



JRCOSTEP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. What is JRCOSTEP?

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

Q2. 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. JRCOSTEP applications are only able to be submitted between June 1st and July 31st for the following years' program.

Q3. Which agency will I be assigned to work?

Students that participate in JRCOSTEP 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 JRCOSTEP include Food and Drug (FDA), Indian Health Service (IHS), Center for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS), National Park Service (NPS), Program Support Center (PSC), and Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

Q4. What are my chances of being selected for JRCOSTEP 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 by the first week in January of the next year. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.usphs.gov/students>.

Q5. Is there an obligation to join the Commissioned Corps after I complete the JRCOSTEP tour of duty?

JRCOSTEPs are not obligated to join the Commissioned Corps at any time. Typical assignments vary from 31 to 120 days during official school breaks. If you go on to become a full-time Commissioned Corps officer, your JRCOSTEP service will count toward your time in service, which affects pay and promotion rates.

Q6. Do I have to wear a uniform while on duty as a JRCOSTEP?

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

Q7. Can I choose the Agency and location of where I want to complete my internship?

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.

Q8. Can I serve more than one tour of duty as a JRCOSTEP?

Yes, providing you are selected by an agency again, meet the medical and security requirements and other policy requirements.

Q9. How much will I be paid and when will I receive my pay?

All JRCOSTEP 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>.

Q10. Will I receive health care coverage?

Yes. JRCOSTEPs called to active duty for 31 days or more will receive full TRICARE benefits. This includes their dependents. However, all benefits will end at the end of the tour of duty.

Q11. What are the job duties of the JRCOSTEP participant?

They may range across a spectrum of public health activities in the research, clinical, regulatory, health promotion or disease prevention, and administrative areas.