PHMC Visiting Scholars Program

FAQs

Who is the Research & Evaluation (R&E) Group at Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC)?

R&E Group is a part of PHMC, one of the largest and most comprehensive nonprofit public health organizations in the nation. The R&E Group is a team of 75 researchers and evaluators working on diverse projects ranging from large randomized controlled trials of interventions to tailored program evaluations for national and local organizations. Our work is community-facing and collaborative, and is focused in four core areas: Family Strengthening and Child Wellbeing, Addictions, Public Health, and Teaching and Learning. To learn more about our work, please visit our website: www.phmcresearch.org

What is the PHMC Visiting Scholars Program?

In 2018, R&E Group was awarded a grant from the Public Health Fund to establish the Visiting Scholars Program. The PHMC Visiting Scholars Program provides a unique opportunity for select Scholars in the social, educational and behavioral sciences to pursue their research in collaboration with PHMC researchers and practitioners. We invite applications from a diversity of scholars and disciplines, but for the 2021-2022 program year are particularly interested in Scholars whose research is focused on early childhood education or criminal justice.

How long is the program term?

The Visiting Scholars program is one year in length. Scholars are expected to complete all program requirements within the one year term. Positions begin in early September 2021 and run through the end of August 2022. The exact start and end date of the program may be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the Scholar.
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What are the program requirements?
Our goal is to work closely with Visiting Scholars to collaborate on new research, pursue grant funding in support of the research, and disseminate the findings of this research through publication. We also look forward to learning from our Scholars through presentations on their work to PHMC researchers and practitioners. With this in mind, our requirements of Visiting Scholars include:

• Work collaboratively to disseminate findings and lessons learned through virtual events (e.g., webinars), peer-reviewed publications, and other methods for sharing scientific findings with various audiences, including the scientific community, community members and other stakeholders.

• Conduct a presentation on key activities and achievements completed during the scholarship residency to PHMC researchers, service providers and leadership.

• Work collaboratively with PHMC researchers on new grant opportunities in support of shared areas of research interest, whether as a lead investigator or co-investigator.

What is the time commitment? Can the program be completed remotely?
Although the amount of time committed may vary, we anticipate that Scholars will devote approximately 1-2 days per month to this work. Scholar time may include work conducted at PHMC’s office (1500 Market Street, Philadelphia) or remotely; though ideally, the majority of this time will be spent on-site. (Note: In light of COVID-19 this may be adjusted.)

What are the eligibility requirements?
All Scholar applicants must have a Ph.D. or comparable terminal degree and a career background that demonstrates their ability to conduct high-level, peer-reviewed research. Preference will be given to applicants with several years' experience beyond the Ph.D. and who are currently affiliated with an academic institution. Applications from doctoral, graduate, or undergraduate students will not be accepted. Importantly, we are seeking researchers whose interests align closely with our portfolio of projects.

If you would like to learn more about internship opportunities or conducting doctoral research at PHMC, please contact Lisa Bond, Managing Director of the Research & Evaluation Group, at lisab@phmc.org
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What is provided to Visiting Scholars?
Scholars receive Visiting Scholar distinction and have access to data, resources, and accommodations; they are able to participate in departmental meetings, training opportunities, and other events as appropriate. He/she/they will work closely with research colleagues within the R&E Group. Scholars have the option to be provided with a work space at PHMC in the R&E Group.

Are Visiting Scholars compensated?
Yes. Scholars receive an annual stipend of $5,000 to support their work at PHMC. This stipend can be paid directly to the Scholar or to the Scholar’s academic institution.

Can scholars conduct research on any topic?
We are dedicated to ensuring a meaningful experience for our Scholars, and accordingly seek projects which align with our focus areas and current portfolio of research. Please contact us if you would like to discuss your research ideas and how they connect with our work.

For the 2021-2022 year, we are prioritizing Scholars whose research focuses on early childhood education or criminal justice. Specifically, PHMC is seeking Scholars with the following research interests:

**Early Childhood Education:** PHMC has a very large portfolio of early childhood education programs and services. Some key programs include: serving as the City’s intermediary for its universal Pre-K initiative; Pennsylvania’s ECE professional development provider for Philadelphia and its surrounding counties; and coordinator of the Early Learning Resource Center to improve the quality of and access to early learning services in the surrounding region. We are seeking a Scholar with research interests in promoting equity within the early care and education field, with preference for specific interests in one of the following: child care subsidy policies and practices, including administrative data, reimbursement models, and special populations; best practices and approaches for insuring that children with special needs are included and succeed in early learning environments; the economics of early learning, including the impact of business practices on child outcomes; and, addressing the needs of homeless children in the early learning sector.
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**Criminal Justice:** PHMC implements a number of criminal justice-focused programs, including the Forensic Intensive Recovery (FIR) Program, which was established in 1973. FIR is a prison deferral initiative that offers eligible participants substance abuse treatment in lieu of incarceration. Participants are referred through the Defender Association of Philadelphia or directly from judges working in the First Judicial District. PHMC is responsible for operating the Clinical Evaluation Unit (CEU), which evaluates eligible participants for chemical dependency; refers them to community-based providers for residential, intensive outpatient and regular outpatient treatment services; and provides case management services for FIR program participants. Because of the longevity of this program, PHMC has administrative data on thousands of program participants. PHMC is seeking a scholar with an interest in criminal justice research focused on prison deferral initiatives. We are seeking a scholar who can work collaboratively with our team, as well as other stakeholders including the Defender Association and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities, to examine the impact of the FIR program. There also may be an opportunity to gather primary data from current participants on their experiences in the FIR program and, more broadly, in the criminal justice system.

**Other Areas of Interest:** PHMC is one of the largest non-profit health and human service organizations in the region. PHMC’s services reach tens of thousands of individuals each year and are delivered through dozens of community locations across SEPA, providing rich opportunities for applied public health research. Some of the services and programs delivered by PHMC include: criminal justice/re-entry, early childhood education, early intervention, child welfare, primary healthcare, addiction treatment, mental health services, parenting programs, HIV care, sexual health programming for youth, chronic disease prevention and management, and services to the homeless. PHMC is committed to engaging in applied public health research, including research that builds the knowledge base about the application of innovative theories, methods, approaches and interventions. We value research collaborations that contribute to evidence-informed decision-making and the use of knowledge by the public health and other sectors.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss other areas for research collaboration.
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**What is the selection criteria?**
The selection of Visiting Scholars is based on both an individual’s demonstrated record of research accomplishments and the merit of the applicant’s proposed project. As stated previously, preference will be given based on alignment of the proposed research with the priority focus areas described above.

We also are committed to including scholars from underrepresented populations and we highly encourage scholars from diverse backgrounds and experiences, scholars of color, and scholars who have been the first in their families to pursue postsecondary or postgraduate education to apply. We aim to promote racial, ethnic, gender and disciplinary diversity in each year’s cohort.

**How do I apply?**
Applications are due to PHMC by July 18th, 2021. Applications should be submitted through the R&E Group website. As part of your application, we ask that you provide a short proposal describing the project to be undertaken while in residence at PHMC (not more than 2 pages single spaced) and a current CV.

**What should be included in the proposal?**
A brief 2-page proposal should include a discussion of the background/significance of the research issue, the research questions you aim to address, and the methodology you intend to employ. We recognize that your specific research activities will likely be informed by the availability of existing datasets, current studies underway, and access to programs being delivered at PHMC. It is sufficient to discuss your proposal in general terms, or to identify different potential areas of focus that will be refined at the beginning of the Scholar residency.

**Who should I contact for more information?**
If you have additional questions, please contact Lisa Bond, Managing Director of the Research & Evaluation Group, at lisab@phmc.org or 215-985-2531.