

Public Health Mentoring Program Guide



About the Public Health Mentoring Program

Background

The New Hampshire Public Health Association (NHPHA) is a member-driven organization that champions public health policy and practice, enriches the workforce, and inspires leaders to improve the public's health. It does this through its three strategic imperatives:

- Strengthen the public health workforce through membership engagement and professional development
- Serve as the collective voice for public health policy and advocacy
- Build a public health movement through timely public health messaging

Foundational to our work is our belief that all people in New Hampshire have fair and just opportunities that allow them to realize their full health potential. This is achieved by a strong public health system, with the capacity to support equitable health outcomes for everyone – regardless of where they live, learn, work, age, and play. We work steadfastly to incorporate this core value of equity into all we do, including advocacy and workforce development.

Carrying out the work of public health calls for a competent workforce. Nearly 40% of public health workers intend to leave the workforce by 2020, leaving us less prepared to carry out core public health services. One approach NHPHA is taking to address this is to establish a Public Health Mentoring Program. This mentoring program was initiated in response to requests from our members, based on their desire to be better prepared as mentors for early career professionals.

Program Description

NHPHA launched its public health mentoring program in 2018. The program begins in late September and finishes in early May of each year. The program is focused on current public health undergraduate students, public health graduate students, and early career professionals (1-3 years in the field). This program is an opportunity for experienced public health professionals to make a positive impact on the career and professional development of students and early career professionals. These mentees will have the opportunity to network and explore a variety of public health careers, in order to learn more about the field.

Program Goals

- Increase the professional success and productivity of public health students and early career professionals
- Help strengthen the field of public health through recruitment, retention, and growth of strong and committed professionals
- Provide learning and networking opportunities for mentors to enrich their contributions to public health and further develop as leaders
- Enhance the professional development of the public health mentee by assisting them to:
 - * Better understand public health as practiced in the community
 - * Gain valuable information about agencies and companies
 - * Begin to build a professional network
 - * Explore public health careers
 - * Develop a realistic career plan
 - * Receive suggestions on how to better prepare for professional life

"We live in a fast-paced world, data and information swirling all around us. It can be difficult to slow down, to find time to connect on a personal level, and to find time for self-reflection. This program provided a thoughtfully curated space to slow down, to connect, and to reflect." — Katie Bush, NH DPHS, mentor

Logistics/Qualifications/Expectations

Application Process

Public health professionals, interested in serving as mentors, complete the application describing their career experiences, educational background, and geographic location. Public health students and early career professionals seeking a mentoring experience complete the application describing their educational background, professional goals, and geographic location. Applications are submitted to the New Hampshire Public Health Association by the designated due date for the matching process.

In addition to the application, both mentors and mentees submit a resume and reference (either a written reference or contact information for a verbal reference) to info@nhpha.org. This can also be provided within the application.

Matching Process

Each mentor is assigned 1 mentee. NHPHA analyzes the applications and matches mentors and mentees based on the factors within the application. Mentors and mentees will meet in person as a group at the fall kick-off event.

During the application process, students and mentors are asked to commit to developing and maintaining a mentoring relationship during the program year. Matches are based on the available pool of mentors and mentees. NHPHA works to create the best possible matches.

Program Evaluations

Each program participant completes a program evaluation so that NHPHA can obtain feedback and make improvements for the future. Program evaluation results are shared with participants.

Mentor Qualifications

Mentors are required to have at least five years of experience in the field of public health and an education background in public health, health promotion, nursing, health administration, etc. It is expected that mentors are or will become NHPHA members by the start of the program.

Mentee Qualifications

Mentees are required to be pursuing a degree in the field of public health or have entered the field in the past 1-3 years.

Mentor Expectations

- Fully engage with the mentee in a professional manner
- Establish goals and expectations, through an Action Plan
- Serve as a role model, an informal advisor, and a resource
- Offer constructive feedback in a positive manner
- Communicate openly and honestly
- Meet with the mentee monthly
- Attend all 3 events in person, which may occur during a portion of the work day
- Use Suggested Topics and Activities to facilitate discussions
- Sign and uphold the Mentoring Agreement
- Complete evaluations, upon request of NHPHA
- Contact Workforce Development Coordinator with questions or concerns



Mentee Expectations

- Maintain professionalism at all times
- Establish goals and expectations, through an Action Plan
- Prepare for each meeting, with relevant questions or points of discussion
- Come to meetings with a positive mindset, ready to learn
- Follow through in between meetings on recommended tasks
- Communicate with the mentor at least once per month and uphold this commitment throughout the length of the program
- Initiate the scheduling of each conversation, even if it is rescheduled
- Attend all three events in person, which may occur during a portion of the work day
- Sign and uphold the Mentoring Agreement
- Complete evaluations, upon request of NHPHA
- Contact Workforce Development Coordinator with questions or concerns

What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a process in which an experienced professional (mentor) guides a less experienced student or early career professional (mentee) to strengthen their knowledge base and develop new skills. Mentors help establish professional goals through a series of ongoing conversations and learning activities or events. This mutual relationship is based on trust and respect. It is considered an old form of learning, in which both mentors and mentees learn from each other. At NHPHA, mentoring is focused on the public health field, including what opportunities are present in the field, what types of careers one can pursue, and what professional associations exist. The mentoring program includes a series of ongoing conversations, monthly, from the start to finish of the program.

Benefits to Mentor

- Contribute personally to the development of a future professional
- Improve communication skills and advising skills
- Develop skills in mentoring
- Could possibly recruit mentees to his/her respective fields of work
- Reflect on practices and personal career choices
- Share years of experience
- Expand his/her professional networks
- Possibly acquire fresh enthusiasm for his/her own professional career

Benefits to Mentee

- Receive guidance and gain practical resources
- Participate in discussion regarding career interests
- If possible, make multiple connections within a broader network of the public health field
- Work directly and interact with a positive role model, leader, successful expert, and professional colleague
- Connect education and training to professional experience
- Discuss a variety of public health careers and workplaces
- Ask specific questions
- Receive constructive feedback and advice for his/her professional goals and professional skills
- Understand how to balance work and personal life
- Improve specific professional skills and knowledge
- Benefit from the mentor's expertise and public health experience
- Understand more specifically what to focus on for professional growth
- Explore professional development opportunities

Mentoring IS

- a commitment
- being open minded
- a sharing experience
- improving communication skills
- increasing networking opportunities
- strengthening professional skills
- expanding one's worldview

Mentoring IS NOT

- a guarantee of a job, internship, or job recommendation
- therapy
- supervision
- tutoring
- effortless

Stages of Formal Mentoring Relationships

1. Build the relationship
2. Exchange information and establish goals
3. Work toward goals and deepening the engagement in the relationship
 - a. What are the benefits of the relationship? How is the mentor helping the mentee to achieve his/her goals?
 - b. What changes are there in the ways the mentee/mentor approach work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
 - c. What kinds of adjustments or changes are needed during the program to work toward the goals?
4. End the formal mentoring relationship and plan for the future
 - a. Reflect on accomplishments, challenges, and progress toward goals
 - b. Explore other resources and types of support
 - c. Discuss if the relationship will continue informally at all
 - d. Express thanks, both to and from the mentor and the mentee

Mentoring Tips

Guidelines and Tips for Mentors

- Provide advice and suggestions in regards to career development and opportunities within the public health field
- Assist the mentee with taking initiative in the relationship
- Offer advice in regards to feasibility of goals
- Provide options and support, but not necessarily solutions
- Share applicable experiences with the mentee
- Do not rush through the learning process
- Foster an environment of mutual trust and respect, and facilitate learning
- Acknowledge the mentee's contributions and progress towards goals
- Give specific and simple feedback, respectfully
- Encourage questions from the mentee, and inspire the mentee
- Understand what the mentee would like to discuss
- Keep it positive and professional: both during the meeting times and outside
- Feel free to continue a relationship with the mentee past the conclusion of the program
- Appreciate and respect the mentee's time

“One of my goals for this program was to explore jobs and internship opportunities for the coming summer. This was my goal even before our first meeting. Through the help of my mentor and other resources, I was able to reach that goal.” — Nick Simeti, mentee

Guidelines and Tips for Mentees

- Discuss the experiences the mentor has had in the public health industry
- Be open to constructive feedback and discussion regarding career goals, as well as alternative interpretations and approaches
- Inquire about the mentor's place of work
- Ask questions about types of public health jobs. The mentor may know people in different places of employment that may be of interest
- If possible, attend networking events or public health events with the mentor to learn more about the industry and the opportunities in the field
- Be respectful and responsible: uphold the meeting commitments and take responsibility in learning
- Respond to messages from the mentor within 24 hours
- Proofread each email and any forms of written communication
- Keep a journal of conversations
- Ask the mentor for feedback, suggestions, strategies, and resources
- Listen to the advice, reflect, and apply it when appropriate
- Show evidence of following through and utilizing the advice
- Acknowledge that the learning process takes time
- Keep it positive and professional: both during the meeting times and outside
- Feel free to continue a relationship with the mentor past the conclusion of the program
- Appreciate the mentor's time and send thank-you notes or emails

Resources for this guide: Adapted from materials from the American Public Health Association, Colorado Public Health Association, Emory-Rollins School of Public Health, University of Minnesota-School of Public Health, and University of New Hampshire, The Mentee's Guide by Linda Phillips-Jones, and Center for Health Leadership and Practice-Mentoring Guide

Suggested Topics

- Initial meeting:
 - * Formal introductions
 - * Discuss academic and professional goals, and establish goals for the relationship
 - * Discuss backgrounds and career interests on both sides
 - * Discuss expectations
 - * Facilitate questions about the field of public health
 - * Agree on a schedule
 - * Determine the best method of communication
- Discuss any reading materials that might supplement studies or interests
- Discuss public health career options
- Provide feedback on a resume, cover letter, or practice interview
- Final meeting:
 - * Discuss how the relationship has been beneficial
 - * Ask for or provide any final feedback
 - * Review the goals and the progress toward the goals
 - * Decide on the next form of the relationship

Suggested Activities

- Attend lectures, events, webinars, professional association meetings, and public health meetings with the mentor
- Facilitate networking opportunities through informational meetings with the mentor's colleagues, if possible
- Job shadow, if possible
- Set up a LinkedIn profile
- Conduct an informational interview and practice proper etiquette
- Attend NHPHA events: both mentors/mentees will be offered a discount

Mentors DO

- Help the mentee take initiative with the mentoring relationship
- Be open to the mentee's ideas and discussion topics
- Be explicit about your own expectations, limits and time constraints
- Ask before making a suggestion or giving feedback
- Prepare to end the formal mentoring relationship at the end of the program
- Keep the door open for the mentee in the future

Mentors DON'T

- Assume your advice will be followed
- Expect that the mentee hopes to have the job or exact career path that you have or have taken
- Assume the mentee does not need encouragement or reinforcement
- Avoid discussion of touchy subjects
- End the mentoring relationship prematurely

Mentees DO

- Set specific goals
- Be explicit about their own needs, limits, and time constraints
- Be receptive to constructive feedback and advice
- Show appreciation for the mentor's time
- Ask permission to stay in contact after the formal program ends, or, prepare to end the relationship at the end of the program

Mentees DON'T

- Ask the mentor for a job, internship, or job reference
- Assume the mentor has unlimited time. If you need feedback by a specific date, provide that date in your communications
- Be defensive when receiving constructive feedback
- End the mentoring relationship prematurely

Source: University of Minnesota Guide

Schedule

August

- Mentor applications due

September

- Mentee applications due
- Mentor/mentee kick-off – informational and educational event
- Establish a schedule as a mentor/mentee: meet monthly

October

- Attend NHPHA fall forum (suggested)

November-December

- Meet with mentor/mentee once per month

January

- Event to check in with mentors/mentees
- Meet with mentor/mentee

February-April

- Meet with mentor/mentee once per month

April

- Attend NHPHA Annual Meeting (suggested)

May

- End of mentoring session event
- Complete evaluation

connections
inspiring building
motivated
trusting hopeful overwhelming
experience
informative
supportive learning gratitude
development relationship
change constructive
professional

supported limited
helpful time
energizing motivating
enjoyable Jazzed disjointed
inspiring
gratifying
underutilized
unprepared frustrated
thought-provoking
eye-opening
perspective-changing