

Public Health Internship Personas

Personas are *fictional profiles* demonstrating themes or common characteristics of students seeking internships and applied learning experiences.

Personas can be used to:

- Understand students seeking internships.
- Create empathy.
- Generate ideas to address students' needs and challenges.
- Consider program designs and the impacts of specific design elements.

These public health intern personas were created by synthesizing the first 97 fellows in the Connecticut Public Health Fellowship Program (CT PHFP) from January 2023 to December 2024 and notes taken during the 2-hour orientation sessions. Descriptive statistics of the students are available in the October 2024 CT PHFP Evaluation Report.

The Translocator: Mary



Age: 36

School: Quinnipiac University

Pronouns: She/her

Year: 1st Year

Degree: JD

Major: Law

Background: Mary is not from Connecticut originally but has now lived in the state for over 15 years. She first moved here for her undergraduate degree and stayed after she got her first, full-time job. She feels established in Connecticut and plans to continue to raise her family here. She has also established relationships with community stakeholders through her work experience. She is a non-traditional student, engaging in both full-time work and law school.

Goal: Her goal with getting an internship in public health is to help gain experience that will help enhance her current degree program. She is hoping to gain a specialty in public health law.

Hopes: Mary hopes that this internship will help her combine her personal interests in public health policy with her growing professional expertise in law.

Fears:

- Am I too overcommitted to my work obligations to take on this internship?
- Will this internship actually provide me with enough experience or opportunities to make it worth my time?

The Explorer: Isabella



Age: 19
School: WCSU
Pronouns:
She/her
Year: 3rd Year
Degree: BS
Major: Public health

Background: Isabella is from Connecticut and is the first person in her family to attend college. She previously has had part-time seasonal jobs, including babysitting and working at an ice cream parlor. During the semesters at WCSU, she participates in intramural sports and volunteers at a local school.

Goal: Isabella needs an internship for her degree requirement. However, she also wants to gain exposure to a public health organization in order to explore different areas of interest. She thinks she is interested in topics like maternal and child health, health equity, and environmental health.

Hopes: Isabella wants to use this internship to help her figure out what her interest areas really are and to have the chance for some real-world application of the things she has learned in class.

Fears:

- What if “public health” isn’t for me?
- Do I have the necessary skills to succeed?

The Zoomer: Nasaan



Age: 39
School: Southern New Hampshire University
Pronouns: He/him
Year: 1st year
Degree: MPH
Major: behavioral health

Background: Nasaan completed an associate’s degree and became a LPN right out of high school. Married and father to two young children, Nasaan completed an online degree and now started an MPH degree online at night and on weekends which is exhausting, but his family keeps him motivated even when it is hard.

Goal: His goal is to find careers still related to health that provides more career advancement with regular hours and higher pay.

Hopes: That all this effort in advancing his education will lead to a stable job to support his family.

Fears:

- Only met the preceptor one time before agreeing to the internship placement. They seemed busy and distracted. Will I get the support I need to learn everything in a short time?
- What if I can’t get a new job after all of this effort?

The Pathfinder: Simone



Age: 20
School: UConn
Pronouns:
They/Them
Year: 4th Year
Degree: BS/MPH
Major: Public health

Background: Simone is the first in their family to attend college. Currently, they are in an honor program and completing a dual degree (the 4+1) to earn an MPH. They are strongly considering medical school but have a real passion for community and are considering alternative ways to contribute. Accordingly, they are interested in the public health internship as a pathway to thinking of another means of serving their community.

Goal: Simone's goal is to learn as much as possible about public health, in order to make an informed choice about their future and career path. They have some work and volunteer experience, including clinical shadowing and working in a lab, but want to see what it is like to be out, working with the community (while also building their resume).

Hopes: Simone hopes to leave the program with a more informed idea of what they want to do with their degree. They already have tried other internships, so they really want to try something that *means* something.

Fears:

- Will I feel as though I do not belong at the agency I am placed with?
- Will I take on too much debt from this program?

The Focused: Markos



Age: 27
School: SCSU
Pronoun:
He/Them
Year: 1st Year
Degree: MPH
Major: Public health

Background: Markos was born and raised in Connecticut. After graduating from college and serving in the US Military for a few years, he decided to pursue an MPH. From his time in the military, he has experience in a professional setting with time management, professionalism, organization, and meeting deadlines. However, he has little experience in the field of public health and healthcare.

Goal: His goal is to complete an internship in public health to meet his APE requirement for his MPH degree. Markos is also interested in growing his professional network outside of the military, so he hopes his internship provides him with opportunities to meet new colleagues and collaborators.

Hopes: Markos is very narrowly interested in veteran health, especially in PTSD and access to mental health care. In this way, he is hoping that his internship provides an opportunity to learn more about public health research and practice in this space.

Fears:

- What if my internship doesn't let me explore veteran mental health?

