

Edgecombe County Health Department Scholar Reviews

Sophia Ramirez (2022)

I worked at the health department for all of Edgecombe County, which was about a 5 minute walk from the house. There was some travel required for my job (conferences, workshops, distributing surveys, etc.), so having a car definitely contributed to the flexibility of my activities.

My primary project throughout the summer was achieving the objectives set forth in the micro-grant, a project focusing on understanding barriers to care and de-stigmatizing substance use disorder and the syringe exchange program in Edgecombe County. This involved researching and compiling educational materials, interviewing professionals in the community, and conducting community surveys.

Another facet of my internship was familiarizing myself with the healthcare dynamics in a rural area. I achieved this through shadowing, attending conferences, workshops, meetings, etc., and assisting with day-to-day activities such as compiling newsletters and collaborating with the Sheriff's Department with their Vial of Life project. My mentor, Leigh Saner, was wonderful and provided me with instructions on what to do each day. The vast majority of my activities were done independently, however, so I felt like it was just the right amount of oversight.

Consider this internship seriously if you are involved with public health or applying to Gillings. It was an incredibly educational experience, and I had a lot of deliverables at the end of the summer. It's also an area which both embraces the scholars who work there and can be tangibly impacted by a hardworking intern.

Katherine Gan (2021)

I was in Tarboro, NC interning at the Health Department this summer. I worked on a research project, interviewing 40 patients that found a large proportion of women that wanted birth control but were not aware of how accessible it was through the Health Department. The memo I produced at the end aimed to help the Health Department become more effective at integrating services (family planning, dentistry, pregnancy car management).

Ralph Lawton (2020)

I spent the summer in Tarboro, North Carolina, working in the Edgecombe County Health Department on their opioid-related projects.

I ended up doing a bit of everything over the course of the summer. I'd usually spend about 1 day a week in a local pain clinic, Friday mornings at the local prison with the person who does HIV testing, and then my other days would be a combination of working in the office and work around the county. I ended up doing community presentations on Opioids & HIV, I attended an opioid policy summit in Raleigh, was involved in the Rural Health Network, laid foundations for a Needle Exchange program, made promotional materials for the coalition's CORE treatment connection program & other opioid information and resources, made promotional material for the pill dropoff boxes, worked the Friday overnight EMS shift, made and analyzed maps of overdoses and deaths in the county, and proposed and implemented a research project on barriers to opioid treatment in the county.

We ended up taking weekend trips to Wilmington and met the Kentucky scholars in Asheville, NC. The community was incredibly welcoming, and we spent days at local farms and at Dr. Leland's lakehouse.

This summer ended up being incredibly meaningful to me for a lot of reasons. The Tarboro community was absolutely wonderful, and my job & mentor were great. That all being said, while there was some structure to my job, I ended up creating the majority of my work. There will be some dull days and it will likely take a lot of initiative on your part to get

the most out of this work. That being said, it's very rewarding, and the flexibility lets you make the most of your skills and bring the most that you can to this community.

I think that my first advice is to get involved and see as much of the community as possible. Contact and engage with the ENCIP folks and the community mentor they'll give you. Take a few hours early on to drive the backroads of the county in an unstructured way, drive up through Whitakers and look around if you get the chance. I highly recommend trying to volunteer on an EMS shift to see firsthand the state of healthcare in the area, even if you aren't certified.