



National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) Host Guide



National Environmental
Health Association

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NEPHIP Host Guide

We at the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) welcome environmental public health practitioners and agency staff to the NEPHIP Guide. You will find this overview packed with helpful information about NEPHIP. There are links throughout specifically for host agencies to start the application process.

About Us

NEHA was established in 1937 to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce. Currently serving over 7,000 members, we empower and educate these 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 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.

NEHA Programs

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

To learn more about NEHA, please visit www.neha.org/about



About the Program

Since 2015, we have developed and hosted the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (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 and 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 internship opportunity connecting environmental health undergraduate and graduate students from 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 pathways 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 public health professionals engage in every day. STLT health agencies are matched with interns currently enrolled in National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) accredited programs. The qualified interns are eager to contribute their support to each environmental health program's delivery of public health services.

Students, through cooperative efforts with their health agency mentor, faculty supervisor, and environmental health 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 environmental public health 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

Environmental public health agency staff and mentors are encouraged to contact us for assistance with hosting questions about the NEPHIP program and the application process. Please email us at NEPHIP@neha.org. We look forward to working with your team to become a NEPHIP host agency.

NEPHIP is supported by CDC's National Center for Environmental Health through cooperative agreement CDC-RFA-PW24-0080.



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](https://www.nehspac.org) 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 placements to only students from EHAC accredited programs. A list of EHAC accredited undergraduate and graduate environmental health academic programs is provided below. Information on becoming accredited is available at <https://www.nehspac.org>.

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



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.

In addition, we will also undertake the following activities -

- 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 payments directly to interns. Graduate students receive \$8,000 and undergraduate students receive \$6,000. These payments are made directly from NEHA, so no funding has to pass through your agency.
- Provide health agencies with intern support packages to help reimburse costs associated with hosting an intern
- Administer the internships that offers multiple benefits and perks to the interns including membership to NEHA, mentorship sessions with seasoned environmental health leaders, professional development resources, 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



Host Agency Benefits, Eligibility, and Application

State, tribal, local, and territorial health agencies interested in hosting an environmental health student intern are required to complete the application form and meet the eligibility criteria outlined below.

NEPHIP Considerations and Benefits

Internship Format

We have opened the experience to virtual, in-person/on-site, or hybrid formats depending on student and health agency's needs. To provide flexibility in internship timing, NEPHIP offers sessions in the fall, spring, and summer each year. Please note that session availability may vary and fall and spring sessions are not guaranteed.

Support and Coordination

Participating host agencies are provided:

- a support package valued at up to \$1,500 to reimburse for intern-related costs
- enhanced administrative support from NEHA staff
- a streamlined evaluation process

School Requirements

Internships must meet the requirements of NEPHIP eligibility guidelines, the host health agency, as well as the student's academic institution. Only students from National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) programs are eligible for NEPHIP.



Eligibility

To be considered as a host site, the health agency or environmental health program should be able to:

1. Assist the student in identifying and completing an independent project that focuses on solving a current environmental health problem or challenge facing the jurisdiction. The project may be used by the intern to meet university internship requirements.
2. Provide opportunities for student interns to be exposed to multiple environmental public health programs/activities throughout the internship. Examples include climate and health, food safety, onsite water and wastewater programs, vector control, institutional environmental health, or emergency preparedness.
3. Assign a primary mentor to the intern who should be available to assist in mentoring and advising the student intern on the independent project on a routine basis throughout the internship period.

Other Considerations

Students and health agencies will be matched by our NEHA staff based on student's interest and host site's project portfolio. Students are not always guaranteed this consideration. Health agencies may have the opportunity to interview selected students prior to acceptance; however, if a health agency declines the student post-interview, a replacement student may not be guaranteed.



Role of the Host Health Agency Mentor

The mentor is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined below. Although interns may vary in their experience and exposure to environmental public health practice and some may be skilled in various technical areas, all interns benefit from regular interaction, guidance, and feedback from their mentors. The mentor is expected to engage interns, discuss project progress, successes, and challenges, dialogue about the internship experience and answer questions that arise, and introduce students to various programs, activities and services that are operated by the agency/program to support knowledge and exposure to various environmental public health services and topic areas. Host health agencies should provide opportunities for the intern to observe and/or participate in team meetings, engage with community members and agency partners, as well as facilitate one-to-one mentoring. The mentor will:

- Work with the student intern and their academic program faculty to ensure that the internship meets all academic requirements.
- Oversee the intern's work activities.
- Provide guidance, advice, and assistance as needed.
- Be accessible and willing to offer constructive feedback to the intern.
- Be available for at least weekly recurring meetings.
- Assist the intern in following host health agency policies and practices. Ensure the intern completes the full 400-hours.
- Confirm intern participation before NEPHIP administers intern payments.

The mentor should be available to advise the intern throughout the internship period. Health agency hosts are encouraged to assign a mentor who is professionally registered (REHS or RS) whenever possible, although this is not a requirement. Health agency staff who are graduates of an environmental health academic program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) are encouraged to participate as mentors in the program.



Terms of Agreement for the Internship

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 health agencies based on geolocation preferences, interests, and professional goals that align with opportunities at the health agency. We cannot guarantee the preferred placement.

Support Package: Participating agencies are provided a support package valued at up to \$1,500 to reimburse for intern related costs.

Internship Hour Requirement: 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 agency's hours of operation. Students and host sites in the same or neighboring time zones will be matched accordingly for those participating in virtual or hybrid internship formats.

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 the host site mentor to meet academic guidelines and requirements.

Midterm Progress and Internship Evaluation: The host mentor will be asked to complete weekly evaluation forms and to meet with the NEHA internship coordinator to provide feedback on their experience at the midpoint of the internship. This will be an opportunity for the mentor to discuss their experience and any issues. Mentors will also be asked to evaluate their experience and NEPHIP program at the conclusion of the internship. This information is helpful for making program improvements, determining impact, and demonstrating outcomes.

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 intern payments and have NO responsibility for internship arrangements, academic program requirements or liability insurance. NEHA is not an employer of the intern. 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 agency and academic program. Host health agencies or academic programs are encouraged to provide liability coverage for the intern.

Non-Compliance with Program Requirements: We reserve the right to terminate intern payments in response to unacceptable conduct, disciplinary problems, or performance-based actions noted by the intern's academic program advisor or health agency mentor. Payments 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, he or she must follow academic program guidelines as well as provide 14 days written notice to NEPHIP staff.



Project Guidance and Considerations

Independent projects may address a broad range of environmental public health issues or programmatic needs. This focus should align with a current initiative, project, or program that falls within the host agency's typical scope of work and addresses a recognized concern. Projects are expected to address **environmental health** hazards that impact community health outcomes, while also emphasizing the long-term sustainability of the work beyond the intern's participation.

The host site mentor and agency will determine the specific focus of the internship. NEPHIP interns are required to produce at least one deliverable associated with their independent project that will be left with their host site and shared with NEPHIP at the end of the internship. 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.

Examples of past projects and deliverables include:

- **Air Quality** – the intern reviewed and updated the county's communications plan for wildfire smoke and created educational communications for the public. This project assisted the county in educational outreach around the health impacts of wildfire smoke for rural residents and vulnerable populations.
 - Deliverable(s): Communication plan.
- **Emergency Preparedness** – the intern developed a strategic evaluation tool for emergency medical needs shelters in the state, incorporating considerations of health equity and shelter operational factors. This tool assists public health officials in determining which shelters to activate during emergency responses.
 - Deliverable(s): Evaluation tool and user instruction report.
- **Food Safety** – The intern conducted a literature review and observational study to examine the relationship between the presence of a Certified Food Manager (CFM) and both inspection scores and the number of critical violations at local food establishments. This project supported the county's evaluation of the effectiveness of food manager certification in improving food safety practices.
 - Deliverable(s): Written report shared with the county's Board of Health.
- **Food Safety** – The intern conducted research comparing enteric disease case data with socio-economic factors across different communities within the jurisdiction. This project supported efforts to identify disparities and inform targeted public health interventions.



- Deliverable(s): GIS maps and a presentation of findings and recommendations to staff.
- **Vector Control**- The intern assessed how native mosquito vectors are shifting in range and behavior due to climate change. This project informed the host site's planning for equitable and effective environmental public health interventions.
 - Deliverable(s): Report of findings and recommendations.
- **Water Quality** – the intern analyzed and compared PFAS compounds found in surface water and foam samples from a local lake. This project informed risk assessment efforts and supported communication with local residents.
 - Deliverable(s): Written report with figures and site maps.

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



Resources

1. NEHA's 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/>

