



Strategic Scholars Program:

The Strategic Scholars Program, a program developed and implemented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), uses a community of practice cohort model and multiple learning modalities to build governmental public health workforce capacity in eight strategic skill areas. The program will launch its second cohort in February 2020; selected Public Health Scholars will have the opportunity to build their skills in Resource Management, specifically in the areas of fiscal, budget, grant, and contract management.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Can territorial health departments apply?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a cost to participate?

A: No cost to participate, except for your time.

Q: Who are the right people in our department to apply?

A: We wanted the programmatic and administrative/finance departments to apply as teams to work on a project or issue collaboratively. While we certainly welcome a CFO or other health official, the administrative/finance person does not need to be high-ranking. It could be a grants manager or contract specialist. What is not a good fit for the administrative/finance applicant is someone like a human resources specialist.

Q: Does the project you complete need to be related to performance improvement work?

A: Yes, as it relates to budget and finance.

Q: How many teams will be selected?

A: We have funding to choose up to ten teams (20 people total).

Q: Were tribal organizations considered?

A: Tribal health departments are welcome to apply. The BEAM curriculum is a generalist curriculum and does not discuss tribes specially. However, there may be ways to tailor post-module learning sessions to address concerns that relate directly to tribal organizations.

Q: Is travel required?

A: Yes, both team members will be expected to attend PHIT in June, with the skills-based workshop during that same time. NNPHI pays travel costs.

Q: We are looking at applying using our accreditation and environmental health director as our team. The environmental director oversees grants and programs, would this individual be sufficient to represent administration?

A: Yes, if this person is involved with grants, that is an appropriate role.



Q: Can you give an example of a resource management project?

A: Using a QI process to improve business activities. For example: process mapping a contract and grant process from procurement-application-closeout. Seeing the flow of that and opportunities for improvement would be an excellent example. Scholars can also work with their coach to develop this over time with the coach.

Q: Would you allow two teams of two?

A: We have a finite budget for this and have allotted for 10 teams, so it would not be equitable to have two teams from the same department. You can submit two applications, but only one would be funded.

Q: Would you revisit how you're defining resource management?

A: Resource management are the foundational business skills of program management- budget and financial management, procurement, grants and contract management.

Q: What is the time commitment?

A: Over the course of 6 months, participants will participate in approximately 30 hours of online and video conference learning, and attend the PHIT training from June 2-4.

Q: If we were part of last year's Strategic Scholars systems thinking program, does this disqualify us from this cohort?

A: Former Strategic Scholars are not disqualified as this year's theme is different than last year's theme. However, we want to ensure we are equitably distributing opportunities and resources.

Q: What if the health department is smaller in size and they do not have a formal QI office or person with the specific role?

A: A common problem in health departments! As long as someone from the HD has some sort of performance improvement function, then they are eligible.

Q: Are project descriptions from previous participants available?

A: No, because last year's cohort had a different theme (systems thinking).

Q: Does the project need to be related to the BEAM curriculum?

A: The BEAM curriculum is a very broad course in finance and budget. So yes, we expect that the final project should relate to the concepts that you learned and discussed while taking the BEAM course.

Q: Given the competitive nature, what are you looking for on the application to best inform your selection?

A: We will be looking for the right combination of applicants; for example, if someone from human resources is included as part of the team, that would not be the right role. We are only asking two short answer questions and we'd like to see thoughtful responses to the



questions. Please discuss and answer the questions as a team, as that will produce answers that are well-rounded and comprehensive.

Q: Will the web conference be available after the call?

A: Yes, the webinar recording, PowerPoint slides and a list of Q&As will be available on the NNPHI website.