

Establishment of the CDC Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program As a Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship

Accomplishment: In a unique federal collaboration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program (PHIFP) has worked with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to designate PHIFP as a DOL/ETA Registered Apprenticeship.

DOL/ETA Registered Apprenticeship programs meet the skilled workforce needs of American industry, training millions of qualified individuals for lifelong careers since 1937. In addition to peer review and accreditation by another federal agency, this partnership establishes PHIFP as a national template for public health informatics (PHI) training programs. The collaboration with DOL lays the foundation for a standard occupational code for the profession of Public Health Informatician.

This accomplishment signifies a potential cascade of future possibilities for the PHI field that include: defining Public Health Informatician as a distinct discipline within the public health workforce; establishment and promotion of career paths and salary progression within the profession; greater ability to track training investments; development of PHI job descriptions by state governments; and adoption of PHI job code templates by other industries.

Benefits of DOL/ETA Registered Apprenticeships:

- Ensure quality training by meeting DOL training and practice standards
- Provide a nationally-recognized credential for a highly skilled professional workforce
- Provide career training opportunities for multiple facets of the workforce
- Strengthen public-private and public-public partnerships for workforce development

The PHIFP Registered Apprenticeship is Unique and Important:

- It certifies CDC's PHIFP as contributing to a highly skilled workforce (<http://www.doleta.gov/oa/faqs.cfm>)
- PHIFP fellows will earn a nationally-recognized DOL certificate in addition to their CDC certificate
- PHIFP can serve as a national template for similar PHI training programs and fellowships

Benefits for Other Fellowship Programs: DOL/ETA can use lessons learned from this experience, their first with a public health discipline, to expand the apprenticeship model to other health professions training programs. PHIFP can provide guidance and lessons learned to other public health training programs that want to pursue a Registered Apprenticeship designation.

Challenges Addressed by this Accomplishment: Health information technology is a rapidly developing area critical to both health care and public health. In an era of increasing public health responsibilities, increasing use of information systems, and shrinking budgets, few states have the informatics workforce capacity to address these challenges. A considerable amount of Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act funding has been invested in developing PHI training programs to benefit state-based public health workers; PHIFP as a Registered Apprenticeship helps to further address the workforce training needs.

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