

DSHS Intern Barbara Jardine Assists with Texas COVID-19 Response

Many DSHS interns have had the opportunity to directly aid the Texas response to COVID-19. One of these interns is Barbara Jardine, an MPH student at Texas A&M that has been working with the COVID-19 Vulnerable Populations Taskforce.



What are you studying?

I am a candidate for a Master of Public Health with an Epidemiology concentration from Texas A&M University School of Public Health.

Why did you want to work for DSHS, and in this department?

My first experience in public health was interning and working with the City of San Antonio's health department. They always referenced how the state was the most desirable public entity to work with and I wanted to take their advice while I was still starting my career. The Taskforce was desirable for several reasons. I am most interested in infectious diseases, the location is in Austin (my hometown where I want to work) which would be good for networking, and it was a true epidemiology experience.

What projects have you been working on?

I had the opportunity to work on an exceptional item request and provide supporting documentation for a senate bill. My current project is developing an internal vaccination coverage dashboard for some of our long-term care facilities.

How has your experience been with the DSHS virtual internship programming?

The virtual component has truly increased accessibility to opportunities I might not have had otherwise. I currently live in San Antonio and would have had a hard time justifying moving for an internship. I've had the opportunity to network and get to know people 100 miles away. Even though we're virtual, my supervisor has made a great effort to keep us connected and even have in-person events outside of work hours.

How has your internship experience been with DSHS?

I love interning with DSHS. This is now my third semester and I often joke they can't get rid of me! In all seriousness, I really enjoy the culture of this organization. I have intellectually stimulating conversations with my teammates, and you can tell they are just as excited about this content as I am. It's also very unique to see recommendations turn in to actual public health policy or practice.

How has this internship prepared you to go out into the workforce?

I have gained a lot of professional confidence while interning with DSHS. My group really allowed me to grow by letting me take the lead and provide feedback on some pretty important projects. I'm grateful for their trust in me and pushing me out of my comfort zone. Now I feel like my products and ideas are valuable to an organization so much so that I should look for jobs that are a good fit for me rather than just applying everywhere. This internship has also helped me understand what DSHS is looking for in a public health professional and I'd like to think I'm implementing that observation through my actions and demeanor.



**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

