

Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program

CDC data detectives build, evaluate, and improve public health information systems.



CDC's Public Health Informatics Fellowship (PHIFP) delivers on-the-job training for doctoral- and master's-level professionals at the intersection of technology, healthcare, and public health. Fellows are assigned to CDC host sites to work on projects that strengthen information systems and data capabilities by applying expertise in computer science, data analytics, and visualization.

What Fellows Do

- **Strengthen outbreak and emergency responses** by developing data collection tools, tracking response activities, and conducting post-response data analyses to improve future response performance.
- **Provide data science expertise to address urgent public health needs** of state, tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) health departments and other public health partners through special requests known as Info-Aids.
- **Advance research and development** of complex public health information systems.
- **Evaluate system processes and outcomes** to generate data-driven, actionable recommendations to strengthen public health information systems.

By the Numbers



More than
200 fellows trained



47% of PHIFP Info-Aids supported CDC emergency response and preparedness activities (since 2020)



17% of PHIFP Info-Aids supported STLT health departments (since 2020)

Smart public health decisions really depend on getting the right data at the right time to the right people. And public health informatics is very critical in doing that. Informaticians usually act as translators to translate the data that's coming from different sources to different people and interpret and transform it into actionable insights.

— **Jina Dcruz, PhD**, Lead Health Scientist
CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, 2016 PHIFP Graduate



Why this Program Matters

PHIFP fellows provide robust informatics capacity that improves public health by:

- **Solving public health issues** using cutting-edge computer science, data science, and information technology.
- **Serving as boots-on-the-ground support** for STLT health agencies with urgent technology and data support needs.
- **Making CDC programs more efficient and accountable** by applying technology-driven solutions.
- **Bridging a critical gap** between public health practitioners and the data they rely on to ensure decisions are based on the best available evidence.
- **Directly supporting CDC's data modernization efforts** by providing informatics expertise while working alongside CDC's scientific staff.

A Closer Look

Fellows work alongside CDC scientific and program staff to make public health data more available, accessible, and actionable for critical decision-making. Their work spans the data lifecycle, from collection and analysis to translating data into action. Examples include:



Detected outbreaks earlier. Fellows incorporated new laboratory data sources into existing surveillance strategies, improving the timeliness of laboratory-based surveillance for pathogens including poliovirus and viral hepatitis.



Improved access to substance use treatment in West Virginia. Fellows worked with subject matter experts to assess how people use substance use services, generating insights to help improve treatment access and save lives.



Strengthened state and local preparedness for the FIFA World Cup. Fellows partnered with CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service officers and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to integrate surveillance systems, develop a data dashboard, and create an alert reporting system.



Improved situational awareness. Fellows collaborated with CDC programs to develop a dashboard and monitoring plan that supported timely access to essential data from the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, a nationwide system that helps public health officials monitor, track, and respond to diseases and conditions that pose public health threats.



PHIFP fellows help with every stage of the data lifecycle, from collection to action.