

Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program

Fact Sheet

Background

Public health information systems are a cornerstone of effective public health practice. They help move the right information to the right person at the right time—so the right public health decisions can be made. Public health and healthcare organizations need a competent workforce to not only help collect, process, and analyze data, but also support the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of complex information systems. The Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program (PHIFP) provides public health informatics training for doctoral- or master's-level professionals, applying computer science and information technology to solve public health problems.

Fellows in this 2-year program serve as data detectives—they help CDC, other federal agencies, state and local health departments, and international public health organizations investigate and solve complex public health informatics challenges. They apply expertise in information science, computer science, and information technology to address current and future informatics needs. PHIFP fellows may be involved in:

- Working with teams in research and development of public health information systems
- Planning and evaluating complex public health information systems, such as disease surveillance systems
- Contributing to CDC's emergency response activities by providing urgent, rapid informatics assistance
- Providing strategic and operational support to requesting agencies through short-term assignments, or Info-Aids



PHIFP fellows develop expertise in a much-needed field. They learn and work with teams involved in research and development of public health information systems, and they're trained to provide technical assistance to state and local health departments and international agencies.

Who are PHIFP Fellows?

PHIFP fellows have diverse academic training, including but not limited to, computer science and engineering, information systems, biomedical informatics, clinical care, data science, and public health. They also have previous work experience in public health-related fields in state and local health departments, industry, non-profit organizations, and academia.

PHIFP Accomplishments

PHIFP fellows solve cutting-edge informatics issues in public health. As example accomplishments, some PHIFP fellows have:

- Assessed HIV/AIDS patient monitoring systems in Kenya and provided recommendations for system integration
- Re-engineered the global Flour Fortification Initiative information system for improved micronutrient supplementation surveillance
- Conducted a case study on biosurveillance challenges using grid computing architecture
- Developed the Human Genome Epidemiology Network information system



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PHIFP Accomplishments (continued)

- Completed more than 100 Info-Aids—requests for short-term technical assistance from local, state, federal, and international agencies to help address urgent public health informatics needs
- Facilitated the implementation and adoption of a health information system framework to standardize and integrate data systems across Kenya
- Designed and developed an information system to support a CDC outbreak investigation by standardizing data collected from multiple sources and developing a dashboard to generate a live information feed
- Developed a prototype tool for managing HIV cases and contact information during an active HIV outbreak investigation in West Virginia
- Developed an automated system to merge disparate data elements and streamlined it to improve the quality of data during Zika response in Puerto Rico
- Developed software requirements for a field training program’s management information system to monitor and evaluate the impact of the program
- Established systems for emergency operations to enhance acute watery diarrhea surveillance in Ethiopia



While working in CDC programs to enhance the agency’s informatics workforce, fellows help state and local health departments and international public health agencies solve complex public health informatics challenges.

Application Information and Eligibility

Fellowship application information is available at www.cdc.gov/phifp. The application period usually opens in July and closes in November each year.

To be eligible for PHIFP, you must:

- Have a doctorate (PhD, MD) or a masters level degree (MPH, MS) from an accredited academic institution in one of the following: computer science, information science, information systems, public health, medicine, health care, or health services research*
- Have one year (doctoral level candidates) or three years (masters level candidates) of documented experience in either of the following:
 - informatics (public health informatics, health informatics or related field, information science, computer science, or information technology)*
 - public health or related health care profession (medicine, nursing, veterinary medicine, dentistry, or allied health)*
- Have experience performing research or evaluation during or after academic training
- Be willing to relocate. Most assignments are located in Atlanta, Georgia, but assignments may involve other locations.

*This is not an exhaustive list. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/phifp/application.html> for complete eligibility requirements.

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