



# National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) Student Guide



National Environmental  
Health Association

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# NEPHIP Student Guide

We welcome students and faculty to the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) Guide. You will find this overview packed with helpful information about NEPHIP. There are links throughout specifically for students to start the application process.

## About Us

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) was established in 1937 to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce. Currently serving more than 7,000 members, we empower and educate professionals by providing them with the tools and resources they need to make the greatest contributions possible in creating healthy environments for their communities.

We offer six national highly regarded credentials and eight certifications, produce the Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, and publish the widely respected and peer-reviewed Journal of Environmental Health (JEH). The JEH serves as a one-stop-shop for publications in virtually every area of the environmental health field through its online bookstore, providing networking and committee participation opportunities, and developing positions on timely and serious environmental health concerns.

## Our Programs

- Climate and health
- Food safety
- Private water and recreational water safety
- Vector and pest control
- Environmental health workforce development
- Air quality
- Health homes
- Tracking and informatics
- Emergency preparedness

To learn more about NEHA, please visit [www.NEHA.org/about](http://www.NEHA.org/about)





## About the Program

Since 2015, we have developed and hosted [NEPHIP](#) through our partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help environmental health student interns gain valuable work experience, develop meaningful professional relationships, and ultimately to introduce them to the many diverse and rewarding career opportunities that exist in state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) environmental public health agencies following graduation.

NEPHIP is a 400-hour paid internship opportunity connecting environmental health undergraduate and graduate students from the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) accredited programs, to qualified environmental public health agencies for NEPHIP funded internships. This workforce initiative supports establishment of qualified applicant pipelines to STLT public health agencies.

Year after year, NEPHIP demonstrates our success in connecting highly qualified environmental health students with STLT health agencies. Interns experience firsthand, the needs, benefits, and opportunities of working in governmental public health agencies. Practitioners share by example the important work environmental health professionals engage in every day. STLT health agencies are matched with interns trained by [National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council \(EHAC\)](#) accredited programs. The qualified interns are eager to contribute their support to each Environmental Health (EH) program's delivery of public health services.

Students, through cooperative efforts with their health agency mentor, faculty supervisor, and EH program will have the opportunity to:

- Gain internship hours required for their degree
- Earn credit hours for required coursework
- Complete a special project for their portfolio
- Become inspired about coursework and find passion for a specific direction in environmental health
- Network with environmental public health professionals and community members
- Form connections with mentors to gain career guidance and opportunities

Participating environmental public health agencies can anticipate many benefits through hosting a NEPHIP intern, including:



- Dedicated intern assistance to advance identified project work
- Fresh perspectives from students who will be the next generation of EH professionals
- Additional support for projects that have been impacted by competing priorities
- Opportunity for increased staff engagement, peer connections, and invitations to new initiatives and programs
- Recruiting and hiring opportunities for workforce expansion

### **We Are Here to Help**

We encourage you to contact us for assistance with questions about the NEPHIP program and the application process. Please email us at [NEPHIP@neha.org](mailto:NEPHIP@neha.org). We look forward to working with you.

NEPHIP is supported by CDC's National Center for Environmental Health through cooperative agreement CDC-RFA-OT18-1802.



## NEHA Partnerships to support NEPHIP

### EHAC-Accredited Programs

Since 1967 the Environmental Health Accreditation Council - EHAC has been the gold standard of environmental health program accreditation at universities across the nation. You can find out more through this link [NEHSPAC](#) to the **National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council**, the official name of EHAC that was adopted over 2 decades ago.

Because of the long-trusted accreditation process and standards still applied by the EHAC volunteer council members, the CDC has restricted the NEPHIP internship awards to only students from EHAC accredited programs. A list of EHAC-accredited undergraduate and graduate environmental health academic programs is provided below.

- [Accredited Undergraduate Environmental Health Academic Programs](#)
- [Accredited Graduate Environmental Health Academic Programs](#)



## NEPHIP Program Updates

In 2022, NEHA launched a newly revised and expanded National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP). The expanded program offers many additional benefits and opportunities for professional and career development:

- Choice of internship cohorts each year with opportunities to apply for Summer, Fall, or Spring NEPHIP internships
- Now up to 50 EHAC student interns can be selected per academic year
- Strengthened promotion and recruitment support for increased diversity and inclusion among interns
- Provide student interns with valuable professional career mentorship sessions with EH professionals working in STLT health agencies
- Participation opportunities for professional development learning sessions provided by NEHA staff
- NEPHIP Interns receive a one-year NEHA student membership
- NEHA staff support interns in developing presentations/publication of successful internship project outcomes
- Enhanced internship coordination and evaluation support to strengthen experiential learning outcomes
- Opportunity to consider how climate change can both directly and indirectly impact environmental health hazards, community health outcomes, and environmental public health program sustainability
- Consider environmental justice and health equity concerns as part of internship projects to identify disproportionate health effects among various local population groups

### Internship Format

To allow flexibility for students, NEPHIP now offers the internship experience virtually, in-person/on-site, or hybrid formats depending on student and health agency needs.



## Our Role

Our role in NEPHIP is to help build new relationships between EHAC-accredited environmental health academic programs and state, tribal, local, and territorial environmental public health agencies. In this role, we will solicit applications from eligible host agencies and select host agencies based on established application criteria, including intern support, interesting and applicable independent student project, breadth, and depth of programmatic intern opportunities, PHAB accreditation, serving medically under-served and/or rural populations, and geographic and student diversity.

In addition, we will also:

- Solicit applications from eligible students and select interns based on established application criteria, including academic competence, resume, written essay responses, faculty letter of recommendation, and other qualifications
- Match selected interns with host agencies and ensure the intern's qualifications and professional goals match with opportunities at the health agency
- Provide support to interns throughout duration of internship and ensure timely delivery of the three stipend payments directly to interns
- Provide health agencies with intern support packages to help cover costs associated with hosting an intern
- Administer the internship that offers multiple benefits and perks to the interns including membership to NEHA, mentorship sessions with seasoned EH leaders, free admission to networking events, professional development preconference workshop, and publishing opportunities
- Provide coordination support to interns and health agencies throughout duration of internship
- Evaluate the quality and the effectiveness of the internship experience





## Student Benefits, Eligibility, and Application

NEPHIP is designed to allow students to gain a firsthand perspective on the day-to-day responsibilities of environmental public health professionals, make invaluable connections with those working in the field, and consider careers working in state, tribal, local, or territorial environmental public health agencies following graduation.

Students are required to complete an independent project during their internship. The project will be identified and managed by the health agency. This project may be used by the intern to meet university internship requirements. While projects targeting a wide variety of environmental public health issues are welcomed, student and health agency participants are encouraged to explore how climate and health and environmental justice issues are either directly or indirectly related to the project purpose and environmental health hazard/issue being addressed. Further identifying health equity issues associated with project as well as sustainability considerations are strongly encouraged.

### NEPHIP Considerations and Benefits

**Stipends:** Through funding from CDC, the program provides a base stipend of \$6,000 for undergraduate and \$8,000 for graduate students for a 400-hour internship through NEHA to cover lodging, food, and incidental expenses. Additionally, students who relocate for an in-person internship experience will be offered an additional need-based relocation allowance starting at \$500.

### Eligibility

To be considered as an intern for this program, students must:

- Attend an undergraduate or graduate environmental health academic program that is accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC):
  - [Accredited Undergraduate Environmental Health Academic Programs](#)
  - [Accredited Graduate Environmental Health Academic Programs](#)
- Be a current sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student at the time the application is submitted and have completed at least one full year of academic training with most courses in environmental health focus areas.



- Be enrolled as a student during the summer or fall internship.
- Have active health insurance.

Students may be interviewed by the Health Agencies to ensure that the student is a good fit for the project.



## Student Application

Undergraduate and graduate college students currently enrolled in a National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) accredited institution are eligible to apply for a NEPHIP internship experience.

To be considered for placement in NEPHIP, students are requested to:

- Complete an application.
- Submit current resume.
- Provide unofficial transcripts.
- Letter of Recommendation Form from a faculty member of the EH program at the EHAC-accredited academic institution (a letter may be substituted if preferred).



## Intern Terms of Agreement

**Internship Format:** We have opened the experience to virtual, in-person/on-site, or hybrid formats depending on student and health agency needs. We offer a host of virtual tools to help support virtual internships including an online community platform for all NEPHIP interns.

**Matching:** Our staff will match the selected interns with the environmental public health agencies based on geolocation preferences, interests, and professional goals that align with opportunities at the health agency. We cannot guarantee the preferred placement.

**Stipend:** We will provide a stipend of \$6,000 for undergraduate and \$8,000 for graduate interns. Stipend payments are intended to assist with living expenses. The stipend will be distributed directly to interns via direct deposit. Before stipend payments are made, we will request verification from the health agency mentor that the intern has been participating in the internship throughout the stipend dates. Students will be paid in three installments throughout the internship.

**Relocation Allowance:** In addition to the base stipends, students who relocate for an in-person internship experience will be offered an additional need-based relocation allowance starting at \$500.

**Internship Start Date:** NEPHIP interns will participate in a 400-hour internship during designated internship periods for each NEPHIP session.

**Internship End Date:** If students choose to extend their internship past 400 hours, it is the responsibility of the host agency.

**Work Hours:** Interns are expected to work within the host health agency's hours of operation. Students and health agencies in the same or neighboring time zones will be matched accordingly for those participating in virtual or hybrid internship formats.

**Employment Status and W9:** Interns are not a NEHA employee or subcontractor; thus, we will not submit withholding, income tax, social security, or Medicare payments on their behalf. We will submit a 1099 form to the IRS and the recipients of the payments by January 31 of the following year in which the stipend funds were issued. Each intern is responsible for ensuring that appropriate taxes are paid on the stipend received. A W9 must be completed for our records before processing stipend payments.



**Working Arrangements:** All arrangements for the internship, including start and end dates, work hours or timesheet, sick policy, etc. should be made by the academic program in partnership with the intern and host health agency mentor to meet academic guidelines and requirements.

**Health Insurance:** Anyone selected for an internship must have active health insurance and be capable of performing various environmental health tasks, some of which may be physically challenging.

**Background Check:** A background check will be performed by NEHA's Human Resources department on all student intern participants prior to the start of the internship experience. If the background check results are not satisfactory to NEHA's standards, the internship offer will be withdrawn.

**Liability:** We are acting solely as an administrator for the stipend and have NO responsibility for internship arrangements, academic program requirements or liability insurance. NEHA provides no training, no tools, and no benefits, including Workers' Compensation insurance, to the student intern. Interns are asked to sign a waiver to confirm their understanding that the internship is under the guidance of the host health agency and academic program. Host health agencies or academic programs are encouraged to provide liability coverage for the intern.

**Midterm Progress and Internship Evaluation:** The student will be required to complete weekly evaluation forms. In addition, the student will be required to meet with the NEHA internship coordinator at the midpoint of their internship to provide feedback on their experience. This will be an opportunity for the student to discuss their experience and any issues. However, please contact us at any time if questions or concerns arise. Students will be asked to evaluate their experience and NEPHIP program at the conclusion of their internship. This information is helpful for making program improvements, determining impact, and demonstrating outcomes.

**Email Communication:** All interns must be accessible via e-mail during their assignment. If interns are not accessing student emails on a regular basis during the internship period, a personal email should be provided.

**Webpage Permission:** We will ask permission to share comments from the midterm and/or evaluation to be posted on our website.

**Non-Compliance with Program Requirements:** We reserve the right to terminate stipend payments in response to unacceptable conduct, disciplinary problems, or





performance-based actions noted by the intern's academic program advisor or health agency mentor. Stipends will be pro-rated through the last day worked by the intern.

**Withdrawing from NEPHIP:** In the event the student wishes to voluntarily withdraw from the assignment at any time, they must follow academic program guidelines as well as provide 14 days written notice to us.

**Intern Professional Conduct:** Your conduct should make the health agency want to host other students from your institution in the future. Be sure that you clearly identify start/end dates and determine your work schedule with your worksite supervisor; familiarize yourself with and adhere to organizational arrangements, policies, procedures and functions; maintain confidentiality of work-related personnel and projects; understand what constitutes a permissible work absence and whom to notify if absent; report to your faculty coordinator changes in work schedule, supervision or problems at your site; and remain drug and alcohol-free, and avoid use of controlled substances.



## Project Guidance and Considerations

Independent projects are open to a wide variety of environmental public health issues and identified program needs identified by environmental public health host sites. Together with CDC, we are encouraging students and health agencies to explore how environmental health, climate change, and environmental justice issues are either directly or indirectly associated with the purpose and environmental health hazard/issue being addressed by proposed projects. Considerations regarding how these priority areas converge with environmental health hazards and their impact on community health outcomes and environmental public health program sustainability are included in the revised program impact and evaluation metrics. Further, projects will be asked to help identify environmental justice and health equity concerns that are associated with identified internship projects and help to better understand the disproportionate health effects these issues may have among various population groups. The health agency mentor and agency will identify a project focus for the internship. The focus should be from an initiative, project or program that is a current concern identified within the scope of issues normally addressed by the hosting agency jurisdiction. Examples of potential projects include:

- **Climate and Health – The impact of indoor and outdoor air quality on health and policy:** conducting an in-depth analysis on environmental policies currently in place within the health agency’s jurisdiction and their ability to impact human health.
- **Climate and Health – Identifying contributing factors to wildfire conditions:** conducting an assessment on mitigation and adaptation strategies, health effects of smoke, and evaluating effective communication strategies to reduce risk.
- **Vector Control – Identifying impacts of climate change on vector populations and control strategies:** analyze data to determine any geographic trends in vector-borne disease to inform enhanced surveillance in disaster prone regions.
- **Water Quality – Using EPA’s Cyanobacteria Assessment Network (CyAN) tool for identifying harmful algal blooms (HABs):** assist in assessing the environmental health information and untreated recreational water data systems used by the health agency and associated partners to determine whether current systems adequately identify and characterize untreated recreational water hazards and harmful exposures.



- **Data Informatics/Tracking: Identify and extract data from relevant data sources:** conduct research to understand the impacts of environmental health hazards on vulnerable and under-served populations and inform public health policies.

Deliverable examples could include a literature review, a community health assessment, a white paper/report, an infographic, or a presentation/report of findings and recommendations.

NEPHIP interns and host public health agencies have access to guidance and support from NEHA staff along with faculty from the intern's specific environmental health program. Our partners at EHAC are ready to assist when appropriate and requested.



## What to Expect When Accepted into NEPHIP

### Before the internship starts

- Define your start and end date with the host health agency and student advisor. Communicate these dates with the NEHA Internship Coordinator
- Have good internet access
- Arrange with the responsible administrative party for any of the following that may be needed: intern email account, HIPAA information privacy training, etc.

### First day of internship

On or before the first day of the internship, the intern will meet virtually or in-person with their mentor from the host health agency. During this meeting, the following will be discussed:

- Intern workplan
- Intern's environmental public health topic areas of interest
- Environmental public health programmatic areas available to the intern
- Independent project, including deliverables and timeline
- Intern duties and tasks, including deliverables and competencies met
- Frequency of meetings/communication between intern and mentor
- Trainings, workshops, or meetings that the intern can participate in
- Expectations of the host mentor and the intern, including dress code and workplace culture

### Last day of internship

- Complete final presentation to health agency mentor and NEHA Internship Coordinator
- Complete final evaluation about their experience and NEPHIP program at the conclusion of their internship



## Expectations of Interns

- Act in a professional and ethical manner
- Dress in an appropriate manner for work calls
- Follow through on commitments
- Do not conduct personal business during work hours
- Be prompt when reporting to work and with completing assignments
- Give your work your best effort
- Be positive and supportive
- Keep an open mind; avoid jumping to conclusions; develop informed opinions
- Be observant; note how employees organize their ideas and respond to and ask questions
- Be fair, considerate, honest, trustworthy, and cooperative when dealing with co-workers and clients/customers
- Assert yourself and your ideas in an appropriate and tactful manner
- Seek feedback from your supervisor(s), accept suggestions for corrective changes in behavior and attempt to improve your performance
- Accept constructive criticism and continuously strive to improve and to grow professionally
- Enhance your professional effectiveness by improving skills and acquiring new knowledge





## Resources

1. NEPHIP Webpage – <https://www.neha.org/nephip>
2. National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) – <https://www.nehspac.org/about-ehac/>
3. EHAC Undergraduate Accredited Degree Programs - <https://www.nehspac.org/about-ehac/accredited-programs-ehac-undergraduate-programs/>
4. EHAC Graduate Accredited Degree Programs - <https://www.nehspac.org/about-ehac/accredited-programs-ehac-graduate-programs/>

