

2025-2026

Office of Applied Practice

APPLIED PRACTICE ANNUAL REPORT



**Arnold School of
Public Health**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA





Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Sutton prepping for the release of Applied Practice's second annual report

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MISSION & GOALS

The mission of the Office of Public Health Practice is to bridge academia and public health practice by providing and/or connecting students and the existing workforce to training, professional practice experiences, mentorship, and resources to protect and improve the health of all communities.



*Discovery I Building,
Arnold School of Public Health*

WE AIM TO:

- Manage and build relationships with students, faculty, and community partners
- Facilitate, monitor, and evaluate meaningful and applied practice opportunities
- Provide educational and professional guidance on career preparation/enhancement, career paths, job placement, and alumni networking
- Showcase applied practice and workforce development opportunities and stories
- Provide professional development opportunities and resources to students and the public health workforce
- Conduct and disseminate research on public health workforce trends, needs, challenges, and workforce transitions
- Develop strategies to address workforce shortages and disparities
- Provide education and technical assistance and support to agencies and organizations to develop and/or enhance public health workforce development training and education initiatives



*Dr. Zach Jenkins and Ms. Brittany
Sutton at the 2025 ASPPH
Conference*



*Ms. Brittany Sutton at the 2025 ASPPH
Conference*



*ASPH Students at the "50 on the
Field" event*

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Stories are how human beings make sense of this experience we call life. The story of public health is a remarkable one and has been a part of humanity's story for as long as humans have existed. As of late, the story of public health has been filled with funding challenges, competing ideologies, and an increasingly competitive job market for the public health workforce. Despite those challenges, the story of public health has also been filled with resilience, hope, and the blossoming of a new generation of public health professionals.

What follows in these pages are excerpts of that story from the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina. While the story is being told by those who work in Applied Practice, this tale has many protagonists. It is filled with community organizations forming partnerships with the Arnold School, faculty lending their expertise to ensure the highest quality collaborations possible, and most importantly, the MPH students who are enhancing their practitioner skills in order to protect the health of **all** our communities.

On behalf of the Office of Public Health Practice, we hope you enjoy the selected excerpts of Applied Practice's story. Even more so, we hope that the next chapter will involve you. Here's to the next chapter!



ZACH JENKINS, PHD, MPH, CPH

Director of Applied Practice
Office of Public Health Practice

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Zach J".

OUR STAFF

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Columbia SC, 29208



Ms. Sutton and Dr. Jenkins participating in the MPH PHield Experience at Hobcaw Barony in the spring of 2026

APPLIED PRACTICE AT A GLANCE

45

**MPH
STUDENTS
COMPLETED
APPLIED
PRACTICE
EXPERIENCES
ACROSS 5
STATES**

8500

**HOURS OF
WORK WITH
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS**

14

**NEW
PARTNERING
ORGANIZATIONS**

131

**FORMAL
PARTNERSHIPS
WITH
ORGANIZATIONS
TO PLACE
STUDENTS ACROSS
26 DIFFERENT
STATES**

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

INTEGRATING PERSPECTIVES PANEL

Each year, in order to fulfill the Council on Education and Public Health's competency, integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health, Applied practice coordinates the Integrating Perspectives Panel Event. This involves selecting a unifying article, identifying and securing panelists and a moderator, and organizing the logistics for the event. This year's theme was Building Common Ground to Advance Population Health: a particularly timely topic.



Ms. Sutton and Dr. Jenkins at the 2025 panel

Integrating Perspectives Panel Fall 2025:

Building Common Ground to Advance Population Health

Moderator:



Trimease Carter
Central Carolina Community Foundation, Director of Community Investment

Panelists:



Meg Stanley
Wholespire, Executive Director



Amanda Lawrence
HCA Health Care, AVP



Gregory Sprouse
AICP: Central Midlands Council of Governments, Director of Research Planning, and Development



Elise Partin
City of Cayce, Mayor

Monday, October 20th | 1:45 PM - 3:45PM

Pastides Alumni Center | Presidential Dining Room



For more information and to register

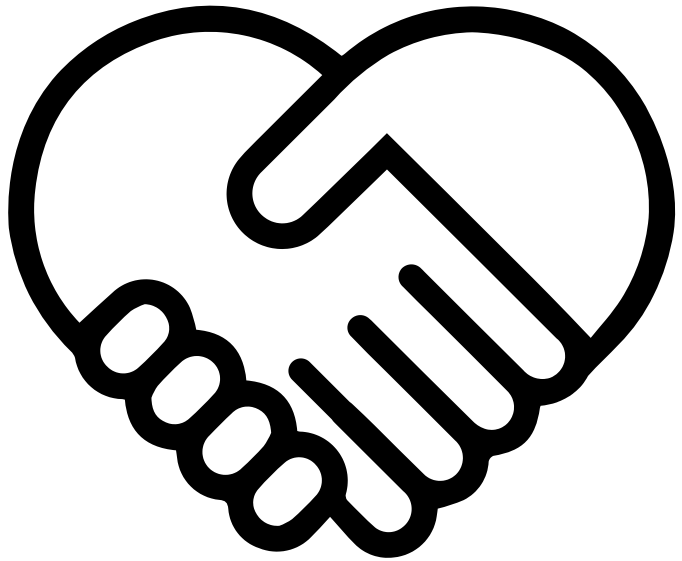


Arnold School of Public Health
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

GREAT COLLABORATION

During the fall of 2025, Dr. Jenkins was introduced to Dr. Kisner and Dr. Sigsbee, the Director and Assistant Director of the Grant Readiness, Empowerment and Advocacy Training (GREAT) initiative. With the federal funding landscape shifting, Applied Practice and GREAT saw an opportunity to provide essential community support by involving MPH students into the GREAT initiative. Over 40 organizations sought assistance with GREAT this year, which led to MPH students meeting with select community partners to further identify ways to support their needs.



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

GOVERNOR'S CUP



Dr. Jenkins, Ms. Sutton, and ASPH students at the Governor's Cup 2026

For the past two years, Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Sutton have served on the **Governor's Cup** road race committee. The Governor's Cup is sponsored by Lexington Health, and the plethora of community partners that are involved in the race allows Applied Practice to build and strengthen these relationships as well as create a more physically active community. In addition to the Applied Practice team serving on the committee, they also involved several MPH students and a host of undergraduate ASPH student volunteers. Overall, 2,000 individuals from 17 U.S. states registered for the event. Talk about a major impact!



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

HOBCAW PHIELD EXPERIENCE

Every year, the ASPH hosts a Public Health Integrated Environmental Leadership Development (PHield) experience for MPH students at **Hobcaw Barony**, a private research reserve in Georgetown, SC. During the PHield experience, MPH students engage in a host of activities, including touring the grounds of Hobcaw Barony, participating in a walk audit of downtown Georgetown, engaging in guided discussions with practitioners, networking with partners, and much, much more. Applied Practice plays a key role in managing the logistics of this event, including recruiting students to attend, organizing and reimbursing travel, ordering food, as well as engaging faculty and staff in the planned schedule. Additionally, Applied Practice assists in conducting the evaluation of the PHield experience. The 2026 event held many memorable moments. We are excited for what 2027 will bring!



MPH students and faculty pause their bike ride for a group photo



MPH students harvest oysters with USC faculty

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

SCPHA INVOLVEMENT

In the past year, Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Sutton have become more involved with the **South Carolina Public Health Association**, taking leadership roles with the organization. On June 19th, 2026, Dr. Jenkins became the treasurer for the first ever executive board for SCPHA. During his two-year term, he looks forward to providing superb financial stewardship and advancing the financial health of the organization. Relatedly, Ms. Sutton serves as the vice chair of the Young Professional Network (YPN) committee where she creates opportunities for current students and recent graduates to get involved with SCPHA, while building a stronger public health network.



SENATOR SUTTON



Senator Brittany Sutton

In the spring of 2026, Ms. Sutton became a staff senator representing the Arnold School of Public Health in the Staff Senate of the University of South Carolina. During her term, she plans to serve as a bridge between her ASPH staff counterparts and the university, providing her colleagues with a system to address any concerns they may want to be addressed. As a staff senator, Ms. Sutton will connect with USC leadership to cultivate an environment that acknowledges the importance of ASPH staff members and creates space for them to reflect on their experience thus far.

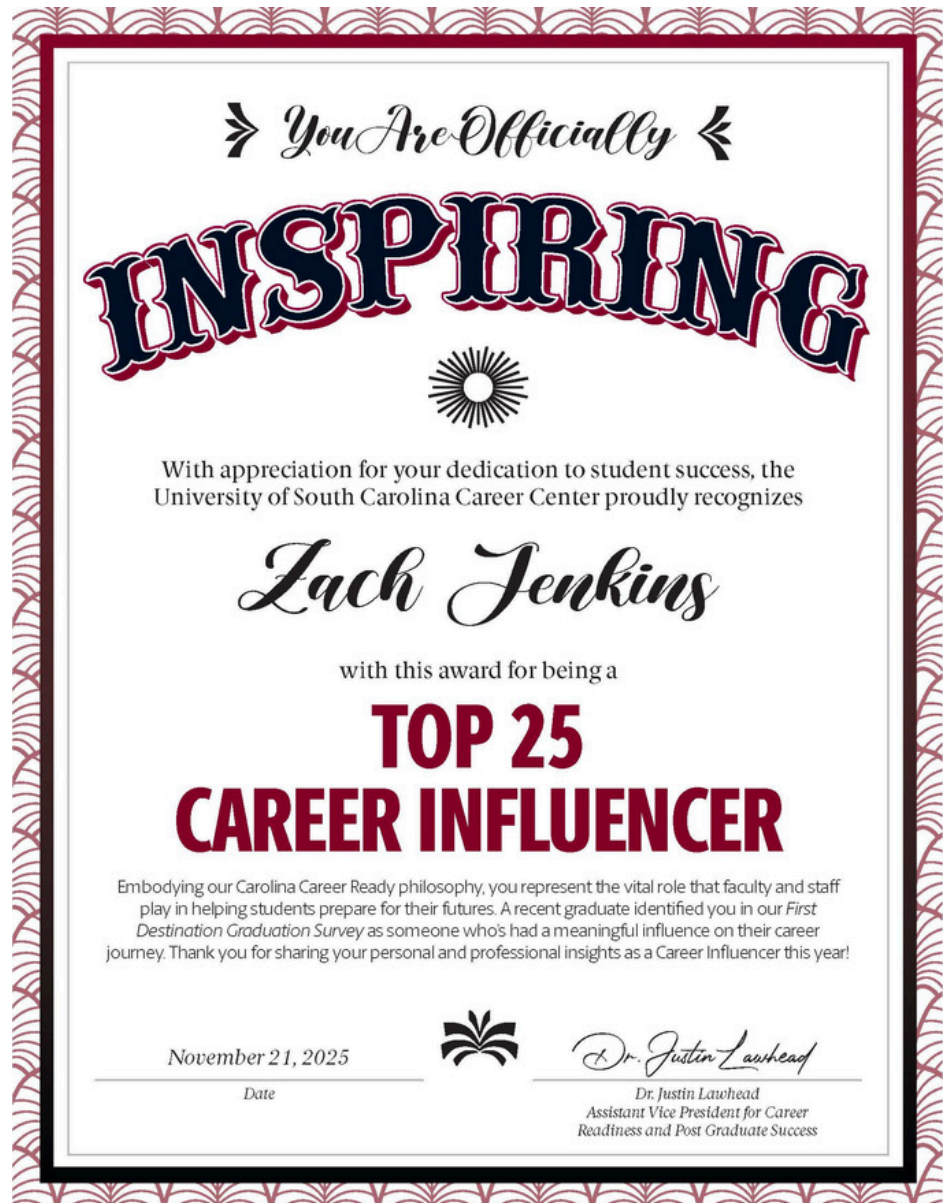
WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

TOP 2025 CAREER INFLUENCER

In the fall of 2025, Dr. Jenkins was recognized as a Top 25 Career Influencer by the University of South Carolina. This honor captures his dedication to preparing the next generation of public health leaders. Congratulations, Dr. Jenkins!



Dr. Jenkins at the 2026 ASPPH sections retreat



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

TIPS AND TRICKS ON TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE 2026

THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH APPLIED PRACTICE
PRESENTS

Tips and Tricks ON TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE



**Ashanti
Cromedy, MPH**
Preaward Grant
Specialist



**Cate
Jones, MPH**
Clinical Trial Project
Manager



**Nudrat
Nawar, MPH**
Data & Evaluation
Coordinator

Meet ASPH alumnae as they share their journey to the workforce.

**MARCH
18
2026
6:00 PM**

VIRTUAL EVENT [ZOOM LINK HERE](#)



**HAVE QUESTIONS
FOR OUR
PANELISTS? ASK
THEM HERE!**

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Since 2022, Applied Practice has hosted an annual Tips on Transitioning to the Workforce panel with MPH alumni from last year's graduating cohort. This event prompts alumni to share their experiences traversing the job market into employment and offers words of empowerment and encouragement for future alumni. This year's panelists included alumnae Ashanti Cromedy, MPH, Cate Jones, MPH, and Nudrat Nawar Hassan, MPH, who shared empowering words of wisdom with the soon-to-be graduates about successfully transitioning to the workforce. At a time when public health jobs are at a premium, these stellar alumni captured the ways that the ASPH prepares students to successfully enter the workforce.



LISTEN TO THE REST OF THE RECORDINGS HERE

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

ASPPH SECTION RETREAT

This past June, Dr. Jenkins represented the Applied Practice section at the Association for Schools and Public Health Programs Sections Retreat. During the retreat, Dr. Jenkins learned about the great work that fellow ASPPH members are doing and even got to preview some big plans that the ASPH Office of Applied Practice has for the upcoming year!



Dr. Zach Jenkins and Ms. Kollette Clark, the Director of Evaluation and Academic Assessment at the 2026 ASPPH Sections retreat



Dr. Zach Jenkins sharing some of his insights at the sections retreat

CAREER ADVISING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



MOCK JOB APPLICATION

This resource provides Master of Public Health Students enrolled at the Arnold School of Public Health the opportunity to simulate the job application, and interview process by “applying” to several fictitious yet realistic public health roles. Members of the Applied Practice team role-play as the hiring agency and provide feedback to students on how to improve their application (e.g., resume, cover letter, interview skills, etc.) at the culmination of the mock interview.

One student who benefited from this resource is alumnus **Naomi Higgins** who recently received the prestigious Council of State and Territorial Applied Epidemiology Fellowship.

MPH STUDENT-LED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This ongoing initiative builds on the inherent strengths that MPH students already possess by opening the opportunity for them to submit a proposal to educate their peers on a topic in which they possess specialized expertise. Previous submissions have included Canva Unlocked, Cultivating your Public Health Brand and more. See a full list of previous submissions **[here](#)**.



Naomi Higgins MPH, Mock Job Application Participant

COLLABORATE WITH US



Interested in partnering with Applied Practice? Click below depending on your interests and needs!



**PROVIDE AN APPLIED PRACTICE
EXPERIENCE/PRACTICUM PLACEMENT**



REQUEST A CONSULTATION



REQUEST A GUEST LECTURE



RESEARCH COLLABORATION



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sph.sc.edu/opph