

# Building a Statewide Network of Peers for Rural Infection Preventionionists

## Authors

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## BACKGROUND

### What's the Problem?

- Novice infection preventionists feeling like they do not have a professional network ("lone IP")
- Gap in resources and educational materials related to infection control and prevention for new infection preventionists
- Gap in opportunities for proficient infection preventionists to develop leadership skills

The 12-week peer-to-peer mentorship program aims to build relationships and provide professional development for new and experienced infection preventionists, as well as address challenges like high rates of turnover in a geographically large and rural state.

### Program Qualifications

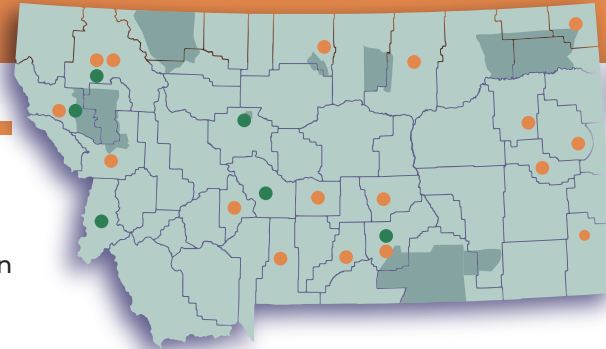
#### Mentor Qualifications

- At least 25% of position is related to infection prevention
- In position for > 3 years
- Board Certified in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC)
- Current APIC and APIC Montana Chapter member

#### Mentee Qualifications

- At least 25% of position is related to infection prevention
- In position for < 3 years
- Actively working towards Certification in Infection Prevention and Control

DPHHS and MTPHI worked together to pair mentors and mentees based on facility type and location.



6 MENTORS  
18 MENTEES

### Program Expectations

- Mentors and mentees meet weekly to focus on specific needs and discuss workplan progress.
- Monthly cohort calls for 90 minutes to discuss syllabus content, share with others about their learning experiences, and hear from a guest presenter on an educational topic of the group's choosing.
- Mentor and mentee pairs are offered a sponsored in-person travel opportunity to visit either the mentor's or the mentee's facility and a travel scholarship to attend an APIC Montana educational meeting.

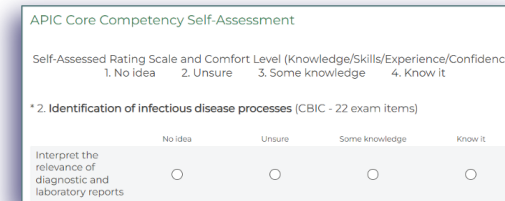
## METHODS

For each of the three Infection Control Mentorship Program cohorts, mentees completed a pre- and post-assessment based on APIC's Competency Self-Assessment Activity for Novice or Becoming Proficient Infection Preventionists. The pre-assessment was completed prior to the cohort kick-off and the post-assessment was completed during week 12 of the program.



Image from: <https://apic.org/professional-practice/infection-preventionist-ip-competency-model/>

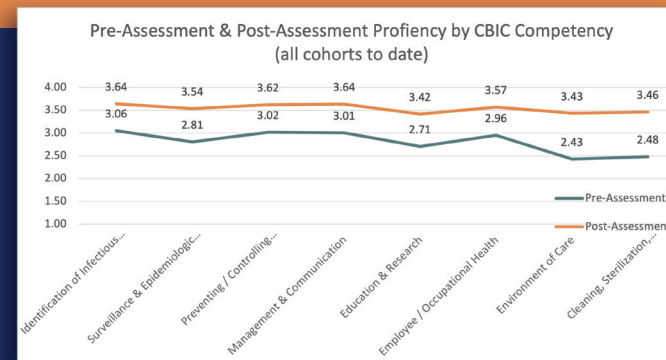
In addition, mentees reviewed the Roadmap for the Novice Infection Preventionist ('Novice' sections only) at the beginning of the program. At the end of the 12-week session, mentees were provided the 'Becoming Proficient' sections of the Roadmap and completed a general evaluation survey for the program.



## RESULTS

Mentees reported improved proficiency across all eight competency domains.

"This is an incredible program which has improved networking for infection preventionists across the state. Personally, I feel comfortable reaching out to any of the infection preventionists who have information that may help me or lead me into the right direction to meet new and challenging issues."  
- Spring 2023 Mentor



"I believe the mentorship program is valuable for all the infection preventionists across the state. So many have entered the field without any guidance from within their organization. This program will continue to grow new IPs and improve care across the state. Thank you all for all that you do, I deeply appreciate each of you!"  
- Winter 2023 Mentee

## SUCCESSSES

- Each cohort saw an increase in participation and there is a growing list of infection preventionists that have expressed interest in participating in future cohorts.
- Based on the success of the program to date, the mentorship program has helped address a gap related to professional development and skill-building for new infection preventionists.
- In addition, since the mentorship program was developed using APIC tools and resources, this program could serve as a model for other states looking to implement an infection control mentorship program.

## FUTURE PLANS

- Planning to continue the Infection Control Mentorship Program in 2024 and beyond with the goal of facilitating 2-3 cohorts per year contingent on grant funding
- Exploring expansion of the mentorship program for continued learning and growth (i.e., 'Becoming Proficient' iteration)
- Continuing to evaluate the program's impact, including potential impact on position retention, improvements / expansion of facility IP programs, professional network, etc.

## Resources

- Mentor Toolkit
- 12 Week Syllabus
- Workplan Template
- Roadmap for the Novice Infection Preventionist
- Contact List

SCAN TO ACCESS RESOURCE LIBRARY

