



PHAP

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

The mission of the Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) is to train and provide experiential learning to early-career professionals who contribute to the public health workforce. Managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support, PHAP enables early-career public health professionals to gain hands-on, real-life experience in the day-to-day operations of public health programs. After completing the two-year, CDC-funded training program, associates are qualified to apply for public health positions at CDC and other health organizations.

PHAP is geared toward recent bachelor's- and master's level graduates who are interested in a career in public health.

Learning Through Hands-on Experience in the Field

Public health associates have the opportunity to work alongside professionals across a variety of public health settings. As CDC field assignees to host agencies in the field (state, tribal, local, and US territorial public health agencies; community-based organizations; public health institutes and associations; academic institutions; and CDC quarantine stations), associates hold positions similar to those of their host site co-workers. They also help to extend the reach of public health program work in the field, making them a valuable resource for their host site agencies.

Program Areas at Host Sites

Each associate is given a two-year assignment in a program area selected by the host agency, such as—

- Chronic disease prevention and health promotion
- Environmental health
- Global migration and quarantine
- Immunization
- Injury and violence prevention
- Maternal and child health
- Public health preparedness
- Prevention of STD, TB, HIV, and other communicable diseases



"PHAP has given me a wide range of applied experience in public health that is rare for a recent college graduate. I am very appreciative for the variation built into the PHAP curriculum because it gave me exposure to a wide array of public health programs and helped me build skills that will be important to any career in public health or service in my future."

— Former associate,
PHAP Class of 2014



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support



"We love this program! We benefit from the associates' energy and expertise in public health, and in return, provide great opportunities for them to do meaningful work."

— Host site supervisor,
PHAP Class of 2012



Program Curriculum

PHAP's comprehensive curriculum focuses on developing associates' proficiencies in key public health areas via on-the-job training, formal instruction, and mentoring. Associates also are able to participate in skill-building activities through seminars, web-based training, and conferences. Some examples of a typical associate's on-the-job training include—

- Contributing to community program planning and implementation
- Participating in outbreak response activities
- Developing surveillance reports for use by the agency or community
- Collecting water samples and insect specimens for environmental testing

PHAP Strengthens the Public Health Workforce and Benefits Host Sites

PHAP was founded in 2007 to renew CDC's frontline public health focus and to meet the need for an ongoing source of field-based, experienced, and dedicated public health professionals. In 2010, PHAP expanded from a pilot program to a nationwide public health training program—hiring 65 associates in 2010, and 197 associates in 2016—to further extend the reach of the program and CDC's prevention activities. To date, PHAP has placed 950 public health associates in public health agencies and nongovernmental organizations across 47 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

While PHAP offers tremendous benefits to the associates through training and support, the host site also receives numerous benefits, including—

- Capacity-building and human resources to fill gaps in agencies affected by budget cuts and staffing shortages
- Early-career public health professional workforce to help organizations meet their program goals
- A unique partnership with CDC to develop the nation's next generation of public health professionals

For more information about becoming an associate or hosting an associate at your site, contact us at phap@cdc.gov, or 404.498.0030.

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