



National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP)

Guidelines

For Internships during Summer, 2017

About NEHA

NEHA currently serves over 5,000 members to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all. Professionals who earn a Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian credential from NEHA are recognized as having achieved an established standard of excellence. These environmental health professionals master a body of knowledge (which is verified by examination), and acquire sufficient experience to satisfactorily perform work responsibilities in the environmental health field.

In addition to maintaining high standards of practice and testing for its credentialing programs, NEHA provides training and resources for continuing education through online courses and an online bookstore; holds an annual education conference; fosters networking and career growth; and publishes the widely-respected peer-reviewed *Journal of Environmental Health*.

See more at: <http://www.neha.org/about-neha>

About NEPHIP

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) administers the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program (NEPHIP) funded by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Environmental Health Services Branch.

The purpose of NEPHIP 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) -accredited environmental health academic programs. Selected students will receive a stipend of up to \$4,000 (\$400 per week for a ten-week internship) to cover expenses. An additional stipend may be 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, including support with housing suggestions
 - Interesting and applicable independent student project
 - Breadth and depth of programmatic intern opportunities
 - PHAB accreditation
 - Serving medically underserved and/or rural populations
 - Geographic diversity
- 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.*

Health Department Eligibility and Application

To be considered as a host program, the health department or environmental health program must meet the following criteria:

1. The 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.
2. The 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.
3. The 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 registered (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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The health department or environmental health program has to option to interview the potential intern after the matching process in order to ensure he/she meets their requirements.
4. The information provided in the health department's application will be shared with the selected student intern.

Student Eligibility and Application

Current sophomore, junior or senior undergraduate and graduate students at EHAC-accredited environmental health academic programs are encouraged to apply for one of 25 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 current environmental health major in an EHAC-accredited environmental health academic program, students applying for an internship through NEPHIP must meet the following criteria:

- 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 a majority of courses in environmental health focus areas.
- Have an overall minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 2.8 on a scale of 0.0 to 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.
- 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.

Note: Application materials will be shared with potential host health departments for selection purposes.

EHAC-Accredited Program Information

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 <http://www.ehacoffice.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 current sophomore, 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.

For individual students, academic program administrators or faculty will be asked to:

- Write a letter of recommendation, if appropriate, to support students' application.
- Assist the student with completing NEHIP paperwork, including signing the Agreement.
- Coordinate with the student on internship requirements to ensure that academic obligations are met.

Steps in the Selection Process

1. Health Department Recruitment

Environmental health departments are recruited by NEHA and partner organizations to apply as an internship host site for 2017 during the fall of 2016. The primary host requirements are:

- The site must provide opportunities for student interns to experience multiple environmental health programs/activities throughout the internship.
- The site must have the ability to assist the student in identifying and completing a complex project that focuses on solving a current or project environmental health problem or challenge facing the host health department.
- The 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.

2. Review Health Department Applications and Select Hosts

Applications will be reviewed by NEHA and the CDC Project Officer to ensure that eligibility requirements are met. 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.

3. Student Intern Recruitment

NEHA will contact EHAC program coordinators to assist in announcing NEHIP opportunity and distribution student applications.

4. Review Student Applications and Select Interns

Student applications will be reviewed by NEHA and CDC 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.

5. 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.

6. Confirmation of Internship.

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.

Terms of Agreement

NEHA will provide a stipend of \$4,000 for up to 25 undergraduate or graduate interns during Summer 2017. NEPHIP interns will participate in a 10-week (consecutive) internship beginning and ending on the date agreed upon by the health department host, student and academic program advisor. Interns are expected to work full time for the host health department (approximately 40 hours per week). Internships should generally start the internship by June 15, 2017. Internships beginning after that date will require approval from NEHA, the academic program advisor and health department mentor.

Stipend payments are intended to assist with expenses related to the internship such as lodging, food, mileage and incidental expenses. An additional stipend (up to \$2,000) may be available to students who relocate for the internship.

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 stipend of \$4,000 for a 10-week internship. Students relocating for an internship may be eligible to receive an additional stipend of up to \$2,000 to assist with costs related to relocation.

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, 2018. **Each intern is responsible for ensuring that appropriate taxes are paid on the stipend received.**

W9: A W9 must be completed for our records before processing stipend payments.

Process for stipends

The \$4,000 dollar stipend will be distributed directly to interns via direct deposit or mail in three disbursements throughout the internship. Before stipend payments are made, NEHA will send a timesheet 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 timesheet dates. Timesheet documents must be returned to ecornelius@neha.org for timely processing of the stipends. Please note processing via mail may take up to 30 days.

Relocation Stipend

Interns who relocate for the term of the internship may be eligible for an additional stipend of *up to* \$2,000. In general, interns must work at least 50 miles from their home or college address to be eligible for the relocation stipend.

The exact amount of the relocation stipend will be determined by processing a **relocation stipend application**, in which the intern will provide their estimated travel costs (including housing, airfare, mileage and other transportation costs). Interns should not expect to be awarded the exact dollar amount they provide on the relocation stipend application. **The relocation stipend is not intended to cover *all* costs associated with relocation; rather it is meant to assist with the relocation costs in addition to the \$4,000 base stipend.**

Interns will be notified of their awarded relocation stipend amount by April 14th, 2017. The relocation stipend will be processed via direct deposit or mail on the first day of the internship. Please note processing via mail may take up to 30 days.

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 relocation stipend or other travel expenses should be emailed to ecornelius@neha.org.

Housing

Students should be aware that if they relocate, securing housing at their preferred health department location is their sole responsibility. Some health department hosts have indicated they will assist students with housing suggestions.

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: NEHA will contact students approximately 30 days after their internships begin to ensure they are receiving a satisfactory experience. 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.

Certification

A certificate will be awarded by NEHA to an intern at the end of the internship.

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

Role of the Environmental Health Department Mentor

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. The mentor will:

- Coordinate with the student intern to ensure that the internship meets all academic requirements.
- Oversee the intern's work activities.
- Offer advice and assistance.
- 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.
- 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 May 1st, 2017 and should be completed and returned to NEHA one week after the internship start date. If the academic institution requires a similar document, it may be substituted.