



# NEW ENGLAND PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER

## Health Equity Internship Program 2020-2021 Guidebook

*Serving Connecticut (CT), Maine (ME), Massachusetts (MA),  
New Hampshire (NH); Rhode Island (RI) and Vermont (VT).*

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# Health Equity Internship Program 2020-2021 Checklist and Deliverables

Please use the checklist below to ensure that you have completed all requirements of the HRSA-sponsored New England Public Health Training Center (NEPHTC) Health Equity Internship Program. The information listed below must be received by the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Manager, Kathi Traugh, at [Kathi.traugh@yale.edu](mailto:Kathi.traugh@yale.edu)

BEFORE or at the beginning the project:

1. Upon receiving notification of your selection for an internship, and once you have agreed to accept the placement, the following must be in place.

- NEPHTC paperwork needed for award payment
- Registration for the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Moodle Course
- Completion of two background courses in the Health Equity Learning Bundle
- Participation in an NEPHTC orientation call or webinar
- Submission of a signed Internship Work Plan, to be approved by NEPHTC

DURING the project:

- Completion of a mid-point experience survey on project progress\*

Upon COMPLETION of the project, submit the following to the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Manager.

- Photo(s) or an image that depicts your internship experience
- Executive summary of project
- Report or poster presentation that describes your project
- Field placement/faculty supervisor online evaluation
- Student's online evaluation
- HRSA data survey, if requested

In addition, one year following the project, all interns must respond to the one-year follow up evaluation.

\*If your internship is more than 3 months in duration, your stipend can be paid in two installments: one-half of the stipend (\$1,750) following submission of your mid-point survey and the balance upon submission of all completion items. For internships of three months or less, payment of the entire stipend is made upon submission of all completion items.

If you have any questions, please contact the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Manager, Kathi Traugh, at [kathi.traugh@yale.edu](mailto:kathi.traugh@yale.edu)

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## The New England Public Health Training Center

The New England Public Health Training Center delivers trainings, provides training services and places students to build public health workforce competency, particularly in New England's medically underserved areas. By supporting student field placements and faculty-student collaborative projects in public health agencies and organizations, NEPHTC seeks to increase student knowledge of, experience with and interest in public health careers. By choosing Health Equity student projects, NEPHTC seeks to improve student ability to improve public health services related to the social determinants of health in medically underserved communities (MUCs). NEPHTC is funded by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## What is the Health Equity Internship Program?

The Health Equity Internship Program provides public health and other health professions students with practice opportunities working on health equity projects with public health or primary care agencies serving or working on behalf of underserved communities or populations. Internships take place in the six New England states. The Central Office of NEPHTC is housed at the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH). NEPHTC state and academic partners supporting the Health Equity Internship Program include: Yale University (CT); University of New England (ME); BUSPH and University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Amherst School of Public Health (MA); New Hampshire Public Health Association (NH), Rhode Island Department of Health and Rhode Island Public Health Institute (RIPHI) and Vermont Public Health Institute (VT).

*What is a health equity project?* Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Health equity projects focus on removing or reducing barriers to health caused by race or ethnicity, education, income, location or other social factors. Proposed projects benefit medically underserved populations and may address any health or social problem, preferably in [medically underserved](#) or [rural areas](#).

The objectives of the program are to provide students a meaningful public health practice experience that:

- demonstrates the value of working in a medically underserved or rural area
- increases student knowledge of health equity and the role of social determinants of health
- improves student competency in one or more of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals, as established by the Council on Linkages between Academia and Public Health Practices (<http://tinyurl.com/cdga9jn>).

Health Equity Internship awards are \$3,500 stipends to help to defray living expenses during the training experience. A total of 27 awards are given out each year, with four to six awards per state. Interns are expected to work 200 total hours or the number of hours that fulfills the degree requirement for an internship/practicum at their academic institution, if the internship will be used to meet academic requirements. Use of the Health Equity Internship to meet an academic requirement is optional, however, students using the internship for an academic requirement are responsible for verifying those requirements and abiding by their university's policies.

## Types of Health Equity Internships

### 1. Field Placements

These internships are structured opportunities and/or experiences for students as they apply their acquired knowledge and skills working in a public health practice setting under the supervision of an experienced public health professional. Field placements contribute to the mastery of public health competencies with a focus on balancing the educational and practice needs of the students with the needs of the community.

## 2. Faculty-Student Collaborative Projects

These internships involve research projects or community interventions identified by a governmental public health agency or other public health service entity where students and faculty advisors collaborate with the agency to: (1) enhance public health services to medically underserved communities (2) address specific public health issues among a specified target population.

### *Internship Timelines*

**Academic Year (Fall/Spring) Placements/Projects:** Placements taking place during the academic year (September – May) are generally located in or near the area of the student’s university enrollment. Academic year placements may range from 1-2 semesters. Note: students may be limited in the minimum or maximum number of hours they can work per semester based on their university, school or degree’s policies. Projects should be completed and deliverables received by June 15 of that academic year.

**Summer Field Placements/Projects:** These take place during the summer (May-August), when students are generally not in class and range from 8-12 weeks in length and approximately 20-40 hours/week. Projects should be completed and deliverables received by September 30 of that year.

### *Qualifications & Eligibility*

Students must be graduate or doctoral students pursuing a degree in a health profession. Preference is given to graduate students in accredited schools and programs in public health. Undergraduate juniors or seniors enrolled in a health profession degree program, including public health, may be considered.

Students may not be a prior recipient of a NEPHTC stipend. Only one award per student is allowed.

Only citizens, non-citizen U.S. nationals, or a foreign national having in his/her possession a visa-permitting permanent residence in the U.S are eligible.

## Student Application Process

### *Application Process Steps*

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student has a project approved by their host agency.</li> <li>• NEPHTC academic or practice partner organization recommends student apply or student directly applies to program at <a href="http://sites.bu.edu/nephtc/students/">http://sites.bu.edu/nephtc/students/</a></li> <li>• Student submits application and receives acknowledgement of submission.</li> </ul>
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants reviewed by NEPHTC and state partner organizations.</li> <li>• NEPHTC may contact the applicant, the host agency or applicant’s school for additional information, if needed.</li> </ul>
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards are announced by NEPHTC Central Office on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Interns have an orientation call/webinar.</li> <li>• Award paperwork is completed.</li> <li>• Work plans are developed by student, agency/faculty and NEPHTC.</li> </ul>
Step 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student begins placement/project, once award paperwork is processed.</li> </ul>

## Health Equity Intern Obligations and Deliverables to NEPHTC

Once selected, interns will participate in an orientation call/webinar and a work plan meeting with a NEPHTC mentor. In addition to agency deliverables and any academic requirements, students will be expected to complete the following items in conjunction with NEPHTC and agency/faculty mentors:

1. Information needed for award payment
2. Student work plan, signed by the student and supervisor
3. Registration for the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Moodle course and completion of two courses in the health equity learning bundle
4. Mid-point experience survey on project progress
5. Photos of experience, within agency and HIPAA guidelines, or graphic images that depict your internship experience or project
6. HRSA deliverable:
  - Faculty/student projects: Scientific report
  - Field placements: Report or a poster presentation
7. Executive summary of your project
8. Exit survey: Student and field placement/faculty supervisor

If a student is using this field placement or faculty-student project to complete an internship, practicum or graduation requirement for their school, it is the student's responsibility to confirm before the start of the internship if their school's deliverables, such as a workplan and executive summary, can be used to meet Health Equity Internship commitments. Interns are expected to abide by the policies and procedures of the institution where they are enrolled, including IRB requirements if applicable, as well as those of the Health Equity Internship Program.

### 1. Award Payments

Students are responsible for providing documents requested by the Student Internship Financial Manager so that payments can be made. If your internship is more than 3 months in duration, the stipend can be paid in two installments: one-half of the stipend (\$1,750) following submission of your mid-point survey and the balance of \$1,750 upon submission of all completion items. For internships of three months or less, payment of the entire stipend of \$3,500 is made upon submission of all completion items.

### 2. Work Plan

Together with the supervisor, students will complete a competency-based work plan within the first weeks of the field placement. These work plans will be used to outline the activities and responsibilities associated with the field placement and project for all parties. The work plan must be signed by the student and the field placement/faculty supervisor and submitted to the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Manager.

### 3. Internship Course and Trainings

Students must register for the NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Moodle course and complete at least two self-study courses from the health equity course bundle listed on the site. On the Moodle course page, students will find resources and templates for deliverables and can upload deliverable files as assignments for the course.

### 4. *Mid-Point Experience Survey*

All student participants must complete a mid-point survey to assess how the field placement is progressing and if the target date for completion will be met. This survey is an opportunity for students to inform NEPHTC if assistance is needed working with their agency or if the workplan needs to be modified. After completing the survey, interns with projects of greater than 3 months in duration may receive 50% of their stipend, or \$1,750.

### 5. *Photo*

At least one photo or graphic image is required as a deliverable. It should represent your internship project, similar to an image on a book or report cover. Any photos taken at an agency should follow the agency's policies and guidelines. *This photo or image may appear on the NEPHTC website.*

### 6. *HRSA Deliverable*

Interns must provide a project deliverable which NEPHTC shares with HRSA. Interns participating in faculty/student collaborative projects must write a scientific report, which includes the following sections: abstract, introduction, methodology, findings, conclusions and discussion. Field placement interns have the option of creating either a report or a poster presentation. Templates and tips are provided on the Health Equity Internship Moodle course page. *The report or poster may be shared publicly on the NEPHTC website.*

### 7. *Executive Summary*

The Executive Summary provides a brief description of your internship. Students should use the template provided on the Health Equity Internship Moodle course. *Excerpts from the Executive Summary may be shared on the NEPHTC website.*

### 8. *Student and Supervisor Exit Surveys*

Interns must complete an exit survey and are also responsible for assuring that their supervisor completes an exit survey. NEPHTC will e-mail a survey link to the student and supervisor following receipt of the student deliverables.

One year following the internship, students are required to complete a follow up survey. The survey assesses the impact of the internship experience on a student's career choices or further study.

## Health Equity Intern Commitments

### *Intern Rights and Responsibilities*

A student has the right to:

- a specific job description, including the supervisor's expectations and standards.
- a clearly defined work schedule and the average number of hours of work to expect per week.
- adequate training to perform assigned tasks.
- regular supervision and review of work performed.
- instructions on how to report an unexpected absence from a scheduled work shift.

- a procedure for stating concerns related to the job or supervisor.
- adequate training in relevant organization policies and procedures, including HIPAA policies.
- tools to adequately perform assigned tasks.

Each student is responsible for:

- adhering to policies of their school, such as IRB exemptions or limits to work hours during the semester.
- becoming familiar with information regarding the terms of the NEPHTC program and general policies.
- understanding their specific job responsibilities, including their supervisor's expectations.
- performing assigned tasks in an efficient and timely manner.
- arranging a mutually agreeable work schedule with the supervisor and working the assigned hours regularly.
- notifying the supervisor immediately if a scheduled work period must be missed.
- accurately documenting work hours.
- completing a work plan together with the organization and NEPHTC.
- completing a mid-point, exit and 1-year follow-up survey.
- completing all agency deliverables and NEPHTC required materials.

### *Field Placement Agency/Faculty Supervisor Rights and Responsibilities*

Each Field Placement Agency/Faculty Supervisor has the right to:

- have assigned tasks completed efficiently and correctly by the student employee.
- have student employees record their time properly.
- expect student workers to adhere within reason to a regular work schedule.
- be notified immediately if a student must miss a scheduled work shift.

Each Field Placement Agency/Faculty Supervisor has the responsibility for:

- providing adequate orientation and on-the-job training to student employees. NEPHTC relies on the supervisor to communicate all policies and procedures, including IRB and HIPAA policies, to the student.
- clarifying the required hours of work and expected duration of job to students.
- setting expectations for the quality and quantity of work.
- notifying the NEPHTC of any issues with the student that may result in termination of the field placement.
- ensuring students do not begin working prior to receiving HR approval or continue working past the point of termination.
- discussing and documenting any performance issues with student employees and sharing, as appropriate, with NEPHTC staff.
- completing a work plan together with the organization and NEPHTC.

- completing a mid- and post-project evaluation.
- maintaining open communication with NEPHTC staff and student.
- responding to NEPHTC's request for permission if NEPHTC wishes to showcase the student's report or deliverables on the NEPHTC student webpage.

### *Terminations or Withdrawal*

Failure to meet the student responsibilities as outlined above may be grounds for termination. Should an agency/faculty mentor think that there may be grounds for termination, they should report the circumstances to NEPHTC immediately and together, the agency, the academic institution, and NEPHTC will make a decision regarding if and when the student should be terminated. In the event that the student is terminated, an evaluation should be completed at the time of termination and NEPHTC will consult with HRSA regarding any award due for time worked. NEPHTC is not obligated to find alternative arrangements for the student, and organization-initiated termination may be grounds for the student's exclusion from further participation in the program.

Students who need to withdraw from the Health Equity Internship program for personal or other reasons must notify NEPHTC immediately.

### *Tips for Professional Work Ethics*

Health Equity Interns work in professional environments and should act accordingly. This program not only provides an opportunity to hone skills in public health, but also to enhance professionalism as well. Students are representatives of their home universities and NEPHTC sites. Therefore, professional conduct is expected at all times and in all circumstances while in a field placement. The following is a list of guidelines for professional standards.

1. **Dress professionally.** Your attire should be business professional. Once you have secured the position, have a discussion with your supervisor about appropriate work attire. Even if the attire is casual, make sure you look neatly arranged. No ripped jeans, revealing or tight clothing, tank tops, etc. should ever be worn to any job assignment.
2. **Separate personal and professional life.** Minimize checking your personal e-mail, receiving or making personal phone calls or visiting online networking sites during work hours. Employers do notice and it reflects poorly on you and NEPHTC.
3. **Be punctual.** Arrive to work at the time arranged between you and your mentor. If you will be late for any reason, call your mentor.
4. **Inform your mentor of any absences as soon as possible.** If you must be absent (e.g., doctor's appointment, exam, etc.), give as much notice as possible. This allows your mentor to plan for your absence and ensure that any responsibilities and duties will be covered.
5. **Be respectful in managing all tasks.** Many jobs will require you to perform administrative tasks such as filing, typing memos, or making copies. This will happen in almost any job, at almost any level. All work activities are important to the productivity and goals of the organization and no one is above completing certain tasks. *Note: Although you may be required to do some administrative tasks, the purpose of the opportunity is to further your knowledge and experience in public health. If administrative tasks are the majority of your time and you do not feel like you are gaining public health experience, have a conversation with your*

*mentor. For tips on how to start this conversation, contact NEPHTC.*

6. **Honor your commitment.** By accepting your internship position, you are committing to work for the full span of the program. *Note: If your mentor is not fulfilling his/ her responsibilities, or if the work environment is not safe, it may be appropriate to discuss the situation with your mentor. If the situation does not improve after a courteous, professional conversation, contact NEPHTC to discuss a way forward.*
7. **Be honest.** Relationships are based on trust and honesty. Usually, an open discussion can lead to an amicable agreement.
8. **Accept responsibility.** If you make a mistake, own it and learn from it. No one likes the person in the office who never accepts responsibility for their mistakes.
9. **Receive feedback in a professional manner.** If a supervisor or coworker gives constructive criticism or corrects you, accept the feedback as a learning opportunity.
10. **Uphold confidentiality.** Confidential information should not be disclosed. Patient records or personal information should only be discussed if it is work-related. Ask your mentor about the organization's HIPAA policies and abide by these policies. Any information shared in confidence should not be discussed with outside parties (including other coworkers).
11. **Communicate professionally.** All written and verbal communication should be professional and courteous.
  - E-mail is forever. E-mails can be stored on the organization sever for years. They can also be forwarded without your permission, knowledge, or control. Do not put confidential, inflammatory, or embarrassing information in an e-mail.
  - Spell out all words. Do not use "text language" or emoticons (smiley faces).
  - Tone is not always clear in an e-mail. Use language that is friendly and respectful.
  - If you are angry, take time to calm down before responding either via e-mail or in person. Do not say or write something you will regret later.
  - Organize your thoughts before you speak. Know what you want to say before you start the conversation.
  - Proofread everything before you send. Spell check does not catch words that are spelled correctly but used incorrectly (e.g., there, their, and they're).

Violating professional guidelines can result in termination of field placement and violating students may be banned from further participation in the program.

We hope that the Health Equity Student Internship Program will be mutually beneficial for students, supervisors, faculty and field placement agencies. Please continue to communicate with NEPHTC for additional resources and future updates.

### Contact Information

For additional information, including state practice and academic partner organizations, please visit:

<http://sites.bu.edu/nephtc/students/>

Main NEPHTC Health Equity Internship Program contact:

**Kathi Traugh**

**Yale School of Public health**

203-785-2868

[kathi.traugh@yale.edu](mailto:kathi.traugh@yale.edu)

This handbook was adapted from the Region IV Public Health Training Center. (2017). Pathways to Practice Scholars: Student field placement guidebook. Retrieved from <http://www.sph.emory.edu/r4phtc>