

**Internship Title:**

Birth Defects Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch – Preventing Neural Tube Defects

**Internship Location:**

Austin or Virtual

**Preceptor Name and Title:**

Dayana Betancourt, MPH, MBA,  
Research Specialist

**Brief Description**

Neural tube defects are severe birth defects of the brain and spine that happen when the neural tube does not close properly early during the pregnancy. If a woman consumes enough folic acid before and during early pregnancy, it can help prevent her baby from having an NTD.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an understanding of neural tube defects (NTDs) and folic acid recommendations for occurrence and recurrence prevention of NTDs.
- Develop an understanding of the current NTD prevention initiatives led by BDES.
- Develop an understanding of best practices for NTD prevention through a literature review.
- Develop an understanding of the strategic planning process.

**Approximate Total  
Weekly Hours:**

10-15 hours/week

**Paid:**

☐ Yes

☒ No

**DSHS Division:**

Community Health  
Improvement

**Program:**

Birth Defects Epidemiology  
and Surveillance Branch  
(BDES)

**Disciplines of Public Health**

<input type="checkbox"/> Biostatistics/Data Analytics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Epidemiology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Promotion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Evaluation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Analysis and Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: MPH general, Community Health, Health Education	

**Internship Details**

**Intern Activities**

- Conduct a literature review to identify evidence-based neural tube defect (NTD) occurrence and recurrence prevention initiatives. The literature review will focus on cost-effective prevention initiatives that would be practical for the Birth Defects

Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch (BDES) to conduct and would be applicable to the population of Texas.

- Obtain input for the strategic plan from BDES staff, clinicians, and/or other stakeholders and revise the plan as needed.
- Develop a strategic plan that will serve as a practical guide to inform the activities BDES conducts for NTD occurrence and recurrence prevention. The strategic plan will include recommendations for how BDES can improve their current NTD recurrence prevention mailout initiative. The strategic plan will also include recommendations for new initiatives that BDES can conduct for NTD recurrence and occurrence prevention.

### Intern Deliverables

- A literature review of NTD occurrence and recurrence prevention initiatives.
- A strategic plan focused on improving the current NTD recurrence prevention mailout and expanding the Texas Birth Defects Registry's efforts to increase awareness about folic acid for the prevention of NTDs.

As part of an end-of-semester celebration of the interns, the intern will give a brief PowerPoint or poster presentation of their project and experience to an audience of DSHS staff and university partners.

### Applicant Qualifications

Required	Skill
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Word</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excel</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint</li> </ul>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Analysis applications (SPSS, STATA, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tableau or similar applications
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other software applications
	Academic Level Bachelor's student – Junior or higher (bachelor's in public health, health promotion, community health, or other similar major.)
	Any other skills required (soft or technical) <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
Preferred	Skill
	<input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Office: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Word</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint</li> </ul>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Analysis applications (SPSS, STATA, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tableau or similar applications
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other software applications
	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>

	Academic Level Master's degree student preferred – Master's in public health, health education, community health, or other similar degree.
	Any other skills required (soft or technical) Prefer prior experience developing a literature review. Prefer prior experience with SAS or STATA, but not required.

### Application Instructions

Qualified and interested applicants must submit the following items to the contact below:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letter of Interest	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Two letters of recommendation</b> Instructions: Letters from current or former supervisor or faculty members (in lieu of reference checks).
<input type="checkbox"/> Resume	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Sample	<input type="checkbox"/> Other documents: <a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>

### Contact Information

<b>Contact Name and Information</b>	Name: Craig Gilden Credentials: MEd Title: Education Coordinator Email: internships@dshs.texas.gov
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