

# Be a Therapist Officer

in the U.S. Public Health Service  
Commissioned Corps



## ➤ About the Commissioned Corps

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps protects, promotes, and advances the health and safety of the Nation. With more than 6,000 officers, the Commissioned Corps is one of the Nation's seven uniformed services and resides in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As the world's foremost public health service, it is composed entirely of officers who have been commissioned on the basis of their health-related training.

Commissioned officers deliver ongoing health promotion and disease prevention programs and are called on to provide onsite clinical and public health expertise in times of national emergencies and disasters. A career in the Commissioned Corps offers unlimited opportunities to serve your country while improving the quality of people's lives and making a real difference in public health.

## ➤ What It Means To Be a Therapist Officer in the Commissioned Corps

Therapist officers in the Commissioned Corps work throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in other Federal agencies and programs, including the following:

- Indian Health Service
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Office of the Secretary
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

- National Institutes of Health
- Health Resources and Services Administration

The focus is on improving physical health for entire populations. While there is plenty of direct patient care in every setting imaginable, there also are opportunities to become involved in organized community prevention and treatment programs. Therapist officers in the Corps:

- Provide physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, speech-language pathology, or respiratory therapy services to maximize function and improve quality of life for patients with disability or disease.
- Develop and provide clinical specialty care in a broad range of therapy practice areas.
- Coordinate care as valued members of collegial transdisciplinary teams.
- Respond to public health emergencies.
- Apply therapy-related expertise in conducting research.
- Implement evidenced-based research into clinical practice.
- Develop national health policies.
- Coordinate education efforts on a variety of public health issues, encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles to prevent disability and disease.

## ➤ Pay

Starting base pay and potential bonuses vary depending on level of experience, accreditation and training, geographic location, and number of dependents, if any. Base pay increases with promotions and years of service. Tax-free compensation is provided for housing and meals. While it is difficult to compare your take-home pay with someone in the private sector, your base pay, in addition to an assortment of nontaxable income and benefits, provides a competitive compensation package that grows with years of service and promotions. The U.S. Public Health Service also understands the financial burden of professional schooling and, in coordination with certain Federal agencies, may offer loan repayment and other educational and family support programs.

More information comparing compensation in the Corps to pay in the private sector is available at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).

## ➤ Benefits

As an officer in the Commissioned Corps, you will enjoy a camaraderie and sense of common purpose unlike anything you will experience in the private sector, and Commissioned Corps benefits are generous. They include the following:

- Health care and dental care at no cost
- Thirty days of paid vacation per year
- Paid sick leave
- Paid maternity leave
- Malpractice insurance coverage
- A retirement plan with benefits eligibility beginning after 20 years of service

**Many additional benefits are listed at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).** Officers in the Commissioned Corps have opportunities for mobility among Government agencies and career advancement in diverse work settings. The Corps encourages you to expand your knowledge base and grow professionally so that you can effectively deal with the challenges of improving public health. Tuition reimbursement opportunities may be available.

## ➤ Special Degree and License Requirements

All Commissioned Corps officers must meet several basic qualifications: You must be a U.S. citizen, be less than 44 years of age, and pass a physical examination.

To be a therapist officer, you also need a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctoral degree in your therapy discipline from an accredited program. You also must possess a current, unrestricted, and valid license/certification/registration from your therapy association or state. More details on degree and license requirements are described at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov). Additional special pay is available for some advanced clinical certifications awarded by therapy professional associations.

## ➤ Join America's Public Health Team!

If you are a student or therapist interested in joining the fight for public health, or if you have questions about what we do and how you can make a difference with the Commissioned Corps, we would like to talk to you. For more information, call us at 1-800-279-1605 or visit our Web site at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).

