

UNMC, College of Public Health
Applied Practice Experience (APEX) Opportunities

Partner organization name: South Heartland District Health Department

Partner organization website: <https://southheartlandhealth.ne.gov/>

Partner organization brief description: South Heartland District Health Department is 4-county district health department in south central Nebraska. We are dedicated to preserving and improving the health of residents of Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties. We work with local partners to develop and implement a Community Health Improvement Plan and to provide other public health services mandated by Nebraska state statutes. Our Vision: *Healthy People in Healthy Communities*. Current health improvement plan priorities: Access to Care, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Obesity & Related Health Conditions, and Cancer.

Partner organization's point of contact name and email:
Michele Bever, PhD, MPH michele.bever@shdhd.ne.gov

Description of partner organization's priority opportunities (APEX activities):

- Falls Prevention Program Sustainability – Create and implement a tool/process to assess local health care provider knowledge about and interest in evidence-based falls prevention programs (Stepping On, Tai Chi) and barriers to referral of their patients to these programs and provide recommendations for next steps.
- Environmental Health Data/Awareness – Work with Health Surveillance Coordinator to prepare a Lead Surveillance Report and a Drinking Water Surveillance Report, prepare executive summaries; assist in identifying and contacting key stakeholders and assist in planning meetings to communicate about these reports.
- Public Health Worksite/Workforce Culture – Conduct workplace culture assessment and/or stay interviews, review evidence-based workplace engagement toolkits, provide recommendations for no/low-cost ways to improve staff engagement, morale and promote team building.
- Access to Care Mapping Project – Identify and map health services (e.g., Mental Health, Oral Health, Substance Use Disorder, etc.) in the health district along with information about insurance accepted, wait times, etc., to demonstrate gaps and opportunities. For inclusion in SHDHD's 2024 CHA.
- Community Health Improvement Plan Implementation – The Steering Committees for each CHIP priority (Access to Care, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Obesity & Related Health Conditions, and Cancer) have chosen 1-2 strategies/activities to focus on between October 2023 and October 2024, during the last implementation year for this plan. Depending on student's interests, there are opportunities to support community health improvement plan implementation - which could include, as examples, survey development/data collection on key performance indicators or communications planning/implementation for education/awareness activities.

*Note—An affiliation agreement will be required prior to student engagement

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- **CHA/CHIP: Priority Setting** – Planning and preparation for stakeholder priority-setting meetings, including preparing data summaries/fact sheets and other materials, stakeholder invitations, contributing to meeting logistics, and assisting SHDHD staff in hosting and facilitating these meetings.

Timeframe of proposed activities: These activities will be completed in the Summer 2024 – some of the opportunities have components that need to be completed earlier in the summer, by late July/early August. For some projects, the student might be able to continue the project into the fall semester, if desired.

Benefit of proposed activities to partner organization: APEX students will provide skills and support to SHDHD staff in implementing program, project, CHA/CHIP, and/or public health workforce activities.

Benefit of proposed activities to the student: Real world experience in various public health core competencies, opportunities to apply academic experience and bring fresh ideas to public health practice, contribute to public health improvement efforts in a local health district, learn from public health professionals, observe/use evidence-based practices, hone public health science skills.

Skill sets of students requested: All of these projects require that students have basic data/surveillance/research skills; be self-motivated and able to work independently with limited supervision; display curiosity and willingness to ask questions; present strong written/oral communication skills; willingness to learn; be adaptable to changes; use critical thinking; and be creative problem solvers. (The APEX experience at South Heartland will also help students hone these skills!)

Additional Information (format of preferred engagement-virtual, hybrid, in-person; partner organization's location):

We can accommodate on site, but this is not required and both virtual and hybrid are options. For virtual, we find it helpful to have at least one day of on-site at the beginning of the APEX experience for the student to meet the people they will be working with and get an “orientation” to our local public health department.