



The Center for Diversity in Public Health Leadership Training

Maternal Child Health – Leadership Education, Advocacy Research Network (MCH-LEARN) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Program Description and Activities

1. What is MCH-LEARN?

The Maternal Child Health –Leadership Education, Advocacy Research Network (MCH-LEARN) is up to a ten-week summer program. The MCH-LEARN is designed to support under-resourced and underrepresented undergraduate freshman and sophomore students to achieve entry into graduate degree programs in Maternal Child Health (MCH) fields (i.e., public health and related fields such as pediatrics, nutrition, social work, MCH nursing, pediatric dentistry, psychology, health education, pediatric occupational/physical therapy, and speech-language pathology). Accepted scholars participate in seminars, research presentations and conferences, and visit the state capital during the academic school year (September- April).

2. What is the public health leadership experience available to students during the summer program?

- **Research Experience:** Students work with research mentors on a wide range of public health, prevention, treatment, and epidemiological studies. Students receive training in community-based participatory research, which engages communities that are currently underserved by mainstream systems. In addition, scholars may participate in Community Engagement and Advocacy Experience and rotate through Clinical Experiences.

3. What are the typical tasks of each public health experience?

Typical tasks for each track include:

Community Engagement and Advocacy:

- Conduct surveys in the community
- Community observations of programs and activities
- Public health program evaluation at the state or local government levels

Clinical:

- Observe patient evaluation and treatment
- Assist clinical staff in patient care

Research Track:

- Data entry for research projects

- Conduct literature review
- Make telephone calls to confirm participant data
- Analyze data from current and prior research projects

4. What are examples of past research experiences?

Students will participate in a comprehensive educational and applied public health learning and research experience that will enhance their ability to successfully transition to an MCH-related graduate or professional school.

You can see examples of MCH-LEARN scholar projects presented at various conferences, including the JHU CARES Symposium and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists (ABRCMS) by clicking [HERE](#).

5. What can students expect throughout the academic year?

Students will participate in educational and professional development seminars, conferences, scientific meeting presentations, and advocacy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Eligibility

6. Who can apply to the MCH-LEARN program?

Individuals eligible to apply are:

- Currently enrolled undergraduate freshmen, sophomores or rising juniors with a GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale
- U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, or Permanent Residents

7. I am not an underrepresented student. Can I apply to the MCH-LEARN program?

Yes. The MCH-LEARN program is an HRSA-Pipeline program that emphasizes enrollment of students from underrepresented populations in the public health field ([Populations Underrepresented in the Extramural Scientific Workforce](#)). All scholars interested in working in areas of public health, maternal and child health, eliminating health disparities, and promoting social justice, especially scholars from under-resourced and underrepresented populations in the field of public health, are strongly encouraged to apply.

8. Can international students participate in the MCH-LEARN program?

No, international students (i.e., students with F1 or K1 visas) **are not** eligible.

9. Who can write my recommendation letters?

Two letters of reference from professors, clinical advisors, research advisors, teacher assistants, or academic advisors at your current or former university are **REQUIRED**. The referee should use their professional or university email address. *A third referee is recommended (optional)*. Reference format includes a brief questionnaire and a letter of recommendation with up to 850 words. **The deadline for letters of recommendation is January 31st (11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time)**.

10. Can graduate students or upperclassmen undergraduate students participate in the MCH-LEARN program?

No, graduate students and upperclassmen undergraduate students are not eligible for the MCH-LEARN program. The MCH-LEARN is a program for undergraduate

first-year students and sophomores. If you are a junior, senior, or student who earned a baccalaureate degree within 12 months of graduation, please apply for [MCHC/RISE-UP](#). We encourage graduate students to apply to the [Dr. James A. Ferguson Emerging Infectious Disease Research Initiatives for Student Enhancement \(RISE\) Fellowship](#) or [Excellence in Mentorship of Underrepresented Groups \(EMURG\) for Health Equity Leaders Fellowship Program](#).

11. Can students without health insurance apply to the MCH-LEARN program?

Applicants without health insurance can apply to the MCH-LEARN program. However, all accepted students must have health insurance.

Program Accommodations and Expectations

12. Do students receive a stipend for participating in the MCH-LEARN program?

Yes, students receive a stipend during their participation in the program (see Kennedykrieger.org/MCH-LEARN for details). Adjustments to the stipend are made for scholars with multiple sources of federal funding.

13. Are travel and housing costs subtracted from the stipend?

No. The MCH-LEARN program is for local scholars in the Baltimore/DC region. The summer session is in person and the program **does not** cover the cost of housing.

14. Does the program sponsor the cost of meals?

Meals are covered during:

- Orientation Week in Baltimore, MD
- Weekly Research Seminars
- Weekly Professional Development and Advocacy and CDC Optimal Opportunities for Prevention to Promote Health Sessions

15. Can the MCH-LEARN program provide the necessary accommodations for varying ability levels?

Yes, we will provide accommodations. We are committed to supporting ADA-compliant learning environments across program activities. There is space in the application to note accommodations applicants may need to fully participate in the MCH-LEARN program. Requesting accommodations will not influence the review of applications or decision-making about program acceptance.

16. Does the MCH-LEARN program count towards academic credit?

The applicant's degree-granting institution determines if academic credit can be given for participating in MCH-LEARN.

17. How many hours during the week does the student dedicate to the program?

Students should expect to devote 40 hours (full-time) per week to their project(s) and program activities during the summer. The hours will vary during the academic year.

18. Are the program dates flexible (i.e., start later; take time off to work)?

No, all students must commit to participation for the whole length of the program.

Application Details

19. Where can I apply to the MCH-LEARN program?

The online application is available at KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN.

20. To whom should recommendation letters be addressed?

Please address recommendation letters to the “MCH-LEARN Selection Committee.”

21. Is there a standard recommendation form to complete?

Recommendations include a brief questionnaire and recommended questions referees are asked to address within the letter of recommendation.

22. How many applicants are selected to participate in the MCH-LEARN?

The number of applicants varies from year to year. Slots are competitive.

23. When should I expect a decision letter?

Decision letters are emailed by the end of March.

24. Where can more information on the MCH-LEARN be found?

Please visit MCH-LEARN website, KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN, for more information.

All program activities are contingent on federal funding.

Email additional questions to MCH-LEARN@KennedyKrieger.org