

**DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE
HANDBOOK**

DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

www.dupagehealth.org

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About DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) – Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness, injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors; and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

Vision

Presence in the Community - To be viewed as the community leader in the assessment, preservation, promotion and protection of our citizens' health.

Education - To be a catalyst to educate citizens so they are engaged in proactive health and disease management.

Quality - To define performance standards and outcome measures to continuously improve program development, implementation, and service delivery. The Health Department will attract and maintain quality staff.

Integrated Service System - To promote internal and external partnerships that foster a seamless system of service delivery.

Policy Development - To identify key policy issues confronting public health and advocate for policies that optimize the health of the citizens of DuPage County.

Fiscal - To meet public health challenges while maintaining a sound fiscal position in order to optimize community health practices.

Values

Integrity - Demonstrating the highest ethical and professional standards using honest communications and actions.

Collaboration - Developing and maximizing relationships to improve access and health outcomes in the community.

Accountability - Responsible planning and management of human and financial resources.

Respect - Showing courtesy and understanding for all with whom we interact.

Excellence - Setting and striving to achieve the highest standards of public health service through innovation and demonstration of outcomes.

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

Student Experience Overview

The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) offers internships, externships (shadowing), and informational interviews for interested undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. The purpose of the Student Experience program is to provide students the opportunity to apply certain competencies acquired in the classroom to a workplace environment, under the direction of a Health Department employee.

Depending on the area of study, students may perform work that is related to their academic field or in an area of study in which they have an interest. The student must have permission from their institution before participating in this program. A signed agreement between the educational institution and DCHD is typically required for all internships and externships; there may be some exceptions. Students participating in this program will:

- Use academic training to confront real world public health issues
- Gain knowledge of the DuPage County Health Department programs and services
- Receive hands-on training and/or participate in Health Department activities
- Network with working professionals in their area of interest
- Find opportunities to explore various careers while building on their academic studies

Program Options

All student requests require the completion of an [application](#) and will be reviewed based on Health Department staff availability. Opportunities are available throughout the year, as determined by the program and service unit.

***Note:** Paid internship opportunities are overseen by Human Resources and posted on our [DCHD Job Board](#) as they become available.

- ➔ [Internships](#) are formal opportunities that vary in length from a few weeks to several months with specific school requirements such as: gained experience in a specific area, number of hours, completed projects or deliverables.
- ➔ [Externships](#) (also known as shadowing) are a short-term option (a few days up to a month), typically without program requirements such as designated hours or completed work items. This is an opportunity to witness the day-to-day activities of a specific role or a few program areas at the health department.
- ➔ [Informational interviews](#) are for students interested in learning about the functions of the health department. These interviews (typically over the phone) are conducted with a public health professional for the student to gain an understanding of public health programs and services to supplement a school assignment.

The DCHD also has several established clinical rotations with local educational institutions. These opportunities require: coordination between both DCHD and the educational institution, established observation or clinical rotations across our health department sites and programs, and a current affiliation agreement with the educational institution.

Eligibility Criteria **Does not apply to paid opportunities – Criteria will be listed on the specific job posting.*

- Be over 18 years of age and have a high school diploma.
- Be enrolled as a matriculated undergraduate, graduate, or professional student in a degree program at an accredited college or university in the US.
- Recent graduates are not eligible to apply for unpaid internships.
- Be in good academic standing (GPA above 2.8).
- **For all internships/externships:** The student must be able to commit a minimum number of hours each week, based on program need.
- **For all internships/externships:** The student’s educational institution must have a signed agreement with the DCHD.

Application Process

Students who are interested in pursuing a student experience with the DuPage County Health Department must complete the [DCHD Student Experience Application](#) to be considered for placement. Applications should be submitted at least two months prior to the anticipated start date of the internship/externship. Complete applications received by DCHD will be reviewed by supervisors with available opportunities. Students may be asked to interview, either by phone or in person; Those selected for an internship will be notified by the program supervisor/preceptor via phone or email. All applicants will be notified of the status of their application within 4 weeks of receipt by someone from Quality & Compliance or the selected program.

Questions about the application process should be directed to internships@dupagehealth.org.

Program Scope

DCHD strives to provide students with experiences relevant to their individual interests. Students can expect to learn about various functions within the fields of Public Health and Human Services through a multitude of DCHD programs and services.

Students (bachelors, masters, post-grad, doctoral) seeking an **internship** placement could: support existing projects in a specific program area by being assigned tasks; participate in staff training opportunities; lead therapy sessions to individuals with mental and emotional problems; participate in client support groups and behavioral health programming; lead or support a community assessment to help develop a program plan or identify a community opportunity; design, implement, and evaluate a health education program for a target population in the community; research and produce draft public health legislation that impacts a certain demographic or the broader community; or complete biostatistical analysis and prepare quantitative public health data reports.

Students seeking an **externship** could shadow a Health Department employee in a program area (clinical or non-clinical) of their choosing to experience a typical day/week on the job, network with industry professionals, sit in on staff meetings, and/or conduct informal staff interviews.

Students seeking an **informational interview** with a public health professional can expect to gain a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities associated with a specific position or program area

at the DCHD. In addition to an interview, students may also attend public Board of Health meetings to learn more about the functions of the local health department.

Selection Process

There are multiple steps in the selection process; students should review the following:

- ❖ Completed Application Packets: Once applications are submitted, they are reviewed to ensure all eligibility requirements are met. Upon verification, application packets are made available to selected programs for their consideration.
- ❖ Student Selections: The designated program supervisor / preceptor will contact the student directly to setup an interview, as necessary. Please note that all student experience acceptances are considered tentative until formal communication has been shared.

Student Requirements

Students shall abide by the following requirements, which are also outlined in school affiliation agreements and individual student agreements. Upon acceptance to a DCHD student experience, such as an internship/externship, all students are required to review and sign a student agreement.

Health & Safety

Students are required to meet the following health and safety requirements, which may include, but are not limited to the following: proof of recent Tuberculosis (TB) test; proof of Measles immunity; proof of Hepatitis B vaccination; Tdap vaccination; current influenza vaccination, recommended COVID-19 vaccinations, and OSHA compliance for prevention of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and TB.

Ethics, Confidentiality, & Data Protection

Students shall maintain personal, ethical, and professional standards required of all DCHD employees and students consistent with the applicable professional Code of Ethics and applicable standards of relevant accrediting and regulatory bodies.

Students are expected to adhere to all Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to client confidentiality and privacy, including but not limited to, the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information as required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Students whose experiences with the DCHD include completion of educational or informational projects relating to their practical learning and/or clinical educational experience require prior written approval of the DCHD and their educational institution before publishing any material. Additionally, proper procedures should be followed when University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is needed.

Student Policies & Procedures

Schedule

Hours and schedule may include days or evenings, as this varies by specific location and program business hours. Prior to starting an internship/externship, the supervisor/preceptor and student will establish a schedule that satisfies school and program requirements, adjusting for final exams, school breaks, or other school-related activities. The student should provide their supervisor/preceptor with advanced notice of any schedule conflicts that may arise.

Cell Phone Usage

Students are not to use their personal cell phone to conduct business-related work for their student experiences; however, students may use their personal cell phones to communicate with their site supervisors. Students should refrain from conducting personal business (e.g., phone calls, text messaging, social media, etc.) during their internship/externship hours.

Orientation

Depending on the type of student experience, students may be required to complete a formal orientation process to become familiar with programs, applicable guidelines, policies, and procedures. The student's orientation schedule will accommodate their school schedule. Additional training opportunities may exist, depending on the program area.

Professional Conduct

Students are responsible for meeting all professional expectations of the DCHD as you are representing the Health Department and interacting with the community, Health Department employees, and others. These expectations include, but are not limited to:

- Professional dress and grooming
- Timeliness
- Confidentiality
- Professional demeanor
- Professional communication, both in verbal and written communication

Holidays & Time Off

The Health Department is closed on various holidays throughout the year. Students are not expected to report to their sites during these observed holidays.

If students are seeking any time off from their established site schedules, they should provide as much notice to their supervisor/preceptor as possible so they can plan accordingly. Students should also identify how they will make up those hours to ensure completion of their internship within the appropriate timeframe.