National Environmental Public Health Internship Program

Summer 2021 Internship Guidelines
Welcome To.
National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP)

About NEHA
The National Environmental Health Association was established in 1937 to advance the environmental health professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environmental for all. Currently serving 6,000 members, NEHA empowers and educates these professionals, providing them the tools and resources they need to make the greatest contributions possible in creating healthy environments that we all seek.

NEHA offers six national highly regarded credentials and eight certifications, produces the Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, and publishes 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.

NEHA Programs
- Qualified environmental health workforce development
- Food, private water, MAHC, and vector control
- Needs assessment
- Student internship

See more at: http://www.neha.org/about-neha
About NEPHIP

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) has been partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Water, Food, and Environmental Health Services Branch for the past five years to support state, tribal, and local public health department internships for environmental health (EH) students through the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP). The National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) is supported by cooperative agreement CDC-RFA-OT18-1802 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Points of view expressed within this document are the author’s and do not necessarily represent a position held by the CDC.

NEPHIP’s purpose is to encourage environmental health students to consider careers at local, state, or tribal environmental public health departments following graduation. Through this internship program, students will be exposed to the exciting career opportunities, benefits, and challenges of working with environmental public health agencies throughout the U.S. Students who apply must be from National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) environmental health academic programs. Selected students will receive a base stipend to cover expenses with an additional relocation stipend available to support costs if the student relocates for the internship.

NEHA’s role in NEPHIP is to help build new relationships between accredited environmental health academic programs and local, state, and tribal environmental public health departments. In this role, NEHA 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, NEHA will also undertake the following activities:

- Solicit applications from eligible students and select interns based on established application criteria, including GPA, environmental health coursework, 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 department
- Provide support to intern throughout duration of internship and ensure timely delivery of stipend payments directly to intern
- Evaluate the host site in regards to quality of the internship experience

Note: Arrangements such as work schedule, sick time, leave or vacation days is not determined by NEHA and is at the providence of the academic program and host health department.
To be considered as a host, health department or environmental health program must meet the following criteria:

- The host site MUST provide opportunities for student interns to experience multiple environmental health programs/activities throughout the internship. Examples of programmatic areas include food safety, onsite water and wastewater programs, vector control, institutional environmental health, laboratory process. Short-term work and experiences with other governmental health agencies is also encouraged.

- The host site MUST identify and have the ability to assist the student in completing an independent project that focuses on solving a current or future environmental health problem through the use. Priority will be given to host site who have projects in Environmental Health data or informatics.

- The host site MUST assign a mentor to the intern. This person should be available to assist in mentoring and advising the student intern throughout the internship period.

Programs are encouraged to assign a mentor who is professionally certified (REHS or RS) or is a graduate of an environmental health academic program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC).

Other Considerations:

- Health departments engaged in national performance management and quality improvement initiatives, including use of the Environmental Public Health Performance Standards or attaining national voluntary accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), may receive extra consideration for intern placements. Internships must meet the requirements of the host health department as well as the student’s academic institution and NEPHIP eligibility guidelines. Internship start and end dates, number of hours, number of credits, etc. should be determined by the academic program and health department.

- Starting FY2021 priority selection will be based on the following:
  - Projects that are environmental health data or informatics based
  - First time host applicant
  - Rural or tribal health department
  - Programs that are able to support virtual internships.
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- The host site MUST identify and have the ability to assist the student in completing an independent, complex project that focuses on solving a current or future environmental health problem or challenge facing the host health department. This project may be used by the intern to meet university internship requirements.

- The host site MUST assign a mentor to the intern. This person should be available to assist in mentoring and advising the student intern throughout the internship period. Programs are encouraged to assign a mentor who is professionally certified (REHS or RS) or is a graduate of an environmental health academic program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC).

**Other Considerations:**

Health departments engaged in national performance management and quality improvement initiatives, including use of the Environmental Public Health Performance Standards or attaining national voluntary accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), may receive extra consideration for intern placements. Internships must meet the requirements of the host health department as well as the student's academic institution and NEPHIP eligibility guidelines. Internship start and end dates, number of hours, number of credits, etc. should be determined by the academic program and health department.

The information provided in the health department's application will be shared with the selected student intern.

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### Student Eligibility and Application

Enrolled, junior or senior undergraduate and graduate students at EHAC-accredited environmental health academic programs are encouraged to apply for the environmental health internships at state, local or tribal health departments. This valuable experience will allow students to gain a firsthand perspective on day-to-day responsibilities and make professional connections with those working in the field.

In addition to being a currently enrolled environmental health major in an EHAC-accredited environmental health academic program, students applying for an internship through NEPHIP must meet the following criteria:

- **Student must be a junior, senior, or graduate status at the time of the application submission and during the internship.** Must have at least one full year of academic training with most courses in environmental health. Students who have graduated are not eligible.

- **Have an overall minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 2.8 on a scale of 4.0 with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in environmental health coursework.**

- **Provide an essay answering the following questions (max 350 words for each):**
  1. Describe your understanding of the purpose and mission of a state, tribal, or local environmental public health program and why you are interested in working for a health department/agency.
  2. Describe briefly an environmental health issue or problem you are passionate about solving and explain your solution to fix it.

- **Submit a current resume.

- **Submit an unofficial transcript from all educational institutions attended.** Personal Identifying Information such as SSN, Student ID numbers, addresses, and DOB must be blocked out on unofficial transcript before submission.

- **Have a letter of recommendation submitted on his/her behalf by an environmental health faculty member of the EHAC-accredited college or university.**

- **Have active health insurance and is capable of performing various environmental health tasks, some of which may be physically challenging.**

- **Selected students will also be given a background check prior to relocating to their prospective host health departments.** Most host health departments require a background check to be conducted for interns and volunteers. To expedite this process NEHA will perform this prior to the students' arrival.

**Note:** Application materials will be shared with potential host health...
Only students from National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) programs are eligible for NEPHIP. 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

EHAC program administrators and internship coordinators are asked to distribute information and applications to junior and senior undergraduates or graduate students currently enrolled in their programs. Participation in this valuable internship experience will allow students to gain a firsthand perspective on day-to-day responsibilities and make professional connections with those working in the field.
Selection Process Steps

**Health Department Recruitment:**
EH Departments are recruited by NEHA and partner organizations to apply as host sites for 2021. Applications occur during the fall of 2020. Sites must assign one mentor to the intern and this person should be available to assist in mentoring and advising throughout the programs. Sites must provide opportunities for student interns to experience multiple EH programs/activities including:

- Well developed project identifying and solving an EH challenge facing the health department
- Mentorship
- Inspection shadowing opportunities
- Conference and meeting shadowing

**Host Health Departments Application:**
Applications will be reviewed by NEHA to ensure that eligibility requirements are met. Health departments are to give two project descriptions, one for an undergraduate student and another for a graduate student. A brief description of the approved host site and its planned student project will be posted on the NEHA webpage for student consideration. Health departments will also be scored depending on their application responses.

**Health Department Selection:**
NEHA will contact EHAC program coordinators and AEPHAP leadership to assist in announcing NEPHIP opportunity.

**Intern Selection:**
Student applications will be reviewed by NEHA to ensure that all required documents are completed and eligibility requirements are met. A panel will score the student applications and provide recommendations on preliminary approval. NEHA will match the students with a host health department depending on the student’s application score, location preferences, and student interests and professional goals. Students are not guaranteed to be matched with their preferences.

**Health Department Internship Approval:**
Host health departments will be notified of potential interns, and each has the option to interview the intern they are matched with. If a health department declines to host their matched intern, the health department will not be able to host a different intern for that summer. Final internship arrangements must be agreed upon by the health department, student, academic advisor and NEHA.

**Internship Confirmation:**
NEHA will confirm with faculty that the internship meets environmental health academic program requirements. An Agreement, or statement of understanding, must be signed by the intern, host health department mentor, and academic advisor. NEHA will not determine specific internship activities, but will provide a Workplan document outlining intern duties and expectations to be completed by the intern and mentor.
NEHA will provide a stipend of $6,000 for undergraduate and $8,000 for graduate interns during summer. NEPHIP interns will participate in a 10-week (consecutive) internship beginning between June 01- June 20. Interns are expected to work full time for the host health department (approximately 40 hours per week). Internships beginning after the date range will require approval from NEHA, the academic program advisor and health department mentor. If students choose to extend their internship past the 10 weeks, it is the responsibility of the host health department and the student to cover liability and cost. Students requesting to extend their time must inform NEHA in writing within one month of starting their internship and must have a signed document from the host health department accepting responsibility for the intern post the 10-week program.

Stipend payments are intended to assist with expenses related to the internship such as lodging, food, travel and incidental expenses.

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 HD mentor to meet academic guidelines and requirements. In order for the student to receive the stipend, NEHA must receive signed documentation that internship arrangements have been approved by the academic program, student and host health department.
Stipends

NEHA agrees to compensate each approved intern in the form of a base stipend of $6,000 for undergraduate and $8000 for graduate for a 10-week internship. Stipend awards are not available to students concurrently participating in another paid internship or work experience.

Interns are not a NEHA employee or subcontractor; thus, NEHA will not submit withholding, income tax, social security or Medicare payments on their behalf. NEHA will submit a 1099 form to the IRS and the recipients of the payments by Jan 31, 2021. 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.

Process for stipends

The stipend will be distributed directly to interns via wire transfer. Before stipend payments are made, NEHA will send a stipend document to be completed and signed (typed signatures not allowed) by both student and health department mentor to verify the intern has been participating in the internship throughout the stipend form dates. Timesheet documents must be returned to rtariq@neha.org for timely processing of the stipends. Please note that some bank may charge the student a $15 wire fee. Student should contact their banking service to see if this applies.

Note: Interns may have to purchase airfare or pay for other relocation costs in advance of the start of their internship. Advance travel expenses are the intern’s full responsibility. Exceptions to this policy will be made on a case-by-case basis. Specific questions or concerns regarding the stipend or other travel expenses should be emailed to rtariq@neha.org.

Housing

Students should be aware that if they relocate, securing housing at the health department location is their sole responsibility. Health department hosts should help provide resources for suggested housing to students. Note: In order for a health department to participate their must be access to short-term housing.
Personal Vehicle
Students may be asked to bring their personal vehicle in order to complete their internship. This can be due to a variety of reasons such as:

- Lack of mass transit
- Students are not authorized to use health department vehicles
- Complete project and shadow

Upon selection confirm with sponsoring health department if personal vehicle is needed.

*Special Note Host Health Department: Students are not required to have a personal vehicle to participate in NEPHIP. This is at the convenience of the student.

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.

Liability
NEHA is acting solely as an administrator for the stipend and has NO responsibility for internship arrangements, academic program requirements or liability insurance. Interns are asked to sign a waiver to confirm their understanding that the internship is under the guidance of the host health department and academic program. Host health departments or academic programs are encouraged to provide liability coverage for the intern.

Midterm Progress and Internship Evaluation
Midterm Progress: The student will be responsible to schedule midterm meeting with the NEHA project coordinator. This will be an opportunity for the student discuss their experience and any issues. However, please contact NEHA at any time if questions or concerns arise.

Internship Evaluation: 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
NEHA will ask permission to share comments from the midterm and/or evaluation to be posted on the NEHA website. Photos of interns performing EH activities are much appreciated.

Non-Compliance with Program Requirements
NEHA reserves 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 department mentor. Stipends will be pro-rated through the last day worked by the intern.

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 NEHA.

Intern Professional Conduct
Your conduct should make the health department want to host other University students 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
- Remain drug and alcohol-free, and avoid use of controlled substances
Expectations of Interns

- Act in a professional and ethical manner. For example:
- Dress in an appropriate manner
- 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
The mentor is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined below. Although interns may possess high-level skills, they may lack on-the-job work experience and require guidance and direction from their mentors. This is a mentorship program and student interns ARE NOT there to supplement personnel shortages, but to gain knowledge on various environmental health areas. The mentor will:

- Coordinate with the student intern to ensure that the internship meets all academic requirements
- Oversee the intern’s work activities
- Be positive and supportive
- Be fair, considerate, honest, trustworthy and cooperative when dealing with working with intern
- Offer advice and assistance
- Be available to give feedback to the student
- Assist the intern in following host health department policies and practices
- Ensure the intern works full time (approximately 40 hours per week) for 10 weeks
- Review and approve stipend documents, confirming intern participation

The mentor should be available to advise the intern throughout the internship period. Health department hosts are encouraged to assign a mentor who is professionally registered (REHS or RS) and is a graduate of an environmental health academic program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC).
Before the internship starts:
Ensure appropriate office space and equipment (telephone, computer, etc.) are available. Have essential items for the intern’s assignments and day-to-day activities available.

Internet Access
Arrange with the responsible administrative party for any of the following that may be needed:
- Identification badge
- Building/parking/office access keys
- E-mail account
- HIPAA information privacy training
- Health and safety information
- Parking permits
- Computer passwords and access information
- Other training, especially related to computer policies and use if necessary and the information is available, provide assistance/recommendations for the intern for lodging for the duration of the internship
- Be sure that co-workers understand the purpose of the internship and general scope of activities in which he/she will be involved

Note: Arrangements for the internship, including start and end dates, work hours, vacation days and sick policy, etc. should be made by the host health department.

First day of the internship
On the first day of the internship (or before), interns and health department mentors should fill out a Workplan which will outline the following:
- Intern’s EH topic areas of interest
- EH 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 intern can participate in
- Expectations of the host mentor and the intern, including dress code and workplace culture
The Workplan document will be provided by NEHA by the start of internship. If the academic institution requires a similar document, it may be substituted.