ASPPH | CDC

Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

2026



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ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program
Program Announcement

Project Background

An Applied Practice Experience (APE), often called a practicum, is a required component of Master of Public Health (MPH) education at Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs. Through an APE, students apply the knowledge and skills acquired through their coursework in a real-world public health setting while demonstrating public health competencies through practical work products developed for the benefit of a host organization. The APE provides students with an opportunity to strengthen professional skills, expand professional networks, explore potential career paths, and contribute to meaningful public health projects.

Through the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program, students are placed with state, Tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) health departments that protect and improve the health of communities across the United States. Students work alongside governmental public health professionals to address real-world public health challenges while contributing to the mission and priorities of their host health department. In doing so, students gain firsthand exposure to governmental public health practice, including efforts to prevent disease, respond to public health emergencies, analyze and use data, engage communities, and address the factors that influence population health.

Program Overview

The ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program is a collaborative initiative between the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The program connects students from CEPH-accredited schools and programs of public health with governmental public health departments for structured, competency-based APE. Through mentored, project-based placements at select state, Tribal, local, and territorial health departments, students gain hands-on experience in governmental public health practice while contributing to meaningful public health initiatives.

Placements emphasize public health leadership and data science competencies developed collaboratively by ASPPH and subject matter experts through the CDC Public Health Leadership and Education, Advancing Health Equity and Data Science (PH-LEADS) initiative. Students may contribute to projects related to strategic planning, workforce development, quality improvement, accreditation readiness, community health assessment, program evaluation, organizational effectiveness, data collection and analysis, data visualization, public health surveillance, and other leadership- and data science-focused initiatives.

ASPPH manages the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program from start to finish. ASPPH recruits and onboards participating health department practice sites, administers the student application and selection process, coordinates placements, delivers student orientation and program support, disburses stipend payments, monitors student progress, facilitates performance and assessment activities, and serves as the primary point of contact for students, academic institutions, and practice sites throughout the experience. By coordinating all aspects of program implementation, ASPPH ensures that APE placements are meaningful and aligned with both educational requirements and practice site workforce development needs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program, a student must meet all below criteria without exception:

- Enrolled in an ASPPH member school or program that is CEPH-accredited (Master's or Doctoral-level) during Spring 2027
- In good academic standing
- Academically eligible to complete their academic institution's required APE/practicum during Spring 2027 and use placement in the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health APE Program to fulfill this requirement
- U.S. citizen or hold a visa permitting lawful permanent residence ("Green Card") in the U.S. (Student visas are not accepted)

Period of Performance

The program will be offered through two distinct four-month cohorts during the 2026–2027 academic year:

Fall 2026 Cohort: APE placements will begin in September 2026.
Spring 2027 Cohort: APE placements will begin in February 2027.

Each APE placement will require the completion of 200 hours of applied public health practice, unless more than 200 hours is required by the student's academic institution. Individual APE schedules will be developed in coordination with practice site preceptors and the student's academic and/or APE advisor to ensure alignment with academic requirements and health department needs.

Location

Placements will be based in state, Tribal, local, and territorial governmental public health departments across the United States. All placements will be virtual, unless the student is already located near their practice site and the student, practice site, and ASPPH agree to an in-person or hybrid placement. Relocation expenses will not be reimbursed.

Stipend and Allowances

The training stipend for APE placements is $3,000. The training stipend is intended to assist with personal living expenses.

Applied Practice Experience Placements

While placed at their practice site, students will work on meaningful, project-based initiatives that support health department priorities while developing leadership and/or data science skills and gaining experience in governmental public health practice.

Projects will emphasize public health leadership and data science competencies curated by ASPPH and subject matter experts through the CDC PH-LEADS initiative. These competencies focus on strengthening leadership capacity, systems thinking, organizational effectiveness, collaboration, and data-informed decision-making within governmental public health departments. Placement projects may include activities such as strategic planning, program evaluation, quality improvement, community health assessment, workforce development, accreditation readiness, data collection and analysis, or other initiatives that

advance health department priorities.

Each placement will include at least one deliverable, such as a report, presentation, dashboard, toolkit, assessment, or other product identified by the practice site. Students will be paired with a health department preceptor who will provide mentorship and professional guidance throughout the placement, helping students achieve project goals while gaining insight into governmental public health practice.

Application Instructions

- Applications must be submitted using the ASPPH Applied Learning and Training Programs Online Application System, a centralized application service that provides a secure, easy, and convenient way for students/graduates of ASPPH member schools and public health programs to apply to all ASPPH Applied Learning and Training Programs.
- To begin the online application, click the "Sign Up" button below the Login button to create a password-protected account. If the student already has an account, they may log in on this page. Students are advised to carefully read the instructions that appear throughout the online application system.
- After submitting an application, students may make edits at any time before the application deadline by clicking the pencil icon in the “My Status” section. If the application is edited, the student must resubmit it by the deadline; otherwise, the application will not be reviewed. Applications are reviewed only after the online application deadline has passed.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.
- Please contact ASPPH with questions: trainingprograms@aspph.org

Application Checklist

- **Resume** (PDF only)
- **Unofficial Graduate Transcript** (PDF only. Undergraduate transcripts are not accepted.)
- **Personal Essay and Statement of Eligibility Confirmation** (PDF only)
  Essay prompt: Please describe your interest in governmental public health and how participation in the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program will support your professional goals. Please also highlight the coursework, experience, skills, and strengths you would bring to a leadership- and/or data science-focused APE placement within a health department.

Application Deadline: 11:59:59 PM EST on July 22, 2026 for the Fall 2026 Cohort. 11:59:59 PM EST on December 13, 2026 for the Spring 2027 Cohort.

Review and Final Selection

ASPPH will facilitate the student recruitment, selection, and placement process in collaboration with participating state, Tribal, local, and territorial health department practice sites. ASPPH works with practice sites to define APE project scope, desired deliverables, and preferred candidate qualifications.

A group of qualified student applicants will be shared with health department practice sites for final review and selection. Participating health departments will conduct final interviews and select the APE student who best aligns with their project needs. ASPPH will support the onboarding process and coordinate with the student, practice site preceptor, and student’s academic advisor to ensure the APE experience is established

with clearly defined project objectives and tasks, timelines, learning objectives, and meets the APE requirements of the student's academic institution.

Note: Completing the ASPPH/CDC Governmental Public Health Applied Practice Experience Program does not guarantee full-time employment at the CDC, any other federal agency, ASPPH, or the health department practice site.