



# ELEVATE

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Laboratory Services for Lead in Drinking Water

June 3, 2026	RFP Published
June 11, 2026	Pre-submission information meeting (virtual) 2:00 PM CDT
June 12, 2026	Questions accepted until 5:00 PM CDT
June 17, 2026	All questions and responses posted
June 24, 2026	Deadline to submit response 5:00 PM CDT
June 26, 2026	Notice of Award
July 1, 2026	Proposed Start of Contract

### **Instructions to Respondents**

Proposals are solicited for providing the services as set forth in this solicitation. All proposals must be submitted as a single PDF file including the documents below via an electronic message to [waterproposals@elevatenp.org](mailto:waterproposals@elevatenp.org). Responses must be received by 5 PM CDT, Wednesday June 24, 2026.



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## Request for Proposals: Laboratory Services for Lead in Drinking Water

Elevate Energy (Elevate) is seeking proposals from qualified, accredited laboratories to provide analysis and related services for measuring lead in drinking water samples.

### Context

Elevate has been selected by the Illinois Department of Public Health to administer a program to assist licensed child care facilities and schools through Illinois conduct sampling and testing for lead in drinking water, as well as provide assistance in remediating water outlets exceeding state standards. Elevate will recruit facilities and schools to participate and manage communication with providers. We are seeking one or more Illinois EPA Accredited Laboratories to provide sampling containers, sample analysis, and related services as further described in this Request for Proposals (RFP).

Additional information on the program, known as LeadCare Illinois, is available at <https://leadcareillinois.org/>

### Scope of Work

Elevate is seeking the services of one or more Illinois EPA accredited laboratories to provide lead-in-water testing and analysis services for licensed child care facilities and schools in the state of Illinois. The initial project period will occur from July 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, with the possibility of it being extended for an additional three one-year terms. We are anticipating approximately 10,000 to 31,250 samples per project period and prefer the laboratory have the capacity to process up to 2,800 samples per month, although no specific testing volume is guaranteed. Any lab responding to this proposal must provide proof that they are currently accredited by the Illinois EPA.

#### **Task 1. Provide Information and Expert Review Necessary to Complete Quality Assurance Project Plan and Respond to Inquiries of Same**

Funding for this project originates from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, via a subaward from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The USEPA requires a detailed Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to be completed, reviewed, and approved. Elements of the QAPP are tied to the laboratories performing the analysis of samples collected for the program, including their handling, testing, retention, internal quality controls, and other elements. The laboratory or laboratories selected for this RFP will be provided with Elevate's most recently approved QAPP for lead in water testing and must be able and willing to update the laboratory specific sections to reflect the lab's procedures and equipment. The revisions will require approval from IDPH and the USEPA. Should either agency have additional questions or concerns relating to the laboratory specific sections, the selected lab(s) will work with Elevate to thoroughly respond to the questions as necessary to secure approval of the QAPP.



The cost of providing this information and expert review must be borne by the laboratory as part of its overhead or otherwise incorporated into its per sample fee. The laboratory will NOT be paid separately for this service.

**Task 2. Provide Testing Supplies**

The selected lab must provide to Elevate appropriate sampling containers for conducting lead in water testing in accordance with USEPA Method 200.8. The vast majority of bottles will be 250mL, but some 1L bottles will be needed as well. Elevate will distribute the sampling containers to participants in the program along with instructions, chain of custody forms and other documents as appropriate. The lab must be able to ship or cause to be shipped to Elevate at least 250 to 500 containers per week upon request, in quantities not to exceed 1,000 per shipment unless otherwise agreed to by Elevate. While Elevate will only send sampling containers to likely program participants, the laboratory acknowledges that not all sampling containers shipped will be utilized and ultimately returned for analysis. Based on past experience, we anticipate half of containers will be returned, but the actual completion rate may be significantly higher or lower.

The cost of providing sampling containers must be incorporated into the laboratory's per sample fee. The laboratory will NOT be paid separately for this service.

**Task 3. Processing Returned Samples**

Elevate will provide program participants with a box and pre-paid shipping label to send the samples to the laboratory. The laboratory must have a physical office open during typical business hours to receive these packages from the United States Postal Service or a commercial carrier. (The cost of the shipping is NOT expected to be covered by the laboratory, however, Elevate will consider the distance of the laboratory's office and that impact on shipping costs as part of its selection criteria).

Once a set of samples has been received at the lab, the lab must properly preserve samples using a nitric acid preservative or as outlined in the approved QAPP. The lab must also promptly review the returned materials and make note of any errors. Because program participants are responsible for collecting lead in water samples, sampling errors can occur. Common errors may include improper stagnation time period, improper timing of first draw and 30-second flush samples, improper filling of sample bottles, missing or incorrect information on the Chain of Custody Form, and missing sample bottles. The lab staff is expected to inform Elevate staff of any errors discovered when sample kits and Chain of Custody forms are returned. Elevate staff will contact the provider regarding the sampling error and follow-up actions that are required. Elevate will help facilitate any required corrections with the lab. If the samples are able to be processed, but there are limits to the data because of the errors, Elevate will explain those limits to the program participant. Any time a qualifier is added to the sample result because of a sampling error, the lab should also add an explanation to the official lab results report. Should the QAPP prohibit testing of a particular sample due to errors, or should Elevate direct the lab to reject a sample as a result of errors, the lab will appropriately dispose of the sample, and no charge shall be assessed for that sample.



Additionally, the laboratory may receive samples after the expiration of the contract, or in exceedance of the budget Elevate may have within a time period for testing. Provided Elevate communicates to the laboratory that no more samples may be processed, the laboratory will not charge Elevate for any additional samples. To the extent allowed under the QAPP, the laboratory may preserve and hold samples for analysis until such time additional budget is available. If agreed upon with Elevate, the laboratory may also offer the program participant the option to have the samples processed at the participant's expense. Otherwise, the laboratory will properly dispose of any samples received in excess of available budget or after the end of the contract period.

Once the kit has been reviewed for errors, the lab must process samples using U.S. EPA analytical method 200.8 and in accordance with the approved QAPP. Returned samples must be processed by the lab within 14 days of receipt and the lab is expected to be able to process at minimum 250 returned samples per week. Preference will be given to labs that can process more than 700 samples per week. The lab must communicate any unexpected delays immediately with Elevate.

#### **Task 4. Reporting of the Results**

The laboratory will create an electronic record of the information provided on the chain of custody form including but not limited to the facility name, address, sampling location, sample type, sample ID number, stagnation start and stop date/time, and sampling date/time. The laboratory will also maintain an electronic record of the test results, any qualifiers, and relevant quality control parameters associated with the tests as further documented in the approved QAPP. No more than daily, but within 24 hours of results being finalized, the laboratory will electronically place records of test results and other information collected in designated folders in a secure file management system that is shared between Elevate, the lab and Illinois Department of Public Health. The information will be provided in an excel file (.xlsx) using the exact specifications provided by Elevate in Appendix A. The laboratory will provide test files and work with Elevate to resolve any processing errors for importing the results.

#### **Task 5. Communication and Service Requirements**

The selected laboratory will make qualified and knowledgeable staff familiar with Elevate's account available for occasional and reasonable telephone calls as well as respond to emails within 24 hours during typical business hours. The laboratory agrees to weekly meetings if necessary during the launch of the program and monthly thereafter as necessary to ensure the smooth execution of the program.

### **Payment Terms**

The laboratory will provide these services for a fixed price per completed sample. Only samples with reported results will be considered complete.

The laboratory will invoice Elevate monthly for tests completed the prior month. Elevate will remit payment for proper uncontested invoices within 30 days.

## Required Response Documents & Submission Requirements

All proposals must be submitted as a single PDF file including the documents below via an electronic message to [waterproposals@elevatenp.org](mailto:waterproposals@elevatenp.org). Responses must be received by 5 PM CDT, Wednesday June 24, 2026. Automated responses will be sent acknowledging receipt of proposals, and it is the submitter's responsibility to ensure receipt of the acknowledgement. Elevate staff will be available to assist in troubleshooting submissions that are not being acknowledged, but only until the submission deadline. Responders are therefore encouraged to submit early. Elevate will not be responsible for or offer extensions as the result of technical difficulties that result in late submissions.

1. Identifying Information
  - a. Laboratory name, business address
  - b. Contact person name, phone number, and email address
  - c. Sample shipping address(es) (where samples from Illinois will be shipped to minimize shipping costs)
2. Copy of Illinois EPA Laboratory Accreditation
3. Information on capacity for this project
  - a. Number of lead in water samples able to provide per week
  - b. Number of lead in water samples able to provide per month
4. Cost information, all inclusive per scope of work
  - a. Cost per sample for 2026
  - b. Cost per sample for 2027
  - c. Cost per sample for 2028
  - d. Cost per sample for 2029
5. Brief (maximum one page) summary of the laboratory's experience, including years in operation, highlight of staff qualifications, and to the extent applicable participating in a program such as the one described herein.
6. Acknowledgment of ability to comply with the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work and the insurance requirements (included in this RFP as Appendix B).
7. Copy of laboratory's standard contract or terms and conditions. Note that this will be used to expedite review and Elevate reserves the right to negotiate any and all terms or decline to accept any such terms or conditions.

## Questions and Overview Session:

Q&A Session: The Q&A Session meeting hosted by Elevate will be held virtually on June 11, 2026, at 2:00 PM CDT. Join via Microsoft Teams by using this link: [Join the meeting now](#) (Meeting ID: 294 375 719 884 452, Passcode: wJ9gw6JW) or call in on your phone at [+1 773-977-7319](tel:+17739777319), [527655967#](tel:+1527655967) Phone conference ID: 527 655 967#



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Attendance is not mandatory but is highly encouraged. Questions can be sent in advance to [elizabeth.ornelas@elevatenp.org](mailto:elizabeth.ornelas@elevatenp.org). Questions will be accepted at that address until 5PM CDT on June 12, 2026. All substantive questions received at the Q&A session or received by email by the deadline, along with their answers, will be posted to Elevate's Contract page at <https://www.elevatenp.org/contract-with-us/> no later than 5PM CDT on June 17, 2026.

## Evaluation Process

All properly submitted proposals will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee. Submissions which do not include all the information listed in the "Required Response Documents & Submission Requirements" section may be rejected at Elevate's discretion. Laboratories will be selected based upon cost per sample, adjusting for shipping cost, available capacity to meet the demand specified in the Scope of Work section, and their demonstrated experience in supporting similar efforts.

## RFP Terms and Conditions

Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by Elevate to award any contract or work. Elevate, in its discretion, reserves all rights available to it in law and at equity including, but not limited to the right to:

- modify, cancel or terminate this RFP at any time;
- reject any or all responses received for this RFP;
- enter further discussions with one or more of the respondents;
- waive any specification or term of this RFP; and
- not award the work to any respondent.

## Appendix A – Electronic Reporting Format

- Following columns must be filled out in an .xlsx excel format spreadsheet
  - A (DCFS/NCES Number)- Must be 6 digits if DCFS license number. Must be 7 or 12 digits if a NCES number. If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - B (Lead ID)- If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - C (Building ID) - If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - D (Building Description) If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - E (Type of Submission) If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - F (Work Order Number)- Not currently used. The IEPA Work Order field is 20 characters
  - G (Result Reported) - Not currently used. See Sample Date for preferred formats
  - H (Sample Date)- %m/%d/%Y and %m/%d/%y are both supported at this time
  - I (Sample Time) - %l:%M %p
  - J (Sample Number) – Not currently used
  - K (Fixture Type)- 255 character limit
  - L (Sample Type)- 255 character limit
  - M (Sample Volume) – Number 10 character limit
  - N (Laboratory Name)- 25 character limit
  - O (Analytical Method)- Not currently used
  - P (Concentration)- Text or numbers (ND or 0.0)
  - Q (Reporting Limit)- Not currently used
  - R (Water Result Name) If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - S (Water Result ID) - If not provided on Chain of Custody form leave blank
  - T (Qualifier Notes) – For Laboratory use

## Appendix B – Insurance Requirements

Any laboratory chosen by Elevate to perform services under this RFP (each a “Laboratory”) must agree to furnish and keep in force the insurance specified below for the term of this Agreement and for a period of three (3) years after termination hereof if the policy is on a claims-made basis.

- A. Worker's Compensation.** Statutory Worker's Compensation Insurance including the Employer's Liability Coverage as required by the State of Illinois.
  
- B. Professional (including Cyber Risk) Liability Policy.** Professional Liability including cyber risk coverage with a minimum limit of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per claim and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) in the aggregate.

### **Insurance Policy Requirements.**

- A.** All policies of insurance shall be issued by insurance companies with a general policy holder's rating of not less than A- and a financial rating of not less than Class VII as rated in the most current "Best's Insurance Reports," and licensed to do business in the State of Illinois and authorized to issue such policy or policies. All policies of insurance must be written as primary policies not contributing with and not in excess of coverage that Elevate may carry. Laboratory shall furnish copies of endorsements evidencing this prior to performing any services.
  
- B.** Laboratory shall have the right to insure and maintain the insurance policies required under blanket insurance coverages so long as such blanket insurance policies comply with the amounts of insurance and other requirements hereof.
  
- C.** All policies of insurance procured by Laboratory shall contain endorsements providing that: (i) such insurance may not be materially changed, amended or canceled with respect to Elevate or the additional insureds except after thirty (30) days' prior written notice sent by registered or certified mail; (ii) Laboratory shall be solely responsible for the payment of all premiums under such policies and that Elevate shall have no obligation for the payment thereof; (iii) all liability insurance and excess coverage (umbrella) is primary coverage as required above; and (iv) that the Laboratory's carrier has endorsed a full and complete waiver of subrogation on each policy waiving all rights of subrogation against Elevate, which waiver applies regardless of any self-insured retention or deductible.
  
- D.** The original policy or policies, or duly executed certificates for the same, shall be delivered to Elevate upon request, and upon renewals of such policies not less than thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of any such coverage.