



# Nigeria Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (NFELTP)



## NFELTP Mission

To assist and support the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMA&RD) in building a sustainable network of highly skilled field epidemiologists, including physicians, veterinarians and laboratory managers, who measurably improve public health services at Local Government, State and National levels.

## Background

The Nigeria Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (NFELTP) is a two-year in-service training program in applied epidemiology and public health laboratory practice, created to be a long-term program within the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)/Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development. In conjunction with the University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, it trains medical epidemiology residents, public health laboratory residents, and veterinary epidemiology residents for leadership positions in various levels of both the Ministries of Health and Agriculture through a combination of long-term field placements and didactic courses. The program also offers competency-based field epidemiology training to frontline health care workers at Local Government level to improve surveillance and response to priority disease as part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) and International Health Regulation (IHR) core capacity requirements.

The NFELTP is similar to programs that have been established in more than 80 countries and is modelled after the 67-year-old U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) two-year Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) training program. The Nigerian program was started in 2008 and is among the few programs offering a veterinary component to advance the **One Health** concept in addressing Zoonoses (diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans), emerging infectious diseases (majority of which are of animal origin) and other health issues involving the human/animal interface. This is done through gainful collaborations and networking between the animal and human health sectors.

## Program Content

Residents of the program select one of three tracks for study: Medical Epidemiology, Laboratory Epidemiology and Management, or Veterinary Epidemiology. Residents acquire skills and competencies in the following areas:

Basic Epidemiology	Epidemiology of Priority Diseases & Injuries	Laboratory Methods in Epidemiology
Biostatistics	Research Methodology	Communication in Public Health
Computer Applications in PH Research	Advanced Epidemiology	Special Topics in Public Health
Public Health Surveillance		Teaching and Mentoring
		Management and Leadership

Resource person are drawn locally and internationally. Residents are responsible for completing a number of assignments, or practical outputs, designed to strengthen and enhance their understanding of field epidemiology. These outputs include designing/evaluating surveillance systems, technical and scientific writing, data analysis, and outbreak investigations and responses. This is in keeping with the spirit of competency based training whose emphasis is learning through service. These outputs from the residents are useful in informing evidence-based decisions that improve public health service delivery particularly surveillance and outbreak response.

## Field Placements

Unlike many training opportunities, **FELTP is a fundamentally field-based program** with the goal of building epidemiological capacity through service provision. The didactic components comprise 25% of the focus, while field assignment activities make up 75% of the program. Residents are placed in state or federal public health institutions for the duration of their 2 years in FELTP. Experiential learning is at the heart of this field epidemiology program.

## Achievements

So far, 428 residents have been recruited in the program with **224** completing the 2-year hands-on training. Over **1000** have been trained in frontline 3-month FETP in **16** states covering **365** LGAs. Residents have responded to over **320** public health emergencies including viral hemorrhagic fevers outbreak like Ebola and Lassa fever. Additionally, residents have been engaged in response to lead poisoning, rabies, cholera, cerebrospinal meningitis, measles, diphtheria, Diethylene glycol (DEG) poisoning and mumps among other disease. The focus for the residents is to support early detection and response to outbreak therefore limiting spread and the negative impact. The residents are also involved in the national efforts in eradicating polio and strengthening routine childhood immunization through the National Stop Transmission of Polio (NSTOP) and the GID-FETP project. The program is involved in supporting and sustaining disease surveillance systems for HIV, Malaria and other infectious and non-infectious diseases (Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response). Emphasis is on data quality assessment and improvement, evaluations, strengthening information systems and impact assessments and surveys. These systems are important for providing data to inform public health decisions.

## Program Support

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