

FoodCORE Model Practice: Student Interview Teams



FoodCORE centers work together to develop new and better methods to detect, investigate, respond to, and control outbreaks of foodborne diseases. The FoodCORE Model Practice: Student Interview Teams describes the ways FoodCORE centers successfully establish, implement, and maintain a team of students to support routine and surge capacity in local and state health departments.

Student teams can be tailored to meet the needs of a variety of foodborne disease programs and public health settings. Use the checklists and examples at the end of the document to help you get started setting up a team in your organization.

Read the entire model practice and access checklists, examples, and resources on the FoodCORE website, <http://www.cdc.gov/foodcore>.

Who makes up a Student Team?

Students team members are undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students recruited from colleges and universities that work in close collaboration with the local or state health department. Students from public health, nursing, medical, infectious disease, or microbiology disciplines are often recruited.

Why have a Student Team?

Student Teams are a successful model for addressing gaps in capacity and expanding the range and depth of surveillance and response activities. Students conduct routine case-patient interviews, assist with surge capacity during a response to a specific outbreak or event, enter data, and participate in special projects. Student Teams have helped to increase the number of attempted interviews and to conduct interviews more quickly in the FoodCORE centers. Integration of students into the daily workflow also helps prepare them for a career in public health.

Increase capacity

More interviews conducted

Student Teams

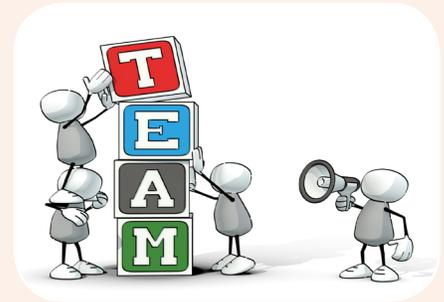
Field experience

Career preparation

How do I build a successful Student Team?

1. Set Up

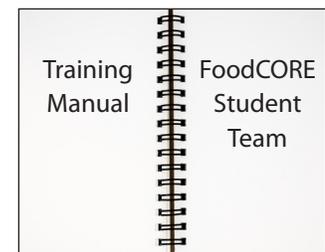
Before hiring students, develop an organizational structure for student teams. Set up pieces such as a supervision mechanism, team coordinator, office space, necessary equipment, and funds for paying students. Having paid positions for students results in increased reliability and longer retention. Close collaboration is needed between state and local health departments to determine how students will be hired and incorporated into the workflow. Also, work proactively with human resources to complete hiring protocols and procedures.



2. Train

Training is critical to building a student team that completes high quality, consistent interviews. Effective training formats include: written manuals, shadowing, direct observation, and practice interviews. Suggested topics include:

- Jurisdictional structure, processes, and protocols
- Identifying cases for interviews
- Interview database
- Interviewing techniques
- Privacy rules and confidentiality



3. Manage

Ongoing maintenance and management activities include: team oversight by a public health professional, refresher trainings, evaluations, and team meetings. Shared calendars and a student team leader position are two solutions to coordinating schedules for multiple students. FoodCORE centers integrate students into the daily work flow and engage students in other activities beyond interviewing depending on the needs in the jurisdictions, training level, and availability.



4. Evaluate

Periodic evaluation of both the students and management of the team helps facilitate process improvement and ongoing success. Evaluation of the student as well as feedback from the students can be conducted using a formal process like exit interviews or more casual approaches like day-to-day conversations. It is beneficial to track information about student teams over time and take note of opportunities students accept when leaving the team.



Read the entire [FoodCORE Model Practice: Student Interview Teams](#) for more information about building a successful student team.