THE FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM

Student Guide | October 2025- June 2026
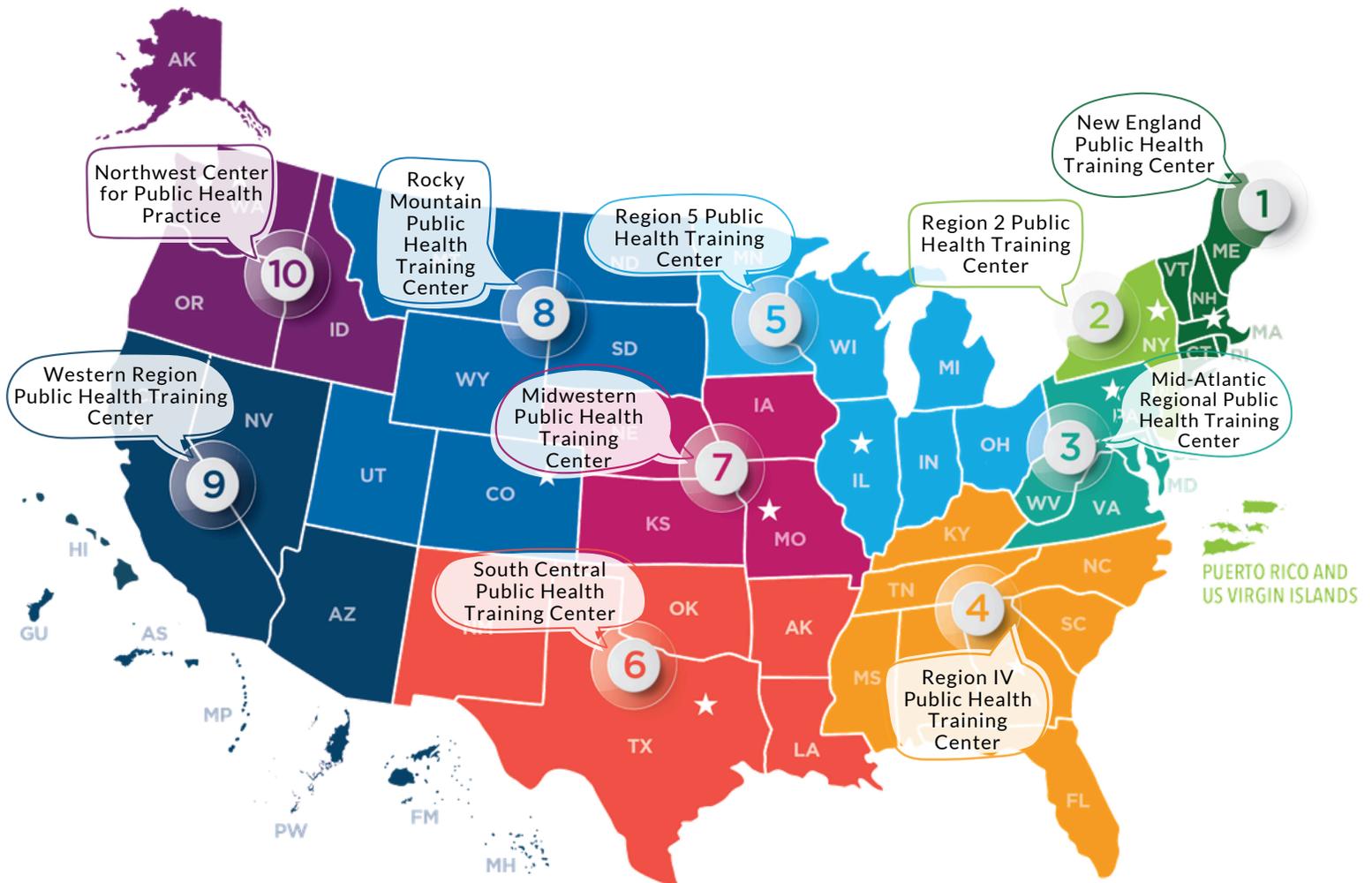
PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER NETWORK

The Public Health Training Center (PHTC) Network is a consortium of regional Public Health Training Centers that collectively represent the nation's most comprehensive resource for public health workforce development. Click on the hyperlink for each regional public health training center below to connect with their resources.

New England Public Health Training Center

Northwest Center for Public Health Practice

Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center

Region 5 Public Health Training Center

Region 2 Public Health Training Center

Western Region Public Health Training Center

Midwestern Public Health Training Center

Mid-Atlantic Regional Public Health Training Center

South Central Public Health Training Center

Region IV Public Health Training Center

PUERTO RICO AND US VIRGIN ISLANDS

PHTC NETWORK

PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER NETWORK

THE FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM

The Future Leaders program is an initiative by the Western Region Public Health Training Center (WRPHTC) to support students conducting applied public health experiences by providing training and funding during the course of their projects.

Students must conduct either a **field placement** or **faculty-student collaborative project** to participate in the Future Leaders program. These projects will be a central component to the program and participation in the program.

FIELD PLACEMENT PROJECT:

A structured experience that provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a public health setting (such as with a nonprofit or public health agency or organization) under the guidance of an experienced professional.

FACULTY-STUDENT COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

A research project and/or community intervention led by a faculty advisor where students collaborate with a public health agency to enhance public health services to rural and/or medically underserved communities.

The goal of these projects is to provide students with applied public health experience under the guidance of faculty and field placement preceptors. Both types of projects should have specific target populations that include underserved communities and project goals that center improving health outcomes in these communities.

The WRPHTC will provide stipends to support students accepted into the Future Leaders program through support from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Stipends are subsistence allowances for students to help defray living expenses during their applied public health experience, and are not provided as a condition of employment, or for tuition, fees, health insurance, or other project costs.

$3,500 PER STUDENT

A partial allotment of the funds ($2,000) will be provided at the start of the project and the remainder after deliverables have been submitted.

30 STUDENTS

Each year, 30 students will be selected to receive stipends for their participation in the Future Leaders program.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:

☑ Students should be undergraduate juniors or seniors, graduate or doctoral students pursuing a degree in a health profession.

Students enrolled in community colleges in the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands or Tribal Colleges and Universities are also eligible.

☑ Students must be enrolled at a school and/or conducting project work in AZ, CA, HI, NV, or the USAPI.

Students must be enrolled in their school throughout the course of their project (students that have already graduated from their program will not be considered).

☑ Students must plan and conduct at least 180 hours of work related to their project, to be completed within one year.

☑ Students must be U.S. citizens, non-citizen U.S. nationals, from the Pacific Freely Associated States, or foreign nationals with a visa permitting permanent residence in the U.S.

Students on temporary or student visas are not eligible to receive these stipends.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applications will first be reviewed to confirm that students and their projects meet the eligibility requirements. Priority will be given to students and/or projects that fulfill the following criteria:

1
Structured Opportunities for Students to Apply Public Health Knowledge & Skills

The project should enable the student to **apply knowledge and skills** learned in their program through structured opportunities and/or experiences.

2
Contribute to the Mastery of Public Health Competencies

Projects are expected to contribute to strengthening of public health competencies, whether the **CEPH Foundational Competencies** or the **PHF Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals** (e.g., assessment & analysis, program planning & policy development).

3
Community-Focused Projects with Public or Nonprofit Health Organizations

Preference will be given to projects conducted with **public or nonprofit health organizations**, particularly those working in or with **underserved areas and/or populations to address health disparities**.

APPLICATION PROCESS

01   Select or arrange a project that meets the criteria on page 4.

Contact the organization that you are interested in working with directly or select a project from your school database. Working with your site supervisor and/or faculty mentor, create a project plan that includes your project goal, objectives, activities, and timeline.

02   Apply using the application on the WRPHTC website.

In addition to student information, your application will include the project plan you created with your site supervisor and/or faculty mentor. Applications will be reviewed at the end of each application window outlined below, in September, January, and June, to select students for the fall, spring, and summer cohorts of the Future Leaders program. Submit completed applications to wrphtc@arizona.edu

If your project begins:	We recommend applying:
Fall semester (August - December)	August 1 - September 15
Spring semester (January - April)	November 15 - January 31
Summer semester (May - July)	April 15 - June 15

03   The WRPHTC will review applications and select eligible participants.

Selected students will be emailed with a Notice of Award and instructions for program participation, along with documentation needed to receive stipends. Students must return their signed agreement and other necessary documentation within two weeks. Participants will be awarded a $3,500 stipend for their participation and to support them while conducting their public health projects.

TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR PROJECT PLAN:

- Select an organization and project that resonates with your interests. Communicate with your project supervisor to ensure they are aware of your project details and timeline.

- Identify the target population for your project and describe how the project will improve health outcomes for that population in your goal statement.

- Integrate one or more of the 10 Essential Public Health Services into your project plan (click the hyperlink to learn more).

- Check to make sure you've set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives.

COMMUNITY OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE: SESSIONS

The Community of Public Health Practice for Future Leaders program is an opportunity for students accepted into Future Leaders to engage with other students across the region to compare field experiences, learn from each other, and participate in competency-based training that will support their entrance into the public health workforce. Field experiences will be a central component to the community of practice, as the basis for shared experience and the main topic of communication. Sessions will be conducted over Zoom for each cohort of students.

SESSION 1: ORIENTATION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
- Introductions (name, school, area of study)
- What are your project goals and activities?
- Who are you working with and what do you hope to get out of your project experience?
- What would you like to learn either 1) about other students' experiences or 2) as someone that plans to enter the public health workforce?

ASSIGNMENTS :
- Complete the "Introductions" discussion forum.
- Take the 30-minute training, "An Introduction to Professional Communication."
- Take the Public Health Core Competency Self-Assessment to assess your skills (optional).

SESSION 2: WEBINAR OR WORKSHOP

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
- Update on your project, including what has been your 1) favorite part, 2) most challenging part, and 3) something you've learned.
- Introduction to posters

ASSIGNMENT :
- Take the 30-minute training, "Designing a Public Health Poster."
- Create your poster and email the PDF to the group 1 week before Session 3.

SESSION 3: POSTER PRESENTATION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
- Present your poster in about 5 minutes, summarizing your project goals and outcomes and the value this activity had for your professional experience.
- Evaluate each other's posters and presentations with an anonymous feedback form.

ASSIGNMENT :
- Complete your project abstract. Optional training, "Preparing and Submitting an Abstract."
- Complete your exit survey.

POSTER INSTRUCTIONS

As part of the project stipend you were awarded by the Western Region Public Health Training Center (WRPHTC), we are asking that you submit an abstract and poster to the WRPHTC to summarize your project and its outcomes. These deliverables may be made available to the public on the WRPHTC website.

The poster should contain the following sections laid out on a 1-page PowerPoint slide (or using another appropriate software). An abstract should be submitted as a separate PDF.

SECTION TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Introduction	An overview of your project, including the need and goal of your project, a background of the organization with which you are collaborating, and the population served by your project.
Methodology	This may include a description of project activities. Define the instrument or tool used to measure/evaluate the goals or objectives.
Findings	Describe your findings, data, recommendations, and/or how products created may be used in the future. Analysis of data collected or examined as part of the project can also be discussed.
Conclusion	Synthesize and interpret the findings of your project and its impact.
Discussion	Discussion and reflections about your project, its limitations, and recommendations for the future.
Acknowledgements	Please end by thanking the preceptors at your internship site, the Western Region Public Health Training Center, and anyone else who you would like to thank for their involvement in your internship.

An abstract should be submitted as a separate document. It should be a separate written overview or summary of what is included in the poster, including 1-3 sentences describing each of the following sections: the introduction or purpose, methodology, findings, and conclusions (*500 words max*).

POSTER PRESENTATION

Video presentations will take place during the third and final session of the Community of Practice. Presentations should be around 5-10 minutes each and students are encouraged to prepare and practice a script (~750 words) before their formal presentation.

We encourage students to write using a speaking-style with a natural flow rather than in the style of an academic paper. Please be sure to read your script out loud a few times and pay attention to difficult passages and where you breathe. You may find that using academic language can make sentences long-winded and it may help to split sentences up to keep the phrasing natural.

Students should briefly describe the respective sections of their posters during their presentation (i.e., Introduction, Methodology, Findings, Conclusion, Discussion, and Acknowledgements).

Tips for your presentation:

Keep text to a minimum.

Use bullet points with less than 10 words each.

Visuals & text should supplement the presenter.

Avoid reading, except for direct quotes.

Turn off your cell phone and close doors/windows.

Please use a 16:9 aspect ratio (widescreen) on slides, as opposed to the default 4:3. Make sure to use a legible font size (on graphs, as well) for those that will be reading the poster text over Zoom.

Students should be prepared to evaluate and offer constructive feedback of each others' posters during the poster presentations. This session will be recorded and each students' poster and presentation posted to the WRPHTC website to present a summary of supported projects for each student cohort. Past project videos are available to watch at: https://wrphtc.arizona.edu/successful-projects.

If a student is unable to attend the final session, they should notify the WRPHTC immediately in order to make alternative arrangements for completing the program deliverables and requirements.

CHECKLIST & DELIVERABLES

BEFORE ORIENTATION :

☑ Complete and submit application to wrphtc@arizona.edu.

☑ Provide signed agreement and any necessary financial paperwork (i.e., W-9 form) or additional information requested within 2 weeks of receipt.

·· ☐ FIRST ALLOTMENT OF STIPEND ($2,000)

DURING PROGRAM :

☑ Attend 3 virtual sessions and complete respective assignments.

☑ Complete required trainings:
1) An Introduction to Professional Communication
2) Designing a Public Health Poster

☑ Complete and submit abstract and poster as PDF files. Provide oral poster presentation (recorded).

☑ Complete exit survey.

·· ☐ SECOND ALLOTMENT OF STIPEND ($1,500)

AFTER PROGRAM:

☑ Complete annual follow-up survey.

In the event that a recipient of the stipend **terminates** his or her participation from the program prior to the specified end date, the stipend must be prorated according to the amount of time spent in training, and the award recipient must contact HRSA to discuss options for the remaining stipend funds.

TRAINING RESOURCES

IDENTIFYING A RESEARCH QUESTION

This quick self-paced, online training is ideal for public health students looking to identify a specific research question to help focus a project or study.
learn.wrphtc.arizona.edu/course/view.php?id=351

COMPOSING A SCIENTIFIC PAPER

Learn tips for organizing information and synthesizing your work for presentation in a scientific paper. This module is part of a training series for public health students looking to improve their communication skills for summarizing and presenting research or other field work projects.
learn.wrphtc.arizona.edu/course/view.php?id=352
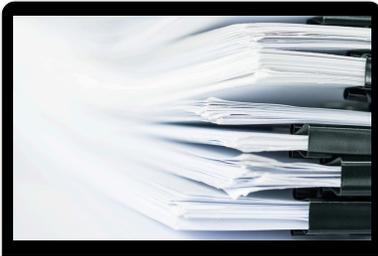
PREPARING & SUBMITTING AN ABSTRACT

Check out this self-paced, online course for information needed to prepare and submit a public health abstract, whether you want to present at a conference or have your research published in a peer-reviewed journal.
learn.wrphtc.arizona.edu/course/view.php?id=353

REQUIRED TRAININGS

AN INTRODUCTION TO EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Being professional is much more than appropriate dress and the degree you earned; it's how you interact and respond to those around you. This training will help prepare you for (or give you a refresher on) effective, professional communication in the workplace.
learn.wrphtc.arizona.edu/course/view.php?id=318

DESIGNING A PUBLIC HEALTH POSTER

This training module gives a quick overview of tools and strategies for organizing an engaging public health poster for outreach or to present the findings of a project or study.
learn.wrphtc.arizona.edu/course/view.php?id=346

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I apply?

▶ The WRPHTC reviews applications monthly from August 1 - June 15. Selected students will be organized into small cohorts for their virtual exchange sessions based on similar start and end dates.

If your project begins:	We recommend applying:
Fall semester (August - December)	August 1 - September 15
Spring semester (January - April)	November 15 - January 31
Summer semester (May - July)	April 15 - June 15

The virtual exchange sessions will be scheduled based on the start and end dates of each cohort, so it is important to apply before cohorts have been selected for each semester.

Who should arrange the applied experience?

▶ Students should select or arrange projects themselves by contacting an organization that they are interested in working with directly or selecting a project from their school database. Organizations should identify an individual that will act as a mentor/supervisor/preceptor, who is qualified to assess a student project, guide students through their projects, and evaluate student progress.

Can the applied experience be conducted remotely?

▶ Yes, applied experiences that are conducted remotely are accepted as long as the approach does not threaten the feasibility of the project.

How are student participants selected?

▶ Applications are first reviewed to ensure the applicants and projects meet all eligibility requirements. Applications are then filed according to location of the project, in order to distribute stipends as evenly as possible through Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific (ideally 5-6 projects will be selected to support from each). Finally, applications are reviewed and scored based on feasibility of the approach, clarity of the plan, and significance/impact of the project for the student and the community.

When will I be notified about whether I have been selected to participate in the program?

▶ Once applications are reviewed, acceptance emails and agreements letters will be distributed to selected students. This normally occurs within a month of application submission. Students that are selected will have 2 weeks to submit their signed agreement letter and complete the initial survey required by our funders. If they are not able to submit the requirements in this time, other students will be selected to participate.

Students that are **not** selected to participate may not be notified based on the volume of applications.

How long will it take for me to receive the stipend? What is the process?

▶ Once students are selected and notified of the award, they will need to submit a signed Notice of Award letter and complete an initial survey. University of Arizona students will have their stipend processed via the Bursar's Office and no additional documentation will be needed. If students have a paid position at the University, they will most likely need to be paid through payroll and may need to submit hours.

Students at other schools that are U.S. citizens or foreign nationals with a visa permitting permanent resident in the U.S. will need to submit a W-9 form (your stipend will be sent to the address on your W-9 form). The business office at the University of Arizona's Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health will enter non-UA students into the UA system as vendors, which normally takes a few days for processing before the payment can be entered. The business office estimates it will be about 2-3 weeks from the time they are entered as vendors for the university to process and mail out checks.

Can students receive their stipends through direct deposit?

▶ Students that do not attend the University of Arizona will be emailed by our Financial Services Office once they are entered into the system as a vendor. They will be given the option of submitting paperwork to receive their stipend as a direct deposit. This paperwork needs to be submitted *promptly* if you do not want to receive your stipend through the mail.

What are the dates of the Community of Practice sessions?

▶ To be determined once the cohort of students are selected for each semester (these are based on the availability of each cohort)! We will contact you to figure out the best time to schedule the three sessions.

How long do I have to submit my deliverables?

▶ Your **initial deliverables** (i.e., signed Notice of Award and any additional information/paperwork) must be submitted **within 2 weeks** of your acceptance email.

▶ Your **Community of Practice assignments** (i.e., trainings, relevant communication, etc.) should be completed before the following session. The poster, presentation, and exit survey will be integrated into the third and final session. We expect all deliverables (except the annual follow-up survey) to be submitted **before the end of the school semester** during which your project completes. If there are any concerns, please contact the WRPHTC to discuss timeline revisions.

▶ You will be emailed a one-time follow-up survey one year after your project completes (that's why we ask for your personal email as a post-graduation contact). This survey will be very brief and is strictly to gather information required by our funders. Please submit it as soon as possible once you receive it.