template?
2. What are examples of allowable costs under the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award?
3. Can we use the funds to pay for activities done in months before the grant was awarded?
4. Can funding be used to support activities unrelated to sequencing, bioinformatics, or integration of genomic data?
5. Can funding be used to purchase liquid handling automation equipment?
6. Can funding be used to support contracts with academic institutions and other entities?
7. Are funds intended to support activities for the duration of the 36-month period? For example, if a recipient liquidates all their funds prior to the end of the 36 months, are they still required to continue activities in the guidance until the end of the 36 months?
8. If a recipient liquidates most or all funds towards supporting a few activities in the workplan, are they still required to complete the remaining activities?
9. The Notice of Award for AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award has a budget period from May 14, 2021, to July 31, 2024; does this mean that contracts and other acquisitions using AMD Sequencing & Analytics funds cannot go past July 31, 2024?
10. Can AMD Sequencing and Analytics funding be used to purchase office supplies and other routine costs?
11. Can AMD Sequencing and Analytics funding be used for renovations and construction costs?
12. Can recipients request more than the recommended personnel listed in the guidance? For example, there is a need for 1 lab scientist and 2 bioinformatics specialists, but the guidance shows the recipient as a smaller jurisdiction with 1 staff allocated.

Sequencing, Bioinformatics, and Data Integration Personnel:

13. Can AMD Sequencing & Analytics funding be used for personnel not dedicated to AMD laboratory and bioinformatics capacity?
14. Can AMD Sequencing & Analytics funding be used for term, temporary, students, or contract staff?
15. Can recipients request more than the recommended staff in the budget?
16. Should personnel normally requested under AMD Capacity in *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab* under the A2 budget of ELC Core NOFO (CK19-1904) be added to the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award budget?
17. Will the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID funding cover AMD Training Participants, AMD Training Lead, and Bioinformatics Regional Resource (BRR) activities?
18. Will there be AMD capacity funding to cover personnel costs in the ELC Core NOFO (CK19-1904) for budget period 4 (BP4) and budget period 5 (BP5)?

Coordinate and Engage with Partners:

19. To what extent can State Health Departments partner with other agencies and organizations?
20. Can you clarify what you mean by data integration?

Appendices

Appendix A: Basic Comparison

Appendix B: Allowable Expenses At-A-Glance



AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID-19 Award Answers

Budget and Allowable Costs:

1. Is there a budget template?
 - Yes, the ELC budget workbook (Excel) was provided in a Grant Note in GrantSolutions. You can also contact your ELC Project Officer. Recipients must complete the budget revision using the Excel budget workbook and adhere to the CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/grants/documents/Budget-Preparation-Guidance.pdf>). The revised budget must then be sent back to CDC through a budget revision amendment in GrantSolutions, along with a cover letter signed by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) of record in GrantSolutions.
2. What are examples of allowable costs under the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award?
 - Laboratory equipment used for sequencing, automation, and bioinformatics and necessary maintenance contracts. Maintenance and service contracts can only be applied for **new** equipment purchased with AMD Sequencing & Analytics funding.
 - Sequencing supplies, kits, reagents, consumables, and other necessary supplies for existing or new sequencing applications or onboarding new platforms to support sequencing. Allowable supplies should be directly related to establishing, expanding, or enhancing sequencing and bioinformatics capacity.
 - Hardware and software necessary for sequencing, bioinformatics, and integrating genomic and epidemiologic data.
3. Can we use the funds to pay for activities done in months before the grant was awarded?
 - Legislative language in the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*, [P.L. 117-2](#), was not included in this appropriation to permit retroactive charges; therefore, only costs associated with activities from time of award issuance are allowable.
4. Can funding be used to support activities unrelated to sequencing, bioinformatics, or integration of genomic data?
 - No, funds should cover only personnel, equipment, supplies, and activities that are directly related to establishing, expanding, or enhancing sequencing and bioinformatics capacity and integrating genomic and epidemiologic data.
5. Can funding be used to purchase liquid handling automation equipment?
 - Yes, funds can be used to purchase equipment and supplies associated with expanding or enhancing sequencing workflow automation. Certain costs associated with service and maintenance contracts during the period of performance may also be allowable.
6. Can funding be used to support contracts with academic institutions and other entities?
 - Yes, OAMD supports collaboration with local and regional academic partners to develop and implement AMD activities including sequencing, bioinformatics, and genomic data integration with epidemiological data.
7. Are funds intended to support activities for the duration of the 36-month period? For example, if a recipient liquidates all their funds prior to the end of the 36 months, are they still required to continue activities in the guidance until the end of the 36 months?
 - The expected timeframe for completion of all required activities under the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award is 36 months. It is possible that certain activities may be completed in a shorter period; however, the overall project period is 36 months. Expenditures that are not aligned with the commensurate level of completion of the approved activities will be scrutinized. Should it be found that resources were not utilized in the manner consistent with grant regulations, the award terms and conditions and/or approved work plans and budget submissions, the recipient may be found to be noncompliant and could be required to reimburse the federal government. Additionally, as indicated in the Guidance associated with this award, if required tasks and activities in the Guidance are not addressed, funds may be restricted in the Payment Management System (PMS). It is highly recommended that recipients continue to engage their ELC Project Officer and the OGS GMS as activities

are undertaken and funds are expended to ensure appropriate progress during the AMD Sequencing & Analytics project period.

8. If a recipient liquidates most or all funds towards supporting a few activities in the workplan, are they still required to complete the remaining activities?
 - The *AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Guidance* sets out the required activities in furtherance of the purpose and use of the funds and the award. Budgets should align to the workplans and are intended to support the breadth of all required activities.
9. The Notice of Award for AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award has a budget period from May 14, 2021, to July 31, 2024; does this mean that contracts and other acquisitions using AMD Sequencing & Analytics funds cannot go past July 31, 2024?
 - All acquisitions must be made before the end of the budget period (i.e., July 31, 2024). Consistent with other ELC awards, all contracts must be structured to ensure activities do not extend past the end of the budget period.
10. Can AMD Sequencing and Analytics funding be used to purchase office supplies and other routine costs?
 - No, funds should cover only personnel, equipment, supplies related to sequencing (not office supplies), and activities that are directly related to establishing, expanding, or enhancing sequencing and bioinformatics capacity and integrating genomic and epidemiologic data.
11. Can AMD Sequencing and Analytics funding be used for renovations and construction costs?
 - Yes, AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID funding has legislative authority that permits: (1) renovations (i.e., alterations under \$150K) and (2) construction. Under construction, these funds permit renovations (i.e., alterations that do not exceed \$150K), minor construction (i.e., alterations of an existing structure that does not exceed 50% of the total square footage), major construction (i.e., alterations of an existing structure that exceeds 50% of the total square footage), and new construction. All renovation and construction requests must be in the revised budget and the budget justification needs to clearly state how these costs relate to the activities in the *AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Guidance*.

Please note: Due to the large costs associated with major and new construction, awarded funds under the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award are likely to be insufficient to meet all requests. If a recipient has a major or new construction need, then it is recommended that the recipient submit a prior approval request for supplemental funding in GrantSolutions.

If the request for supplemental funding to support major or new construction is deemed to align with the *AMD Sequencing & Analytics Guidance*, then based on availability of funding, additional funding will be issued. Total supplemental funding available for all major/new construction requests under these prior approval requests for supplemental funding is \$175M. This additional financial assistance is intended to support the most immediate and achievable facility needs, consisting of small to medium projects that can be completed in the short term. All request will be reviewed and evaluated on a case by case basis, in consideration of these factors.

12. Can recipients request more than the recommended personnel listed in the guidance? For example, there is a need for 1 lab scientist and 2 bioinformatics specialists, but the guidance shows the recipient as a smaller jurisdiction with 1 staff allocated.
 - Yes, the funding is meant to support AMD sequencing and bioinformatics expansion and to meet the specific needs of each recipient. Funds can only cover personnel activities that are directly related to establishing, expanding, or enhancing sequencing, bioinformatics capacity, and integrating genomic and epidemiologic data.

Sequencing, Bioinformatics, and Data Integration Personnel:

13. Can AMD Sequencing & Analytics funding be used for personnel not dedicated to AMD laboratory and bioinformatics capacity?

- No, funds can only cover personnel and activities that are directly related to establishing, expanding, or enhancing sequencing, bioinformatics capacity, and integrating genomic and epidemiologic data.
14. Can AMD Sequencing & Analytics funding be used for term, temporary, students, or contract staff?
- Yes, funds can be used to support term, temporary, student, or contract staff.
15. Can recipients request more than the recommended staff in the budget?
- Yes, this is a minimum recommendation for implementing sequencing and analytics for this project. Recipients may wish to use less funding for equipment or supplies to increase overall AMD sequencing, bioinformatics, and data integration staff to accommodate the demands of expanding microbial genomics.
16. Should personnel normally requested under AMD Capacity in *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab* under the A2 budget of ELC Core NOFO (CK19-1904) be added to the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award budget?
- Yes, the AMD Sequencing & Analytics Supplemental funding essentially replaces the AMD Capacity activities historically found in *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab* under the A2 budget in CK19-1904. Staff and other related AMD Capacity requests should be included in the budget for the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award. Provide adequate workplan and budget justification.
17. Will the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID funding cover AMD Training Participants, AMD Training Lead, and Bioinformatics Regional Resource (BRR) activities?
- No, AMD Training participants, training leads, and BRRs will continue to be supported via awards from the ELC Core funding in *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab* under the A2 budget (CK19-1904). Requests for AMD Workforce Development and/or BRR will not be supported in the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award.
18. Will there be AMD capacity funding to cover personnel costs in the ELC Core NOFO (CK19-1904) for budget period 4 (BP4) and budget period 5 (BP5)?
- No, the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID funding essentially replaces the AMD Capacity activities in *Program A: Cross-cutting Epi & Lab* under the A2 budget (CK19-1904). Staff and other related AMD Capacity requests should be included in the budget for AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID funding. Provide adequate workplan and budget justification.

Coordinate and Engage with Partners:

19. To what extent can State Health Departments partner with other agencies and organizations?
- CDC encourages State Health Departments to continue working collaboratively with city, county, and local health departments, and other partners (e.g., academic, regional organizations) to expand and enhance AMD capacity, addressing gaps sequencing and analytics capacity (e.g., access to high performance computing, bioinformatics capacity, and other related activities to support sequencing projects).
20. Can you clarify what you mean by data integration?
- In general, combining the sequencing data with other data streams has been a challenge as there are many types of LIMS system and other labs are also struggling with this issue. Currently, we do not have any specific suggestions for data integration, but we have staff from AMD exploring solutions. We can share those findings when they become available. In the meantime, we encourage you to join TOAST office hours and bring these up to other participant from state labs as to what is being used by their labs. For example, this week's office hours will be on MicrobeTrace, a tool developed to help visualize sequencing and epidemiological data combined

Appendices

Appendix A: Basic Comparison

Appendix B: Allowable Expenses At-A-Glance

ELC Core AMD Capacity and ELC AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award

Appendix A: Basic Comparison

Please ensure that such funds are expended in accordance with your organization’s policies and procedures and are reasonable, allocable, allowable, and necessary as per 2 CFR Part 200 and 45 CFR Part 75.

All costs must alignment to the workplan and the impact to the overall ability to complete required activities.

	ELC Core funding under Program A: Epi & Lab Capacity – A2 budget for AMD Cross-cutting Activities (BP3)	AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award
Purpose	Provide AMD related resources to state, local, & territorial health departments. The purpose of this funding is to support training in microbial genomics and bioinformatics, bioinformatics technical support, and expand AMD activities and capacity in health departments.	Provide resources and support for national sequencing and analytic capacity building in microbial genomics and bioinformatics as well as to further the development of AMD capacity in local health departments. Activities covered in this supplement are intended to expand pathogen sequencing, bioinformatics, and data integration capabilities. Activities are intended to complement activities covered through other AMD resources and explicitly expand sequencing, bioinformatics, and genomic data integration strategies and activities.
Funding appropriation	Regular budget authority	American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
Key Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AMD Training Lead - Develop and implement regional AMD training for laboratory scientist dedicated to AMD activities. 2. AMD Training Participant – Increase knowledge, skills, and abilities of workforce dedicated to expanding AMD capacity in public health laboratories and health departments. 3. AMD Bioinformatics Regional Resource Lead – Increase bioinformatics analysis capacity, provide technical assistance, and ensure 4. AMD Capacity building to extend the use of AMD technologies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase personnel for AMD sequencing and analytics including laboratory scientists, bioinformaticians, and data scientists 2. AMD Capacity building to extend the use of AMD technologies 3. Microbial genomics data integration with epidemiology data
Amount	\$5.2 Million	\$240 Million + \$175M (estimated for major & new construction costs)
Funding period	8/1/2021 - 7/31/2022	5/14/2020 - 7/31/2024
Number of recipients	64	64
Funding strategy	Need-based funding based on application strength and availability of funds	Population-based formula (per legislation)
Financial reporting	Quarterly reporting via Payment Management Systems (PMS)	Monthly reporting via REDCap & GrantSolutions
Activity Progress	Quarterly reporting via REDCap	Quarterly reporting via REDCap
Performance measure reporting	Quarterly, through REDCap, but reporting frequency may be adjusted	Quarterly, through REDCap, but reporting frequency may be adjusted
Restrictions	Research as defined by CDC, clinical care (except as may be allowed by law), lobbying, purchasing vaccines, and major construction (e.g., new building, modification of more than 50% of structure, etc.) are not allowed. Renovations and minor construction (e.g., modification of less than 50% of structure, concrete slabs for modular labs/generators, etc.) are allowable.	Research as defined by CDC, clinical care (except as may be allowed by law), lobbying, and purchasing vaccines.

ELC Core AMD Capacity and ELC AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award

Appendix B: Allowable Expenses At-A-Glance

Category	Expense	ELC CORE (CK19-1904) Project A2 – AMD Cross Cutting Activities (BP3)	AMD Sequencing & Analytics Supplement
Personnel (term, temporary, students, overtime, contract staff, etc.)	Laboratorians	Yes	Yes
	Bioinformaticians	Yes	Yes
	Data Scientist	No	Yes
	Epidemiologists	No	No
	Data Entry Clerks, administrative, and other support staff	No	No
	Non-AMD Staff	No	No
Equipment	Laboratory equipment & necessary maintenance contracts at PHL (includes state PHLs that are affiliated with clinical or academic institutions)	No	Yes, for new equipment purchase with this award.
	General equipment (generators, freezers, computers)	No.	No.
	Hardware/software necessary for AMD bioinformatics expansion and data integration	May be allowable if support acquisition is for initial implementation. Case-by-case basis	Yes
	Hardware/software that may be used to assist with case investigation & contact tracing	No	No
	Equipment necessary to ensure safety of laboratory workers (e.g. BSCs, HVAC, etc.)	No	No
Supplies	Next generation sequencing (NGS) and whole genome sequencing (WGS) kits, reagents, consumables & other necessary supplies for NGS/WGS of existing platforms or onboarding new platforms	Yes	Yes
	PPE for laboratorians or other staff conducting sample collection or	No.	No.

Category	Expense	ELC CORE (CK19-1904) Project A2 – AMD Cross Cutting Activities (BP3)	AMD Sequencing & Analytics Supplement
Supplies	processing. Also includes PPE for general staff as needed & deemed necessary by the work conditions		
Software	Software/hardware necessary for implementation of bioinformatics pipelines, data integration tools, and other AMD technologies	May be allowable if support acquisition is for initial implementation. Case-by-case basis	Yes
	Cloud computing services and tools that assist in the rapid identification, electronic reporting, monitoring, analysis, & evaluation of control measures to reduce the spread of disease (e.g. GIS software, visualization dashboards, cloud services, etc.)	May be allowable if support acquisition is for initial implementation. Case-by-case basis	Yes
Construction & Renovation	Renovations & construction	Yes, may be considered for unique cases where conditions do not currently allow for safe or effective testing and/or delivery of effective public health services. Renovations (i.e., alterations under \$150K) and minor construction are allowable. Minor construction is defined as alterations of an existing structure that does not exceed 50% of the total square footage; installation of a concrete slab for modular laboratory units; etc.	<p>Yes, may be considered for unique cases where conditions do not currently allow for safe or effective testing and/or delivery of effective public health services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renovations (i.e., alterations under \$150K) are allowable. 2. Minor construction alterations of an existing structure that does not exceed 50% of the total square footage; installation of a concrete slab for modular laboratory units; etc. Are allowable. 3. Major construction (i.e., alterations of an existing structure that exceeds 50% of the total square footage) is allowable. 4. New construction is allowable. <p>Please note: Due to the large costs associated with major and new construction, awarded funds under the AMD Sequencing & Analytics COVID Award are likely to be insufficient to meet all requests. If a recipient has a major or new construction need, then it is recommended that the recipient submit a prior approval request for supplemental funding in GrantSolutions.</p>
Workforce Development	Expenses associated with AMD workforce development travel and training	Yes, with the AMD workforce development strategy.	No.