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To: Local Boards of Health, Health Departments, Health Directors and Agents, and Public Health Nurses
Date: January 27, 2022
RE: **Local Health Internship Program 2022, LBOH Host Applications DUE Friday, February 18, 2022**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Division of Epidemiology is pleased to announce the 2022 MDPH Summer Local Health Internship Program. The goal of the program is to provide graduate public health students with the opportunity to supplement their classroom education by gaining an understanding of the critical role of local health departments, and to support local health departments in undertaking and completing public health projects.

If interested in hosting a student intern this upcoming summer, please complete the online [2022 Summer Local Health Internship Host Application Form](#). We have enclosed samples of previous years' project descriptions which resulted in successful matches with student interns. Please keep in mind that students typically begin their projects in late May and conclude their work in mid-August.

1. What is the Process for Hosting an Intern?

LBOHs draft a project description and complete the [Internship Host Application Form](#) by this year's deadline (**Friday, February 18, 2022**). We will review project options to determine the internships that are most likely to meet student needs. Remote or in person opportunities are welcome to apply. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, not all LBOH applicants will be selected this year. We will conduct the initial screening of applicants to see which students are best suited for this summer's opportunities. MDPH will then match students with local health departments. The local health department will then screen the students prior to final placement.

2. What Are the Requirements of the Internship for LBOHs?

Participating health departments must be able to provide students with appropriate guidance and supervision before and during their internship. The health department should develop a solid

outline of the tasks the student will be required to perform. This information should be provided to the student prior to the commencement of the internship. Participating health departments may be asked to assist the student in developing a “learning contract” or similar description of duties as defined by a student’s school requirements.

3. How Many Hours Is the Internship?

Students are required to meet a minimum of 160 cumulative internship hours across the summer program (late May to mid-August) to meet MDPH requirements. Most students elect to use this summer internship to meet graduate school practicum or internship requirements. As a result, some students may have additional graduate program hours they need to meet and should confirm with their assigned local supervisors during the initial screening discussion that these requirements may be met through this placement. Student internship hours are not required to all be completed “on site.” Interns may count their hours working remotely, and all mandatory Internship program events will be conducted virtually in 2022.

MDPH is committed to providing on-going support for student interns and health departments, including regular outreach throughout the summer program; this includes guidance on completing project abstracts and posters (an MDPH program requirement for the students). This support structure enhances the working relationship between the student intern and the health department. At the conclusion of the program, MDPH hosts a closing session where participating students and health departments will showcase internship projects.

If you have any questions or require assistance in designing competitive public health projects, please contact Kayleigh Sandhu at kayleigh.sandhu@mass.gov

[2022 Summer Local Health Internship Host Application Form](#)

LBOH Host Application Due Date: Friday, February 18, 2022

The following pages contain example internship project descriptions.

Sample Internship Project Descriptions:

Below are three recent local health project descriptions that resulted in successful matches with student interns.

Sample Summer Internship Description 1:

Mansfield Health Department (Bristol County) - Remote

Emergency Preparedness; Environmental Health; Food Safety; Health Education

The Mansfield Health Department serves a community of approximately 23,500. An intern will assist with the Board of Health's (BOH) 2021 goal of increasing outreach and education on local public health, emerging health topics, and departmental daily operations to the general community. The ideal candidate will have some experience in Health Education and Outreach.

The possible tasks for the intern(s) include:

- Research best practices/conduct environmental scan of specific strategies used to promote local public health throughout the Commonwealth and nationally and make recommendations.
- Create a toolkit incorporating information on a wide variety of routine and emerging public health topics, including educational material, local outreach activities and social media messaging that can be carried out by the Health Agent or BOH members.
- Create a calendar of specific health topics to highlight on the website seasonally or monthly
- Identify and assemble information to be disseminated at town events focusing on Mansfield Health Department services.
- Design and publish a monthly public health newsletter with collaboration from the Health Department, Community EMS, BOH, and state-wide organizations.
- Explore opportunities within local organization and municipal departments to partner and promote local public health services and healthy lifestyles in town.
- Review the town drafted Master Plan to identify possible alignment with health department activities and make recommendations
- Obtain feedback and incorporate suggestions from health agent, staff, and board.

The final project will be a “This is Local Public Health” toolkit including templates, educational information, literature, and best practices to promote the role of local public health in municipal government. It will be shared with organizations working with local public health and surrounding health departments.

Sample Summer Internship Description 2:

Bedford Board of Health (Middlesex County) – (Remote Optional)

Data Entry and Analysis; Disease Case Follow-Up; Food Safety; Health Education; Inspections; Mental Health; Surveillance

The Bedford Board of Health is seeking an intern for an assessment project (looking at data), as well as to assist with some additional food safety and community surveillance activities. The ideal candidate will have an interest in data analysis, public health, and outreach work. If the student were interested, there is an opportunity to be placed in a secure, single-person, office on site pursuant to the office safety measures of the Town.

Projects include the following:

Mental Health Services Assessment. The town has implemented a transportation program to pay for transportation to and from mental health services appointments. The intern will assist with assessing the program and identifying variables that influence citizen participation and uptake through data collection and analysis. This assessment will identify possible changes to program implementation and promotion.

Community Surveillance Activities. The intern will be trained in and assist in several surveillance and inspection related activities including low risk food inspections, CBD product community surveillance, and tobacco compliance checks. The intern will have the opportunity to shadow several other public health enforcement activities and assist with tick and communicable disease related work.

Sample Summer Internship Description 3:

MDPH Division of Epidemiology: COVID-19 – Remote

Data analysis; Data Management; Surveillance Case Investigation and Interviews

The Pandemic Response Team within the MDPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory sciences is accepting applications for a student intern to assist on retrospective analysis on metrics related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This work would include case interviews for variant strains detected in Massachusetts, a retrospective analysis of the data collected through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Epi-X flight exposure surveillance system, identification and analysis of cases that meet ‘reinfection’ criteria, and more. The accepting candidate would support COVID-19 work in the Division by working on the needs of the Pandemic Response Team, participating in COVID-19 morbidity activities, and working with Subject Matter Experts to assist with guidance document and SOP development.

The preferred candidate will have an interest in infectious disease and investigations at the state or local health level, excellent communication skills, and the ability to collaborate while also taking individual initiative on assignments. Experience with SAS and communicating with healthcare professionals and the public would be a benefit.