

Preparedness Field Assignee Program

Division of State and Local Readiness, Field Services Branch

The mission of CDC's Preparedness Field Assignee (PFA) program is to support the public health preparedness and response capabilities of state, tribal, local, and territorial jurisdictions through the development of a knowledgeable, responsive, and effective public health workforce. To achieve this mission, the program places PFAs in Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) recipient jurisdictions around the country to serve three-year terms.



About the Preparedness Field Assignee (PFA) Program

The Preparedness Field Assignee (PFA) Program is managed by CDC's [Center of Preparedness and Response, Division of State and Local Readiness, Field Services Branch](#). It provides new graduates of CDC's Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) an opportunity to continue to strengthen skill sets acquired during their initial training. The PFA program recruits highly skilled PHAP graduates for placement in state, local, or territorial health departments to support public health preparedness and response activities.

Selected PFAs are matched with approved host sites. In partnership with PFA program leadership, these sites offer experience and mentorship that supports the continued development of a knowledgeable, responsive, and effective public health workforce while strengthening and advancing the capabilities of state and local public health systems. During their assignments, which typically last three years, PFAs can expect to work hand-in-hand with state and local partners, in an all-hazards approach to preparedness, as they grow and develop into public health leaders. Skills learned in the PHAP program are routinely applied with additional emphasis on building proficiencies in public health, program management and leadership, emergency preparedness and response, communications, and partnership development. In addition to cultivating early-career professionals equipped with the essential skills to advance their public health careers, sponsoring host sites gain a valuable resource that compliments, enhances, and expands their ability to meet priority preparedness and emergency response activities.

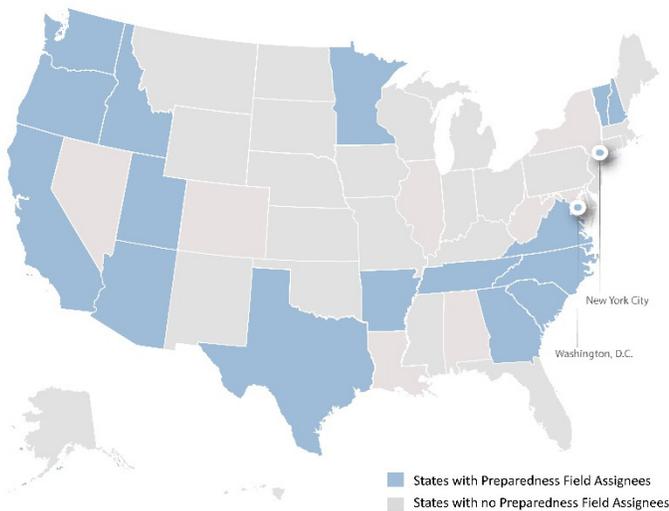
Supporting State and Local Preparedness

The Division of State and Local Readiness (DSLRL) created the Field Services Branch (FSB) to enhance the public health preparedness and response efforts of state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments through assignment of field-based staff, including PFAs and Career Epidemiology Field Officers (CEFOs). PFAs function as embedded staff to build and strengthen the capability of health departments to effectively respond to public health emergencies. Since its inception, the PFA program has successfully recruited and hired 59 PHAP graduates who have served in 29 states, four large metropolitan areas, and one U.S. territory, expanding the CDC preparedness field-based footprint.



Host Site Selection

The host site selection is a formal, competitive process that is open to all 62 CDC [Public Health Emergency Preparedness \(PHEP\)](#) recipients. Interested host sites can submit a proposal for up to two PFAs annually. CDC reviews and rates host site applications based on standardized criteria that evaluate the proposed scope of work, roles and responsibilities, local capacity for supervision and mentorship, and site-specific preparedness and response leadership and experience. Successful host sites are paired with incoming PFA recruits on the basis of staff availability, individual preference, and programmatic priorities.



Current PFA Investment

The PFA program currently has 19 field assignees detailed to state and large metropolitan public health departments to support and enhance efforts to build capacity to monitor, detect, respond, mitigate, and recover from infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, intentional acts of terrorism, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological emergencies. In 2019, the PFA program recruited five new assignees for strategic placement within CDC's PHEP jurisdictions, which include 50 states, four metropolitan areas (Chicago, Los Angeles County, New York City, and Washington, D.C.) and eight U.S. territories and freely associated states (American Samoa, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau).

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