

# Be a Dietitian 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 Dietitian Officer in the Commissioned Corps

Dietitians 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
- Food and Drug Administration
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- National Institutes of Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

Dietitian officers in the Corps:

- Provide medical nutritional therapy as part of a team providing state-of-the-art health care.
- Plan and implement educational programs for patients, staffs of hospitals, specialty clinics, and community health centers.
- Develop and evaluate national health and nutrition programs and national dietary guidelines.
- Coordinate nutrition programs and establish standards for nutrition service in settings such as Federal and tribal health care facilities.
- Ensure the safety of our Nation's food and food products through research, testing, and inspection of food production facilities.
- Conduct research to improve the health and nutritional status of people throughout the country and the world.
- Respond to public health emergencies.

The focus is on improving physical health for entire populations. While there are plenty of opportunities to provide direct patient care, the Commissioned Corps offers the chance to become involved in organized disease prevention and health promotion programs that can positively impact national and community disease rates and patients' lives.

## ➤ 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.

## ➤ 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 dietitian officer, you must have a current, unrestricted, and valid registration by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. Educational requirements from a regionally accredited college or university in the United States with a major in foods and nutrition, dietetics, institution management, public health nutrition, food science, sports nutrition, or animal nutrition include:

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree (with no qualifying bachelor's degree)
- Doctoral degree (with no qualifying bachelor's degree)

You also must have:

Completed a current didactic program in dietetics approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE). Applicants also must present verification of completion of one of the following accredited/approved pathways:

- Accredited Dietetic Internship Program
- Accredited Coordinated Program

If you have just graduated and have not yet passed the Registered Dietitian exam, you may still apply to the Commissioned Corps. Your call to active duty will occur after you have provided documentation of a current, unrestricted, and valid registration by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

## ➤ Join America's Public Health Team

If you are a student or dietitian 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).

