



Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Eric Friedlander
SECRETARY

275 East Main Street, 5W-A
Frankfort, Kentucky 40621
Phone: (502) 564-7042
Fax: (502) 564-7091

Statewide News Release

Media Contact:

Stephanie French

502.229.6979

stephanie.french@ky.gov

Brice Mitchell

502.330.9912

brice.mitchell@ky.gov

Gov. Beshear: New Partnership With Kentucky State University Will Expand Pathways to Public Health Careers

Tuition assistance, professional development now offered to health care workers at 10 postsecondary institutions

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 22, 2024) – To further enhance the future of the public health workforce through education, training and experiential learning, Gov. Andy Beshear announced today an expanded partnership with Kentucky State University that provides a pathway for further education and training for the current state public health workforce.

“The incredible heart and resilience that our health care heroes have shown over the years is truly remarkable,” said **Gov. Beshear**. “Anything we can do to support our public health professionals and recruit more of our hard-working Kentuckians to join the field, we’re going to do it. And this new partnership with KSU is part of that mission.”

“Public Health supports an easier path to a healthier life for all Kentuckians,” said Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) Commissioner **Dr. Steven Stack**. “Those interested in entering the field can choose from a full spectrum of services, from newborn screenings and nutrition education to administering vaccines, medication programs and so much more. The professional development opportunities, provided through our programs, will help students find their niche in improving health outcomes for large populations.”

Currently, KDPH has ten formalized partnerships with postsecondary institutions to collaborate on shared workforce development initiatives. The expanded partnership with Kentucky State University will include a [Student Internship Program](#) as well as Public Health’s [Employee Learning and Development Program](#) for KDPH staff. As one of the commonwealth’s historically black colleges and universities, this partnership with Kentucky State University also furthers



Team Kentucky's commitment to supporting these institutions.

"The ongoing partnership between KSU and KDPH will be sure to create new opportunities that will benefit our students, the future of the public health workforce, and the citizens of Kentucky," said Kentucky State University President **Dr. Koffi C. Akakpo**. "We look forward to working together to serve Kentucky."

Existing partners that are offering these opportunities include Bellarmine University, Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Murray State University, Northern Kentucky University, University of Pikeville, Simmons College of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University.

KDPH has paved avenues to recruit, train and sustain a competent and diverse response-ready public health workforce. One way is through the Student Internship Program, which has established over 40 internship opportunities, with the next application cycle to begin this fall. Since January 2022, KDPH has hosted 107 student interns from across the state through the program, nine of whom have been hired full-time.

Additionally, the Employee Learning and Development Program provides KDPH staff with tuition assistance and professional development opportunities funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Crisis Response Cooperative Agreement: COVID-19 Public Health Workforce Supplemental funds, as well as the CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Grant. The assistance may cover approved tuition and associated costs for a maximum of five courses per academic year. Applicants can request support for additional courses with supervisor approval. In May, two KDPH staff members earned their degrees through the Employee Learning and Development Program.

"Our state's economic future depends on us ensuring that every Kentuckian has the resources and support they need to reach their full human potential," said Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary **Eric Friedlander**. "We'll continue to focus on growing initiatives designed to provide a pathway to careers."

The Beshear administration is committed to expanding access to health care and workforce development. In March 2023, the Governor signed [House Bill 200](#), which continues the administration's work to recruit and retain health care workers. The bill supports these efforts by creating an innovative public-private partnership program to support scholarships and improve and grow high-need health care programs.

The administration has protected health care access for nearly 100,000 Kentuckians by removing governmental roadblocks and relaunched and expanded the state insurance marketplace, [kynect](#). The Governor expanded Medicaid coverage for new mothers, boosted the commonwealth's workforce by adding dental, vision and hearing coverage, and helped cap the cost of insulin. The

state is also seeing health care industry growth all over the commonwealth, including the first hospital in West Louisville to open in 150 years.

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