



Ready Reserve Corps

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Eligibility

Age

- Q. What is the age requirement to commission into the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps?
- A. Applicants must not exceed 40 years of age at time of commissioning (unless a waiver is granted) to allow enough time for the Reservist to complete 20 years of credible service towards retirement by 60 years of age, which is the minimum age a Reservist may apply for retirement.
- Q. Is there an age waiver for the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps?
- A. Age waivers are at the discretion of the Surgeon General and are based on the needs of the service and whether the applicant possesses exceptional qualifications.

Professional Credentials & Licensing

- Q. Can applicants apply with a provisional license?
- A. No, applicants must have an unrestricted license.

Medical Factors

- Q. What are disqualifying chronic illnesses?
- A. Please refer to the Disqualifying Medical and Dental Conditions at <https://www.usphs.gov/apply-now/> for a comprehensive list and description of medical, dental, and mental conditions that are disqualifying conditions for service in the USPHS.
- Q. If an applicant has a disability rating from Veterans Affairs (VA), can they apply to the USPHS Commissioned Corps?
- A. Yes, but they will have to meet Medical Accession Standards. Additionally, to accept a commission in the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps, the applicant will have to forfeit any disability pay that they are receiving from the VA.

Legal Considerations

- Q. If I have a felony charge, will that make me ineligible?
- A. All applicants are required to undergo a Security Clearance during the application process and must receive a favorable adjudication.

Dress & Uniform

- Q. Is religious headdress acceptable?
- A. Yes, if the officer applies for a religious accommodation from the Surgeon General **and** the wearing of the religious headdress does not interfere with the wear of the prescribed uniform cover.



Service Obligations

Q. What is the service obligation for members of the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps?

A. Upon an individual's initial appointment to the Selected Reserve component of the Ready Reserve Corps (SELRES), officers must agree to remain in the SELRES for a minimum of six years.

Q. If an applicant completes two years of service and decides the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps is not a good fit for them, can they separate?

A. Reserve officers must complete the full six-year service obligation committed to at the time of appointment.

Q. What are the main components of the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps?

A. There are three main components: Selected Ready Reserve (SELRES), Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), and Retired Reserve.

The SELRES consists of officers who are required to train for a minimum of at least 15 days active duty per year and 4 drill periods per month or equivalent. Such officers also must be prepared for active duty mobilization within 24 hours to respond to an urgent or emergency public health care need, which may be voluntary or involuntary calls to active duty.

The IRR consists of officers who have had military and/or USPHS Commissioned Corps training. Such officers are not required to participate in training or other USPHS Commissioned Corps activities. However, they are subject to involuntary recall to active duty under certain circumstances. There are two subsets of the IRR: Active and Standby.

a. Active IRR. Members of the IRR who have been assigned to an Individual Augmentation Duty (IAD) position.

b. Standby IRR. Members of the IRR who are an additional mobilization resource for the USPHS Commissioned Corps if there are not enough qualified members of the SELRES and Active IRR available to meet the USPHS Commissioned Corps' requirements.

Retired Reserve. Members who accumulate 20 or more years of qualifying service are eligible for reserve retirement, also known as non-regular retirement, when they reach age 60.

Training

Q. What are the annual training requirements of the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps?

A. Members of the SELRES are required to perform 48 paid Inactive Duty Training (IDT) drills (typically 12 weekends) and 15 paid Active Duty Training (ADT) days per year. Drill schedules are published for the entire year.

Q. Is there initial training for Ready Reserve Corps officers?

A. Yes, Officer Basic Course (OBC) is a two-week training held monthly in Potomac, MD for new officers. However, due to COVID-19, OBC courses are currently being held virtually. OBC is two weeks and officers remain onsite for the entire training.

Deployment

Q. When called to a natural disaster/emergency, will my civilian job be secured?

A. Yes, the Uniformed Service Employment Re-Employment Rights Act – 38 U.S.C. §§4301- 4335 was passed by Congress and signed into law on Oct. 13, 1994, to protect civilian employment of active and reserve military personnel in the United States called to active duty. The law applies to all United States Uniformed Services and their respective reserve components.



Benefits

Pay

Q. Are USPHS Ready Reserve Corps officers paid for their service?

A. Yes, reservists are paid at the completion of a unit training assembly (UTA) which is commonly referred to as drill weekend.

Bonuses

Q. Is there a sign-on bonus for USPHS Ready Reserve Corps officers?

A. Yes, reservists are eligible for an Accession Bonus and a Critical Wartime Skills Accession Bonus.

Insurance

Q. What does TRICARE insurance cover for USPHS Ready Reserve Corps officers and their families?

A. TRICARE provides insurance for officers during their drill weekends, two-week training, and when deployed for 30 days or more.

Rank

Q. How is rank calculated?

A. Rank is calculated based on Training and Experience after obtaining your qualifying degree.

Loan Repayment

Q. Are USPHS Ready Reserve Corps officers eligible for loan repayment?

A. No, only USPHS Regular Corps officers are eligible for loan repayment.

Retirement

Q. How does the retirement system work and who will address benefits?

A. Officers in the Ready Reserve Corps are placed in a retired status upon completing 20 years of qualifying service for retirement (i.e., a year in which an officer of the Ready Reserve Corps has earned a minimum of 50 points); however, such individuals are not eligible for retired pay until they reach 60 years of age.

Q. Does the USPHS Commissioned Corps have a sanctuary like the other services?

A. Yes. If a member of the Ready Reserve Corps who has 18 or more years of active duty service and is called to active duty (other than for training), the USPHS Commissioned Corps cannot separate them from active duty (other than for physical disability, cause, or with the member's consent) until the member reaches 20 years of active duty service.

Q. Is there a mandatory retirement age or mandatory years of service?

A. The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not have a mandatory retirement age but will retire a member of the Ready Reserve Corps once the member attains 20 years of service that qualifies for retirement.

Q. How far can a Ready Reserve Corps officer work past the age of 60 years old?

A. Ready Reserve Corps officers may continue to serve past age 60 if they have not reached the 20 years of service that qualifies for retirement. Reservists can be involuntarily separated after 20 years.

Q. When does a retired Ready Reserve Corps officer begin receiving retired pay?

A. A retired Ready Reserve Corps officer can apply for retired pay once the member reaches 60 years of age. (The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not automatically begin these payments).