



|| USPHS Commissioned Corps



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC) EPIDEMIC INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (EIS) PROGRAM

What is EIS?

- A. EIS is a highly competitive, 2-year post-graduate fellowship in applied epidemiology. This CDC program, established in 1951, is a unique combination of on-the-job-learning and service. Investigating outbreaks in communities is integral to the EIS experience. As CDC's on-call disease detectives, EIS officers are among the agency's first-line rapid responders. EIS officers help public health officials investigate and control infectious disease outbreaks and respond to natural disasters and other threats to the public's health.

What is EIS doing to improve diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility?

- A. We have made organizational changes in how we recruit, select, and train EIS officers. All of our changes have been informed by our EIS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council. The council was formed to ensure a broadly inclusive culture and to better serve CDC and the public. For more information about how we incorporate DEIA into EIS, visit the [About the Program](#) web page.

What do EIS officers learn?

- A. [EIS officers learn](#) to apply the science of epidemiology to solve public health problems. They learn about using and evaluating surveillance systems and applied epidemiologic techniques including steps for investigating an outbreak. They gain broad knowledge in biostatistics, infection prevention and control, and other public health topics such as



health equity. They receive communication and media training to prepare them to effectively share their work with scientists, news media, and the public.

After a month-long orientation, new EIS officers begin assignments as ready responders in infectious and noninfectious diseases, global health, injury prevention, environmental health, and occupational health. EIS officers lead and participate in monthly seminars, monthly training sessions, and the [annual EIS conference](#) where they present findings from their investigations and studies. Through scheduled trainings and on-the-job learning, the officers gain competency in the practice of consequential epidemiology. They also meet and learn from each other, CDC staff, and other leaders in public health and epidemiology.

Who is eligible to apply for the EIS program?

A. Physicians;

Doctoral-level scientists with background in public health or one of its disciplines;

Veterinarians;

Nurses;

Other healthcare professionals (e.g., dentists, pharmacists);

All applicants must meet degree, licensing, and experience requirements listed on our website. For complete eligibility criteria, visit the [EIS Application](#) web page.

Does EIS offer a fellowship opportunity for infectious disease physicians?

- A. In partnership with the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), EIS is offering a pilot program for infectious disease (ID) physicians who are interested in EIS. The Joint ID/EIS Fellowship is a four-year program, starting with a two-year ID fellowship, then continuing to the EIS fellowship. The application period for the first cohort is expected to open in the spring of 2023. Learn more about this [new opportunity](#).

Where do EIS officer works?

A. [EIS officers are assigned to work in:](#)

- CDC headquarters in Atlanta or other locations across the United States
- State, local, or territorial health departments
- Other federal agencies

EIS officers may be sent to another location on a temporary assignment. Although international work may be part of an EIS assignment, no EIS officers are based outside the United States. Assignments are made during a matching process that considers an officer's interests and the preferences of the position supervisors who



will host and train the officer.

How do assignments differ in the EIS program?

- A. EIS officers are either assigned to CDC headquarters or regional facilities or to a state or local health department. EIS does occasionally offer positions with other federal agencies. Each year, approximately 30% of EIS officers are assigned to state, local, or territorial health departments or other partner organizations or agencies. These EIS officers are referred to as “field assignees.”

Like their counterparts assigned to CDC headquarters or regional facilities, EIS field assignees participate in and lead epidemiologic investigations, conduct surveillance studies, interact with the public and the media, and produce high-quality scientific presentations and publications.

Field assignees are jointly supervised and mentored by experienced epidemiologists—two or more at the partner agency and one at CDC. They have direct access to their CDC supervisor and CDC resources such as epidemiologic, statistical, and laboratory expertise.

Regardless of where they are assigned, all EIS officers participate in competency-based education and experiential on-the-job training.

What are the benefits of being an EIS officer?

- A. During the 2-year fellowship, EIS officers:
- Are employed by CDC
 - Receive competitive salary and benefits
 - Are mentored and supervised by experienced, dedicated, and enthusiastic expert epidemiologists
 - Have many opportunities for hands-on work throughout the United States and around the world
 - Have direct impact on domestic and global population health and well-being

What is after EIS?

- A. EIS provides a pathway for a wide range of careers. Many EIS graduates choose public health careers at the local, state, or federal level.



EIS alumni who stay in public health ensure that CDC and other agencies have sustainable epidemiologic expertise. Alumni include:

- Acting Surgeons General
- CDC directors and other senior CDC leaders
- Public health and medical school faculty and deans
- Non-governmental health organization executives
- State or medical epidemiologists
- Pharmaceutical and insurance industry executives
- State health officials
- Health and medical editors, reporters, and writers