

# Be a Health Services 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 Health Services Officer in the Commissioned Corps

Health services officers in the Commissioned Corps work throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in other Federal agencies and programs. Most health services officers serve in the following agencies:

- Indian Health Service
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Food and Drug Administration

- Department of Homeland Security
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Office of Public Health and Science
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- National Institutes of Health

Health services officers in the Corps serve in a wide range of professions within three primary subcategories:

- Clinical specialties (including clinical psychologists, dental hygienists, medical technologists, optometrists, physician assistants, podiatrists, and social workers);
- Health education and administration specialties; and
- Basic and applied sciences.

Health services officers have the opportunity to advance their careers while performing much-needed public health services to underserved populations. The focus is on improving the health of entire communities.

## ➤ 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:

- 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 and long-term training opportunities may be available through the hiring agency.

## ➤ 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 health services officer, you also need the following:

- Qualifying degree from an accredited health professional program, usually approved in *American Universities and Colleges* (published by the American Council on Education), which varies by discipline.
- If applicable, a current, unrestricted, and valid license in any of the 50 States; Washington, DC; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; the U.S. Virgin Islands; or Guam. You may also need to meet additional accreditation criteria to qualify, depending on your profession.

Please visit our Web site to review the required qualifying degree, licensure if applicable, and acceptable accrediting body for different disciplines:

<http://www.usphs.gov/profession/healthservices/requirements.aspx>

## ➤ Join America's Public Health Team!

If you are a student or a health services professional 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 800-279-1605 or visit our Web site at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov).

