

ASPPH | CDC

Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

2026



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Tribal Health Departments provide extensive and culturally relevant healthcare and public health services to their communities. Many Tribal Health Departments, however, receive insufficient funding to cover all their needs and face barriers when recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce as a result. The National Indian Health Board's 2023 Public Health in Indian Country Capacity Scan II found that two-thirds of the needed roles in Tribal Health Organizations lack designated funding, and respondents identified staffing, funding, and workforce development as top priorities.

In 2024, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded funding to the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) to provide capacity-building assistance to Tribal Health Departments by way of the ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program. Fellowship programs are an effective way to enhance the workforce capacity of a health department at no cost to the host site, prepare postgraduates for impactful careers in public health, and provide host sites with potential permanent employees.

For 30 years, ASPPH has recruited and placed over 1,200 graduates of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs of public health within governmental agencies. The ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program is a collaborative effort between the [Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health \(ASPPH\) Center for Public Health Workforce Development](#) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Program's purpose is to provide capacity building assistance to Tribal Health Departments to improve organizational capacity and effectiveness in addressing health outcomes of Tribal communities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

For 30 years, ASPPH has recruited and placed over 1,200 graduates of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs of public health within governmental agencies. The ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program is a collaborative effort between the [Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health \(ASPPH\) Center for Public Health Workforce Development](#) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Program's purpose is to provide capacity building assistance to Tribal Health Departments to improve organizational capacity and effectiveness in addressing health outcomes of Tribal communities by placing fellowship program participants with graduate-level public health degrees with host sites where they contribute to Tribal health projects and are mentored by Tribal health professionals.

Upon completion of the ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program, fellowship program participants will have contributed to Tribal Health Department capacity building while completing a competency-based, mentored training program that will lay the foundation for a career in Tribal public health.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to serve as an ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Program Fellow, applicants must meet all of the below eligibility requirements without exception.

1. Completed a graduate degree program prior to the beginning of the fellowship (no later than August 2026) and within the last five years (no earlier than May 2021).
2. Graduate degrees must come from [ASPPH member schools and programs of public health](#) that are CEPH-accredited. Must be U.S. citizens or hold a visa permitting permanent residence (“Green Card”) in the U.S.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Fellowship placements are full-time, eleven-month training opportunities beginning on September 1, 2026 and ending on July 31, 2027. Pending the availability of funds and satisfactory progress by the fellow, placements may be extended for up to one additional year.

LOCATION

Most 2026 – 2027 fellowship placements require the fellow to serve in-person at the Tribal Health Department host site location. Some host sites may offer hybrid and/or remote work options in certain circumstances. Host site and project descriptions indicate whether this may be an option. Hybrid and remote work are not guaranteed, and the frequency of in-person work will be at the discretion of each fellow’s assigned mentor. Relocation costs will not be reimbursed.

STIPEND AND ALLOWANCES

Each fellow will receive an annual stipend of \$50,000 to be paid in bi-monthly installments. Each fellow will be allocated an allowance for reimbursable expenses, such as health insurance, training, and travel expenses that may be incurred in support of their placement.

FELLOWSHIP PLACEMENTS

Currently, six fellowship placements are available for the 2026 ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program. The following is a breakdown of fellowship placement opportunities. Detailed host site and project descriptions may be found in the “Fellowship Placements: Host Site and Project Descriptions” section below.

Host Site	Host Site Location	Placement Location
Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System	Norman, Oklahoma	In-person
Jemez Public Health Programs	Pueblo of Jemez, New Mexico	In-person preferred Hybrid possible
Lumbee Department of Health and Human Services	Pembroke, North Carolina	In-person preferred Hybrid possible
Rocky Boy Health Center	Box Elder, Montana	In-person preferred Hybrid possible
Siletz Community Health Clinic	Siletz, Oregon	In-person preferred Hybrid or remote possible
Winnebago Public Health Department	Winnebago, Nebraska	In-person preferred Hybrid or remote possible

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Each applicant may apply for up to three (3) fellowship placements. Applications must be completed through the ASPPH Applied Learning and Training Programs Online Application System. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Application Deadline: 11:59:59 PM PST on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Applications must be submitted using the **ASPPH Applied Learning & Training Portal**, a centralized application service that provides a secure, easy, and convenient way for students/graduates of ASPPH member schools and public health programs to apply to all ASPPH Applied Learning and Training Programs.
- To begin your online application, please click the "Sign Up" button below the Login button to create a password-protected account. Signing up is free and easy. If you already have an account, you may log in on this page. Carefully read the instructions that appear throughout the online application system.
- After submitting an application, applicants may make edits at any time before the application deadline by clicking the pencil icon in the "My Status" section. If you edit your application, you must resubmit it by the deadline; otherwise, it will not be reviewed. Applications are reviewed only after the online application deadline has passed.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

1. Faculty Advisor name, phone number, and email address if you have not yet graduated
 - If you have not yet graduated, in Part 3 of the application, you will have the opportunity to generate an email to your Faculty Advisor at the same time as for your References. Verification of graduation date from your Faculty Advisor must be received by the application deadline.
2. Resume (PDF only)
3. Name, phone number, and email address of two references who will write your letters of recommendation
 - Choose individuals familiar with your academic, professional, or community involvement. Tribal members may include one personal reference from a Tribal leader or community member.
 - In part three of the application, you can generate emails to your Faculty Advisor (if you have not yet graduated) and your References before submitting your application. If you do not click "Send Now" in the application, the emails will go out when you submit your application. The deadline for your Faculty Advisor and References to submit their pieces is the same as the application deadline. Therefore, we recommend using the "Send Now" feature to send the emails before submitting your application, so they have time to complete your recommendations before the application deadline.
 - Letters of recommendation must be on the sender's official letterhead with an original signature and include the name, degree(s), title, institution, and contact information of the reference.
4. One Personal Essay per Fellowship Placement
 - Each applicant may apply for up to three fellowship placements. If you are applying for two or more placements, address them in separate essays.
 - Maximum 1,000 words per essay. Each essay should be uploaded to the appropriate fellowship placement, be in PDF format, and have a maximum file size of 15 MB.

- Essay prompt: Explain how your personal and professional experiences, strengths, and interests align with the specific host site and project to which you are applying and how they have prepared you to work respectfully and effectively with American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Please also describe how this opportunity will support your long-term career goals.
5. Unofficial or Official Graduate Transcript (PDF only)
- If you are offered and accept a fellowship placement, you will be required to provide an official graduate transcript.

REVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION

Applicants selected for interviews with Tribal Health Department host sites will be notified in mid-late May. Host sites will be provided with optional interview questions and an interview scoring rubric to identify candidates that may be the best fit for their respective host site and project. Final selections will be made in early to mid-June. Selected applicants will be notified by phone and email. All other applicants will be notified by email.

CONTACT US

All questions regarding the application process should be sent to trainingprograms@aspph.org.

Note: Completing the ASPPH/CDC Tribal Health Department Fellowship Program does not guarantee full-time employment at the CDC, any other federal agency, or the Tribal Health Department host site.

ASPPH/CDC TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FELLOWSHIP PLACEMENTS: HOST SITE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

HOST SITE: ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Host Site Location: Norman, Oklahoma

Placement Location: In-person

Host Site Description: The mission of the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System (ASTHS) is to provide a culturally-sensitive, quality health care system for American Indians and Alaska Natives, which leads to health promotion and disease prevention through a multi-disciplinary team using holistic and evidence-based practices that address all health issues and educational needs while protecting individual confidentiality. ASHS serves the entire Absentee Shawnee Tribal population within the tribal jurisdiction, as well as other Tribal members throughout Oklahoma. Over the past five years, the public health office has grown from two nurses to a team of nine staff members, including a nurse practitioner, community health worker, and community outreach specialist. Services provided include STI/STD patient care, health education, mother/baby visits and breastfeeding education, education for elders raising grandchildren, flu and COVID vaccinations, and child passenger technician education. A large focus of the public health office is mobile health care operations for Tribal members.

Project Title: Advancing Public Health Accreditation Readiness and Strategic Planning at Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System

Project Description: The Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System (ASTHS) aspires to apply for accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board in the near future. The fellow placed at the ASHS public health office will identify steps the department must take in order to meet accreditation standards while also collaborating with leadership to develop a strategic plan and workforce development priorities. This will include researching accreditation standards and benefits, identifying where the department does and does not meet these standards, identifying strategic and workforce development planning best practices, and establishing quality improvement systems to strengthen program performance and sustainability. In addition, the fellow may collaborate with ASTHS staff to enhance community outreach to the elder population by evaluating current programming and identifying opportunities to expand engagement and service delivery.

HOST SITE: JEMEZ PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

Host Site Location: Pueblo of Jemez, New Mexico

Placement Location: In-person preferred, hybrid possible

Host Site Description: Jemez Public Health Programs operates under the Jemez Community Clinic in Sandoval County, New Mexico, serving approximately 3,700 enrolled Tribal members as well as surrounding rural communities. With about 25 full-time positions across Environmental Health, Public Health Nursing, Health Promotion and Health Education, and Food Sovereignty, the department delivers prevention-focused, culturally grounded services to Native and non-Native populations. Core services include immunizations, chronic disease prevention and management, environmental health and safety programs, community health education, youth engagement, and food sovereignty initiatives integrated with diabetes prevention efforts. The program prioritizes youth, elders, and individuals at high risk for chronic

disease and was recently recognized with the Indian Health Service National Directors Award for Diabetes Prevention and Management for its leadership in advancing food sovereignty and chronic disease prevention.

Project Title: Building Public Health Infrastructure for Accreditation and Emergency Preparedness at Jemez Public Health Programs

Project Description: The fellow will support the Jemez Public Health Programs' efforts to advance public health accreditation readiness and strengthen public health systems. During the 11-month placement, the fellow will conduct a Public Health Accreditation Board gap analysis, organize and update departmental policies and procedures, and support completion of a Community Health Assessment (CHA) to guide priority setting and accreditation requirements. The fellow will also support the development of a comprehensive emergency preparedness and response plan focused on contagious disease risks in rural and Tribal communities, including strengthening surveillance, reporting, and coordination with the New Mexico Department of Health. Additional work may include supporting the development of community-based data systems and improving internal and external communication to strengthen long-term public health capacity. By leading accreditation-related efforts, the fellow will help institutionalize quality improvement, emergency planning, and data governance while supporting the department's expanding community health worker infrastructure and prevention activities aligned with value-based purchasing models.

HOST SITE: LUMBEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Host Site Location: Pembroke, North Carolina

Placement Location: In-person preferred, hybrid possible

Host Site Description: The Lumbee Department of Health and Human Services (LDHHS) was established by the Tribal Council in 2023 and has grown to a team of 10 full-time and 2 part-time staff. Serving more than 60,000 enrolled Lumbee Tribal members in southeastern North Carolina, with headquarters in Pembroke, the department focuses on prevention-oriented public health services and research. LDHHS is organized into two divisions—Research and Data Management and Client Services—developed following the Tribe's first Tribal Health Assessment completed in 2024. Current initiatives address substance use prevention, domestic and sexual violence, obesity, heart disease, and diabetes in collaboration with county and state partners. The department has established a Lumbee Health Board and Institutional Review Board and is expanding research capacity through a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded capacity-building award and partnerships with national Tribal health organizations.

Project Title: Developing Research Infrastructure and Data Governance Systems for the Lumbee Department of Health and Human Services

Project Description: The fellow will support the Lumbee Department of Health and Human Services (LDHHS) in strengthening Tribal research infrastructure and data governance to advance community-driven public health research. During the 11-month placement, the fellow will assist in developing research policies, procedures, and protocols aligned with the Tribe's growing research capacity and NIH-funded initiatives. This work will include supporting the development of data management and governance systems, including processes for secure data storage, access, and responsible data sharing. The fellow may also contribute to the

development of research dashboards, Tribal community health assessments, and protocols guiding external researchers working with the Tribe. Through collaboration with Tribal leadership, research advisors, and academic partners, the fellow will help build sustainable systems that support ethical research, strengthen Tribal data sovereignty, and inform future public health programs and services.

HOST SITE: ROCKY BOY HEALTH CENTER

Host Site Location: Box Elder, Montana

Placement Location: In-person preferred, hybrid possible

Host Site Description: Rocky Boy Health Center (RBHC) has been serving the Chippewa Cree community since 1976. Today, RBHC provides comprehensive healthcare to over 5,000 people with a staff of more than 200 employees dedicated to patient care, prevention, and community well-being. As an ambulatory care facility, RBHC offers a wide range of services, including primary care, dental, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, behavioral health, public health nursing, physical therapy, optometry, chiropractic, and traditional healing support. RBHC also provides care coordination, community wellness programs, youth development initiatives, medical transportation, and outreach services to ensure patients receive the care they need both inside and outside the clinic.

Project Title: Strengthening Public Health Data Systems and Infectious Disease Reporting at Rocky Boy Health Center

Project Description: The fellow will support the development of a sustainable public health data reporting system for the Rocky Boy Health Center (RBHC). The project will focus on improving the collection, validation, and routine reporting of public health data from multiple clinical and administrative sources, including the electronic health record, laboratory reporting systems, and other internal data systems. Working with RBHC public health staff, clinic leadership, IT personnel, and the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council – Tribal Epidemiology Center (RMTEC), the fellow will help identify key public health indicators that should be routinely monitored and reported for the community served by RBHC.

The fellow will assess existing data systems, identify gaps in reporting processes, and develop standardized methods for extracting and validating data for public health use. The primary deliverable will be the 2025 Rocky Boy Infectious Disease Report, supported by improved internal data processes. The fellow will also help establish a framework for ongoing public health metrics reporting that RBHC can sustain moving forward, with mentorship from RBHC staff and technical support from RMTEC epidemiology and data systems experts as needed.

HOST SITE: SILETZ COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC

Host Site Location: Siletz, Oregon

Placement Location: In-person preferred, hybrid or remote possible

Host Site Description: The Siletz Community Health Department operates within the Siletz Community Health Clinic, providing primary care and supportive services to approximately 1,200 individuals across an 11-county area. Programs include Diabetes Prevention, Healthy Traditions, and fitness initiatives, as well as tobacco and STI prevention education. The department also offers key community resources such as laundry and shower facilities, advocacy for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, non-emergency medical

transportation, and food sovereignty programming supported by a 38-acre farm. Traditional Health Workers and Community Health Workers help connect community members to services. Staff collaborate with clinic departments—including dental, optometry, pharmacy, medication-assisted treatment, addiction and recovery services, and mental health—to provide coordinated, culturally responsive care that supports the community’s physical, mental, and cultural wellbeing.

Project Title: Developing Communicable Disease Investigation and Reporting Capacity at Siletz Community Health Clinic

Project Description: The fellow will support the development and strengthening of the Siletz Community Health Department’s communicable disease investigation, contact tracing, and reporting capacity as the Tribe works to build greater independence from county public health systems. Working closely with the Community Health Manager and department staff, the fellow will help establish protocols and standard operating procedures for disease investigation and reporting, including learning and supporting reporting through Oregon’s ORPHEUS system. The fellow will assist in assessing current workflows, identifying gaps, and strengthening systems related to STI and HIV testing oversight, case documentation, and data management. This work will help ensure high-quality surveillance, support future public health staffing such as a Tribal public health nurse, and advance the Tribe’s ability to protect community health while upholding Tribal data sovereignty and responsible data stewardship.

HOST SITE: WINNEBAGO PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Host Site Location: Winnebago, Nebraska

Placement Location: In-person preferred, hybrid and remote possible

Host Site Description: The Winnebago Public Health Department (WPHD) is a tribally operated public health and clinical care system serving the Winnebago community near Sioux City, Nebraska. The department includes 19 program areas and employs approximately 115 staff, about 80% of whom are Tribal members. WPHD provides a wide range of services, including behavioral health, recovery services, maternal and child health, doula care, diabetes prevention, dental and optometry services, wellness programming, and public health nursing. Guided by a focus on Indigenous social determinants of health, the department uses tools such as its Community Health Assessment and Tribal Community Health Improvement Plan to identify health priorities and guide community-driven policies and programs. WPHD is accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board and supports coordinated, culturally grounded approaches to improving community health.

Project Title: Advancing Accreditation Readiness and Elder Services Coordination at Winnebago Public Health Department

Project Description: The fellow will support the Winnebago Public Health Department’s (WPHD) ongoing efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure through accreditation readiness and program development. During the 11-month placement, the fellow will assist with activities related to public health reaccreditation, including organizing documentation, supporting quality improvement efforts, and helping ensure alignment with accreditation standards. In addition, the fellow will support the development of the department’s elder services program. Working with program leadership, the fellow will examine service coordination across department divisions and existing assisted living, nursing home, and senior center programs, as well as assist with reviewing relevant policies, job descriptions, and program structures. The

fellow will also identify potential funding opportunities and strategies to support long-term program sustainability while strengthening services for elders in the community.