Partner organization name: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Partner organization website: https://dhhs.ne.gov

Partner organization brief description:

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is a government agency responsible for promoting and protecting the health and well-being of Nebraska residents. Within the DHHS, the Division of Public Health oversees the state's public health programs and services, including disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness and response, health promotion and education, and environmental health.

The Epidemiology section within the Division of Public Health is responsible for surveillance, monitoring and investigating the occurrence of infectious and chronic diseases in Nebraska, as well as conducting research to identify risk factors and develop strategies for prevention and control. They work closely with healthcare providers, laboratories, and other public health agencies to collect and analyze data on disease trends, investigate outbreaks, and provide guidance on disease prevention and control measures.

Partner organization's point of contact name and email:

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

- A student intern in the role of creating and managing data dictionaries would be responsible for helping to develop and maintain a comprehensive dictionary of data elements used within a public health epidemiology department.

- The intern would work closely with department staff to identify and define data elements, ensuring that they are consistent and accurately reflect the data being collected.

- Student may involve creating an online or digital repository for the data dictionary or using existing tools and resources to organize and manage the data.

- Student may be able to learn basic good data practices and have hands on experience on cleaning, standardizing, and structuring real world data for analysis.

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

- Student may also be responsible for assisting with data analysis and reporting, using the data dictionary to ensure that data is being collected and analyzed in a consistent and meaningful way.

Timeframe of proposed activities:

The plan is to have two phases for the student in this opportunity:

Phase – 1 First 50 hours:
Project 1 – Student will use this time to understand the dataset(s).
Checkpoints at the end of each week with preceptor(s) to assess student progress. Expected to complete within the first 50 hours.

Phase – 2 Second 50 hours:
Project 2 – Student will use this time to implement the knowledge gained form studying the datasets and apply to perform aforementioned activities.
Checkpoints at the end of each week with preceptor(s) to assess student progress. Expected to complete within the second 50 hours.

Benefit of proposed activities to partner organization:

- Student intern can help to increase the capacity of the department by providing additional support for ongoing projects and initiatives.

- Student intern can bring a fresh perspective to the department and offer new ideas and approaches to solving public health problems.

- This helps the department to build and preserve educational and research activities with the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Also, this can help to increase the visibility and reputation of the department within the public health community.

Benefit of proposed activities to the student:

- Opportunity to work with a team of experienced epidemiologists.
- Supporting environment for the student to learn, grow and make connections.
- Student would improve and develop time management; they will learn to use their time efficiently and prioritize tasks effectively.
- Student will be able to apply and improve their problem-solving skills with real-world data, they will train to be able to identify problems, analyze them, and come up with solutions.

Skill sets of students requested:

- Basic understanding and programming in either SAS, SQL or R
- Basic understanding of data elements, data structures, variable types etc.
- Communication with preceptor is key, student is expected to maintain this.

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

- Students are expected to engage in-person at least two times (start and end).
- Fully in-person is preferred.

MPH students who engage with the NeDHHS may be eligible for a competitive $3,500 stipend. Please refer to information shared with students during the APEx Orientation about the process for applying.

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