



## OPHA Public Health Professional Services Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question: What is this program?**

**Answer:** The Public Health Professional Services (PHPS) program, administered by the Ohio Public Health Association (OPHA), is a staffing service which matches Public Health professionals within Ohio with available part-time, temporary, short-term, and/or seasonal positions in the Public Health field. We recruit and manage a pool of available contractors, serve as the liaison between contractors and prospective placement sites, and facilitate contracts and placement logistics.

**Question: Why is this service needed?**

**Answer:** Organizations often need part-time or temporary help. Sometimes it takes longer to fill a position than expected, or a project needs concentrated attention. Meanwhile, many individuals in the Public Health sector are in a position to contribute their skills and expertise: retirees, part-time employees, parents who work as caregivers, students working toward full-time employment, and more want to contribute to Public Health work.

**Question: What types of people can register with PHPS?**

**Answer:** Our PHPS team of contractors is comprised of trained and experienced Public Health professionals from a variety of fields and backgrounds, including (but not limited to):

- Health education
- Public Health nursing
- Epidemiology
- Environmental health
- Project management
- Financial and administrative

In short, if you're passionate about Public Health, we want you on our team!

**Question: How do I register?**

**Answer:** To register, please complete the link at <https://ohiopha.org/public-health-professional-contractor-registration/>. Registration is free and all information is confidential. Nicole Balakos directs our PHPS services and can be reached at [NBalakos@ohiopha.org](mailto:NBalakos@ohiopha.org) for additional questions.

**Question: What kinds of agencies and organizations utilize contractors through this program?**

**Answer:** PHPS is open to a wide variety of organizations, including local health departments, professional associations, community action organizations, state agencies, care providers, and any other organization which needs staffing with Public Health experience.

**Question: What types of positions are filled through the PHPS program?**

**Answer:** Assignments available through PHPS vary widely, and might include the following examples:

- *Filling professional vacancies:*
  - Time-limited vacancies: Individuals can cover for employees who take maternity leave, paternity leave, or family/medical leave.
  - Transitions: Temporary staffers can fill in when an individual retires, resigns, or is reassigned to a different position.
  - Start-up vacancies: An interim employee can get a project up and running while the organization seeks the right person for their needs in the long term.
  
- *Short-term or specific projects:*
  - Accreditation, data/report collection, and preparation: Individuals with expertise in accreditation requirements can share their expertise and knowledge with your team.
  - Community health assessments or health impact assessments: PHPS contractors can coordinate a project or effort so that existing staff need not be temporarily reassigned away from their existing duties.
  - Strategic planning facilitation and coordination: A Public Health expert from outside your organization can be valuable as an objective leader.
  - Contact tracing/disease investigation support: A public health specialist can provide empathetic interviewing to quickly and accurately disseminate information and trace communicable diseases, food borne illnesses and other related surge staffing needs.

Assignments may vary in length from a few hours, to a week, to several months. Some assignments may require work in the field, others may take place in the organization's office space, and still others might be completed virtually by a contractor working from home.

**Question: Do I need to be an OPHA member to participate?**

**Answer:** You do not need to be an OPHA member to register in the PHPS system or to be considered for an assignment. However, if you decide to fill an assignment through this program, we ask that you consider becoming an OPHA member (fees range from \$30 to \$75 annually).

**Question: Are contractors employed, contracted, or held on retainer?**

**Answer:** For most assignments, PHPS contractors work for OPHA as independent contractors. The client organization will pay a fee to OPHA which covers payments, contractors' recruitment and management, and contractor and contract logistics. Contractors will sign a contract with, and receive payment directly from, OPHA rather than the employer organization. Independent contractors are not eligible for fringe benefits such as pension (including OPERS), health insurance, life insurance, retirement, unemployment insurance or workers compensation.

**Question: What are the income tax implications for PHPS contractors?**

**Answer:** As independent contractors, contractors are responsible for any and all income taxes. OPHA will not withhold any taxes from paid wages. If the contractor's pay exceeds \$600 in a calendar year, OPHA will provide tax form 1099 at the end of the year.

**Question: How are contractors paid?**

**Answer:** Payment details for each assignment will be detailed in the contract and will vary based on the nature of the assignment. Examples might include an hourly wage paid on a monthly basis or a lump sum paid on completion of agreed-upon deliverables.

**Question: How do you match contractors with available positions?**

**Answer:** A client organization will contact PHPS with an open position. We will work with the organization to clearly identify the skills and experience needed to fill the assignment. Then the PHPS Consultant will review the list of active PHPS contractors and identify potential matches for the task at hand. The client may choose to interview the selected candidates, or may request a candidate sight unseen. PHPS will then work together with the client organization and the candidate to finalize contract logistics and the details of a mutually agreed-upon contract.

**Question: Am I guaranteed an assignment?**

**Answer:** We will make our best effort to match contractors with appropriate positions. Unfortunately, however, we cannot guarantee that you will be offered an assignment. The number of assignments available or likelihood of assignments a position will depend on how closely your skills and qualifications match the posted positions.

**Question: I'm looking for a full-time, permanent position.**

**Answer:** PHPS is intended to fill short-term, temporary, or part-time staffing needs. However, if an organization requests our services to fill a full-time position, we will gladly help to find candidates. You should also keep checking the OPHA webpage at [www.ohiophya.org](http://www.ohiophya.org) and look at the jobs posted on the CareerMart tab.

**Question: Should I be worried about my employer learning that I am seeking outside employment?**

**Answer:** No. Your registration status and all of your information are private; they are accessible to PHPS contractors only. If there are certain potential sites where you would not want us to place you or share your desire to work as a contractor, you can designate that on registration.

**Question: How are assignments evaluated?**

**Answer:** We are committed to making sure that this program provides a mutually beneficial experience for both the employer organization and the individual contractors. We will follow up with each assignment as it progresses to address any issues and to ensure that all parties are satisfied. At the end of each assignment, we will seek feedback from both employers and contractors via a formal evaluation and use the results to adapt our program as needed.

**Question: Are you going to send me lots of spam or unwanted emails?**

**Answer:** We hate spam as much as you do! We pledge to keep all communication limited and will not share your contact information outside of OPHA.

We will contact you if we have determined that there is a potential assignment for you, and to provide periodic news or changes regarding the PHPS program. We will not send daily or weekly communications to list-serves.

**Question: Is this program in competition or conflict with unions?**

**Answer:** It is not our intent to replace, displace, or conflict with employee unions. PHPS is designed to fill temporary and/or short-term contracting needs rather than full-time union-filled positions. In fact, temporary PHPS contractors can keep work moving forward while your agency seeks to fill the position with a long-term union employee.

If you have any concerns or questions about union-related issues, please contact us directly.

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