

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

Partner organization name: Midwest Institute for Community Health (MITCH)

Partner organization website: <https://cynchealth.org/midwest-institute-for-community-health/>

Partner organization brief description:

In 2019, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), CyncHealth founded the Nebraska Healthcare Collaborative and Midwest Institute for Community Health (MITCH) to enhance population health in Nebraska through philanthropy, health education, community engagement, and program evaluation. MITCH supports interdisciplinary pilot programs to bridge gaps in care through innovative health solutions. Programs may focus on public health needs, health equity, health related social needs, rural health, or behavioral health, to name a few.

Partner organization's point of contact name and email:

Preceptor: Larra Petersen, PhD, MA, Chief Operating Officer

Primary Contact: Katie McCarville (kmccarville@cynchealth.org); Manager, Human Resources

To express interest, students should email Katie with:

1. A current resume or CV
2. A short paragraph clearly explaining your interest in the opportunity

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

Students may support the following initiatives:

- **Health Data Literacy & Community Engagement:**
 - Participate in community education events focused on health data literacy.
 - Assist in developing and evaluating focus groups to understand how local health departments (LHDs) interpret and apply data insights.
 - Translate educational resources for community partners based on existing business and data requirements.
- **Dashboard Development & Community Feedback:**
 - Work with data teams to translate business requirements into data output.
 - Collect feedback from LHDs on prototype dashboards and assess their usefulness.
- **Public Health Research & Analytics Projects:**
 - Analyze existing datasets.
 - Support efforts to identify actionable insights and communicate findings back to community partners.
- **Policy & Data Governance Exploration:**
 - Examine barriers to sharing HIPAA-protected data and contribute to solutions that balance data privacy and utility (e.g., exploring use of RUCAs instead of ZIP codes).
- **Program Evaluation & Reporting:**
 - Support grant-funded community organizations with project planning, evaluation, and stakeholder reporting.
 - Develop communication materials that highlight impact and return on investment for internal and external partners (e.g., Board Members).

Timeframe of proposed activities: Fall 2025 (August – December)

Benefit of proposed activities to partner organization:

- Augments staff capacity to engage with communities, refine data tools, and communicate insights.
- Helps assess the real-world value of programs supported by MITCH.

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

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- Enhances communication and strategy alignment across partners and stakeholders.

Benefit of proposed activities to the student:

- Gain experience in data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and applied public health communication.
- Build skills in community convening, public health program evaluation, and executive leadership exposure.
- Learn how to translate complex data into actionable recommendations.
- Expand understanding of data governance and ethics in health information systems.

Skill sets of students requested:

- Strong written and verbal communication
- Prior exposure to public health and/or professional work settings
- Familiarity with data analysis principles and tools (Excel, dashboards, etc.)
- Experience or comfort in engaging with diverse partners
- Preferred for more advanced students with an interest in data-driven public health

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

Hybrid preferred. Opportunities exist to meet with community partners and attend meetings in Omaha and Lincoln. A personal vehicle is preferred for travel. Students will receive a CyncHealth-issued laptop and typically engage on-site once per week with the preceptor or analytics team.