

# Be a Scientist 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, the Commissioned Corps 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 Scientist Officer in the Commissioned Corps

Scientist 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:

- Office of the Secretary
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of the Interior
- Environmental Protection Agency

- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Food and Drug Administration
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Indian Health Service
- National Institutes of Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The Corps seeks scientist officers to:

- Conduct biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and epidemiological research
- Provide treatment and mental health services in a variety of settings, especially for special needs and underserved populations
- Review and regulate biologics, drugs, food, and medical devices
- Develop, implement, and provide oversight for national and international health research programs that address prevention, treatment, and management of numerous diseases and conditions
- Manage national health programs in areas such as chronic and infectious diseases, injury prevention and control, nutrition, mental health, and obesity
- Work on domestic and international assignments
- Serve in leadership positions to ensure preparedness and an effective response to public health emergencies and natural disasters

As a scientist officer in the Commissioned Corps, your work will improve health, save lives, and promote scientific and medical discovery at home and abroad.

Scientist officers in the Corps have received their qualifying degrees from a broad range of doctoral training programs and specialty areas, including epidemiology and other public health sciences; physical and biological sciences (such as biology, chemistry, pharmacology, toxicology, biochemistry, microbiology, human and plant physiology, and genetics); biostatistics; health and bioinformatics; clinical sciences; health risk assessment/communication and health marketing; science and public health policy; research and clinical psychology; social sciences; regulatory affairs in biology, toxicology, and environmental sciences; science administration (research and management); entomology; and anthropology.

## › 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. Officers who meet the appointment standards for the scientist category and who are credentialed psychologists may be eligible for special pay in addition to their regular compensation. 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 Commissioned 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.

## › 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 old (if no prior military service), and pass a physical examination. To be a scientist officer, you also need the following:

- A doctorate degree (Ph.D., Dr.P.H., D.Sc., Ed.D., or other qualifying doctorate degree) that required successful completion of independent, scientific, data-driven original research in the specialty field. This research generally takes the form of a doctoral dissertation and can involve a variety of scientific research designs, including meta-analyses.
- For qualifying doctoral degrees with a licensure requirement, 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

## › Join America's Public Health Team

If you are a science student or scientist 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).

