

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

Partner organization name and website: [Douglas County Health Department](#)

Partner organization brief description: Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) works to protect, promote, and improve the health of individuals, families, and communities in Douglas County. Through programs focused on prevention, data collection, and education, DCHD addresses health disparities, informs policy, and supports collaborative initiatives that advance community health.

Partner organization's point of contact name and email:

If interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Julia Quigley (juquigley@unmc.edu)
Preceptor: Dr. Leah Casanave, DrPH, Division Chief, Community Health, Nutrition, & Clinical Services

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

Students will contribute to analysis and reporting of the Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS), which has been conducted in 2015, 2018, and 2024. A summary report of the 2024 data has already been created. The goal of the project is to take a deeper dive into the existing data and generate findings to inform potential interventions.

Activities may include:

- Conducting data analysis on 2024 data to identify key findings to inform next steps
- Compiling and comparing data across multiple survey years
- Conducting qualitative data analysis on NEMS perceptions (interview data on healthy food access, cooking in the home, access to appliances, etc.)
- Developing a secondary analysis report to build on work completed in Summer 2024
- Creating a short presentation of findings for the Creighton REACH Program and collaborating with community health workers to apply insights from the data
- Identifying evidence-based practices based on findings related to healthy food promotion and access
- Preparing a final presentation of findings for DCHD and REACH partners

Timeframe of proposed activities: Spring 2026, with potential option to integrate data analysis into a capstone project.

Benefit of proposed activities to partner organization:

- Provides deeper analysis and actionable next steps from existing NEMS data
- Helps identify key trends and gaps to guide strategies promoting healthy foods and food access
- Supports ongoing partnership with Creighton REACH and community health workers
- Strengthens evidence base for future interventions and programs

Benefit of proposed activities to the student:

- Hands-on experience with epidemiologic and biostatistical data analysis
- Opportunity to present findings to public health partners and community stakeholders
- Skill-building in program evaluation, research translation, and public health communication
- Exposure to applied research that informs community-level action
- Potential to extend into a capstone project

Skill sets of students requested:

- Basic data analysis skills required
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Ability to synthesize findings and translate data into practical recommendations
- Interest in chronic disease prevention, nutrition, and health equity

*Note—An affiliation agreement will be required prior to student engagement. Check with Kelly Peterson (Kelly.peterson@unmc.edu) to inquire about the status of the agreement.

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Additional Information (format of preferred engagement-virtual, hybrid, in-person; partner organization's location): **Hybrid preferred (located at 1111 S 41st St, Omaha, NE 68105).** Data analysis may be completed virtually, with in-person presentation of findings. Students may need access to a secure DCHD laptop, SASS or SPSS, and all data must be deleted upon project completion.

Data resources:

- NEMS overview and reports: <https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/reports-and-publications/nutrition-environment-measures-survey>
- 2024 NEMS report: https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/images/CHNS/NEMS/NEMS_2024_Report_Omaha_Metro_final_updated_contact_052125.pdf

For students who meet eligibility criteria, this opportunity is available for funding supported by the COPH. For more information, reach out to juquigley@unmc.edu or review orientation slides 13 – 15.

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