



SRCOSTEP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. Do I qualify for SRCOSTEP?

You must be within one year of completing your undergraduate or post graduate program. Applications are currently being accepted for those students who are graduating in 2025 or early 2026.

Q2. What is SRCOSTEP?

An extern program where students gain valuable professional experience and are paid for their work while completing and furthering their health-related professional education.

Q3. Do I have to complete the application process again if I was a previous JRCOSTEP and when is the open application period?

Yes. All the required documents must be current and expire after one year. SRCOSTEP applications are only able to be submitted between June 1st and September 30th for the following years' program. Final year start dates must be after May 1st of the following year. For example: applicants who apply between June and September 2023 would start the SRCOSTEP in their final year of school after May 2024.

Q4. Which agency will I be assigned to work?

Students that participate in SRCOSTEP work in federal government agencies and programs as active duty Commissioned Corps officers. Applicants are accepted from a variety of fields, including environmental health, pharmacy, engineering, and nursing. Federal government agencies that currently participate in SRCOSTEP include Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

Q5. What are my chances of being selected for SRCOSTEP and how will I be notified of my selection?

Competitive selection process based on transcripts, GPA, resume, references, security and medical. Student selections are made by our supporting agencies and only selected students will receive emails in early January of the application year. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.usphs.gov/students>.

Q6. Is there an obligation to join the Commissioned Corps after I complete the SRCOSTEP tour of duty?

There is an obligation commitment of two days paid back for each day as a SRCOSTEP. Typical assignments vary from 18 to 24 months.

Q7. Do I have to wear a uniform while on duty as a SRCOSTEP?

The hiring agency may require SRCOSTEPs to wear the Commissioned Corps utility uniform.

Q8. Can I choose the agency and location of where I want to complete my obligation?

It is very unlikely that students can choose the location. Students are matched at duty stations based on their degree, skill qualifications, and the needs of the agency.

Q9. What happens after I graduate SRCOSTEP?

You will work at your assigned location while you study for and receive your needed credentials and continue to fulfill your Commissioned time obligation.

Q10. How much will I be paid and when will I receive my pay?

All SRCOSTEP interns will receive the O-1 pay rate based on the military pay table on the first of each month. The total salary includes base pay rate of a Navy Ensign, O-1 grade, housing allowance, and a food allowance. For additional information, please see <https://www.usphs.gov/salary-and-benefits>.

Q11. Will I receive health care coverage?

Yes. SRCOSTEPs called to active duty will receive full TRICARE benefits. This includes their dependents.

Q12. What are the job duties of the SRCOSTEP participant?

Successful completion of final year of school. Officers who fail to fulfill the service obligation incurred as a result of PHS supported training shall be obligated to pay PHS twice the amount of total pay received.