

Careers in Public Health

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The best thing about an ID career in public health is the diverse range of career paths available – all of which can have a profound impact on human health while offering long-term stability. People who are trained in public health can work in a variety of settings, including in state and local health departments, universities, nonprofits, corporations, within the CDC and beyond.

Developing an Infectious Diseases Career in Public Health

Define your career goals

Public health can allow for a diverse array of options, including:

- Epidemiology
- Research
- Programmatic work
- International public health
- Roles at the CDC or local or state health departments
- Positions at universities, corporations and nonprofits

Explore the benefits of an ID public health career

A career in public health requires you to use the skills you developed in clinical training for patient care to address population-level problems. There are many benefits to this career path, including:

- Intellectually stimulating challenges with a profound impact
- Long-term stability
- Potential for professional development
- Transferable skills

Careers in Public Health

Gain knowledge/skills in public health

Public health professionals are detail-oriented, have specific subject matter expertise and are willing to tirelessly pursue answers to important and difficult questions. To expand your skills:

- Reach out to state or local public health programs to identify opportunities to gain experience.
- Consider completing a Master of Public Health degree or identifying another way to build basic analytic skills.
- Consider applying for the CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS). This program provides two years of training in applied epidemiology at the CDC or at a state or local health department and will build surveillance, analytic, outbreak investigation, writing and presentation skills.
- Spend time in public health programs: develop a project, shadow a public health officer and meet people who might be able to provide job or project opportunities.
- Become a per diem physician for a public health clinic or program.
- Volunteer or join a workgroup for a nonprofit public health association or state/regional association (i.e., National Tuberculosis Controllers Association, National Coalition of STD Directors, etc.).
- Explore work in different programs and different levels of public health if possible. Day to day work differs across public health levels with local programs doing more direct response work and state or federal levels doing more policy and analytic work.
- Look at local and national public health conferences and apply for trainee travel grants. This is a great way to network and learn more about opportunities to work in public health.
- Find opportunities to write anything (not just manuscripts), as good communication skills are key.
- Tap into public health mentors who can help you identify the steps to take to pursue your specific interests.

