Wastewater-Based Surveillance (WBS) Program Manager

Are you passionate about public health and building collaborations to make a difference? Are you knowledgeable about the communication of data to inform public health decision-making? Canadian Water Network (CWN) is seeking a qualified Program Manager to lead a 14-month demonstration project that will support public health authorities in interpreting the meaning of wastewater-based surveillance (WBS) data for their communities and effectively communicating these results to the public.

Consider joining us if you are motivated by:

- Connecting people to share knowledge and build collaborative capacity
- Working with a diverse team to engage a pan-Canadian network of leaders in the public health and wastewater sectors
- A strong desire to continuously learn while facilitating the learning and collaboration of others
- Working in a dynamic, fast-paced and agile environment

About Canadian Water Network

CWN is a national nonprofit with a 20-year track record as a trusted broker and accelerator of research knowledge into practice and policy. Our strategic plan charts a course for CWN as a catalyst for progress to help communities achieve a resilient, equitable and healthy future through water. CWN convenes cross-sector decision-makers who would not otherwise come together, brings research to the table to inform strategic dialogue on complex challenges, and fosters collaborations within and beyond the water sector to move Canada forward. Learn more about CWN at www.cwn-rce.ca.

About the demonstration project

Early in the pandemic, CWN established the COVID-19 Wastewater Coalition (https://cwn-rce.ca/covid-19-wastewater-coalition/) to catalyze knowledge sharing, collaboration and coordinated action to assess how WBS could be applied to inform public health decisions in communities across Canada. Building on this work, CWN and the National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID) have formed a strategic partnership to implement a demonstration project from January 2023 to March 2024. The demonstration project will support public health officials undertaking WBS for pathogens and other agents to effectively interpret the data's meaning and communicate with the public about risk.

Demonstration project participants will include local public health authorities from several provinces and Indigenous communities where WBS programs are developing or underway. Through virtual and in-person meetings, the project will facilitate knowledge sharing, conduct a needs assessment, and develop pilot materials to support data interpretation and communication of WBS findings and the ethical implementation of WBS with Indigenous communities. This demonstration project fills a critical gap by enabling effective collaboration and communication across all levels of the WBS ecosystem that is necessary to realize an expanded scope, application and uptake of WBS, where desired, to achieve public health benefits for Canadians.

Job description

The Wastewater-Based Surveillance (WBS) Program Manager works closely with CWN's CEO, Director of Program Development, the Knowledge Mobilization and Evaluation Advisor, and strategic partners to lead the implementation of the *Interpretation and Communication of Wastewater-Based Surveillance Data Demonstration Project*.

The Program Manager brings a flexible and adaptable skillset to: convene and facilitate discussions among public health authorities including those serving Indigenous communities; develop and implement peer-sharing groups; conduct an end-user needs assessment; leverage the expertise of a national, cross-sector advisory group of leaders in public health and WBS; engage external experts and curate research, information and knowledge; lead the development and pilot testing of guidance materials for public health practitioners; and oversee an external project evaluation.

This unique and exciting position reports to CWN's CEO and interacts with the entire CWN team.

Key responsibilities

- Lead the recruitment and engagement of public health authorities and practitioners in British Columbia, Ontario and Manitoba who work with WBS data and are involved in communicating about WBS to the public to participate in the demonstration project.

- Support the recruitment of diverse, cross-sector expert advisory group members, leveraging CWN and its strategic partners' national networks and connections. Lead expert advisory group meetings and act as the key point of contact, keeping advisors informed of progress and incorporating feedback and guidance into demonstration project activities and materials.

- Lead the facilitation of peer-sharing groups and organize peer-sharing triads focused on key topics related to interpreting and communicating WBS data to public audiences.

Conduct an end-user needs assessment based on the demonstration project discussions and learnings.

- Design the format and content, support planning and logistics, and facilitate discussions at a Wastewater-Based Surveillance Summit in May 2023 (Winnipeg, MB). Lead the development of additional presentations at CWN and external events, including CWN's Blue Cities conference.

- Conduct an end-user needs assessment of materials and resources needed to support public health practitioners in interpreting the meaning of WBS data and communicating risks to the public, using knowledge gathered through peer-sharing discussions and validated through the in-person Summit.

- Lead the development of draft pilot materials (frameworks, training, or other resources to be determined based on the end-user needs assessment) to support the interpretation of WBS data meaning and communication of risk to the public, by public health practitioners. Oversee the pilot testing of these materials by demonstration project participants, collecting feedback from participants and expert advisors to finalize these materials and make them publicly available.

- Lead the development of other high-quality project-related content including briefs, backgrounders, meeting agendas and summaries, webinars, conference presentations and reports by synthesizing information collected from sources such as surveys, interviews, peer-sharing groups and triads, input from expert advisors, workshops discussions, databases, peer-reviewed literature, and policy or regulatory documents.

- Scan the existing knowledge base and proactively monitor emerging pan-Canadian and regional discussions on wastewater-based surveillance topics and issues to inform demonstration project implementation. Regularly share updates, insights and knowledge with CWN leadership, the demonstration project team and NCCID.

- Collaborate with CWN's Communications Manager, Knowledge Mobilization and Evaluation Advisor and NCCID to develop and disseminate communications content including key messages to ensure that appropriate stakeholders are engaged, aware and informed about the demonstration project.

- Liaise with CWN's strategic partners, including NCCID, throughout the project to provide regular updates and solicit input, leveraging partner perspectives and knowledge in the development of project approaches, materials, outputs and resources.

- Develop a final report to be shared with demonstration project funders and participants.

Canadian Water Network
Réseau canadien de l'eau

National Collaborating Centre
for Infectious Diseases
Centre de collaboration nationale
des maladies infectieuses

- With support from the Knowledge Mobilization and Evaluation Advisor, collect evaluation data throughout the demonstration project and oversee an external third-party evaluation.

Knowledge and skills

- Relevant public health background such as public data interpretation and communication; public health communication, risk assessment, program development and implementation; epidemiology; or development and implementation of local or regional wastewater-based surveillance programs.

- Prior experience working in, with or for Indigenous communities on public health program development and/or implementation is an asset.

- Demonstrated ability to communicate, engage and build rapport with local and regional public health authorities and practitioners.

- Strong discussion facilitation and moderation skills for in-person and virtual events.

- Superior verbal and written communication ability; engaging presentation and active listening skills are critical.

- Demonstrated experience communicating with, seeking and receiving guidance from experts and knowledge-holders who are volunteers. Tact, good judgement and strong interpersonal skills are essential.

- Demonstrated ability to digest complex concepts, examine and incorporate diverse perspectives, and summarize key insights effectively for a range of expert and non-expert audiences.

- Ability to synthesize various sources of information and tailor key messages to the local/regional perspective.

- A strong sense of self-motivation and an ability to work independently and collaboratively within a cross-functional team structure and with external strategic partners while managing tight project timelines are essential.

- Strong technology skills, including MS Office 365 Suite, Dropbox, SharePoint and various videoconferencing platforms.

- Fluency in written and spoken French is an asset.

Education and experience

- A master's degree in public health or the health sciences.

- A minimum of three to five years of professional experience in the public health sector.
- Prior experience working with data interpretation and/or communication of public health data, particularly related to WBS programs is a strong asset.

- Professional training or certification in meeting facilitation, project management or program evaluation would be an asset.

Why Canadian Water Network

- Canada has a wealth of water knowledge in our municipalities, utilities, academic institutions and governments. In this role, you will join a well-respected nonprofit to connect knowledge with current and emerging water leaders across Canada to advance, accelerate and improve decision-making in the water and water-adjacent space.

- Our flexible work policy – we recognize the importance of balance in our lives and encourage you to prioritize the balance in yours. We will support you on and off the job so you can be fully present in both your work and home lives.

- We have a collaborative culture filled with genuinely good people.

Work environment

Although our home base is in Waterloo, Ontario, our team has been working remotely since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are looking ahead and are committed to maintaining a flexible, hybrid work environment. Consequently, CWN will consider candidates from anywhere in Canada in support of our pan-Canadian network.

Terms of employment

The Wastewater-Based Surveillance Program Manager is a full-time, fixed-term contract position ending March 31, 2024. The start date is subject to receipt of external funding for the demonstration project. You must be based, and have the legal right to work, in Canada.

All employees of Canadian Water Network Inc. are required to provide proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have an approved accommodation.

This position requires some domestic travel, including the ability to travel to Winnipeg for an in-person workshop in May 2023 and the Greater Toronto Area for an in-person meeting in October 2023.

Application instructions

Please send your resume and cover letter sharing your interest in this position to careers@cwn-rce.ca as soon as possible; we will begin interviewing candidates in early to mid-January. Our commitment is to support a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment and hire the best candidate. To eliminate any bias in our applications review process, please withhold all identifying information from your application's attachments (including your name, address, personal social media accounts, etc.). Your name and contact information should be included in the body of your email so we can contact interview candidates. The position will be posted until we have found the ideal candidate.