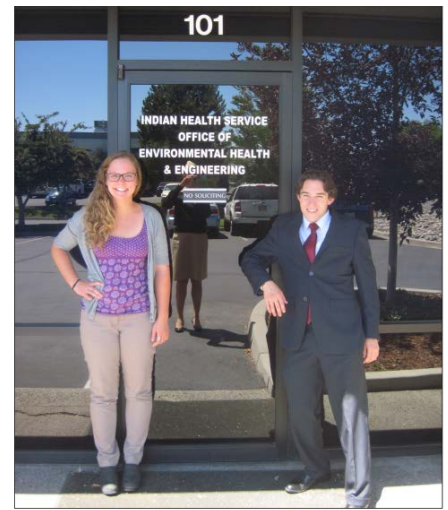


# ENS Ada Sloop Jr. COSTEP Summer 2014 Western Carolina University Reno District Office Sparks, Nevada

My name is Ada Sloop and I am a rising senior in Western Carolina University's Environmental Health and Safety Program. I had heard of the PHS Jr. COSTEP program prior to choosing Environmental Health as my major through friends that had participated in the program. The Jr. COSTEP program not only helped me confirm my change in major, but also became a goal for my undergraduate experience.



The engineer JRCOSTEP and I outside the office.

When I was assigned to the Reno District Office, I was not only excited to explore the western part of the United States, but also to interact with professionals in many different areas of Environmental Health. My experience achieved this objective and then some. On the first day my Preceptor, LT Landon Wiggins, provided me with a full agenda for the summer. That was when I knew that I would be able to interact with many different aspects of the field, from vector control to food safety. I worked with 13 different tribes in 3 states during my time here in the Reno office, including the Schurz, Owens Valley, Uintah & Ouray, and Elko Service Units.



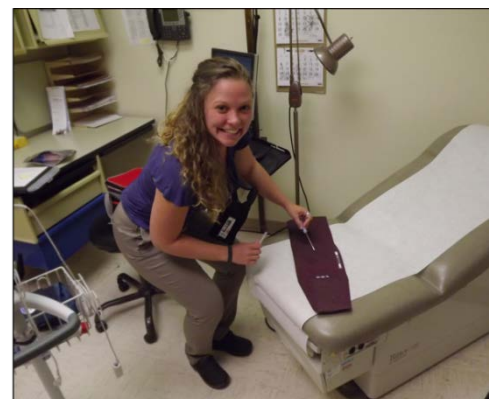
Interacting with puppy and owner at a rabies clinic.

I developed professional relationships with not just my Preceptor, but also with the entire staff within the Reno District. Being stationed at a district office provided a large amount of support and resources to me. I had the opportunity to go out with all four Environmental Health Officers on several occasions and also some of the Engineering Officers. This unique experience showed me the different approaches that professionals in the field can take toward their work.

My work consisted of rabies vaccination clinics (eight locations), various environmental health surveys (twenty-seven facilities), community training courses (seven classes), mosquito surveillance (three sites), harmful algal bloom response planning, and a primary project focused on the evaluation of environmental cleaning in healthcare settings (five clinics). My office exposed me to a lot of the technical areas of environmental health including; food safety, health care facilities, rehabilitation facilities, water quality, childcare facilities, and vector control. My final project utilized an instrument that was new to the area. This presented me with the opportunity to explore the tool's possibilities and collect data that is being used to address gaps in environmental cleaning in many of the health care facilities served by the district Environmental Health program.

Having a passion for travel, this opportunity allowed me to explore many parts of the country I had not been to in the past. I was able to visit many areas of the west coast as well as the intermountain west. I would not have had this opportunity to visit these amazing places if it weren't for the Jr. COSTEP program.

Although my time in Reno was brief, I feel as though I had a productive grasp on the different fields of environmental health. Working with the Indian Health Service also taught me how disparities can determine community dynamic. Every moment out in the field was a chance for me to be an educator and also a learner. Both the Indian Health Service and the U.S. Public Health Service are wonderful organizations that go to great heights to ensure the health and safety of their communities. I will definitely be considering a career in the USPHS. My experience this summer was phenomenal and I now know that environmental health is what I want to pursue.



Swabbing surfaces at a clinic for my project