Types of Internships in Community Health

Clinical
- Hospital or clinic-based
- Often involves working directly with patients/clients and/or labs/data
- Might include interviewing patients, shadowing, assisting patients, working with laboratory material
- Generally offers opportunities to learn/observe in grand rounds, clinical rotations, or meeting with community partners/researchers/team members
- Might focus on any aspect of community health (epidemiology, treatment, disease, health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities)

Research
- Hospital, clinic, university or office-based
- Often includes clinical research, data collection/analysis/entry, lab research
- Might involve a short clinical trial, a multi-year study, or anything in between
- Often involves solitary, data-driven work with little opportunity for human interaction
- Might involve interviewing or observing subjects or conducting focus groups.
- Might include literature review of past studies or current trends/outcomes
- Might focus on any aspect of community health (epidemiology, treatment, disease, health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities, etc.)

Policy
- Agency or office-based (at policy organization, university-affiliated research department, or government agency such as the State House, the EPA, or Dept. of Public Health)
- Often includes research on past/current policies and trends/outcomes
- Might include meetings with constituents, community partners, government officials
- Might include meetings at the State House or other state offices
- Often include data collection, entry, analysis
- Might include literature review of past/current policies or studies, or opportunities for writing
- Might relate to epidemiology, social determinants, health disparities, trends, outcomes, policies

Outreach/education
- School, agency, hospital, corporate office, or clinic-based
- Often involves working directly with patients/clients/students in their communities
- Might include program development, evaluation, running groups, writing grants, examining outcomes
- Generally offers opportunities for collaboration with community partners/researchers/team members/businesses
- Might involve individual or group meetings with clients or students.
- Might focus on a wide range of community health issues/areas including disease, women’s health, access, children’s health, mental health, addiction, incarceration, homelessness, hunger, health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities, drug trials, technology
- Often involves communication skills, social media skills, development/fundraising or technical skills.

Communications/consulting
- Office-based
- Often involves working directly with clients, researchers, business development leaders
- Might include program evaluation, research, literature reviews, developing written material, writing, examining outcomes, conducting focus groups.
- Sometimes offers opportunities to collaborate with partners/researchers/team members/businesses
- Might focus on a wide range of community health issues/areas including disease, women’s health, access, children’s health, mental health, addiction, , health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities, drug trials, technology
- Often involves communication/social media skills, development/fundraising or technical skills.
Types of Settings for Community Health Internships

Non-profit agency

- Large organization in downtown setting, or very small office in remote area
- Issue-focused or population-centered work (homelessness, AIDS, women’s health, immigrant health, addiction, mental health, environmental issues)
- Often involves community outreach/education
- Sometimes involves writing or drafting literature/memos/brochures
- Might involve work directly with clients in the community or onsite
- Might include presentations to clients, community partners, other staff
- Might include data collection, data entry, analysis
- Might focus on treatment, disease, health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities, harm reduction, education, access, occupational health

Consulting agency or pharmaceutical/tech company

- Large office park or smaller setting downtown or in the suburbs
- Typically involves several projects/clients/teams
- Often involves data collection, entry, or analysis
- Often involves research on past/current policies, trends, outcomes, problems
- Might involve literature reviews or survey of previous research at site
- Might include presentations to team, clients, customers, other staff
- Often utilizes skills related to economics, mathematics, statistics and writing
- Sometimes located away from public transportation

Hospital or community health center

- Large teaching hospital in downtown Boston or small neighborhood health center
- Often provides many opportunities for learning including outside of immediate projects (including grand rounds, lectures, team meetings)
- Might involve focused work in one area, or involvement in several areas (one day doing research; one day in clinic)
- Usually located near public transportation
- Might focus on medical issues, treatment, disease, health trends, interventions/outcomes, social determinants, health disparities, harm reduction, education, access, occupational health
- Might include data collection, data entry, analysis
- Might include clinical exposure (observation, medical procedures, medical histories)
- Often includes writing (literature reviews, research summaries, medical charting)

Government Agency or Research Institution

- Large bureau/department, small local health department, or research group within bigger institution
- Typically involves several projects/clients/teams
- Often involves data collection, entry, or analysis
- Often involves research on past/current policies, trends, outcomes, problems
- Might involve literature reviews or survey of previous research at site
- Might include presentations to team, constituents, other staff
- Often involves exposure to other areas of government/departments
- Might involve outreach/education in community