

The 2026 PHAP Host Site Application Process: Program Overview and Updates



Public Health Associate Program for Recent Graduates (PHAP)

**National Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Public Health
Infrastructure and Workforce (PHIC)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

January 8, 2026

Welcome



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National Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial
Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce (PHIC)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Greetings from PHAP Leadership



Russ Cantrell, MPA

Chief, Field Services Workforce Branch (FSWB)
Division of Workforce Development (DWD)
National Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial
Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce (PHIC)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Session Agendas

Webinar #1: Thursday, January 8, 2026 @ 2:00PM ET

- PHAP program overview
- PHAP Class of 2026 host site application timeline
- Characteristics of a quality host site application (CO-STARR model)
- PHAP host site application submission and selection process
- Enterprise Fellowship Management System (eFMS) 3.0 and program updates / new requirements for host sites

Webinar #2: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 @ 2:00PM ET

- PHAP host site application portal demonstration (eFMS 3.0)

PHAP Mission

The mission of PHAP is to prepare recent graduates to enter the public health workforce, through field experience and structured learning.



What is PHAP?

- **Two year, paid, competency-based training program for early-career public health professionals**
 - Associates are federal government employees while in PHAP
 - Associates are assigned to one host site and work in one subject/program area
 - Associates gain hands-on experience in public health programs and service delivery
- **CDC partnership with host sites**
 - State, tribal, local, and territorial health departments and nongovernmental organizations
- **PHAP is NOT**
 - An internship
 - Administrative staffing support
 - A program that provides host sites with CDC subject matter experts

“Three-legged stool” Concept of PHAP Goals



1. Host site benefits

- Hosting an associate increases capacity, provides value-added service
- CDC-funded associates are well-rounded, energetic, flexible individuals eager to learn
- PHAP is a unique partnership with CDC to develop the nation’s next generation of public health professionals

2. Associate benefits

- Associates gain critical hands-on experience in onsite public health programs and service delivery

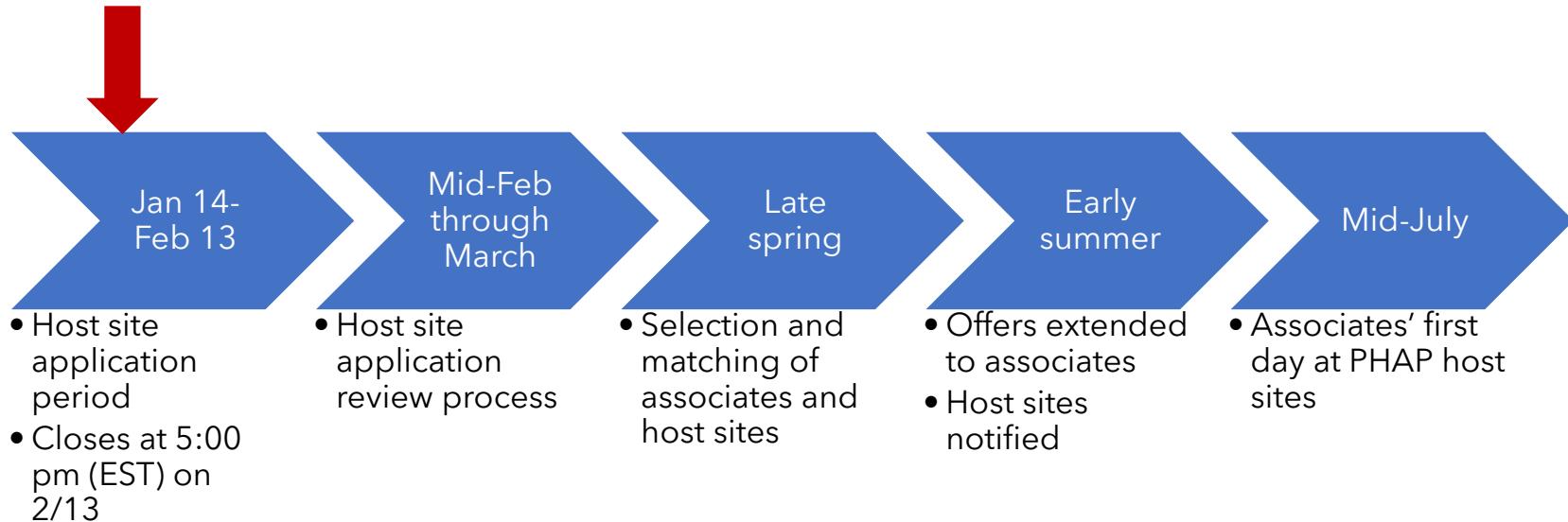
3. Public benefits

- Public benefits from the work of the associate at your host organization

Is my Agency Eligible to Host a PHAP Associate?

- **Many agency types are encouraged to apply to host an associate (only in US or its territories)**
 - State, tribal, local, and territorial public health agencies
 - Nongovernmental organizations (such as community-based organizations)
 - Public health institutes and associations
 - Academic institutions
- **A host site must be able to provide a two-year hands-on learning experience that**
 - Is suitable for recent graduates with a bachelor's or master's degree with little or no work experience in public health
 - Will enable the associate to develop proficiency in required PHAP competencies
- **Host sites must identify a primary and secondary host supervisor to provide ongoing day-to-day supervision of the associate**
- **Associates must report to the host site workplace on a full-time basis - assignments cannot be 100% remote**

Tentative Overview of the 2026 PHAP Application Timeline



Seven Characteristics of a Quality PHAP Host Site Training Experience

CO-STARR

- C Competency-based work plan
- O pportunities for advancement
- S upervisor involvement
- T raining, education, and development are ongoing
- A ligns with host site program goals and strategy
- R ealistic for an early-career public health professional
- R obust public health learning experience

“C” Competency-Based Work Plan

- Program structure and work plan should provide opportunities for associate to meet PHAP competencies
- “See, Do, Teach” approach
- Skills and performance; not just observation
 - Disease intervention specialist
 - Community education
 - Collaboration efforts
 - Water sampling
 - Health promotion
 - Community needs assessment

PHAP Competencies (revised 12/2025)

- Competencies revised to be more focused and manageable
- New version: 6 domains, 15 competencies
 - Vs. 11 domains, 45 competencies
- Each domain should be addressed at least once in host site application
- More guidance will be shared to clarify expectations and activities to support each competency

Domains:

1.0: Analytic & Assessment Skills

2.0: Public Health Systems & Services

3.0: Communication Skills

4.0: Community Engagement & Partnerships

5.0: Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response

6.0: Professional Practice



“O” Opportunities to Build Skills

- Associate’s work should be progressive to build skills over the two-year training program
- Provide additional experiences to reinforce acquired skills, for example—
 - Implement a survey → assist in data analyses
 - Interview contacts → assist supervisor in managing local disease control efforts
 - Conduct Directly Observed Therapy → assist tuberculosis manager to identify barriers to care
 - Help conduct immunization assessments → interact directly with health care providers

“S” Supervisor Involvement

- **Proximity**
 - Direct oversight of associate's day-to-day work activities
 - Close to the work the associate will be doing
- **Time commitment**
 - At least 10% of time (~4 hours per week)
 - Can be direct observation, one-on-one meetings, shadowing, email communication, etc.
- **Capacity**
 - Staffing infrastructure of host site can support an associate
- **Experience**
 - Minimum of 2 years' experience required
 - Host site supervisor's subject matter expertise, supervisory experience (e.g., supervising early-career staff, fellows, interns, students), mentoring experience, and interest in supervising associate

“T” Training, Education, and Development are Ongoing

- Develop a well-rounded training plan for the two-year assignment
- Three components to a quality training plan:
 - 1. Host site orientation**
 - Local regulations, policies, and procedures (e.g., security, use of IT, professional attire, training for ethics, sexual harassment, bloodborne pathogens, HIPAA)
 - 2. Technical training**
 - Provide specific knowledge and skills needed to complete work activities
 - 3. Public health and professional education**
 - Collaboration among public health program areas
 - Provide broader training of public health concepts, methods, and issues to foster professional growth

“T” Training, Education, and Development are Ongoing (cont'd.)

- Progressive training and creative opportunities to build knowledge, skill, and ability
- Include a variety of training methods, including—
 - Instructor-led
 - Web-based/online learning
 - One-on-one
 - Self-paced study
 - Independent study

“A” Aligns with Host Site Goals

- Associate's work should support your effort to meet your program goals
- Focus on work activities that provide hands-on, front line public health experience
- Examples include conducting the following:
 - Disease investigation
 - Disease-specific surveillance
 - Community needs assessment
 - Health promotion inventory

“R” Realistic

- Work plan should be realistic and appropriate for an early-career public health professional
- Work activities should be progressive, with specific measurable deliverables and clear timelines
- Associates are NOT:
 - Supervisors
 - Spokespersons for CDC or their host site
 - CDC subject matter experts

“R” Robust Public Health Experience

- **Develop work activities to provide broad public health experience**
- **Examples:**
 - Survey implementation
 - Track/interview STD contacts (DIS)
 - Provide TB Directly-Observed Therapy (DOT)
 - Develop communications tools
 - Support partnership and collaboration efforts
 - Support host site policy development, systems improvement
 - Conduct immunization record audits (e.g., school, daycare, or healthcare-provider-based)
 - Assist with developing and staging preparedness and response exercises for key community-based partners
 - Develop and deliver public health education to community

Additional Examples of Robust Assignments

- Sexually transmitted infections (testing/outreach)
- Tuberculosis (cluster investigations)
- Notifiable disease reporting, surveillance and case/outbreak investigations
- Emergency preparedness (Medical Reserve Corps, review/update response plans)
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (training leader)
- Healthy Eating Active Living (cooking/healthy eating demonstrations)
- Physical activity/obesity prevention (Girls on the Run coordination)
- Injury Prevention (car seat installation/checks, bike helmet distribution)
- CHIP/CHA (Community Health Improvement Plan/Community Health Assessment): coalition work
- Environmental health (drinking water testing, rabies vaccinations)
- Data analysis/translation (Youth Risk behavior survey, community health profiles)

Break- 5 Minutes



PHAP Host Site Application Submission & Selection Process

Host Site Application Process

- Applications submitted via eFMS 3.0 (link on PHAP website)
- Approximately 300 host site applications received each year
- Class of 2024: 46 associates matched
- Class of 2025: No class
- Class of 2026: ~40-50 associates
- Matched host sites - a mix of local and state health departments, some federal agencies (not CDC headquarters), academia, Tribal, non-governmental organizations
- Can apply for more than one associate, must submit separate application for each
- PHAP does not provide feedback on submitted applications

Components of the PHAP Host Site Application

- Acknowledgement of PHAP program requirements ***NEW-ish!!***
- Host site contact info, point of contact
- Description of host site and mission, worksite environment
- Population served
- Description of need for associate
- Proposed work for associate (activities, dates, deliverables)
- Training and orientation plans
- Supervision plan
- Special requests (language proficiency, driver's license)
- Letter of support, host site organizational chart

Selection of Host Site Applications

- Primarily based on CDC priorities (e.g., target population, subject area, funding, location, impact)
- Heavy emphasis this year on priority areas: Emergency preparedness/response, outbreak investigation, infectious disease response
- Systematic review, multiple reviewers
- Scores are given for the following sections:
 - Public Health Agency statement (workplace environment, need for associate)
 - Assignment details*
 - Training
 - Supervision*
- Scores are not given for requested language skills or car/driver's license, or for population served

*These sections account for 70% of total application score

PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates



Thomas George, MPH

Public Health Advisor

PHAP Data Management Team (DMT)

CDC/PHIC/DWD/FSWB



PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates (contd.1)



eFMS 3.0 updates

- New PHAP requirements page - must accept to proceed with application
- Host site organization name: Port Health stations - select your city location
- ADA resource links now provided to determine if worksite is ADA compliant
 - All state and local government work sites for federal staff assignments must be ADA compliant
- Subject area - can only select one, pick list revised to reflect agency priorities
- Removed a lot of fields, condensed some into fewer fields, some sections moved
- Most fields are now mandatory

New PHAP Requirements for Host Sites – Must Accept to Proceed With Application

- Health and safety of associate
 - ✓ *“As the host site applicant, we acknowledge that the host site will be responsible for meeting all health, safety, and security requirements (and related fees/costs) for the Associate to fully perform any duties, responsibilities, activities, and roles at the host site. This includes but not limited to: TB testing and respirator fit testing, health screenings, immunizations or titer tests, trainings and certifications, and orientation to host site emergency response procedures.”*
- Host site work status (100% remote sites not eligible), elimination of routine telework for associates
 - ✓ *“As the host site applicant, we acknowledge that the host site is fully open at the working facilities and office spaces and not operating as 100% remote or 100% teleworking status. We understand that associates are not permitted to participate in regularly scheduled telework, and we will provide dedicated workspace for the associate to work at the host site on a full-time basis.”*
- Host supervision
 - ✓ *“As the host site applicant, we will provide a primary and a secondary supervisor. One or both will be onsite, with the Associate, at least three days per week.”*

PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates (cont'd.2)



New info and reminders

- Subject area of proposed work
 - Majority of work must focus on one subject area for entire assignment
- Position assignment environment
 - Host site must provide access around IT firewall or provide alternate means of access to CDC intranet systems

PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates (cont'd.3)



New info and reminders

- Language
 - Host site requests for language fluency (other than English) are not guaranteed, dependent upon associate applicant pool
 - Should not be a requirement for the work to be performed
- Host site related travel
 - No federal funds can be used for travel or training of associate
 - Host site is fully responsible for local travel costs (<100 miles from host site)

PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates (cont'd.4)



New info and reminders

- **Activity**
 - Proposed activities will be identified as Year 1, Year 2, or both
 - Roles for associate are Team member, Coordinator/Co-Coordinator, or Lead
 - Associates should not be “Lead” on any activities from Day 1
 - Should show clear evidence of progression in responsibility and task complexity
 - Host site application proposals cannot include research activities
 - Associate’s work in grant writing is limited for federal grants – can only provide background data or literature reviews; no financial management or authority role

PHAP eFMS 3.0 and Program Updates (cont'd.5)



New info and reminders

- Training
 - Ensure sufficient trainings are described to prepare associate for assigned work
 - Training offerings should be a mix of settings (didactic/classroom, virtual, one-on-one learning)
 - Orientation now its own section- describe orientation plan to host site for first 3-6 months of assignment
- Host Supervision
 - Both primary and secondary host site supervisors must be identified
 - Minimum of 2 years supervisory experience required
 - Describe strategy for collaborating/communicating with CDC PHAP
 - Either supervisor must be in office with associate at least 3 days per week

Resources for PHAP Host Site Applicants

Coming soon to the PHAP website:

- Host site application guidance – **new!**
 - Tips and advice for creating a quality host site application
 - Organized in same layout as application in eFMS 3.0
- Host site application questions – **new!**
 - Included in slides from Jan 13 webinar
- Agreement to detail
 - Binding agreement signed by the host site and CDC
 - **Cannot be revised**

Key Takeaways

- Consider new PHAP requirements for host sites - is PHAP right for your agency?
- Develop a comprehensive hands-on training experience to meet all PHAP competencies
- Demonstrate an increased level of skill-building over the two-year assignment
- Identify a strong primary and secondary host site supervisor
- Include strategies to communicate with CDC PHAP supervisor throughout two-year assignment
- Associates cannot conduct or assist with research as part of their PHAP assignment
- Do not use federally sourced funds for any aspect of the associate's travel or training
- Be specific with details, including work activities, tasks, desired outcomes or deliverables, roles, and time frames
- Watch start/end dates of activities and trainings (should fall within the fellowship period)

Wrap Up

Wrap Up

- Host site application period opens January 14, 2026, at 8:00AM ET; closes February 13, 2026, at 5:00PM ET *Tentative timeline*
- The link to eFMS 3.0 will be found on www.cdc.gov/PHAP
- For technical issues or questions about eFMS, email the PHAP Helpdesk at phap@cdc.gov
- Contact PHAP with any general questions at phap@cdc.gov

**Part II of the PHAP host site application process webinar series:
the eFMS 3.0 application portal**

Tuesday, January 13, 2026 @ 2:00PM ET

For more information, please contact
CDC's Public Health Associate Program for Recent Graduates

Email: PHAP@cdc.gov
Website: www.cdc.gov/PHAP

Thank you for your interest in hosting an associate!

Questions?

For more information, contact CDC

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348 cdc.gov atsdr.cdc.gov

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