

**ENS Felix Ngouan**  
**JRCOSTEP Summer 2015**  
**East Central University**  
**Rhineland District Office**  
**Rhineland, Wisconsin**

My name is Felix Ngouan, and I am originally from the Ivory Coast. I am currently a student majoring in Environmental Health Science at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma.

I first heard about the COSTEP program through my advisor CAPT Patrick Bohan, USPHS (Ret). Additional to my advisor, the EHS department had current active officers from USPHS tell more about the IHS program. After that my interest grew and I knew it would be a great opportunity to apply to this program.



My first week at the office and it was fun

After applying, I found out I would be stationed at the Rhineland District Office in Rhineland, Wisconsin. I did not know what to expect about the location, the office, or the entire moving process. However, I had the opportunity to work with a wonderful and knowledgeable staff. My preceptor was Marissa Kumar and she was a great help. She was very patient during the application process and guided me through all the proper channels. It didn't take long and I found myself stationed in an office located in Rhineland.



Presentation at Lac Vieux Desert Health Fair

On one of my opportunities, I was able to talk about the IHS at the Lac Vieux Desert Health Fair, this was a great experience. The first two weeks were more about becoming familiar with the different codes and regulations, WebEHRS, and office procedures. Following that, I participated in surveys at a couple of convenient stores, where I learned how to properly inspect and give recommendations as needed. I spent the first part of my summer inspecting casino bars, kitchens and buffets. I became more knowledgeable about food safety and housekeeping by helping my preceptor Marissa and Barry Hugo during a food handler and housekeeping class. I was able to participate in a pool survey, health and wellness center survey and promote the adoption of tribal food codes. I spent the second half of my internship traveling to several reservations to conduct routine inspections of food stand vendors and grounds during Pow Wow celebrations. I learned that patience and communication skills play a big role when working with diverse cultures, personalities and beliefs.

Reports had to be completed after each survey; so I became familiar with the environmental reporting software, WebEHRS. Learning this new database was a great opportunity. Besides the reports, I worked on some projects such as an emergency preparedness informational tri-fold, a tribal food code template and updated references on the Bemidji Area IHS mold guideline booklet.

My overall experience with the Indian Health Service has been a great one, leaving me with many skills, hands-on opportunities and new connections within my desired field. The ability to work with the community and the wonderful staff helped me grow personally and professionally.

Finally, for anyone willing to learn through challenges, this program will help you grow and enhance your knowledge on environmental health. I would highly recommend this internship to my friends and other university students. I would like to thank every single person who contributed to my successful internship. A special thanks to Marissa Kumar, Barry Hugo and the Indian Health Service for this wonderful opportunity.



Kitchen inspection for a casino



Teaching a Food Handler class



Temporary Food Surveys at a Pow Wow