



Center for Diversity in  
Public Health Leadership Training  
at Kennedy Krieger Institute

## The Center for Diversity in Public Health Leadership Training

### The Maternal Child Health – Leadership Education, Advocacy Research Network

#### 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 are the three public health experiences available to students during the ten-week summer program?

Scholars select one public health leadership experience in addition to the required research experience. Additional public health experiences offered are:

- **Community Engagement and Advocacy Experience:** Students work with professionals in developmental disabilities, public health, and related systems on forming, implementing, and evaluating health care and disability legislation, regulations, and practice guidelines. The critical importance of engaging underrepresented communities is particularly emphasized.
- **Clinical Track Experience:** Students rotate through clinical experiences provided by Maternal and Child Health disciplines (pediatrics, psychiatry, neurology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition, social work, psychology, speech/language, special education, and nursing). In addition, students gain experience in providing community-based healthcare and community support systems for underserved groups.
- **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.

### 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 transition to an MCH-related graduate or professional school successfully.

You can see examples of MCH-LEARN scholar projects presented at the CDC Showcase and Expo, JHU CARES, Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (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:

- Undergraduate freshman or sophomores with a GPA 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 MCHC-LEARN program?

Yes, you can. The MCH-LEARN program is an HRSA-Pipeline program that emphasizes enrollment of students from underrepresented populations in the public health field (<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/diversity-us-health-occupations.pdf>). All students interested in working in the area of public health, maternal and child health, and health disparities are welcome 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. 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 has earned a baccalaureate degree since June 2021, please apply for MCHC/RISE-UP. We encourage graduate students to apply to our Ferguson RISE program.
- 10. Can students without health insurance apply to the MCH-LEARN program?**  
Students without health insurance can apply to the MCH-LEARN program. However, all accepted students must have health insurance.

## **Program Accommodations and Expectations**

- 11. Do students receive a stipend for participating in the MCH-LEARN program?**  
Yes, students receive a stipend during their participation in the summer program (see [kennedykrieger.org/MCH-LEARN](http://kennedykrieger.org/MCH-LEARN) for details). Adjustments to the stipend are made for scholars with multiple sources of federal funding.
- 12. 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 program does not cover the cost of housing. However, all travel and housing costs for the CDC Showcase is covered by the program.
- 13. Does the program sponsor the cost of meals?**  
Meals are covered during Orientation Week, Tuesday research sessions, Friday CDC Winnable Battles, and the CDC Showcase week.
- 14. Can the MCH-LEARN program provide 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 participate in the MCH-LEARN program fully. Requesting accommodations will not influence the review of applications or decision-making about program acceptance.
- 15. Does the MCH-LEARN program count towards academic credit?**  
Maybe; the student's degree-granting institution determines if academic credit can be given for participating in MCH-LEARN.
- 16. How many hours during the week does the student dedicate to the program?**  
Students should expect to devote 40 hours per week to their project(s) and program activities.

**17. 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**

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

The online application is available at [KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN](http://KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN).

**19. 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 university email address. Reference format includes a brief questionnaire and a letter of recommendation with up to 850 words that must be added to the electronic form provided to the referee. **The deadline for letters of recommendation is January 31.**

**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 at the end of March.

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

Please visit MCH-LEARN website, [KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN](http://KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN), for more information.

**All program activities are contingent on federal funding.**

**Address additional questions to [MCH-LEARN@KennedyKrieger.org](mailto:MCH-LEARN@KennedyKrieger.org)**