



**IOWA**

Institute for Public Health  
Practice, Research and Policy

Policy Fellow  
Application Guide

## Policy Fellow Application Guide

### For Program Beginning Fall 2026

## Introduction and Background

The College of Public Health’s Policy Fellow Program, offered through the Institute for Public Health Practice, Research and Policy (IPHRP), is now taking applications. The program creates opportunities for primary faculty and research staff to enhance skills for translating public health research into practice and policy. Faculty or research staff who desire additional opportunities to inform practice/policy change, who want to incorporate policy impact into their research portfolio, who aspire to lead activities such as convening a panel of experts or developing impact materials, and who want the opportunity to interact with stakeholders should apply for this year-long program. Individuals or two-member teams are encouraged to apply.

Each policy fellow will develop and implement an action learning project designed to help advance individual skills while receiving support from a variety of experts to implement the project. The focus of the project can be any critical public health topic, and the scope of each project can be very diverse. For example, one project may be to develop a position paper on a specific public health issue, while another project may be to implement legislative language that impacts workforce development. Other examples of possible projects include recommending a policy change to implement best practice, developing a best practice guide, convening a panel of experts to make recommendations on a public health issue, working with a local business to develop workplace policies that promote health, or developing a policy brief or other impact materials. (See pages 5-7 of this guide for examples of how to present projects.)

We anticipate the time commitment to be approximately two hours a week on average over the yearlong program. Policy fellows will attend training workshops, be linked with experts, interact with policymakers and stakeholders, and work as a team to accomplish each policy fellow’s action learning project.

## Policy Fellow Application Process

Participation in the Policy Fellow Program occurs through a competitive application process. Primary consideration will be given to applicants with projects that are likely to generate an effective example of translating research into policy/practice. Consideration will also be given to those who have a project that is measurable and is feasible during the year-long program.

**To apply for the Policy Fellow Program**, please complete the information requested in the application form on page 3 of this guide. Questions about the process can be directed to Vickie Miene, Executive Director of the IPHRP through email at [vickie-miene@uiowa.edu](mailto:vickie-miene@uiowa.edu) or by phone at (319) 384-1511.

Materials are due by August 14, 2026. Policy Fellows will be notified by mid-September 2026. The program will officially begin October 1, 2026, and will run through September 30, 2027.

A description of the Policy Fellow Program can be found on page 4 of this guide.

The steps to apply for the Policy Fellow Program are as follows:

1. Complete the Application form on page 3.
2. Save the application form and rename with a file name that includes the name of the applicant (e.g., MienePolicyFellowApplication.docx).
3. Email the application form to [Vickie-miene@uiowa.edu](mailto:Vickie-miene@uiowa.edu) by August 14, 2026.

## Policy Fellow Application Form

1. First and Last Name:
2. Department:
3. List additional team members if applicable:
4. Faculty Track (if applicable):
5. Faculty Rank (if applicable):
6. I have discussed my project proposal with my Department Executive Officer, and he/she is supportive of my application to the Policy Fellow Program: YES or NO
7. Briefly describe the public health issue you want to focus on as a Policy Fellow. (500 words or less).
8. Describe your interest in the topic and any relevant research, outreach, or education you have engaged in related to the topic. (500 words or less)
9. Each policy fellow will focus on an *action learning project* that has potential to inform policy or practice change. This project will be designed to help you advance your skills while receiving support through the Policy Fellow Program. The project should be doable within a one-year time frame. The approach, should at minimum, include at least one **stakeholder meeting** and a **product** that can be disseminated at the completion of the program. That product might be a policy brief, an issue brief, a white paper generated from an expert panel, proposed legislative language or an educational/impact resource, etc. Please feel free to consult with Vickie Miene for assistance regarding project ideas.  
  
**Briefly** describe the project you desire to work on as a participant in the Policy Fellow Program. Describe your project goal and include activities you may wish to pursue to reach that goal. A list of possible activities is included in the program description on Page 4 of this guide. The list is not inclusive. Individual projects are expected to be diverse and therefore, the strategies utilized to reach project goals will be varied. It's expected that your proposed project plan and list of activities may change through the course of the program. The final project plan will be further developed as part of the Policy Fellow Program.
10. How will you measure success of your project?
11. What is your personal motivation to participate in the Policy Fellow Program? What do you hope to achieve through participating in the program?
12. Please include a budget.

## College of Public Health: Policy Fellow Program Description

The College of Public Health’s Policy Fellow Program, offered through the Institute for Public Health Practice, Research and Policy (IPHRP) creates faculty and research staff opportunities to translate public health research into practice and policy. Faculty or research staff who desire additional opportunities to inform practice/policy change, who desire to increase their skills, who aspire to lead activities such as developing impact materials, and who want the opportunity to interact with panels of experts should apply for this year-long program. The policy fellows will work closely with their cohort (through monthly meetings), the IPHRP, and with CPH Leadership to learn strategies and implement activities that result in direct impact to practice or policy initiatives.

Participation in the Policy Fellow Program occurs through a competitive application process. The process includes writing a short informational narrative outlining the public health issue, the project approach, and the personal learning achievements the applicant hopes to acquire in the year-long program.

Our goal is to select policy fellows who are enthusiastic, who address a significant public health issue, and who propose a project that will likely generate an effective example of translating research into policy or practice. The college will award up to two fellowships annually.

Fellows will engage in many activities that could include but are not limited to the following:

- Participate in learning activities including expert-run workshops or seminars
- Develop a “Panel of Experts” to strategize solutions regarding a critical public health issue
- Generate policy documents including data briefs, policy briefs, position briefs and impact materials
- Develop educational materials
- Write an Op-Ed regarding the critical public health topic
- Foster a community-based team
- Participate in efforts to better educate community members and governmental leaders on the importance of research
- Participate in a College-wide “Presentation Series” that showcases achievements and lessons learned upon completion of the program

Fellows may access funds up to \$5,000 to enhance learning. Examples of approved learning activities can include travel-related expenses to visit a key policymaker or industry leader, attendance at a specialized meeting or conference, a day of shadowing an elected official, or other activities as approved to support individualized learning. In addition, the program will support visits from policy experts, workshop leaders, and others who provide education and expertise to the program. It is anticipated that policy fellows will be a resource to colleagues following the program and will act as informal mentors to future policy fellows.

Applications will be available in May, and policy fellows will be selected in September. The learning series will launch immediately with planning and project implementation. Policy fellows will have through the summer to complete work on policy documents.

# Project Examples

Two project examples are provided below. These examples highlight a series of steps that could be considered while implementing an action learning project over the course of the Policy Fellow Program. Included in each example is a series of steps that will culminate in meeting the goal of the example project. The table also includes sample support and learning activities that could be provided by the IPHPRP. There are many approaches to any project, so these examples serve as one approach to achieve the example project goal. In addition, current policy fellow projects can be viewed at <https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/IPHPRP-policy-fellows/>.

Applicants to the program should propose a brief project plan that includes ideas and possible steps to reach the end goal. However, the proposed plan is **not expected** to include the detail provided in the examples below. The final project plan will be developed as part of the Policy Fellow Program.

## Example 1 – Distracted Driving

The first example in **Table 1** concerns the topic of distracted driving. This is an important and timely topic in the transportation community. Currently, many states are considering implementing legislation to reduce distracted driving, yet there is little evidence supporting any policy approaches. The policy project would involve getting feedback from advocates in various sectors, developing a policy brief on the topic, and developing a communication plan. The activities on the right side of the table include types of support and learning activities that could be supported by the IPHPRP for this project example. These support activities will be developed as part of the Policy Fellow Program.

Table 1	
Series of incremental steps to achieve project goal	Types of support and learning activities provided through IPHPRP
1. Identify important advocates in the transportation safety community including driver, law enforcement, transportation officials, etc. and learn what recommended actions could be taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will assist in contacting the advocates and arranging meeting times.</li> </ul>
2. Identify what evidence supports these approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will assist in connecting to library and online resources as needed.</li> </ul>
3. Draft a policy brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seminars and workshops will be provided as well as a guide to writing a policy brief. In addition, IPHPRP will provide feedback opportunities through monthly cohort meetings and will provide editing and formatting assistance.</li> </ul>
4. Get input on the brief from advocates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will assist in contacting the advocates and arranging times to meet.</li> </ul>
5. Get input from key policy-makers about their support of the particular issue and potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will assist in reaching out to key policy makers (elected officials or industry leaders).</li> </ul>

approaches. This could include officers, local elected officials, state legislators, etc.	
6. Finalize policy brief and develop a talking guide to go with the brief that addresses various viewpoints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning activities will be provided to teach skills to frame conversations for particular audiences.</li> </ul>
7. Develop a communication/dissemination plan for the brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning activities will be provided to develop dissemination strategies using various mediums.</li> <li>Policy fellows will receive feedback from cohort and leadership regarding communication plans.</li> </ul>

### Example 2 - Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First-Aid (MHFA) Training is a best practice, public education program that helps individuals across audiences understand mental illnesses, support timely intervention, and save lives. Although many states have created policies to make MHFA available, Iowa is not one of those states. The example in **Table 2** describes a set of steps to achieve the goal of creating statewide policy change to promote the use of MHFA training. In this example, emphasis is placed on convening a statewide group and interfacing that group with national leaders. Policy briefs would be developed while searching for a legislative champion. The activities on the right side of the table include types of support and learning activities that could be supported by the IPHPRP for this project example. These support activities will be developed as part of the Policy Fellow Program.

Table 2	
Series of incremental steps to achieve project goal	Types of support and learning activities provided through IPHPRP
1. Identify MHFA trainers, key participants and agency leaders who have supported MHFA training activities (Iowa MHFA Experts). Conduct a virtual meeting to identify strengths and barriers of MHFA in Iowa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will assist in identifying trainers and agency leaders.</li> </ul>
2. Develop data brief of Iowa MHFA and include information discovered in Step 1. Share this with Iowa MHFA Experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will provide feedback opportunities through monthly cohort meetings and will provide editing and formatting assistance.</li> </ul>
3. Meet with Leaders from National Council in Washington DC and/or in Missouri to gain understanding of strategies used in other states to create statewide MHFA training policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPHPRP will support travel to DC and/or to Missouri to meet with experts.</li> </ul>
4. Convene a meeting with experts from National Council and leaders from other states to meet with Iowa MHFA Experts to develop strategies that might work in Iowa. Create white paper from meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning activities will be provided regarding strategies for building collaborations and coalitions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPHPRP will assist in planning the meeting and providing travel expenses for out of state experts.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Develop draft policy brief and share with Iowa MHFA Experts.</p> <p>6. Share draft policy brief with key legislators who have an interest in mental health to determine feasibility of proposed policies, additional strategies and to find a legislative champion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminars and workshops will be provided as well as a guide to writing a policy brief.</li> <li>• IPHPRP will provide feedback opportunities through monthly cohort meetings and will provide editing and formatting assistance.</li> <li>• IPHPRP will assist in arranging meetings with legislators interested in improving mental health for Iowans.</li> <li>• Learning activities to teach skills regarding framing conversations for specific audiences will be provided.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Develop communication and dissemination plans for policy brief and white paper. Determine measurement for dissemination process and impact of materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning activities will be provided to develop dissemination strategies using various mediums.</li> <li>• Policy Fellows will receive feedback from cohort and leadership regarding communication plans.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Disseminate documents and set meetings as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPHPRP will assist with dissemination.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Share the policy brief in one-on-one meetings with key legislators to create a yes vote for the new policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPHPRP will assist in arranging meetings with legislators interested in improving mental health for Iowans.</li> <li>• Learning activities to teach skills regarding framing conversations for specific audiences will be provided.</li> </ul>