Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
Community Health Internship Program (CHIP)

Frequently Asked Questions

General Program Questions

What are the dates of the CHIP internship?
This year’s Statewide and Milwaukee CHIP program runs from June 1st - July 24th (8 weeks). Additionally, both the Statewide and Milwaukee program hosts a MANDATORY orientation at the beginning of the internship. The Statewide Orientation will be held on Friday, May 29th on the UW-Madison campus. The Milwaukee Orientation will be held on Monday, June 1st in Milwaukee.

What are the work requirements for CHIP?
Students chosen to participate in CHIP are required to work 40 hours/week for the full eight weeks. If you are unable to arrange your schedule to fit this requirement, you are ineligible to participate. Other work requirements including work hours, work attire and more will be specific to your host site and project work. These are questions you can ask your mentor if you are awarded a placement.

In addition to your project-work with your host site, interns are also responsible for participating in the AHEC facilitated curriculum. Milwaukee students will attend weekly in-person seminar sessions in Milwaukee and Statewide students will participate in an online curriculum. While the main priority of CHIP is the project work associated with one’s host site, the AHEC curriculum is meant to further support those experiences and is mandatory for all students.

What if I have a conflict during the CHIP internship?
Any and all conflicts regarding CHIP need to be discussed and approved by the AHEC CHIP Coordinator AND your Host Site mentor. If accepted, you’ve made a commitment to this program and have agreed to participate for 8-weeks, 40 hours/week. Any time missed must have prior approval and must be made up.

Minor conflicts like one or two missed days can usually be accommodated either by working on the weekends or adding extra hours to a couple of days. However, longer absences (like a week-long vacation) may require a special extension to your internship. Please, DO NOT assume accommodations are a given!! Some projects are working with very specific dates and deadlines. If you cannot meet those requirements, you may not be a good fit for that project.

All expected conflicts with the CHIP internship should be disclosed at the very end of the application (There is a specific question for this). If you are accepted into CHIP, it must be a priority in your summer schedule.

How much money does a CHIP intern receive?
The total stipend amount a CHIP intern receives is $2,400. While the stipend amount is the same for Statewide and Milwaukee interns, the payment schedule may vary between programs. Interns will be notified of the exact payment schedule closer to the start of the internship. Please be aware of several items regarding payments:

- Stipends are subjected to taxes and the net amount received may be slightly less than $2,400.
- Students will receive a W2 tax form in January 2021 in regard to their CHIP stipend.
- AHEC staff has the authority to withhold stipend payments in the event an intern’s performance throughout the internship is unsatisfactory. This includes the student’s professional performance at their community host site, completion of AHEC curriculum assignments, and missed time throughout the internship.

What are the transportation and housing expectations?
Interns are expected to provide their own transportation to and from their work site each day. Host sites that require a personal car for work-related travel have indicated so in their project description. Any work-related travel (other than driving to and from work) should be reimbursed to the student by the host site. Students are also responsible for making their own housing arrangements.

Can I have a second job while participating in CHIP?
Yes. Holding a second job while participating in CHIP is fine, except CHIP roles and responsibilities must come first!! It is unacceptable to miss CHIP hours, project work, or assignments due to a secondary job. If you are participating in CHIP, it must be your priority.
Application Questions

Do I need to complete the application in a specific order?
No. The CHIP application is broken down into several sections based on content:
1) Personal Information,
2) Education and Work Experience,
3) Internship Preferences and Housing,
4) Essays (4),
5) Unofficial Transcripts,
6) Letters of Recommendation (2),
7) Application Certification and Completion.
You are allowed to save as you go, and you may complete the application in any order you would like. After you have completed a section, you may mark that section as “complete” and use that as a self-indicator of your progress. You do not need to mark a section as “complete” in order to move onto the next. Even after you have marked a section as complete, you still have the ability to go back and change your responses. You are no longer able to make changes to your application once it is officially submitted for AHEC Committee Review.

What are the requirements for the two recommendation letters?
The CHIP application process requires two letters of recommendation:
• one from an individual who has supervised and evaluated your work in a professional setting and can attest to your work experience/ethic, AND
• one from an individual who has supervised and evaluated your work in an academic setting and can attest to your academic goals/efforts/achievements.
Relatives and friends cannot serve as your letter writers. Recommendation letters can be addressed generally (ex: “To Whom it may concern…”; “Dear CHIP Review Committee…”; “AHEC Review Team…”; etc.). If your recommender is having trouble submitting their letter through the preferred Survey Monkey platform, they may email the letter directly to Jill Niemczyk (jilln@newahec.org) or Suzanne Letellier (sletellier@milahec.org).

If my application is finished and I’m only waiting to receive my letters of recommendation, can I submit my application?
No. Your application is not considered complete until we have received both Letters of Recommendation. Therefore, it is your responsibility to stay in communication with your recommenders so that they complete your letters of recommendation before the application deadline.

What is the word count requirement for the application essays?
Each student is asked to complete 4 essay questions as part of the CHIP application. Each essay has a maximum word count of 500 words. This word count is for each essay, not a total word count for the four combined. If you feel you can fully answer the question with less words, feel free to use less. The 500-word count is a maximum.

What do reviewers look for in my application/essays?
As CHIP is a community/public health internship opportunity, reviewers want to see your interest and commitment to community/public health issues. They want to understand why you are interested, what specific topics interest you, how you will incorporate public health in your future career, and how this internship will help with your future goals.

How competitive is the CHIP program?
Every year the CHIP program is a competitive program and we cannot guarantee students will receive a placement. Some host sites/locations are more competitive than others however, that varies from year-to-year as project descriptions change yearly based on the needs of our community partners.

What will happen after my application is submitted?
The review process of submitted applications does not begin until the application period closes. Once the application closes, the AHEC review committee will then begin to review applications and identify potential matches between students and host sites. The match process is very complex and time consuming. While AHEC reviews all the potential applications and sends the top candidates to the host sites, the host site makes the final decision for student acceptance. Some host sites may request to conduct interviews prior to choosing their top candidate. We hope to have placements finalized by early April.