



2025 Intersectional Council Annual Report

Council Role and Responsibilities

The Intersectional Council (ISC) is composed of the Chairs, Chair- Elects, and Immediate Past Chairs of all Sections. The ISC represents the interests common to the APHA Sections, Student Assembly, Forums and Topical Groups. The ISC facilitates relations between and among these groups and with APHA Committees, Affiliates and Caucuses.

The Intersectional Council Steering Committee (ISC-SC) conducts ISC activities between the Annual Meetings. The fourteen members consist of nine members elected by the ISC, the ISC--SC Immediate Past Chair, the Student Assembly Chair--Elect and one member appointed by the Executive Board every three years, plus the Council of Affiliates Chair-Elect and the Caucus Collaborative Chair. The ISC--SC has a virtual midyear meeting, a meeting at the Annual Meeting, plus monthly Zoom calls in addition to the ISC bi-monthly meetings.

The Steering Committee assists Sections with internal management and communication. The ISC-SC:

- Reviews and comments on applications for Sections, Special Interest Groups (SPIGs) and Forums and submits comments to the Executive Board/Governing Council.
- Works within the framework of the APHA Strategic Plan by identifying specific goals and objectives which best fit the purpose of the ISC then develops an annual work plan.
- Functions as a proactive body on issues of concern to the Sections.
- Communicates association matters to the Sections and fosters responsible interchange among Section leadership as well as between Section leadership and other Association entities.
- Provides leadership development.

Members

Karl Cooper – Chair; Robin Kimbrough-Melton– Chair-Elect; Padmini Murthy – Immediate Past Chair
Members: Alina Cernasev; Paul Gilbert; Ebony Johnson; Jeanette Kowalik; Karen Mancera-Cuevas; Kimberly McBride; Kevin Borrup- Executive Board Appointee; Anas Khurshid Nabil– Student Assembly Liaison; Jose Pietro Aparicio– Caucus Collaborative Representative; Kaye Reynolds– Council of Affiliates Representative

Staff

Fran Atkinson - Deputy Director of Membership Services; Elsa Greer - Member Unit Program Manager; Sebastian Padrino - Member Engagement Specialist

Intersectional Council Topical Groups

One of the APHA strategic plan objectives is to increase collaboration across the member groups. To facilitate this collaboration, the ISC--SC has aided in the development and management of several topical groups. These collaborative groups work on issues that traverse multiple Sections and engages (members from multiple member units. The topical groups receive the following benefits: an ISC scientific session, a webinar, APHA LEAD online communities for leaders and members to communicate and an ISC--SC liaison. The current list of ISC--SC Topical Groups is as follows:

Climate and Health

ISC SC Liaisons: Jeanette Kowalik

Organizers: Raquel Silva, Matthew Weinburke

Webinar: The Changing Climate and Our Food and Nutrition System: Ramifications for Public Health

October 9, 2025

Opioids

ISC SC Liaison: Alina Cernasev

Organizers: Beth Sommers, Larry Selkow

Webinar: Policies Affecting Funding and Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder: Local and National Perspectives

July 23, 2025

Gun Violence Prevention

ISC SC Liaison: Robin Kimbrough-Melton, Alina Cernasev

Organizers: Judith Katzburg, Linda Degutis

Webinar: Delayed

Rural Health

ISC SC Liaisons: Paul Gilbert

Organizers: Meg Ann Perry Traci, Kate Perkins, Nancy Lewis

Webinar: Economic Stability and Health for Rural Families: Experiences in Central Iowa and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

June 26, 2025

Suicide Prevention

ISC SC Liaison: Robin Kimbrough-Melton

Organizers: Shawna Hite-Jones, Kristen Quinlan, Kerri Nickerson

Webinar: Rural Suicide Prevention: Discussing Disparities and Promoting Prevention Strategies
September 11, 2025

Disasters and Emergency Preparedness

ISC SC Liaisons: Kevin Borrup

Organizers: Peggy Keller, Kathleen Carlson
None

Summary of 2025 ISC Activities

ISC SC Meetings

ISC Steering Committee meetings were held monthly. The focus of the Steering Committee was based on the 2024 ISC Report and a priority poll provided to Sections in the beginning of the year. Many APHA member units have had challenges filling vacant elected and appointed positions over the past few years- therefore most requested that staff and the Steering Committee assist them in leadership development and filling the vacancies.

Recent Election Vacancies

Election	Total Vacancies	Remaining Vacancies	Remaining Vacancies %
2024 Special Elections (December)	66	27	41%
2025 Annual Elections (July)	241	46	19%

ISC Bi-Monthly Meetings

The broad Intersectional Council met on even months of this year and trainings from staff were on the odd months of the year. Due to the new administration, APHA has been very busy fighting to protect the public's health and public health agencies. The bi-monthly calls allowed Dr. Benjamin, Executive Director, James Carbo, Chief of Staff and Susan Polan, Associate Executive Director of Public Affairs and Advocacy to provide updates to Section Chairs, Chairs-Elect and Immediate Past Chairs. This provided the opportunities for leaders to ask questions and share information back to their Sections.

In addition, Aaron Guest, Speaker of the Governing Council joined the meetings several times to provide information on policy and governance changes. Also, due to the attack on public health, the ISC Steering Committee invited Rebecca Boulas, Action Board Chair to discuss how Sections could work closely with their Action Board Representatives, especially during the Speak for Health Campaign.

Leadership Development

As mentioned previously, Sections have struggled to fill vacant positions in the Section. Therefore, during the bi-monthly meetings members discussed leadership development best practices and creating a pipeline for students to become involved in Sections. Many agreed that the Disability Section has a good model in which their Section Councilors also hold appointed positions (Membership Chair, Awards Chair, Program Chair, etc.). During a separate meeting, the group discussed the need to utilize the Section Student Liaison and to collaborate with the Student Assembly.

However, the bigger discussion was concerning volunteer trends including:

- Time pressure and competing demands
- Economic constraints – leaders need to prioritize paid work over unpaid volunteering.
- Burnout and overload
- Changing expectations and preferences – traditional long-term roles feel too burdensome.
- Disruption from COVID-19
- Demographic Shifts

Fran Atkinson discussed these volunteer trends and the impact they are having on all professional associations. Currently, there are eleven APHA volunteers for every staff member to make association operate smoothly. As the number of volunteers decline APHA leaders will have to make difficult decisions for the future to sustain member units and the Association.

During the 2025 Section Chair-Elect/ Affiliate President-Elect training – staff brought a speaker, Elaine Pasqua to discuss the trends and burnout. In addition, staff will be bringing an expert on component relations, Peggy Hoffman to speak about the decline of volunteerism and the recent survey results from associations conducted over the summer. During that time, leaders will have the opportunity to work together in breakout groups and discuss changes that are necessary.

CoA/ISC Midyear Meeting

This year, the Council of Affiliates and the ISC Steering Committee decided to solely focus on advocacy for their midyear meeting and it was one of the most successful meetings in a decade. Karl Cooper, ISC Chair and Rebecca Nevedale, CoA Chair agreed that due to the Trump administration it was vital that the two groups discuss how they could better collaborate to advocate for public health on the national and local level. Several efforts came out of the discussion.

1. Section and Affiliates should work together to support the Speak for Health Campaign
2. More Section leaders need to join their Affiliates to bring their expertise to the local level.
 - a. Staff found that only 10% of members in the Leader's Corner were Affiliate members. However, the number is low, because many leaders have not identified themselves as Affiliate members in the database. To gain better insight and have an accurate number – staff will provide instructions on updating one's profile between the Annual Meeting and January
 - b. In February, staff will work with the CoA to launch an Affiliate member recruitment campaign. They will reach out and encourage leaders to join their Affiliates and work together on National Public Health Week efforts
 - c. 2026-2027 Section Chairs will need to be members of Affiliates, similar to Affiliate Presidents becoming APHA members during their year of leadership. The ISC Steering Committee is currently discussing how they can assist Section Chairs if they don't have the resources to join their Affiliate. It's important to note that the Chairs-Elect were strongly encouraged to join their Affiliate during the summer training.

3. During the meeting, Affiliate leaders stated that it would be extremely helpful to know the experts on various public health issues in their state. It was agreed that in the next year, ISC member, Paul Gilbert will work with the CoA and staff to enhance the expert database. APHA

Trainings

APHA Affiliate President-Elect and Section Chair-Elect Training

In addition, the ISC and Council on Affiliates (CoA) collaborated in developing the agenda for the Chair -Elect/President- Elect Training. The in-person training was held in July and was one of the most successful trainings to date. The cohort of leaders were able to network and form new relationships between Sections and Affiliates.

Advocacy Trainings

In July, both Section and Affiliate leaders were invited to an advocacy training to prepare them for the Speak for Health Campaign, which runs during the time in that congressional representatives are back in their home state for the summer recess. The training covered APHA advocacy priorities, questions at town halls and how to write an op-ed supporting public health policies.

Leadership Guidelines

In the beginning of the year, staff invited ISC members and Section Councilors to an overview of the new leadership handbook. The goal was to ensure that the Section Councilors are aware of their responsibilities and are assisting the Chair in determining and achieving the goals for the work plan.

CoA/ISC Candidates' Forum

The virtual CoA/ISC APHA Candidates Forum is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 4:00-7:00 PM (ET). This forum provides Governing Councilors an opportunity to interact with and ask questions of the candidates for President-Elect and the Executive Board in small groups. Similar to last year, the forum will take place over Zoom. Candidates will make 2-minute self-introductions and then will be placed in a Zoom breakout rooms with a small group of participants to chat and answer questions from the attendees. After 8 minutes, the candidate will move to another breakout room, and the participants will remain in the same breakout room. After all the candidates have visited each room, all participants will return to the main session. Each candidate will then have the opportunity to provide 2-minute closing remarks.

2025 Member Unit Report

Every year, Sections, the Student Assembly and Forums are expected to submit a work plan at the beginning of the year and a member unit report prior to the Annual Meeting. The ISC SC uses these annual reports to:

- Better understand the needs of the member units

- Identify struggling member units in need of extra support
- Ensure member unit activities align with APHA’s Strategic Plan
- Facilitate collaboration between member units

The ISC Work Plan and Report was created to monitor the activities of the groups to ensure their activities aligned with the APHA strategic plan, the engagement of members and to assist Sections that may have challenges in meeting the APHA standards. All Sections completed their work plan and report; therefore no Section lost a scientific session for the 2026 Annual Meeting.

There were many great accomplishments to report from the Sections. The following metrics from their submitted reports provide data where Sections are doing well and where they are facing some challenges. These data points will help guide the ISC SC and staff to provide the necessary resources and to support the Sections to continue leading the APHA’s initiatives in their many respectful fields of expertise.

- **Scientific Sessions:** Based on the results of the Section reports the top four scientific session themes included:
 - Equity (53%)
 - Social determinants of health (55%)
 - 2025 Theme: Making the Public’s Health A National Priority (37%)
 - Access to Care (39%)

Sections organizing five or more scientific sessions dropped from 79% to 60%. Staff will be investigating the significant decrease, especially since the number of sessions were similar to last year.

- **Recognition Awards:** The most common reported response by Sections (50%) was that 5-10 recognition awards were provided for best abstract, lifetime achievement, etc. to their members.

Recognition Awards	
None	5%
1	8%
2	11%
3	8%
4	8%
5-10 (<i>error – overlap in numbers</i>)	50%
10-15	5%
15 or more	5%

- **Scholarships:** Data was also collected for how many scholarships each Section provided for students and Early Career Professionals to attend the Annual Meeting. The number of student scholarships only decreased by one from last year, but the number of scholarships given in the 11-15 bracket increased from zero to three. Early Career Professionals scholarships stayed the same.

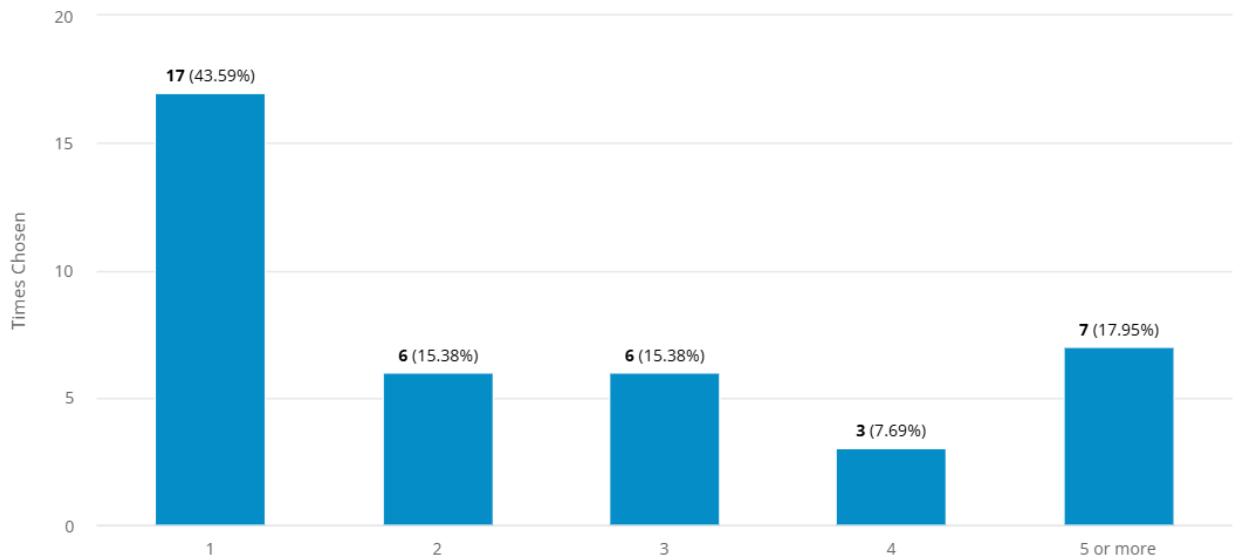
- **Student Scholarships**

Number of Sections/Student Assembly	Number of Scholarships 2025	Number of Scholarships 2024
Does not provide scholarships	18	15
1-5	10	16
6-10	5	3
11-15	3	0
16-20	1	1

Early Career Professional Scholarships

Number of Sections/Student Assembly	Number of Scholarships 2025	Number of Scholarships 2024
Does not provide scholarships	27	27
1	6	3
2	1	3
3		-
4		1
5	1	1

- **Webinars:** Unfortunately, the number of Sections organizing only one webinar focused in the Section’s field remained at 44%. The ISC SC will be emphasizing that Sections should work on increasing the numbers of public health focused webinars to engage their members.



The three most covered areas included Equity (41%), Access to Care (33%), Social Determinants of Health (26%) and 2025 Theme: Making the Public’s Health a National Priority (26%)

- **Mentoring Activities:** Staff saw a disconnect between Section mentoring programs and using LEAD’s Mentor Match. Plus, APHA had more mentees than mentors. In 2025, the Membership Department educated the Mentoring Chairs and started the process of streamlining their mentoring program through Mentor Match. The department will also reach out to APHA retired and emeritus members to increase the number of mentors.

- **Policy Activities:** The most reported policy activity was reviewing/archiving APHA policies (77%). Sections contributed feedback on the new policy process (69%) and reported advocating for a current APHA policy at the local, state, or federal level (51%).

- **Traditional Partner Engagements**
 - Seven Sections reported working with 5 APHA Affiliates and 9 Sections collaborated with 7 APHA Caucuses.
 - Over twelve government agencies/health departments/universities were engaged by the Sections including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and several state health departments.
 - Nineteen Sections worked closely with 33 nonprofits and foundations (Truth, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), deBeaumont Foundation, American Nurses Association, etc.)

- **Advocacy Priorities:** The three highest priorities were increasing and protecting funding for vital public health agencies (64%), upholding the ACA and expanding access to health coverages and services (39%) and strengthening and upholding critical public health laws (33%).
- **Advocacy Activities:** This year there was a dramatic increase in promoting action alerts. We believe this is attributed to a strong effort earlier this year to place Action Board representatives in their liaison groups on LEAD. It allowed Action Board reps to communicate easily with leaders in each Section. It's also important to note that the number of Sections not participating in advocacy activities went down from 18% to 10% this year.

Activities	2025	2024
Promoted Action Alerts (mandatory for Action Reps.)	46%	28%
Promoted Speak for Health campaign	28%	36%
Encouraged leadership to participate in advocacy tutorial webinar	33%	36%
Partnered with other groups to advocate an APHA priority	44%	31%
None. Maybe next year.	10%	18%
Other	15%	13%

- **Increase Retention and Recruitment of Members:**

	2025	2024
Launched one membership retention effort	44%	48%
Sent at least three messages each month on the online community	38%	43%
Executed one membership recruitment campaign	28%	31%
Welcomed new members each month	41%	28%
Sent a "Happy New Year" message to all members between Jan. 1-7	15%	18%
Checked-in with new members after 6-months	15%	15%
Sent a "thank you" message to renewing members	15%	0

- **Prioritization of Section Elections:**

Activities	2025	2024
Promoted vacant and upcoming volunteer positions throughout the year	95%	87%
Adhered to election timeline	87%	82%
Contacted staff if elected/appointed officer resigned	38%	54%

from position		
Prepared a competitive/diverse slate of candidates	67%	69%
Reached out to leaders that did not renew their membership	64%	51%

- **Annual Meeting Business Meetings:** Over the last two years, APHA staff have encouraged Sections to have virtual meetings and member orientations prior to the Annual Meeting. Sections have cut down their in-person business meetings and used the time to greet new members and address the most pertinent issues. Currently, nearly 59% have only one business meeting.
- **Member Unit Business Meetings (Webinars):** In 2026, the ISC Steering Committee will be encouraging Sections to have more than four business meetings during the year.

Number of webinar business meetings (including subcommittees)	2025	2024
1-4	23%	21%
4-6	10%	15%
6-8	10%	5%
8-10	8%	13%
10 or more	49%	46%

- **Other Leadership Development Activities:** Most (67%) did not sponsor leadership development activities.
- **Membership Engagement:** Most Sections reported organizing social events for this year’s Annual Meeting (95%), soliciting feedback from members (51%), and utilizing Section student liaisons to communicate with student members (49%)– which was unfortunately 10% down from last year. Other reported activities included presenting one or more webinars for students and early career professionals (36%).
- **Component Collaborations:** Most Sections organized and co-sponsored scientific presentations at the Annual Meeting (78%) or convened joint webinars and other educational activities for members (47%). Other activities included organizing and supporting joint working groups or committees (51%).
- **Affiliate Collaborations:** The most reported collaboration with state or local affiliates was organizing scientific presentations at the Annual Meeting (38%) and organizing National Public Health Week joint activities (21%), which increased three percent.

- **Needs from ISC:** The top needs indicated by Sections is guidance on how to raise money and increase their Section’s endowment (61%) and support, improve member communication (39%) and engage students (39%). It is also important to note that there was a 13% jump in the need to connect with other Sections interested in similar activities.

Technical assistance needed	2025	2024	Difference
Raise money and increase Section endowment	61%	56%	5
Develop leadership among members	36%	47%	-9
Recruit new members	36%	47%	-9
Improve member communication	39%	28%	11
Engage early career professionals	36%	28%	12
Improve impact of policy	21%	14%	7
Recruit and retain a more diverse group of members	21%	31%	-10
Engage student members	39%	33%	6
Learn about and connect with other Sections interested in similar activities	30%	17%	13
Engage retired members	27%	31%	-4
Implement a sustainable business model	15%	25%	-10
Engage members in making an impact in advocacy	12%	17%	-5
Use strategic communication to frame issues	9%	14%	-5
Support Component leaders	24%	17%	7
Build and sustain effective partnerships/alliances	24%	25%	-1
Measure progress toward goals	3%	17%	-14
Other	6%	8%	-2