

Reference

The Public Health Laboratory Science Fellowship Program Handbook

For Fellows and Mentors



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A Message from APHL's Chief Learning Officer

Dear Fellows and Mentors,

Welcome to the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program! We are pleased that you will participate in the fellowship program to begin your professional journey into the field of public health laboratory science. This program will provide you with experiential learning to include firsthand laboratory training as well as completion of a core training curriculum. Your fellowship will give you direct experience with the significant role that laboratory operations play in routines as well as emergency responses in public health.

APHL is committed to advancing the public's health through training the next generation of laboratory professionals to support the core functions of public health. We are confident the skills you acquire during your fellowship experience will empower you to rise to meet the public health challenges and opportunities that you will face during your career. Our training program includes learning that takes place in the laboratory, mentorship, alignment with core curriculum training, participating in professional development opportunities and taking part in public health planning and response.

As you begin and throughout your fellowship, please let us know how we are doing. Our staff and your mentors are here to support you. Please let us know what we are doing well, but also where you feel improvements can be made and how we can better assist you to achieve your career goals.

Welcome to the fellowship program and best wishes for an exciting experience in your host laboratory!

Sincerely,

Christine Bean, PhD, MBA, MLS(ASCP)

Chief Learning Officer

Introduction and Overview

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) has prepared this handbook to provide information on the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program: An APHL-CDC Initiative, what APHL expects from fellows and mentors and what fellows and mentors may expect from APHL. It also describes the expected fellow-mentor-host relationships and responsibilities. To account for the various types of hosts and settings that will have fellowships, APHL will collectively consider the host laboratory/agency/site to be referred to as ‘host laboratory’ or simply as ‘host.’

Additionally, this resource includes information related to administrative and operational aspects of the program, such as reporting requirements, stipend payments, tax information, travel requests and more.

APHL may supplement or modify the policies and procedures set out in this handbook at any time during participation in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program and will provide written or electronic notification of the changes. All active fellows and mentors in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program must refer to the current version of the handbook as the current version supersedes any previous versions. Fellows will also be expected to follow all applicable host-specific policies and procedures that cannot be accounted for within this handbook but will only be available from the host.

APHL Overview

APHL is the national organization representing state and local laboratories in the United States. Its members, known as “public health laboratories,” monitor and detect health threats to protect the health and safety of Americans. Our core members are state and local laboratories in the US, including public health, environmental, agricultural science and food safety laboratories. Representatives from federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, corporations and interested individuals also participate in the association. International participation is expanding in response to the globalization of disease and APHL’s active global health program, which operates offices in 10 countries. APHL has over 130 member laboratories, 50 corporate partner organizations and 1,500 individuals in its network.

APHL collaborates with laboratory and public health partners to ensure effective monitoring, detection and response to health threats. We work closely with federal agencies, including the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration, US Food and Drug Administration and the US Environmental Protection Agency to develop and execute national health initiatives. During public health emergencies, APHL operates as a coordinating center for laboratory response.

APHL also works around the world to develop effective national laboratory systems and expand access to quality diagnostic testing services to prevent the spread of health threats internationally and domestically. With over 50 years of experience managing public health laboratory programs, we are recognized internationally as a leader in laboratory science and practice. We support ministries of health with consulting services including laboratory strategic planning, twinning partnerships, laboratory information management systems, quality assurance and training.

The goal of the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program is to train and prepare scientists for careers in public health laboratories supporting public health initiatives. The fellowship program’s mission is to provide a high-quality training experience for the fellow while providing workforce capacity to the public health laboratory community.

To learn more about APHL, please visit [APHL.org](https://www.aphl.org).

Fellowship Program Areas

Fellows will be placed into one of eleven program focus areas, and the determination for placement will depend on the mentor's designated project area. The fellowship program covers a variety of topics in each of the eleven program areas:

- **Bioinformatics and Molecular Epidemiology**
- **Biosafety and Biosecurity**
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Food Safety**
- **Infectious Diseases**
- **Informatics**
- **Laboratory Operations and Support Services**
- **Newborn Screening**
- **Quality Management**
- **Radiochemistry**

Learn more about APHL's work within these program areas on [our website](#).

Signed Fellowship Agreement with APHL

Prior to an individual fellow's start date, APHL will enter into a fellowship agreement with the participant (fellow) to establish the legal rights and responsibilities between APHL and the participant. The agreement terms will supersede any statement or material in this handbook and its attachments, or in any other information provided by or on behalf of APHL staff. A fellowship may not begin until the fellowship agreement is finalized and signed by the participant and APHL.

Fully Remote or Hybrid Fellowships

APHL strongly encourages fellows to be physically present in their host laboratories to immerse themselves in the program and dedicate their time and effort to the host laboratory. Hybrid and fully remote fellowships are not common. However, APHL may make an exception if the host and mentor can provide sufficient documentation for a successful hybrid or fully remote fellowship. APHL will only allow a hybrid or fully remote fellowship to individual fellows under special circumstances if requested and agreed upon between the fellow, host, mentor and APHL. This request will need to be communicated to APHL before the fellowship begins, or as soon as possible if a transition needs to occur during the fellowship, to amend the fellow's agreement with necessary adjustments. If a transition to hybrid or fully remote is approved, the remainder of the fellowship will be carried out in the hybrid or fully remote status as indicated in the agreement amendment reflecting the status change.

The Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program will only consider requests from mentors for fully remote fellowship positions that could be remote if the fellow were to be hired into that position as a full-time employee with their host, as well as considerations for hosts that may have geographic constraints. The mentor's request for a fully remote fellowship must be communicated to APHL and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If APHL approves a fully remote

fellowship, the following will be taken into consideration:

- **Fellows working fully remotely will not receive the one-time relocation stipend or monthly transportation allowance.**
- **Fellows whose host is APHL may participate in fully remote fellowships.**
- **Fellows in Bioinformatics and Molecular Epidemiology, Informatics and Quality Management program areas may be considered for fully remote fellowships.**
- **Fully remote fellowship participants and work must be based in the United States and its territories.**
- **For a fully remote fellowship request to be successful, the host must outline the procedures they plan to implement in order to sustain and complete a fully remote fellowship.**

Part-Time Fellowships

All fellowships are considered to be full-time to allow fellows to immerse themselves in the program and the project work with the host. Unless APHL approves an exception, all fellows are expected to work full-time throughout the work week; this is typically 40-hours a week. APHL will only allow a part-time fellowship under unique or special circumstances if requested in writing by the fellow, host and mentor and agreed to by APHL. The fellow or mentor must submit a part-time request to APHL before the fellowship begins or as soon as possible if a transition needs to occur during the fellowship. If approved, APHL will amend the fellow's agreement with necessary adjustments to reflect the fellow's part-time participation in the fellowship program.

Early Departure from Fellowship Program

Fellows are expected to complete the full term of their fellowship as indicated within their signed agreement. This commitment includes not seeking any employment that would interfere with their obligations with the host. Although APHL hopes that each fellow will gain employment at a public health laboratory or agency at the conclusion of their fellowship, fellows are expected to complete their full fellowship term first. Therefore, as best possible within host hiring systems, hosts should avoid offering full-time employment until after the end of the fellowship term.

If unforeseen circumstances arise and the fellow needs to resign from their fellowship position earlier than specified in their fellowship agreement, the fellow must contact APHL at least 30 calendar days prior to their intended resignation date to communicate the reason for departure and to identify any next steps before exiting the program. Fellows should work with their host/mentor to finalize any outstanding work, complete any host-specific off-boarding requirements and return any items to the host laboratory (e.g., identification badges, laptops, etc.). Fellows who leave the program early are still expected to complete their last quarterly report and a post-experience survey. If the fellow's departure is between report deadlines, APHL staff may contact the fellow as needed to complete the necessary reports or surveys. Fellows must complete at least 90 calendar days of their fellowship in the first year and leave the program in good standing (i.e., have completed all program requirements to date) to be considered an alumnus of the program and receive a certificate of completion.

In addition, the host, mentor or APHL may request to terminate a specific fellowship assignment with sufficient reasoning. If the fellow's departure is a mutual decision between the fellow and the host or mentor, APHL will support the decision. If a host or mentor requests that APHL terminate a fellowship and the fellow does not concur with termination, the mentor/host must provide APHL with reasoning and/or documentation to support the early termination. APHL (in its sole discretion) may attempt to coordinate a resolution in order to continue the fellowship, if reasonable,

or may move forward with the mentor/host's requested early termination. The party requesting early termination must provide the other party and APHL with written communication of the reasoning and the terms of the termination (i.e., desired end date). APHL will provide the fellow and mentor with written communication of termination reasoning if a fellowship is terminated at the request of APHL.

If a fellow departs their fellowship without approval from APHL and the mentor/host, they will not be considered an alumnus of the program, will not be allowed to participate in alumni community offerings, will not receive a certificate of completion and will not be considered to have departed in good standing. If APHL learns that a fellow left or stopped working with their host without approval and has already been paid their monthly stipend, the fellow must promptly refund any excess to APHL as specified in their signed fellowship agreement and will not receive any pending disbursement requests if there was a stipend overpayment.

Fellowship Extension to Second Year

If funding is available, APHL will contact mentors during the last quarter of the first year of the fellowship to determine the collective interest between mentors, fellows and the host in a program extension for up to 12 months. If all parties agree to an extension, the mentor and fellow must complete and return the provided Request for Extension form to fellowships@aphl.org. If the extension is granted, APHL will notify both mentor and fellow, and APHL will distribute an agreement amendment to the fellow for signature. If the mentor and fellow decide not to extend the fellowship, the provided No Extension form must be signed and returned to fellowships@aphl.org.

Fellows extending their fellowship into a second year may receive an increase in their second-year base stipend. The second-year health insurance stipend and transportation stipend will remain the same as described in the monthly pay breakdown of the Fellowship Stipend section.

Except as noted here, the fellowship extension will begin immediately following the completion of the first year. APHL, with the mentor's approval, may allow a fellow to take up to one month of leave from the program between the end of the first year and the beginning of the second year. Leave from the program between the first year and beginning of the second year must be clearly indicated in the submitted Request for Extension form and communicated to APHL in advance of the leave. The fellow's stipend will be paused during this leave from the program.

Program Requirements

Ethical Standards and Professional Behavior

Mentors and fellows are expected to conduct work according to the highest scientific and ethical standards in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies regarding protection of human research subjects, human care, use of laboratory animals, laboratory safety and ethical standards or codes of conduct. Fellows are to follow all rules and regulations that apply to host personnel such as safety, breaks, closures, security access, confidentiality, reporting of a conflict of interest, participation in the employee improvement plan and other policies specific to the host.

APHL has the right to suspend the fellow's stipend and/or terminate the fellow's participation if APHL and/or the mentor determines that the fellow's conduct conflicts with terms of the fellowship program as outlined in the fellowship agreement and this handbook, or the host's rules, as well as if the conduct conflicts with the best interests of the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program or any of the fellowship program focus areas. APHL also has the right to terminate

the mentor's participation if APHL determines that their conduct conflicts with APHL's rules, the terms of this handbook, the best interests of the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program, or any of the fellowship program focus areas.

APHL expects fellowship program participants (fellows and mentors) to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects [APHL's vision, mission and values](#), and to exhibit integrity, respect and professionalism while participating in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program. APHL is committed to conducting its activities with the highest ethical and moral standards and encourages all fellows, mentors, members and employees to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling responsibilities and complying with applicable laws and regulations.

Fellows and mentors may contact the APHL Ethics Reporting System (NAVEX Global's EthicsPoint) to submit a report if something at the host location or within APHL appears illegal, unethical or is unrepresentative of APHL's high standards of ethics. Fellows or mentors should report concerns in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed reflects a violation of policy or procedure. Reporters will have the option to keep their reports anonymous (although absolute anonymity may not be possible depending on the specific situation). EthicsPoint is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by using these tools:

- Web link: aphl.ethicspoint.com
- Mobile intake site: aphl.navexone.com
- Phone number: 1-844-979-4928

Plan of Action

Upon arrival at the host location, the fellow and mentor will work to develop a formalized Plan of Action (as assigned by APHL). The purpose of the Plan of Action is to provide a written understanding between the fellow, the mentor/host and APHL for expectations as well as project parameters and goals. The Plan of Action serves as a guideline and overarching agreement about the expectations and opportunities of the fellowship experience in each host location. The Plan of Action is also a tool for the fellow, the mentor and APHL to monitor progress during the fellowship. After the fellow's start date, APHL will assign and notify the fellow that their Plan of Action is ready to be completed. The Plan of Action needs to be developed, completed and submitted to APHL through the fellowship onboarding [portal](#) within 30 calendar days of the fellow's start date.

It is understood that projects can slightly change throughout the fellowship due to resource availability and workload. However, if there are significant changes to the fellowship project, a new Plan of Action should be developed by the mentor and fellow and submitted to APHL. Mentors and fellows are expected to prioritize the project formalized in the Plan of Action, but it is understood that fellows are working in a full-functioning host environment where work duties and/or project changes might be necessary.

An updated or new Plan of Action will be required for fellows who extend their fellowship. If an extension is granted, APHL will assign the new Plan of Action after the fellow begins the extension.

Reports and Surveys

Fellows and mentors are required to submit several reports and surveys as detailed below. Information about each of these reports and surveys can be found below or by visiting [APHL's website](#).

Check-In Reports

At the end of their first and second months of the fellowship, (approximately 30 and 60 days after the fellowship start date), fellows will be required to complete brief check-in reports. The primary purpose of these reports is to assess the progress of on-boarding with the host, APHL and the host-assigned fellowship project. The report links will be emailed to the fellow when it is time to complete, and fellows should complete the report within one week of receipt.

Quarterly Reports

Fellows and mentors are required to complete a detailed report each quarter (i.e., every three months) beginning in the third month of the program (approximately 90 days after the fellowship start date). These reports allow the fellow, mentor, APHL and the CDC to identify a fellow's work opportunities, objectives achieved and in-progress, areas of success, and opportunities for improvement. When appropriate, fellows and mentors will receive the report link via email and will have 10 days to complete. After 10 days, reminders will be emailed daily until the report is completed.

Post-Experience Survey

Fellows and mentors are required to complete a post-experience survey. The survey link will be emailed near the conclusion of the fellowship and must be completed within 10 days of receipt. Mentors with more than one fellow will only complete the post-experience survey once per calendar year to encompass all fellows during that time period.

Alumni Survey

At regular intervals after their fellowship concludes, fellows will be contacted by APHL via their provided personal permanent email address to complete an alumni survey(s). This survey(s) allows APHL to learn how the fellowship program did or did not impact their career and other relevant experiences. Fellows will receive information about the alumni survey(s) as they near the end of their fellowship.

Good Standing Status

In addition to project-related work, fellowship program requirements must be completed when they are assigned to maintain good standing in the program. Program requirements such as Plan of Action, check-in reports, quarterly reports, training plan, etc., will be tracked to ensure timely completion. Fellows who fail to complete program requirements or show appropriate progression will no longer be in good standing and will be unable to access professional development funds until all outstanding requirements are completed. Fellows will retain a status of good standing once all outstanding program requirements are completed.

Communications

APHL expects that fellows and mentors will be accessible via email during the fellowship. The host will provide the fellow with access to a computer and an individual work email address. Fellows are also required to provide APHL with a permanent personal email address that can be used for communication between APHL and the fellow. Fellows and mentors can email APHL staff at fellowships@aphl.org.

Office Hours

The Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program provides weekly office hours for fellows and mentors to speak directly with APHL staff without an appointment. Breakout rooms will be available for private discussions. The link to the office hours can be found on the [APHL website](#). Fellows and mentors can contact fellowships@aphl.org if they are unable to attend weekly office hours and would like to schedule an appointment.

Newsletter

APHL sends monthly newsletters to fellows and mentors with important information and regular updates. Fellows and mentors are expected to read these newsletters in their entirety and complete any action items by their assigned due dates. The fellow and mentor newsletters are archived on APHL's website for reference.

CoLABorate

[CoLABorate](#) is APHL's member-only community of practice forum and is used for discussion and information sharing. There is a CoLABorate community specifically for current fellows and a separate CoLABorate community for mentors. All members of a CoLABorate community will have the ability to receive and post messages in that specific community. APHL will use the Fellowships and Mentors-APHL Fellowship CoLABorate communities to share updates and other important information. When a fellow is considered an alumnus, they will be moved from the Fellowships CoLABorate community to the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program Alumni community. APHL has several other CoLABorate communities that fellows may request to join. Fellows will learn more about these communities as part of their orientation.

Feedback Process

APHL will routinely seek feedback using surveys and other mechanisms to evaluate the fellowship program and make continuous quality improvements. In addition to these mechanisms, all fellows and mentors may provide feedback at any time during weekly office hours with APHL staff, by emailing fellowships@aphl.org or using the APHL Fellowship [Anonymous Feedback form](#).

It is also important that both mentor and fellow provide feedback to each other to ensure a successful working relationship and to ensure the project Plan of Action is completed. Should a conflict arise where a fellow, mentor or other host location staff feels there is a situation that is detrimental to a participant, the assignment or the fellowship program, please promptly contact APHL at fellowships@aphl.org.

Feedback or questions about the fellowship project goals, deadlines or deliverables should be addressed between the fellow and mentor through their mutually agreed upon communication channel (e.g., email, in-person meeting, video call, etc.). In addition, daily or weekly working schedules, host-specific safety and security training, and monitoring/tracking the 12 APHL-allotted days of paid time off (PTO) should be discussed between the fellow and mentor. Whereas feedback or questions about the monthly stipend, fellowship agreement or the APHL Training Plan should be addressed to APHL by emailing fellowships@aphl.org.

Time Reporting and Leave

Paid Time Off (PTO)

APHL allocates fellows 12 days of PTO per year of their fellowship beginning on their start date. PTO includes vacation, sick, personal and bereavement leave. The mentor/host and fellow are collectively responsible for tracking this PTO, and the PTO days must be approved in advance by the mentor/host. The mentor or fellow should provide a record of the PTO used upon request by APHL. Mentors/hosts should encourage their fellow(s) to use their PTO balance. When appropriate, the mentor may also work with the fellow to try to “flex” the fellow’s time away from the laboratory for any short absences (e.g., leaving early or coming in late) to make up the time in place of using PTO. Any requests for “flex” time should be approved by the mentor.

Fellows may not be away from their fellowship assignment for more than a total of 12 days in a 12 month period without their mentor and APHL’s approval of extended leave. If a fellow’s absence exceeds their 12 PTO days, the mentor is required to contact APHL. Anything exceeding 12 days, without an extended leave approval, will be considered leave without pay.

If the fellow extends their fellowship for a second year and has not used all 12 PTO days, up to three (3) days of PTO may roll over from year one to year two for a maximum of 15 days in year two. It is the responsibility of the fellow and mentor to track and roll over up to three (3) PTO days, if applicable. If PTO days are not used by the end of the fellowship, the time will be forfeited and the fellow will not be compensated for any remaining PTO balance.

Time Reporting

The mentor/host will be responsible for monitoring, approving and tracking fellows’ regular, full-time work hours and PTO including vacation, sick, personal and bereavement leave. The fellow and mentor should agree upon regular work hours and a PTO tracking system that will be maintained by both parties and may or may not mirror the structure the host already has in place. Upon request by APHL, the mentor or fellow should provide a record of the hours worked each week and PTO used. APHL and the mentor expect the fellow to report to work during the host’s established regular business hours. Mentors and fellows should determine a regular, full-time work schedule that is appropriate for the project requirements and the host business hours. This schedule may be changed as determined necessary and appropriate by the mentor and fellow. Fellows will observe the same leave policies and closures as those observed by the host laboratory. Fellows are not expected to work while the host is closed and do not need to use PTO during a laboratory closure.

Extended Paid Leave

If a fellow requests extended time away (e.g., personal medical leave, parental leave, family medical leave, mental health leave, etc.), their mentor and APHL may approve up to 28 consecutive days of paid leave with appropriate documentation such as a doctor’s note. The fellow and mentor must contact APHL prior to the leave to provide the extended leave justification and/or documentation. APHL will provide final approval for the extended paid leave. Should a fellow need additional time away, APHL will approve it as leave without pay.

Jury Duty

Fellows summoned to jury duty must contact their mentor immediately by providing a copy of the summons notice. Fellows must coordinate with their mentor to ensure coverage during their time away especially if their jury duty service is expected to exceed one (1) work day. Fellows will still receive their stipend while attending jury duty and will not need

to use PTO. However, if jury duty exceeds five (5) working days, the fellow and mentor must contact APHL to plan for the extended time away. APHL has discretion as to how to treat extended jury duty.

Military Leave

If a fellow has a military-related obligation requiring deployment or leave for more than five (5) working days, the fellow and mentor must contact APHL to discuss a plan to move forward.

Unknown Absence

If a fellow is away from their host for more than three (3) consecutive working days without notice, the mentor must immediately notify APHL. Consequences for these unique cases will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by APHL and the host/mentor.

Fellow & Mentor Challenges

Should a conflict or challenge arise between a fellow and mentor, both parties are encouraged to collaboratively work toward a solution. Solutions used in the past included reducing the scope of the project, creating a structured plan to reach goals or mentor offering more guidance to support success. Additional support and resources are available by joining APHL staff office hours, by contacting APHL directly, or reviewing APHL's website.

Fellow Overview

Status of Fellows

Fellows in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program are participating in an Educational Experience Program and are therefore not considered employees of APHL or the host. Fellows may not have the same access and privileges of employees, and may be ineligible for certain employee assistance programs. Please note that systems and programs will vary between hosts, as will what each host chooses to offer or provide to their fellow(s). Fellows will not be eligible for unemployment benefits upon completion of the fellowship.

Separate from their employment status, fellows receive an APHL student membership during their time as a fellow as a benefit.

Some hosts may classify their fellows as contractors or visitors to align with their established protocols (e.g., assigning badges, providing email addresses, etc.). Mentors should discuss this classification assignment with their fellow(s) and convey what will be included or not included due to this classification. While fellows are neither employees of their host, nor APHL, their employer should be listed as the host laboratory not as APHL when required on documents, paperwork, etc.

Citizenship Status

Fellows must be a current US citizen or US permanent resident to apply and participate in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program.

Student Status

Upon request, APHL may provide the fellow with a letter indicating their participation in the fellowship program for purposes such as income verification or requesting a student rate for conference registration. Please note that some conference organizers may not consider a fellow to be a student and have no obligation to offer a student rate as the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program does not lead to a degree or certificate.

Student Loan Deferment

Because the fellowship program is a designated Educational Experience Program, the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and some lenders may consider the program to be a qualifying program for loan deferment. More information is available on APHL's website.

Program Requirements

Roles and Expectations

Fellows are expected to complete their entire fellowship as specified in their fellowship agreement. In accepting the fellowship position under the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program, the host and APHL have endeavored to support the unique educational and training opportunities afforded to the fellow. APHL also expects that the fellow will neither seek nor accept an offer for a position at the host or elsewhere until the full fellowship has been completed.

APHL expects fellows to devote full-time attention and energy to the fellowship program and not seek other employment in a manner that would conflict with their fellowship duties, responsibilities and obligations. However, if the fellow plans to seek additional paid employment, approval must be obtained by the mentor and APHL to assess whether it will interfere with their fellowship work or goals. Similarly, fellows may not be enrolled in academic course work at a full-time level in a manner that would conflict with fellowship responsibilities.

Fellows are expected to comply with all requirements listed in their signed agreement, the elements listed in this handbook and any host-specific requirements. Fellows who do not comply may be subject to remediation actions taken by their host or potentially have their stipend payments held until required actions are taken. Fellows who do not comply and do not work through remediation actions will be subject to termination from the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program and will not be considered in good standing. The fellow is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined below:

- Perform fellowship duties at the host laboratory daily and maintain regular working hours as set by mentor or host.
- Refrain from working on personal work or non-approved laboratory work during fellowship work hours.
- Collaboratively develop a Plan of Action with the mentor within the first 30 calendar days of the fellowship to serve as a guideline and overarching agreement about the expectations and opportunities of the fellowship experience. Projects and duties are subject to change as noted previously in this handbook.
- Complete Check-In Reports at the end of the first and second months of their fellowship as noted previously in this handbook.
- Submit official transcripts and proof of health insurance
- Review and complete Quarterly Reports during each quarter of the fellowship program.
- Complete the required APHL Fellowship Training Plan developed by APHL and CDC.
- Pursue professional development opportunities as approved by the mentor and APHL.

- Establish regular patterns of communication with the mentor and set agendas for each meeting with enough time for the mentor to review prior to the meeting.
- Respond to APHL communications within one business day or as otherwise requested.
- Complete a post-experience survey

Onboarding

Once a fellow has accepted their host match, they will receive onboarding instructions from APHL that must be completed in order to prepare the fellowship agreement and stipend. Fellows will receive an email notification when their fellowship agreement is ready for their signature. Fellows must sign their fellowship agreement before their fellowship is scheduled to begin. The host will also provide their own onboarding information to ensure the fellow will be set up to work and is enrolled in laboratory-specific safety, security and training programs.

Orientation

Fellows are required to complete a virtual asynchronous New Fellow Orientation prior to their start date. Orientation provides fellows with an overview of the program, describes program requirements and location of key resources, and provides an opportunity to meet APHL staff. After completing their onboarding, fellows will receive instructions for accessing and completing their New Fellow Orientation.

APHL Fellowship Training Plan

Fellows will receive specific training from their host or mentor as it relates to their Plan of Action, scope of work and laboratory procedures. Additionally, APHL will assign the fellow a training plan, based on general and cross-cutting [Public Health Laboratory Competencies](#). The APHL Fellowship Training Plan consists of required and optional self-paced, asynchronous training resources and activities to support the fellowship experience. Fellows are expected to work through the APHL Fellowship Training Plan over the course of the fellowship. Mentors should allow fellows to work on their training plan during established work hours. The fellow must complete the required APHL Fellowship Training Plan by the conclusion of the fellowship to receive a fellowship program Certificate of Completion. First-year fellows should follow the month-by-month training plan guidelines to remain on track as fellows must continue to make progress on the training plan to remain in good standing in the program. If a fellow fails to make enough progress on the training plan, the fellow will no longer be in good standing and will not be able to access the APHL-allocated professional development funds until enough progress has been made to retain a status of good standing.

Fellowship Stipend

APHL will provide a stipend to each fellow. Fellows can find their stipend amount and the terms and conditions associated with stipend payments in their individual fellowship agreement. While APHL generally utilizes the US Health and Human Services Public Health Service (PHS) guidelines, the government's federal salary and general wage scale schedule (GS) to aid in establishing the fellowship stipend, this does not guarantee that the fellowship stipend will strictly follow either the PHS guidelines or the [GS rating scale](#).

APHL will disburse the stipend in monthly payments to fellows through its third-party payroll service provider, ADP Inc. Upon enrollment in the fellowship program, fellows will receive a welcome email from ADP with a registration code and their associate ID number that will allow them to register for payroll services. APHL strongly encourages all fellows to use direct deposit for receipt of their stipend. Fellows will have the opportunity to input their banking information into

ADP once they have completed ADP registration. Fellows are expected to complete their ADP registration within three days of receiving the welcome email from ADP. APHL will provide fellows a reference guide to assist in completing ADP registration.

In the event of a name change (e.g., as a result of marital status, gender reassignment, etc.), the fellow should promptly update their name accordingly in their ADP profile and email an updated W-9 form to APHL.

If a fellow's start date is on or before the 15th of a month, the fellow should receive their first stipend payment on the last working day of the month in which they begin their fellowship. If a fellow begins their fellowship on or after the 16th of a month, the fellow will receive their first stipend payment on the last working day of the following month. As a result, APHL encourages fellows to begin their fellowship on or before the 15th of a month. During the fellowship, fellows will be paid on the last working day of each month.

The monthly stipend will include:

- The base stipend amount divided by 12 (the first and last stipend payments may be prorated for any partial calendar months of participation in the program at the start or end of a fellowship),
- The health insurance stipend of \$500 (\$6,000 total over the year), and
- The transportation stipend of \$86.67 (\$1,040.04 total over the year).

Supplementary Support Funds

Supplementary support funds are allocated to each fellow at the beginning of their fellowship to help offset expenses associated with a fellow's participation in the program. These include relocation, unexpected hardship and other situations that may have otherwise prevented participation in the fellowship program. These supplementary support funds will be distributed as one one-time payment which will be included in the fellow's first stipend payment and are intended to be used on an as needed basis by the fellow throughout their participation in the program. Supplementary support funds are calculated individually and will therefore differ between fellows depending on relocation parameters. Please see below to identify how these funds are calculated.

Relocation Stipend

Fellows will receive a relocation stipend in their first stipend payment as part of their supplementary support funds to offset relocation expenses. Fellows will receive \$1,500 if their relocation was less than or equal to 500 miles including fellows who elect not to move. If a fellow's relocation exceeds 500 miles, they will receive \$3 per mile up to \$5,000. Mileage is based on geographical miles. Fellows are not required to provide documentation of how the relocation stipend was used.

Under the special circumstance that a fellow is remote, they will not receive a relocation stipend. Instead, they are approved for reimbursement up to \$2,000 for one visit to their host location per fellowship year. Remote fellows are required to contact fellowships@aphl.org before arranging a host visit.

Hardship Support Stipend

All fellows will receive a hardship support stipend in the amount of \$1,500 in their first stipend payment as part of their supplementary support funds. These funds are to support fellows through unexpected barriers that may arise while participating in the program such as those related to housing, family, medical-related circumstances, or other possible hardships. Fellows are not required to provide documentation of how the hardship support stipend was used.

Fellowship Funding Sources

Most fellowships through the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program are funded through a cooperative agreement between APHL and CDC that allowed for the establishment and operation of the Public Health Laboratory Workforce Pipeline Project. However, some fellowships are funded through program-specific sources. Fellows funded through these program-specific sources can be hosted at CDC laboratories or other public health laboratories who have programs working on very specific projects in the areas of bioinformatics and advanced molecular detection, antimicrobial resistance, influenza or vector-borne diseases. For these program-specific fellowships, there may be some differences such as the potential to travel internationally and sponsored attendance for an orientation at CDC headquarters. APHL will communicate the funding source to the fellow.

Health Insurance

While participating in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program, fellows are considered non-employees working in a host location outside the control of APHL. As such, neither the host nor APHL are responsible for the provision of insurance coverage and will not provide any insurance coverage including workers' compensation or unemployment insurance. Therefore, fellows must procure and maintain coverage under a health insurance plan of their choosing and will be responsible for payment of all insurance costs while participating in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program. Fellows must be covered for their entire duration in the fellowship program. Fellows must provide APHL with proof of insurance coverage within the first 60 calendar days of their fellowship. Any fellow who does not provide APHL with proof of their insurance within the first 60 calendar days of their fellowship will be subject to fellowship termination. APHL provides all fellows with \$500 per month (\$6,000 per year) to help offset the cost of health insurance.

Income Taxes

Under IRS regulations, the applicants who participate in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program are considered fellows (not employees) for US income tax purposes due to the specific characteristics of the fellowship assignment. As a result, APHL will have no responsibility for federal, state and local tax withholding from fellow stipend payments since APHL fellowship stipends are not considered salaries. APHL assumes no tax liability and will not submit a Form 1099 at the end of any calendar year during the fellowship assignment. Under Section 117 of the Internal Revenue Code, non-degree candidates are required to report, as gross income, all stipends and any monies paid on their behalf for course tuition and fees required for attendance. Additional tax-related information is available [APHL's website](#) but APHL strongly encourages fellows to seek individual tax advice from a certified accountant or tax advisor so that they can fully understand the tax implications associated with their total stipend income.

Safety

It is assumed that fellows will be working in environments where hazardous conditions or hazardous materials may be present. Therefore, it is critical that all fellows strictly follow all host policies, procedures and practices as they relate to safety, training or other relevant subjects (e.g., evacuations, vaccination protocols, etc.). APHL expects the host to provide the fellow with any necessary and site-specific safety and security training.

Vaccinations

Laboratories may require different proofs of vaccination and specific vaccines. Fellows should note that some vaccinations require more than one shot to fully complete a series. Hosts may be able to provide fellows with a vaccination through their occupational health program if the vaccination is required by their facility. Otherwise, fellows can obtain a required vaccination through their own health insurance or use their APHL-allocated professional development funds. Fellows should discuss vaccination requirements with their mentor before beginning their fellowship.

Security Clearance

Hosts may require additional security clearance measures for certain types of work or access to certain areas. This requirement must be discussed between the host, mentor and fellow, and the host must provide the steps needed for the fellow to obtain proper laboratory-specific security clearances.

Professional Development Allowance

APHL will allocate funding to each fellow per fellowship term to be used for professional development opportunities. However, APHL also encourages hosts to provide funds, when and if available, to fellows for additional professional development opportunities. Regardless of the funding source, the fellow must have approval from APHL and their mentor before travelling for any professional development opportunity.

The amount of allocated funding for the first year will be listed in the fellow's agreement. APHL expects that fellows use their APHL-allocated professional development funds on project-related opportunities or materials that enhance their fellowship experience and professional development. These APHL-allocated funds are for fellows, not mentors or other host personnel. Information about approved professional development opportunities and submitting a professional development request can be found on APHL's website. Please note that per CDC, these funds cannot be used for equipment purchases (e.g., laptops). APHL will review each submitted request and if approved, the funds will be disbursed in the fellow's monthly stipend payment. As the final step, fellows will complete a mandatory post-experience form to confirm they completed the funded opportunity. New requests for subscriptions, memberships and exam preparation materials submitted within the last 90 calendar days of the fellowship, and all new requests submitted within the last 30 calendar days, will not be approved unless there are unique circumstances as this short time frame hinders the fellow's ability to maximize the use of these resources during the remainder of their fellowship. APHL will approve professional development requests only if the fellow is in good standing within the program and has completed all program requirements to date. If the fellow is not in good standing, APHL will deny their request and the fellow will be notified of the corrective action needed. The fellow must be active in the program in order to utilize the APHL-allocated professional development funds. If a fellow is approved for an extension, these funds are not transferable. Remaining funds are not eligible for disbursement after a fellow has concluded their fellowship term.

Second-Year Professional Development Allowance

If a fellow is granted an extension, APHL will again allocate funding to be used for professional development opportunities. The amount of funding allocated will be determined by the length of the extension. APHL strongly encourages fellows to use some of the funds allocated during the extension for an in-person experiential learning opportunity such as attending a scientific conference or an on-site laboratory training at another laboratory.

As stated above, unused professional development funds from a fellow's first fellowship term cannot be transferred to

the second fellowship term. The fellow must be active in the program in order to utilize the APHL-allocated professional development funds. Please see the APHL website for additional details.

APHL-Sponsored Travel

Fellows may travel during their fellowship to attend meetings, participate in trainings, attend conferences, participate in fieldwork or take part in an outbreak investigation. APHL-sponsored travel may include funding for professional development opportunities and other circumstances. A fellow's travel request will be captured when they submit various program request forms and all APHL-sponsored travel must be approved by APHL prior to the fellow booking the travel. For APHL-sponsored travel, fellows will be required to book travel via the APHL Travel Site. Instructions for navigating and using the APHL Travel Site will be provided to the fellow following travel approval. If travel is approved, fellows can travel via air, train, personal vehicle, public transportation, or rideshare option such as Uber or Lyft. Rental cars are not an approved transportation option unless in rare circumstances. When booking lodging for travel, fellows are expected to use the federal per diem rate for lodging for the specific geographic destination location. Fellows unable to obtain the lodging per diem rate must contact APHL for approval to book at a higher rate. APHL will not sponsor lodging at online marketplace rentals such as Airbnb and Vrbo.

Regardless of travel circumstances or destination, fellows must adhere to professional standards and behavior as fellows will be actively representing the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program as well as their host. With the exception of emergencies, fellows may not change their travel itinerary within one week of travel.

Domestic Travel

Travel related to the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program will be domestic, except for very rare circumstances (see International Travel section). As described above, fellows have many transportation options and are encouraged to use the most economical method of transportation when traveling. This includes economy class for airfare, traveling via air vs. personal vehicle for longer distances and using public transportation or a rideshare option instead of a rental car. Rental cars can be booked only when no public transportation or rideshare options are available, but justification must be provided to APHL for approval before booking.

The cost of air travel for professional development opportunities will be deducted from the APHL-allocated professional development funds. Air travel costs will include a necessary booking fee to ensure that the APHL travel agent can assist with changing or cancelling flights if needed.

International Travel

APHL will not sponsor international travel for fellows due to liability, the extensive approval process, the prolonged absence from the host and the limited professional development funds allocated to fellows. However, APHL will only consider approval of international travel that has been funded by the host or, for a fellow with a program-specific funding source. If approved and funding is provided, the fellow will be instructed on how to use APHL's International Travel Request System.

APHL Annual Conference

All fellows will have the option to attend the [APHL Annual Conference](#) either by using their APHL-allocated professional development funds or through other specific APHL sponsorship; in which further details will be communicated. Attending the APHL Annual Conference will be considered professional travel for the fellow. If attending the APHL Annual

Conference requires travel or participation over the weekend, APHL recommends that the host or mentor grant the fellow a recuperation day upon returning from the conference. This recuperation day will be a paid day by APHL, and the fellow will not be required to use their PTO.

Lobbying Restrictions

Because the fellowship stipend is paid using federal grant funding provided to APHL by a federal agency, none of the stipend payments may be distributed by or on behalf of the fellow to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress who is in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, or the entering into of any cooperative agreement, extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan or cooperative agreement.

Publications and Presentations

Funding Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

Fellows must send APHL a copy of all papers published as a result of their assignment with the host whether they are published during or after the fellow's participation in the fellowship program. All published reports, journal articles, professional presentations or any other document or material that rely on the project conducted during participation in the fellowship program must include a specific funding acknowledgement. Prior to publication, fellows must contact APHL to verify that the funding acknowledgement is correct. Please see this example of such an acknowledgement:

"The fellowship assignment was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number NU600E000104 (CFDA No. 93.322), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This publication's contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the Association of Public Health Laboratories and member laboratories. The fellowship assignment was 100% funded with federal funds from a federal program of [APHL will provide the funding amount]."

Style Guide for Publication, Posters, Presentations and Job Titles

Fellows should refer to the fellowship program as the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program: an APHL-CDC Initiative. Participants in the program should be referred to as Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program participants or public health laboratory fellows. As a job title, fellows should refer to themselves as an APHL-CDC Public Health Laboratory Fellow. The host's name and the complete funding acknowledgement must be included in a publication, poster or presentation. Please replace "publication" in the aforementioned acknowledgement with the appropriate word if applicable. APHL branding should not be used on publications, posters, presentations or other materials unless specifically approved and provided by APHL.

Use of APHL and Host Logos

Any APHL logo or branding should not be included in publications, posters, presentations or other materials developed by fellows unless specifically approved and provided by APHL. If APHL staff are also involved in the development of such materials, fellows may receive approval to use APHL branding. Fellows will contact APHL for questions or to request

approval for logo use or other APHL branding. Fellows may not use the host logo or branding without prior written authorization from the mentor, the host director or other leadership, or the appropriate host representative as required.

Use of Funding Agency or Third-Party Logos

Fellows may not use federal agency or third-party logos without prior written authorization from APHL.

Publication of Peer-Reviewed Materials

Under pursuant applicable federal grant regulations and federal funding agency public access policies, fellows will be required to submit into the National Institutes of Health Manuscript Submission (NIHMS) system an electronic version of the final, peer-reviewed manuscript (defined below) of the work developed under or in connection with the fellowship assignment upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication.

At the time of submission, the fellow or the host's submitting author must specify the date the final manuscript will be publicly accessible through PubMed Central (PMC). The fellow or the host's submitting author must also post the manuscript to PMC within 12 months of the publisher's official date of final publication; however, the host is strongly encouraged to make the subject manuscript available as soon as possible.

The fellow and the host must obtain prior written approval from APHL—who, in turn, must obtain prior approval from the federal funding agency—for any exception to this requirement. For purposes of this section of the handbook, the “final, peer-reviewed manuscript” is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication and includes all modifications from the publishing peer review process and all graphics and supplemental material associated with the article.

APHL Fellowship Program Publications and Other Program Promotional Materials

Under the fellowship agreement, the fellow grants APHL the right to use their name and photograph or likeness for the purpose of generally promoting APHL and its programs, without payment or compensation. From time to time, fellows and mentors may also be invited to participate in Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program promotion activities and share quotes or stories about their experiences. Such activities will only take place or be published with the express permission of the fellow, mentor or host. Participation in these activities is strictly voluntary and will have no bearing on the final outcome or final evaluation of the fellowship.

Intellectual Property Rights

Patents and Inventions

While APHL follows US federal grant recipient-related guidelines and will neither interfere in an attempt to seek a patent nor claim any right to inventions made by fellows, the host may have rights in and to any invention connected to the participation in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program and may require fellows to seek a patent or claim intellectual property rights through the host's processes and procedures. Fellows will have to check with, and may need to coordinate with, their mentor or staff representative from the host as part of any patent application or invention claim.

Copyright Interests

The US federal government will have a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish and otherwise use publications, data and other copyrightable works developed by fellows during their time in the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program. The US federal government may also grant a sublicense of these rights to others to do so for federal purposes.

For purposes of this paragraph, the term “data” means recorded information, regardless of the form or media on which it may be recorded, and includes:

- Writings
- Films
- Sound recordings
- Pictorial reproductions
- Drawings, designs or other graphic representations
- Procedural manuals
- Forms
- Diagrams
- Workflow charts
- Equipment descriptions
- Data files
- Data processing or computer programs (software)
- Statistical records and other research data

Mentor Overview

All public health laboratory fellows are assigned to a designated host and mentor. Hosts are typically APHL member laboratories, but they also may be non-federal laboratories working in one or more aspects of public health. The host and mentor that is paired with fellows in the fellowship program have a demonstrated capacity to provide all fellows with technical training and professional development opportunities in their fellowship program focus area.

Roles and Expectations

Training

The mentor will oversee the fellow’s training and project activities; ensure that the fellow is familiar with relevant techniques, practices and policies in each specialty; and encourage the fellow’s overall professional development. The mentor or host is required to provide the fellow with any necessary and site-specific safety and security training. The mentor will support the fellow’s participation in the required APHL Fellowship Training Plan during established working hours and will be available to discuss training plan topics and learning activities. Mentors are encouraged to provide funds, when and if available, for fellow travel and training needs, as well as opportunities for fellows to participate in a field investigation or laboratory assignment to assist with an outbreak investigation.

Program Requirements

The mentor is expected to fulfill the responsibilities outlined below. Although fellows may possess sophisticated methodology skills, they still require guidance and direction from their mentor as part of the Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program for professional development purposes. The mentor should:

- Oversee the fellow's work activities by:
 - Creating an environment that fosters professional development.
 - Offering advice, feedback and assistance.
- Guide the fellow to broaden their network of professional colleagues.
- Direct the fellow to access resources needed to accomplish fellowship goals. This may include providing access to data and other subject-matter experts.
- Support and encourage the fellow in their technical and professional development, including completion of the required APHL-assigned Fellowship Training Plan.
 - The mentor should allow the fellow to complete this training during established working hours and will be available to discuss training plan topics and learning activities.
- Inform the fellow of professional development opportunities, encourage the fellow's participation in those opportunities and provide input on how to maximize the use of the APHL-allocated professional development funds.
- Express a caring and interested attitude in the fellow's work, future goals and interpersonal relationships with host staff.
- Collaboratively develop a Plan of Action with the fellow to serve as a guideline and overarching agreement about the expectations and opportunities of the fellowship experience.
- Review and complete quarterly reports for each one of their fellows every three months of the program.
- Complete a post-experience survey to provide continuous quality improvement feedback.
- Establish regular patterns of communication with the fellow that include regular check-in meetings.

Host Onboarding

Before the fellow arrives at the host, the host or mentor is expected to:

- If necessary, provide lodging assistance and/or recommendations to the fellow.
- Ensure established office space and appropriate equipment (e.g., telephone, computer) is ready.
- Have essential items for the fellow's assignment(s) and project(s) available.
- Provide an identification badge, key card(s), email address, laboratory access, parking permit and other typical workplace essentials as needed.
- Provide related health, security and safety information including vaccination requirements. Plus, the mentor or host is required to provide the fellow with any necessary and site-specific safety and security training, including confidential computer use and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.
- Inform co-workers and staff of the fellow's start date and ensure the administrative details given above are in order.
- Inform the fellow of arrival times, laboratory hours, laboratory location and dress code policies.
- Be sure everyone working with or alongside the fellow understands the purpose and terms of the fellowship, including how long the fellow will be working there and what their work schedule will be.

Upon the arrival of a fellow, the host or mentor is expected to:

- Welcome the fellow and introduce them to staff—including leadership—as well as orient the fellow to the environment and resources available to them.
- Ensure the fellow receives an identification badge, key card(s) and other necessary items as outlined in the section above.
- Review the roles of the fellow and mentor as well as individual expectations each person has for the duration of the fellowship.
- Work with the fellow to develop a mutually agreed upon Plan of Action. The Plan of Action will ultimately be submitted to APHL by the fellow within 30 calendar days of the fellow’s start date.
- Establish with each fellow their daily work hours, weekly working schedule and a system to monitor and track PTO as well as ‘flex’ time, if applicable.
- Provide the fellow with any necessary and site-specific safety and security training as stated above.

Mentor Orientation

First-time mentors are required to independently review provided orientation materials or book an appointment with APHL to obtain an overview of the program and review mentor roles and responsibilities while participating in the program. After the first year, reviewing orientation materials is optional.

Fellowship Project Supply Fund

Funding is available to reimburse host laboratories (mentors) for fellowship project supply costs. These project supply funds are contingent upon funding sources and availability. Therefore, the amount of funding available may differ and fluctuate per fellow. This funding is meant to defray supply and consumable expenses associated with the fellow’s project work and not necessarily cover the entire cost of all expenses. This funding will be available by request from the mentor. Mentors will first submit a request form to APHL to provide an initial estimate of the cost of supplies and consumables needed for the fellow’s project. If the request is approved, the mentor will purchase the listed supplies and consumables and then submit for reimbursement. APHL will issue a one-time reimbursement per fellow, per fellowship agreement year. For further project supply funding details, please visit the [APHL website](#).

Second-Year Fellowship Project Supply Funding

If a fellow is granted an extension, APHL will again have funding available to reimburse host laboratories (mentors) for fellowship project supply costs. These project supply funds will again be contingent upon funding sources and availability. Therefore, the amount of funding available may differ and fluctuate per fellow and will be prorated by the length of the extension. Contact APHL for prorated amounts. Available project supply funds from a fellow’s first fellowship agreement year cannot be transferred into a fellow’s second fellowship agreement year.

Appendix A – Contacts and References

Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)
7700 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1000
Bethesda, MD 20814
240.485.2745
Fax: 240.485.2700
www.aphl.org

Public Health Laboratory Fellowship Program references and information:

[Current Fellows](#)

[Current Mentors](#)

[Reports and Forms](#)

[CoLABorate](#)