

Role of the Host Health Department Mentor

The mentor is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined below. Although interns may vary in their experience and exposure to environmental health practice and some may be skilled in various technical areas, all interns benefit from regular interaction, guidance, and feedback from their mentors. The mentor is expected to engage interns, discuss project progress, successes, and challenges, dialogue about the internship experience and answer questions that arise, and introduce students to various programs, activities and services that are operated by the department/program to support knowledge and exposure to various environmental health services and topic areas. Host health departments should provide opportunities for the intern to observe and/or participate in team meetings, engage with community members and agency partners, as well as facilitate one to one mentoring. The mentor will:

- Work with the NEHA Internship Coordinator and the student intern to ensure that the internship meets all academic requirements.
- Oversee the intern's work activities.
- Be positive and supportive.
- Be fair, considerate, honest, trustworthy, and cooperative when dealing with working with intern.
- Offer advice and assistance.
- Be available to give feedback to the student.
- Assist the intern in following host health department policies and practices. Ensure the intern completes the full 400-hours.
- Approve stipends, confirming intern participation.

The mentor should be available to advise the intern throughout the internship period. Health department hosts are encouraged to assign a mentor who is professionally registered (REHS or RS) whenever possible. Health agency staff who are graduates of an environmental health academic program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (EHAC) are encouraged to participate as mentors in the program.

