Summer 2026 Internship Reflection: Navneet Kaur

Category: News
written by NCUIH | November 24, 2026



My summer internship with the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) was an experience that allowed me to step beyond the classroom and see how public health research can contribute to meaningful change in communities. As an MPH Epidemiology student, I was excited to dive in public health research and health equity. What I did not expect was how much this experience would broaden my understanding of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) and the importance of culturally responsive public health practice.

Through projects focused on oral health, maternal health, racial misclassification, and traditional healing, I gained hands-on experience in literature review, survey development, Qualtrics, data management, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and public health communication.

One of the most meaningful lessons I learned was that data are more than numbers—they represent real communities and people's experiences. My work on racial misclassification helped me understand how inaccurate representation of American Indian and Alaska Native populations can affect health surveillance, the visibility of disparities, and efforts to improve maternal health outcomes.

I also gained a deeper appreciation for culturally responsive and community-centered public health practice. Working with the NCUIH team taught me the importance of collaboration, asking questions, seeking feedback, and taking advantage of opportunities to learn beyond my assigned tasks.

I am grateful especially to Dr. Kimberly Fowler, Vice President, Technical Assistance and Research Center (TARC), NCUIH team and my mentors for their guidance and support throughout this experience. This internship strengthened both my technical and professional skills while expanding my understanding of Urban Indian health. I will carry these lessons with me as I continue my MPH journey and pursue a career in epidemiology, research, and health equity.