



Maryland Department of Health Student Research Project

Maryland Public Health Emergency Preparedness Legal Handbook

Focus Areas:
Emergency Legal Authorities

SUMMER 2026
May 26 – July 31

This project is being offered through the **University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State** (<http://mpower.maryland.edu>) – a formal collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership – “MPower”— provides funding for the program.

MDH MISSION

The mission of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is to work together to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management, and community engagement.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The selected student will collaborate with the MDH to update the Maryland Public Health Emergency Preparedness Legal Handbook, providing information on available legal authorities for state and local public health response. This handbook was first created in 2013 and updated in 2018; the 2018 version will be utilized as a basis for updates/new information.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The UM Scholar will have the opportunity to update the Maryland Public Health Emergency Preparedness Legal Handbook and to provide the latest statute/regulation references and interpretations. This UM Scholar will also scan legal authorities (sources of law, such as constitutions, statutes, etc.) utilized by Maryland and other states during public health emergencies, including the COVID-19 response, for potential inclusion in the update.

A typical day will include research/updates regarding Maryland Code and COMAR as well

as other legal authorities utilized by Maryland and other states during public health emergencies.

Project work will also include key informant interviews with Office of Preparedness and Response (OP&R) staff and others to understand public health emergency response and coordination.

High-level learning objectives for this project include:

- A greater understanding of public health emergencies.
- Defining legal authorities needed for the timeliest response.

The primary deliverable for this project, is an updated version of the Maryland Public Health Emergency Preparedness Legal Handbook, a guidance document which provides updated information regarding available legal authorities for state and local public health response.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

This project is ideal for a student with a background in legal research and/or who is familiar with researching Maryland Code and COMAR. The ideal candidate(s) will also be able to research legal authorities utilized in other states and at the federal level, which may be applicable to public health emergency response in Maryland. The ideal candidate(s) will be organized, responsive to questions, suggestions, and will be both curious and engaged about public health emergency response.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Students may come from UMCP's School of Public Policy and School of Public Health and UMB's Francis King Carey School of Law.

PROJECT LOCATION

This project will be delivered in hybrid format; Remote and in-person at MDH's Office of Preparedness and Response. When in person, this is the address that the student will report to:

MDH Office of Preparedness and Response
7462 Candlewood Road, Ste D
Hanover, MD 21076

Mentor and student should discuss delivery details during the interview, including method (in-person, hybrid, or remote), expectations, location, and meeting frequency. Flexibilities to complete the 10 weeks of research may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

PROJECT LEAD/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Sara Barra, Director, MDH Office of Preparedness and Response

OFFICE ADDRESS: 7462 Candlewood Road, Ste D

PHONE NUMBER: (443)-695-6732

EMAIL ADDRESS: sara.barra@maryland.gov

More than one student will be considered for this project.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

- 10 weeks/400-hour student research project conducted with schedule mutually defined and agreed upon by the student and mentor.
- The project is funded by the [University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State \(MPower\)](#) and is a part of the [UM Scholars program](#).
- The selected student will receive a stipend for their work, to be paid in multiple installments over the 10 weeks.
 - **\$5,500** for undergraduate students
 - **\$6,500** for graduate students
- Work is expected to occur during typical business hours; Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in the Fall 2026 semester.
- Travel to and parking at the MDH is the responsibility of the student and costs are included in the stipend.

[APPLY HERE](#)