

Expanding my role as an intern with the NOLA Maternal & Child Health Coalition

Thu, 04/14/2022 - 00:00

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Emma Allen newcomb@tulane.edu

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My role as a research assistant with the New Orleans Maternal and Child Health Coalition is to help with the research project they are conducting to evaluate how effective the coalition has been since its inception. The project also aims to identify

the coalition's strengths, weaknesses, and how to improve in the future. My tasks include administrative and organizational tasks as well as interview transcription, but with every research project there are periods of high productivity and periods where I am less needed. This semester has been one with less tasks for the research project so my focus has expanded to being an intern for the New Orleans Maternal and Child Health Coalition more broadly.

This expanded role includes additional digital file organization, making citations, compiling resources. My two biggest projects also fall under coalition tasks. The first was work on the Action Network, which is a system that organizations such as the coalition can use to mobilize their members and facilitate mass emails to state legislators. In the system, a template can be created that members use to send to their representatives on important issues that affect maternal and child health in New Orleans. Some issues necessitate broad emails to senate or house members but others are particularly effective to certain committees, such as Ways & Means or Health & Welfare Committees. My job was to compile a list of all the members on six different committees, their emails, districts, and input the information into the Action Network.

My second largest project was putting together a presentation that will serve as a general introduction to the Maternal & Child Health Coalition. The presentation will be used to introduce the coalition to potential new partners or members and serve as a broad overview of who the coalition is and the work they do.

I have served as a research assistant with the coalition for three semesters now and my entire experience has been remote due to COVID, which has its challenges, but one advantage is that this format allowed me to continue my internship while I studied abroad this semester. This was amazing because it meant I did not have to choose between studying abroad or keeping my position, I got to do both! The only major difference was the time difference and my inability to make some meetings, but overall it was a great experience. I have loved being able to work while abroad, but I am excited to continue my internship this summer in the same time zone.