

Standard Operating Procedure for Hiring Interns

This document contains all information necessary to conduct efficient and thorough Corps member hiring. It is designed to be used by staff members responsible for Corps member hiring. This document is effective for the Spring 2024 cohort and may be changed and improved as necessary.

Document and Process Overview

The APHC uses a decentralized hiring system, for two reasons: first, it reduces bottlenecks by dividing labor; second, it allows the APHC to thoroughly review a higher volume of applications. This document uses section headers to designate sequential process steps.

This document is an SOP and complement to your personalized applicant management sheet (see links below). This document will contain workflow and process documentation, detailed instructions about how to conduct scoring processes checklists, and email templates.

Overall Hiring Timeline

Dates	Activities	# of applications
Sep 21, 2023	Program Manager will send out hiring materials	n/a
Sep 22 - Oct 2, 2023	Complete the initial screen and resume/application review Schedule interviews	~70-75 per reviewer
Oct 3-13, 2023	Conduct interviews	~8-10 per reviewer
Oct 16, 2023	Make decisions about what applicants you want to hire and transfer to final hiring spreadsheet	5-8 per reviewer
Week of Oct 16	Meet as a team to discuss final hiring decisions	~20 total applicants
Oct 20	Send offer letters to final applicants	~20 total applicants

Everyone has a subset of applicants that are similar to each other in education level, so that you may compare applicants to each other in terms of education and experience. Applicants are also organized by which HMCC region the school is in. **Each reviewer is reading <75 applications. Your end goal is to each choose 5-8 applicants by Oct 16 to hire as Corps members.**

Reviewer Name	Applicant Categories
X	- Graduate & Doctoral
Y	- Undergrads with 4+ semesters
Z	- Undergrads with <4 semesters

Credit: Academic Public Health Corps (APHC), funded by the MA Department of Public Health (DPH).

Spreadsheet Tab Overview

Tab #	Name	Description
1	Applications	The full application answers for all of your Corps member applicants.
2	Initial Screen	Used to screen out ineligible applicants.
3	Resume & App Review	Used to score each eligible applicant's resume and written application answers and choose applicants to interview.
4	Interviews	Used to score each interviewee's answers and decide whether to hire, waitlist, or reject final applicants.

Tab #1: Applications

The first step of applicant management will be to view the applications in the “Application” tab of your sheet. Process steps will progress from left to right sequentially in the tabs. The application tab contains all of the answers from the application and is the data source for the rest of the tabs.

Tab #2: Initial Screening

The intention of an initial screening is to quickly remove applicants who do not fit the basic eligibility criteria of the corps. This serves the purpose of getting notice to them sooner, and of reducing the amount of resumes and applications to review closely.

Reasons to automatically screen out a applicant:

- They will not be a current student at an institute of higher education at the time of the internship.
- They attend an institution that is not located in Massachusetts.
- They do not currently live in Massachusetts.
- They currently hold a full time position.
- They have already been a paid Corps member in a previous or current cohort (they would not be disqualified if they were an APHVC volunteer in the past).
- They are available 2 or fewer business days of the week.
- They are a first year college student (unless it is a non-traditional student).

Additional reasons to screen out an applicant are at the discretion of your best judgment. For instance, you may also choose to screen out a vastly over- or under-qualified applicant per the job description.

Possible reasons to screen out applicants:

- They are a second year college student.
- They are in a clinical, pre-med, nursing, or dental track.
- Neither a public health/science major nor comms/data experience.
- Their application answers are focused on healthcare access (individual level) or policy work (societal level).
- They are an undergraduate Tufts student who is looking for a practicum (due to Tufts' requirements that practicums be at least 50% in person).

Screening Checklist:

Credit: Academic Public Health Corps (APHC), funded by the MA Department of Public Health (DPH).

- Skim applicants' application answers.
- Screen applicants out, using the eligibility criteria above and your own judgment.
- Mark applicants as rejected by selecting "no" in the "move to next stage" column.
- Mark all other applicants as "yes" in the "move to next stage" column.
- Copy all "yes" applicant first name, last name, and email information into the "resume and application review" tab.
- The Program Manager will send a rejection email once all slots are filled.

Tab #3: Resume and Application Review

By now, ineligible applicants have been screened out. This tab is to thoroughly read and score eligible applicants' application materials.

The purpose of the written application and resume is to score applicants based on the following criteria:

- **Most importantly: Exhibited interest in local public health or community health.**
 - Is the applicant more likely to be interested in a career in local public health?
 - Expressing interest in working in their home community
 - "I want to make a difference in my community/I believe in the mission of public health"
- Exhibited interest in the APHC
 - E.g. they were an APHVC volunteer in the past or they have applied for the APHC before (Column L)
- Applicable work and/or lived experience
 - **Prioritize people who would take less training to train and onboard to the APHC**
 - Previous applied experience with health communications or data analysis/visualization projects
 - Previous applied experience or stated interest in health equity
 - Previous experience working at the community health level
 - Previous experience with consulting or a client-facing role
 - Previous experience with project management or working in teams
 - They mention they are from Massachusetts and want to give back to their community
 - Food service/customer service
- Potential for growth; will the APHC be a good/useful career experience for them?
 - They want to work in local or community health and the APHC would be a significant stepping stone for them
 - Their expectations for what they want to get out of the APHC is aligned with the internship's goals (e.g., they aren't looking exclusively for policy experience or something we don't do at all)

The criteria for scoring are as follows:

- A score of "0" signifies that this competency is not demonstrated.
- A score of "1" signifies that this competency or question is demonstrated or answered to a minimal extent.
- A score of "2" signifies that this competency is demonstrated somewhat.
- A score of "3" signifies that this competency is demonstrated satisfactorily.
- A score of "4" signifies that this competency is demonstrated above expectations.

The Likert scale is intended to quantify applicant strengths and weaknesses. However, not all applicant attributes are quantifiable. If you feel that you would like to interview someone despite a low score, you are entitled to do so.

Resume & Application Review Checklist

- Check that applicant information is complete in the first name, last name, and email columns.
- Read all of the applicant's application answers thoroughly.
- Score applicants. The data source is the "applications" tab which has all of the applicants you are responsible for. Columns D-M are what you will be scoring. Column "M" is meant to encompass any skills which are not strictly communications or data but that would be useful, such as research, customer service, etc.
- Review applicants using the computed columns.
- Make your decisions using the "move to next stage" column, identical to the initial screen tab.
- Copy and paste applicant information of those you will interview into the "interviews tab". You should aim to interview about 8-10 applicants.

Tab #4: Interviewing Applicants

Interview Prep Checklist

- Create a google calendar appointment schedule with 30 minutes slots. Please name it "APHC Corps member interview".
- Include your personal Zoom link and the following text in the appointment description:

"Thank you for scheduling an interview for the APHC Corps member position. Here is a link to an interview guide with the questions I'll be asking you at the interview. Our policy is to share interview questions with applicants in advance so you have time to prepare thoughtful, thorough answers that include specific examples of your skills and experience."

[Zoom info]

- Once the previous step is completed, send The Program Manager your link so they can confirm it works. They will book a dummy appointment.
- Send applicants this email using the email address from their resume or application:

Subject: Interview with the APHC for a Spring 2024 Corps member position

Dear [name],

My name is [your name], and I am the [your title]. After thorough review of your application to be a Corps member with the APHC, we are impressed with your potential fit for this position. I would like to invite you to an interview to further discuss your skills and experience.

Interviews will take place remotely over Zoom over the next week (March 20-24). Please use my appointment calendar link to book a 30-minute interview with me: [link]

If you are no longer interested in the position or not available this spring, please let me know.

I am looking forward to learning more about you, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks!

Interview Goals

Talent acquisition is a whole profession in itself. Typically, applicants are assessed for technical, motivational, and behavioral traits and abilities. It is important to bifurcate our processes: since their technical and experiential competencies will have already been assessed in the application reading stage, the goal of this interview is to understand their behavioral and motivational assets. In other words, you're assessing the extent to which they make you feel as though they would be a good fit with the APHC's flow and culture, as well as the broader organizational context of the APHC and MHOA. The goal is not to evaluate their technical skills, but to engage in meaningful dialogue about what they do, how they do it, and why they do it both in terms of their past experience and in terms of their potential position.

A good interviewer will:

- Focus on building rapport
- Actively listen
- Remain composed and professional, but engaged
- Focus on getting to know and understand a applicant
- Keep questions to time to ensure fairness
- Be supportive of the applicant: "Thank you for your answer. The part about x and y are very important to us"..."Please take a minute if you need to think, and answer when you are feeling comfortable."
- Be transparent about time: "I encourage you to take around five minutes per question, and be brief but thorough in your answers."

Interview Questions

You should aim to interview about 8-10 applicants. The interviews will contain five minutes of introductions and ~20 minutes of questions, as outlined below. This will be helpful to have during the interview.

Time	Question/Action	Goal
2 min	<p>Introduce yourself and explain the APHC.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The projects you work on depend on what our clients request (i.e. data and health equity projects are <u>not guaranteed</u>)- The work is mostly remote and self-directed- Students work as part-time public health consultants on 3-6 projects per semester with various clients	Give organizational context, create authentic rapport and set communication example.

2 min	Tell me a little about yourself. What are your public health passions?	Understand the applicant's background and motivations.
5 min	What are your current career goals? What jobs or fields do you want to work in when you graduate?	Assess how the applicant fits into the long term goals of APHC. Are they interested in local public health? Do they anticipate working in local public health after they complete the APHC? <u>Do they mention the following?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest in working at the local or community health level - Working in their home community
5 min	The APHC works on a lot of projects that require previous experience with data, health communications, and health equity skills. Going one by one, can you please tell me your previous experiences with each of these skill areas?	Determine what their specific skills are, which projects they might work on, and whether they would require much training. <u>Do they mention the following?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previous experience working at the local level - Previous applied experience with health communications or data analysis/visualization projects - Previous applied experience or stated interest in health equity
5 min	What does health equity mean to you? How will you realize this vision of health equity in your future professional roles?	Further assess their commitment to health equity principles and how they envision these principles as a practice. Gain insight into what perspectives/experience/ideals they want to bring to the program. <u>Do they mention the following?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health equity as a systemic issue - Concrete ways they see themselves incorporating health equity in their career goals
5 min	Imagine that it is midterms week, and you are currently juggling class, midterms, a 15 hour/week job, and a large APHC project due in 4 weeks. You are working on the project as a team with two other interns, and you're each currently spending about 10 hours per week on it. Please describe your approach to fulfilling these obligations.	Assess their approach and process to time management and communication. <u>Do they mention the following?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear, thoughtful process for prioritizing activities and managing time/workload • A commitment to making sure everything gets done to everyone's satisfaction • Communicating with their teammates

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	<p><i>Probe 1: What kind of process and tools do you use to keep each project on track?</i></p> <p><i>Probe 2: How would you communicate with your teammates about your situation?</i></p> <p>Follow up question: If your APHC project is due in 2 weeks instead of 4, how would your answer change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they react when their priorities change
5 min	Do you have any questions for me?	Answer their questions, evaluate interest based on questions, and give clear next steps (We will be conducting interviews for the next two weeks and hope to make hiring decisions the week of June 26th. Please let me know ASAP if you need to drop out of consideration for the role.)

The criteria for scoring are as follows:

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Interview red flags (not a disqualification on its own)	Interview green flags
No mention of health equity	Clear interest or passion for community-level public health practice*
Cannot distinguish healthcare vs. public health, very focused on the individual level of public health	Demonstrated health communications or data skills*
Equity question in application was off the mark	Talked about something specific in local health, were able to relate to their experience
No hard skills (data, comms) AND no passion for LPH. Need to have one or the other (ideally both)	Able to talk about career or personal aspirations associated with public health
Clinical track (pre-med, pre-nursing, counseling/therapy)	Talked about something outside of class related to public health
Planning on going into academic research	Interested in in-person work
Freshman or sophomore	

Interview Checklist

- Review the above contents.
- Schedule all interviews.
- Conduct Interviews. The scoring system is identical to the “resume and application” review tab.
- Update sheet accordingly and move the applicants who you believe the APHC should hire into the “hiring decision” tab.

Hiring Decision Processes

By now, you have a shortlist of qualified applicants who are a strong fit for the APHC. Each applicant should be someone who you are confident would perform the position based on the job description.

At this point, please paste the applicants you would hire and waitlist into the final hiring sheet. The next process steps will include position confirmation and procurement of an offer letter, which are not documented in this SOP.

Checklist

- Copy and paste applicant name, email, and scores into respective columns.
- Input your recommended action using the dropdown in the adjacent column (Hire or Waitlist).
- Final hiring decisions will be discussed as a group, making sure we are hiring a balanced Corps.

Together, we will put together a list of 20 final applicants and ~5 waitlisted alternates.

Rejection Emails

The Program Manager will send the following rejection email from the internal account to **applicants that were screened out before an interview**:

Subject: APHC Spring 2024 application update

Good afternoon,

I hope that this email finds you well. After reviewing your application materials, we have decided not to pursue your candidacy for the Spring 2024 Academic Public Health Corps cohort. However, there were many excellent applicants and we **strongly** encourage you to consider re-applying to the APHC once you have gotten more experience!

Here are some ways to stay connected with the APHC and other opportunities:

1. To join our waitlist and re-apply for a future cohort, please click [here](#). We will notify you when the application period opens.
2. Please check out more local public health job and internship opportunities on our website, [here](#).
3. If you are interested in interning with the MA Department of Public Health, you can fill out their interest form [here](#).
4. [Other opportunities]

Respectfully,
[Your name]

The Program Manager will send the following rejection email from the internal account to **applicants that were screened out after being interviewed**:

Subject: APHC Spring 2024 application update

Good afternoon,

Thank you for taking the time to interview for a Corps member position with the Academic Public Health Corps, it was a pleasure speaking with you and getting to know you better. After careful review, your experience and interests did not line up with what we were looking for, and we have decided to move forward with other applicants at this time.

However, there were many excellent applicants and we **strongly** encourage you to consider re-applying to the APHC once you have gotten more experience!

Here are some ways to stay connected with the APHC and other opportunities:

1. To join our waitlist and re-apply for a future cohort, please click [here](#). We will notify you when the application period opens.
2. Please check out more local public health job and internship opportunities on our website, [here](#).
3. If you are interested in interning with the MA Department of Public Health, you can fill out their interest form [here](#).
4. [Other opportunities]

Sincerely,