

## PITTSBURGH SUMMER INSTITUTE (PSI) SUMMER 2026 PROJECTS

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2024 Pittsburgh Summer Institute  
Project Proposal



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Leah Pope	<b>Phone</b>	4125787957
<b>Bureau</b>	DRDC	<b>Program</b>	ID EPI
<b>Practicum Location</b>	542 4 <sup>TH</sup> AVE		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _X_YES <input type="checkbox"/> _NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X __YES <input type="checkbox"/> _NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>Health care providers in Allegheny County are required to submit a report for each animal bite they treat, and ACHD follows up to ensure patients receive proper care. Each year, ACHD reviews, cleans, and analyzes the data collected from these events to report the trends in animal bites, including what species/breeds have the most reports, the time of year bites occur most often, and a breakdown of bite victims by sex and age, as well as how many people receive the correct care per provider recommendations. This report further provides background on animal bites, best practices for preventing bites, and recommended treatment should a bite occur.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p>The PSI student will clean and analyze the animal bite data that will be used in the report. They will use SAS version 9.4 and Microsoft Excel for cleaning, data, analysis, and generating descriptive statistics, tables and graphs. Prior reports will be referenced for historical data.</p>			
<b>Specific Qualifications</b> <i>[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].</i>			
<p>The individual working on this project should be familiar be comfortable using SAS to analyze data, as well as create. They should be detail oriented and experienced in summarizing epidemiologic data. The individual should have completed at least 3 epidemiology credits and coursework in SAS.</p>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



Preceptor Name	J. Nicholas Baldauf	Phone	412-350-3893
Bureau	Environmental Health	Program	Housing & Community Environment
Practicum Location	Housing & Community Environment Office (3190 Sassafras Way, Strip District, 15201)		
Do you have an available workspace? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		Do you have an available computer? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Project Summary <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p><b>*THE VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM WILL TAKE <u>TWO STUDENTS</u> FOR THIS PROJECT.*</b></p> <p>This practicum opportunity is with ACHD’s Mosquito-borne Disease Control Program. The majority of the experience will be spent in the field trapping adult mosquitoes in Allegheny County to be tested for arboviruses such as West Nile Virus. For more information about mosquito surveillance in Allegheny County and Pennsylvania, visit <a href="http://www.depgis.state.pa.us/WNV/index.html">www.depgis.state.pa.us/WNV/index.html</a>.</p> <p>The interns must be available to work from May 4<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, on Monday through Thursday for approximately 25-30 hours per week. There is a requirement for the interns to work until Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> therefore flexibility will be given around class schedule once the Fall Semester begins. <b>A personal vehicle for field work and a valid driver’s license are a requirement (no exceptions).</b> The Pittsburgh Summer Institute is sponsoring 300 hours for this practicum. After the initial 300 hours worked, the interns will be paid \$15/hour up to an additional 300 hours.</p>			
Primary Activities and Deliverables <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p><b>PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mosquito surveillance (using gravid &amp; BG Sentinel traps to collect adults; larval dipping)</li> <li>• Sorting and preparing mosquitoes to be shipped for laboratory testing</li> <li>• Database entry of surveillance results</li> <li>• Maintaining the equipment used for surveillance</li> </ul> <p><b>POTENTIAL SECONDARY ACTIVITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel to statewide Vector Academy, hosted by PA DEP Vector Control (2 day educational / training event)</li> <li>• Tick dragging to survey for tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease</li> <li>• Public interaction &amp; education (e.g. door-to-door neighborhood outreach, responding to mosquito complaint calls, treating mosquito breeding habitat, neighborhood clean-up activities, educational tabling events, etc.)</li> <li>• Mosquito controls</li> <li>• Revising/creating vector control pamphlets &amp; educational materials</li> <li>• Any other mosquito study that the interns would like to use for graduate thesis/essay material</li> </ul>			



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**Specific Qualifications** *[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].*

A valid driver's license and personal vehicle are mandatory to transport mosquito traps to and from the field. Mileage will be reimbursed at the Pennsylvania Mileage Reimbursement Rate (currently \$0.70/mile) for the entirety of the internship. The interns must be able to lift 50 pounds and be willing to haul traps in their personal vehicles that may get dirty and have an odor from the bait used to lure mosquitoes. The majority of time will be spent in the field therefore the interns must be physically able to conduct such work for the duration of the summer. A personal GPS device would be helpful when driving around to locate trap sites. The interns will be expected to represent the Vector Control Program with professionalism while conducting field work and interacting with the public. When necessary, the interns must be able to provide the public with information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the program.



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Katie Wooten, MPH	<b>Phone</b>	412-208-0654
<b>Bureau</b>	Food, Housing, and Public Policy	<b>Program</b>	Overdose Prevention
<b>Practicum Location</b>	542 Fourth Avenue		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _X_ YES <input type="checkbox"/> _NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> _YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _X_ NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>Overdose Prevention Program Communication Strategy: The target populations for this project are (1) people with substance use disorder (SUD) and/or opioid use disorder (OUD) and (2) organizations and community groups who provide services to people with SUD/OUD.</p> <p>This project involves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Reviewing existing overdose prevention program materials (pamphlets, education handouts, resource guides) and identifying improvements and updates</li> <li>(2) Developing a communication strategy to enhance existing materials and recommendations for any new materials for the target populations</li> <li>(3) Designing new materials and updating existing ones with the approved communication strategy</li> <li>(4) The intern will work under the direction of the Overdose Prevention Program Manager at the downtown office to complete the project. Some travel outside of downtown will be required</li> </ol>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compile and organize existing Overdose Prevention Program materials.</li> <li>2. Develop a communication strategy that describes material gaps, recommendations for improvement and new content using health communication theory and evidence-based practices.</li> <li>3. Revise program materials and create new materials.</li> <li>4. Participate in community events and meet with partners to gather feedback about materials and communication needs.</li> </ol>			
<b>Specific Qualifications</b> <i>[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].</i>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successful completion of required first year coursework in the MPH in Behavioral and Community Health Sciences program</li> <li>2. Ability to travel to different locations across Allegheny County on occasion</li> <li>3. Sufficient oral and written communication skills</li> <li>4. Experience with material development for public audiences</li> <li>5. Prior experience with community outreach, health promotion, or education a plus</li> </ol>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Josh Feldmiller Kayla Misera	<b>Phone</b>	Josh: 412-578-8370 Kayla: 412-247-7914
<b>Bureau</b>	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	<b>Program</b>	EPI & CDVIP
<b>Practicum Location</b>	Admin Building (542 Fourth Ave) / Hosanna House (807 Wallace Ave)		
<b>Do you have an available workspace? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</b>		<b>Do you have an available computer? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</b>	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>The project will be jointly led by the Epidemiology and Chronic Disease Prevention programs that work together on the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) infrastructure grant. Allegheny County contains the second largest population of aging adults compared to counties of similar size, and this project will focus on healthy aging; specifically, Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD). Research confirms that ADRD can be a modifiable health outcome through lifestyle choices, and the goal of the BOLD grant is to get out messaging about various prevention efforts. The Allegheny County Bold Coalition was formed as a part of the BOLD grant, and this project will work to expand the coalition’s visibility and relevant data metrics to local residents.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p>A student who participates in this project will be expected, at minimum, to produce an ArcGIS Storymap that contains content describing ADRD, prevention efforts, data indices, participating partner organizations, resources available, and any other content as determined by the coalition. This centralized resource is imperative to the success of the coalition and a mandatory grant evaluation element. The student will also be expected to analyze available data on self-reported cognitive decline and create a formal presentation of their findings to staff in the Bureau of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. The BOLD coalition is growing and changing as the needs of the community change, so the student may also be asked to perform duties to support those emerging tasks.</p>			
<b>Specific Qualifications</b> <i>[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].</i>			
<p>The ideal candidate will have completed at least one semester of biostatistics or comparable statistics course, and experience with some form of analysis software like R, SAS, SPSS, etc. They will also have experience modifying and analyzing datasets (professional experience preferred, but coursework is acceptable). PowerPoint and presentation experience strongly desired in an ideal applicant. Basic computer literacy is imperative as the final deliverable is electronic. Lastly, the ideal applicant will have experience communicating professionally with diverse audiences.</p>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Viktoria Evdokimova	<b>Phone</b>	412-209-1578
<b>Bureau</b>	Public Health Laboratory	<b>Program</b>	Wastewater Surveillance Project 1
<b>Practicum Location</b>	119 Commonwealth Dr., Warrendale, PA 15086		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>Wastewater surveillance using molecular and quantitative methods provides a robust means of monitoring regional epidemiological trends. The ACHD PHL currently tests wastewater from five to nine sites at least twice per week using a combination of qPCR and digital PCR (dPCR) assays. dPCR offers increased sensitivity, a lower limit of detection, and absolute quantification, eliminating the need for external standards and streamlining overall workflow.</p> <p>The primary objective of this project is to transition existing RT-qPCR assays—including SARS-CoV-2 and Enterovirus D68 (EVD68)—to a dPCR platform to improve accuracy, reliability, and operational efficiency in wastewater surveillance.</p> <p>Final project summary detailing implementation outcomes and recommendations for future surveillance enhancements.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p><b>Primary Activities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assay Transfer and Optimization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt existing RT-qPCR assays for SARS-CoV-2 and EVD68 to the dPCR platform.</li> <li>• Optimize reaction conditions to ensure high sensitivity and reproducibility.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Method Validation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform analytical validation, including sensitivity, specificity, precision, and limit-of-detection assessments.</li> <li>• Compare performance metrics between qPCR and dPCR methods.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Data Analysis and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce summary reports evaluating assay performance and impact on surveillance outcomes.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Deliverables</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verification plans for SARS-CoV-2 and EVD68 assays.</li> <li>2. Validated dPCR assays for SARS-CoV-2 and EVD68.</li> <li>3. Verification summary reports for SARS-CoV-2 and EVD68 dPCR assays</li> <li>4. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for dPCR-based wastewater testing.</li> <li>5. Comparison report outlining performance improvements over RT-qPCR.</li> </ol>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

2026 Project Request Form



**Specific Qualifications** *[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].*

1. Scientific writing skills
2. Laboratory experience
3. Knowledge of molecular protocols and principles



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Brandon Doumont	<b>Phone</b>	412-208-0650
<b>Bureau</b>	Data, Reporting, and Disease Control	<b>Program</b>	Infectious Disease Epidemiology (IDE)
<b>Practicum Location</b>	542 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15219		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> X_YES __NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> X_YES __NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>The project will involve analysis of vital statistics for respiratory viruses, creation of infographic(s) and development of methodology/operating procedures. The goal of this project is to complete the annual update for ACHD’s Respiratory Virus Mortality Summary, documenting the process to update IDE’s methodology guide which acts as the operating procedures to update the public-facing infographic(s). The Respiratory Virus Mortality Summary describes COVID-19, Influenza, and RSV deaths in Allegheny County, from 2020 to the previous calendar year. This includes year-to-year trends and differences by age and race. This project is office based (TBD, hybrid conversations are ongoing), located at 542 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15219.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p>The intern will complete security and confidentiality training prior to accessing confidential vital statistics data. They will develop a SAS program to clean files, remove personal identifiers, create new variables, and summarize statistics describing respiratory virus deaths among Allegheny County residents. The SAS program(s) will produce counts, age-specific rates, and age-adjusted rates for deaths associated with each respiratory virus. The results will be described in an infographic – “Respiratory Virus Mortality Summary”, displaying data visually through graphs, charts, and tables. A methodology guide describing the project, it’s data sources and procedures will be drafted and presented to the IDE program during a staff meeting.</p>			
<b>Specific Qualifications</b> <i>[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].</i>			
<p>Applicants should have at least intermediate level SAS skills and should have completed an introduction to epidemiology course and at least one SAS course. They should have an interest in infectious diseases and be familiar with data management, analysis, graph/chart design, and presentation.</p>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Erica Pierce	<b>Phone</b>	412-258-3258
<b>Bureau</b>	Director's Office	<b>Program</b>	Public Health Policy
<b>Practicum Location</b>	524 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>ACHD is committed to the promotion and enactment of policy that gives every resident of Allegheny County, particularly those most vulnerable, access to healthy choices and healthy communities. To do that we must: work in partnership with the Board of Health to make best use of the Department's unique rulemaking responsibility under the law in Allegheny County; collaborate with our public health partners across the Commonwealth to ensure that policy decisions impacting the health of the community are informed by local public health; and support and empower municipalities to enact health policy at the local level.</p> <p>The focus of this internship is to enhance the Department's public health policy work by assisting in the modernization of Department regulations and procedures. The intern will gain direct experience in the Department's rulemaking process, supporting staff in the drafting of regulation revisions and in communicating new policies and procedures to both internal and external stakeholders. The intern will also research sustainable mechanisms to increase community member participation during the development and evaluation of policy, and work with relevant staff to plan for future implementation.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the policy activities of the Department by performing public health policy research and outlining findings to program managers and leaderships. Example projects include briefs on the regulation and enforcement mechanisms of sister jurisdictions and reports on current best practice for increasing civic engagement, particularly from vulnerable populations.</li> <li>2. Under the supervision of Public Health Policy Specialist, create health policy communication tools for a variety of audiences, including area policymakers and the general public, that demonstrate the intersection of policy and health.</li> <li>3. Assist in adapting existing health and policy materials to reflect changes in Department regulations and to better address local community concerns.</li> <li>4. Strategize with the Public Policy team on methods to bring the work of the ACHD and public health generally to the attention of decision-makers and the public.</li> <li>5. Collaborate with program managers, the Public Health Policy Specialist, and the Public Health Information Officer to present health policy communication materials to the public.</li> </ol> <p>Deliverables include policy briefs, PowerPoint presentations and health policy communication materials.</p>			



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

2026 Project Request Form



**Specific Qualifications** *[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].*

The student should possess:

- A passion for promoting health equity and civic engagement
- Strong research and writing skills
- A basic knowledge of government and policy development
- An interest in health communications and in local and national politics
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and as part of an interdisciplinary team



## Pittsburgh Summer Institute (PSI)

### 2026 Project Request Form



<b>Preceptor Name</b>	Laura Stewart	<b>Phone</b>	412 209 1109
<b>Bureau</b>	Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	<b>Program</b>	Chronic Disease Epidemiology
<b>Practicum Location</b>	542 Fourth Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15219		
<b>Do you have an available workspace?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _X_YES <input type="checkbox"/> _NO		<b>Do you have an available computer?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _X_YES <input type="checkbox"/> _NO	
<b>Project Summary</b> <i>[Enter summary of project. This may include information about the target population, nature and scope of work, overall project goals, and work environment.]</i>			
<p>This project will assist the chronic disease epidemiology team in creating an R program to clean and analyze the Allegheny County birth dataset. There are a number of data cleaning and analysis steps we run yearly in SAS. The primary goal of this internship is to create an R program that can be used to accomplish the same tasks as the SAS program.</p> <p>We are interested in transitioning from using SAS to using R as statistical software. R is a free software and is now taught to most public health students, therefore the benefits of switching would be 1) saving money on SAS software licenses and 2) bringing ACHD up to date with the most current methods and best practices for data analysis.</p> <p>This internship will be at the downtown ACHD office 542 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. and it can be hybrid after onboarding.</p>			
<b>Primary Activities and Deliverables</b> <i>[List the primary duties necessary to complete the project and any expected deliverables, such as a database, analysis report, presentation, educational materials, etc.]</i>			
<p><b>Activities:</b> Become familiar with the birth dataset, the necessary cleaning steps, and the statistics needed to replicate our routine update deliverables. Develop an R program that can be used to clean the dataset and produce the same statistics as the current SAS program.</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b> An R program that can be used to clean and analyze the yearly birth data files, and a comparison of the R program's results to the SAS program's results.</p> <p>If this deliverable is completed before the internship is over, we have many other SAS programs that we would like to translate into R. The intern could choose one to work on based on their interests.</p>			
<b>Specific Qualifications</b> <i>[List any specific skills or resources needed to complete the project, such as access to a vehicle or ability to use specific software. You may also list specific coursework that you would prefer the student to have completed prior to starting the internship].</i>			
<p><b>Required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience using R</li> <li>- Graduate level coursework in biostatistics and epidemiology</li> <li>- Ability to commute to the office downtown</li> </ul> <p><b>Helpful, but not required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiarity with SAS statistical software</li> <li>- Familiarity with maternal and child health topics</li> </ul>			