



Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service
Scientist Professional Advisory Committee

Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee



SCIENTIST PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(SCIPAC)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

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SciPAC Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee Standard Operating Procedures

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I. PURPOSE

The goal of the Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC) Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee (SC) is to support ongoing growth and strength of the contribution of Scientist Officers to the mission of the Corps. This is done through the development and execution of a lifecycle approach to new officer recruitment, on-boarding and early career retention.

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to (1) describe the duties and responsibilities for members of the SciPAC Recruitment and Retention SC and (2) provide detailed information on the operations and procedures currently employed by this SC.

II. GOVERNING BODY AND OFFICERS

a. Organization

i. Structure

The SC consists of a Chair and one or two co-Chairs, all to be appointed by the SciPAC Chair, and team SC members. The SC members may also co-lead and/or support additional teams formed within the SC.

ii. Size

The size of the Recruitment and Retention SC ranges between 15–40 members, including the Chair/Co-Chairs. The number of assigned team members depends on the scope of the team and may range from 2–12.

iii. Representation

The Chair/Co-Chair make efforts to ensure the members are distributed appropriately across OPDIVs, rank and scientific disciplines (e.g. psychologists, epidemiologists, bench scientists, microbiologists, etc). Information on PHS officer distribution can be obtained from the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) and can be accessed via <https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/>.

b. Officers – Roles & Responsibilities

i. Chair

1. Establish the SC roster, through recruiting SC members and open calls for members via the listserv

2. Establish team structure and initiatives
3. Review documents prior to dissemination
4. Communicate with SC members
5. Compile monthly update and present update during the SciPAC monthly meeting
6. Prepare annual SC report
7. Update SOP, as needed on a timeline consistent with the SciPAC SOP and Rules and Membership SOP

ii. Co-Chair(s)

The Co-Chair(s) aids the Chair with his/her responsibilities (See section II.b.i). Additionally, the Co-Chair(s) acts as R&R SC Chair when the Chair is unavailable to do so (including, but not limited to, periods of leave or deployment).

iii. SC Members

SC members work on tasks according to Activities and Duties (below) for specific teams.

III. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

a. Meetings

The meetings for the Recruitment and Retention SC convene as below. SC leadership determine the frequency of meetings, using the minimums set below as a guide.

i. SC Chair and Co-Chair(s)

At a minimum, Chair and Co-Chair(s) meets to discuss progress and activities on a quarterly basis.

ii. All Hands

At minimum, a quarterly “All-Hands” meeting are held for all members of the SC. These meetings require at least 50% of Team Leads in attendance and at least one of the Chair or Co-Chair(s).

iii. Teams

Team leads chair meetings among team members on an as needed basis. SC Chair and/or Co-Chair will be notified of all team meetings.

iv. SC Leads

SC leads, including the Chair and Co-Chair and/or other team leads, meet as needed.

b. Activities and Duties

At the start of the operational year, the Chair establishes teams and identify team leads to perform one or more of the following activities.

i. Resources Team

The Resources Team consists of 1–3 members: the Team Lead plus 1-2 support members. Team members are responsible for creating and updating relevant documents for recruitment and retention activities. These documents include, but are not limited to, Top Tips for Scientist Officers and the Recruitment Presentation (see below for description). Documents are approved at the SC and SciPAC Chair levels prior to dissemination. Such dissemination may be via the listserv, website, max.gov site or other approved mechanism, with the electronic Corps Mass Communication System (eCMCS) being the preferred system when possible. Team members engage with other teams, such as the Interested Applicant Team and the OBC Engagement Team to determine if additional documents such as flyers need to be developed.

The Top Tips document represents a shortcut document to the many relevant activities and deadlines that occur throughout the operational year. This document represents a knowledge store for both new and existing officers, allowing them to quickly find links and descriptions of things such as chartered organizations, CCMIS website sections, listservs, benefits information and career management. This document should be updated yearly. The Recruitment Presentation represents the current best knowledge of USPHS CC recruitment practices. It is modified at least yearly to reflect current recruitment priorities. All Resource Team documents will live in the Recruitment and Retention subpage in the Resource Team section.

ii. Interested Applicant Team

The Interested Applicant Team consists of 1–3 members: the Team Lead plus 1–2 support members. Team members facilitate all initial contact with applicants interested in becoming Scientist Officers as well as introducing the Commissioned Corps and the Scientist category to potential Scientist Officers. This includes maintaining a database of potential officers who are interested in being contacted when open enrollment occurs. This database is populated from recruitment presentations and from individuals contacting Scientist Officers

wanting more information on the Commissioned Corps. Other duties of this team include directing applicants to usphs.gov, revising the language on the SciPAC website, and giving recruitment presentations at graduate schools and training programs targeting potential Scientist Officers. Recruitment presentations are focused on CCHQ priority applicants first (for example, if the current focus is clinical psychologists, presentations will focus in this area). This may also include developing or maintaining canned language for use in these cases. Once a candidate applies to the Corps, that individual is moved to the New Recruit Team for assistance.

iii. New Recruit Team

This team is a legacy team. Sometime during the OY2019 or 2020, this team is up for decommissioning as all current applicants in this pool will have either become officers or lost their eligibility as applicants. The team's programmatic description is staying in the SOP, in case of future activation.

The New Recruit Team consists of 5–10 members: the Team Lead(s) plus 3–5 support members. This team is only active on an as needed basis, decided by the Executive Board. This team starts working with applicants after submission of application to Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ). This includes the existing applicant pool from previous years and any new applicants from the current open period. This team monitors progress of applicants along the pathway, checking in with the applicants and providing guidance as available. This team seeks to find out from applicants where they are on the process, including boarding date, have they been contacted about security or medical clearance and if and when they receive an OBC date. Officers who plan to enter through the Epidemiology Intelligence Service or Laboratory Leadership Service work with the Epidemiology Intelligence Service/Laboratory Leadership Service Team as described below.

A second major function is to help applicants find appropriate positions after they have been boarded. This requires coordination with the Career Development SC's jobs list. The applicant pool is broken into cohorts with an officer managing a cohort. The cohorts are based on where the applicant is in the application process. The team should not directly contact HQ. All communications with HQ or Agency Liaisons happens through the SciPAC chair, CPO or their designees.

iv. OBC Engagement Team

The OBC Engagement Team consists of 4–6 members: the Team Lead and 3–5 support members. This team ensures that at least one officer from SciPAC will attend the OBC open house and graduation on those occasions when there is a Scientist Officer graduate. The Team Lead receives a list from COTA of officers slated to attend the next OBC to determine if OBC open house and graduation attendance is required due to the presence of a Scientist Officer. The Team Lead distributes information on SciPAC to the new officers and ensures that the Peer Support Network Team has the names and contact information of all new officers to ensure that they are put into the Peer Support Network. It is the responsibility of the outgoing and incoming Team Leads to work with the Commissioned Officer Training Academy (COTA) to ensure that there is a transfer of distribution information during the OY handoff in September and October.

v. Peer Support Network (PSN) Team

The Peer Support Network (PSN) Team consists of 4–8 members: the Team Lead(s) and 3–7 support members. This team works with the OBC Engagement team to identify new officers and help ensure that they are given peer support within 2 weeks following OBC. This helps to ensure that new officers (who may be in more isolated/hardship positions) are given access to peer and early career support right out of OBC. Existing documents on support agreements, as well as other guidance documents such as those pertaining to important milestones in a young officer’s career, are maintained and updated to help manage the support process. While officers may be matched based on location and specialty, this is not a requirement. Peer support is ideally provided by O-4 officers. The goal is to encourage officers to stay in the peer support program for their first 1–3 years, which encompasses the new officer’s first promotion cycle. This team also encourages new officers to participate in the SciPAC mentorship program via Mentoring SC.

vi. New Call to Active Duty (CAD) Seminars Team

The New Call to Active Duty Seminars Team consists of 2–3 members: the Team Lead(s) and 1–2 support members. This team works to develop, promote and administer seminars on topics for new officers. These topics include COERs, Awards, Promotions, Deployments and other new officer relevant topics. These presentations are maintained on max.gov in the Recruitment and Retention subpage in the New Call to Active Duty section. One seminar every other month is the

minimum, with seminars scheduled near relevant times when possible (e.g. COERs in Sept, CVs in October, etc.) or as presenters are available (awards, new parent benefits, etc). Established team, FDA and CDC in-person seminars and webcasting for remote officers are maintained year to year.

vii. Epidemic Intelligence Service/Laboratory Leadership Service (EIS/LLS) Team

The Epidemic Intelligence Service Team consists of 3–5 members: the Team Lead plus 2–4 support members. This team works to engage incoming Epidemiology Intelligence Service (EIS) and Laboratory Leadership Service (LLS) officers as they make their choice of whether to apply for commission and then provides networking and support as they work through the application process including events like a breakfast or lunch at the EIS conference.

viii. Separation Survey Team

The Separation Survey Team consists of 2–4 members: the Team Lead(s) plus 1–3 support members. This team works with CCHQ and OPDIV liaisons to recommend that Scientist Officers who file separation paperwork complete an “exit” survey to collect information about separation and reflections on their career in the Corps. The existing separation survey is maintained and updated when needed. The data from the survey is analyzed to see if any specific trends can be identified as to why officers are leaving.

IV. SC MEMBERSHIP

a. Requirements

SC members must be current Commissioned Corps Officers on extended active duty. Scientist Officers who are interested in the Recruitment and Retention SC should respond to the annual call for new members. The membership roster is filled on a first-come first-serve basis and the maximum number of SC members is determined by need and team structure. The Chair strives to comprise the SC with Scientist Officers from diverse geographical locations, OPDIVs, and scientific specialties. A Recruitment and Retention SC member in good standing at the end of the operational year must fulfill the following:

- i.** Substantially contribute to their team assignment
- ii.** Contribute to the monthly report for their team

- iii. Attend SciPAC monthly meeting, Readiness SC quarterly meetings, and team meetings as scheduled

The SC Chair is responsible for determining the standing of each member based on the contribution to their team. Each team lead is asked to provide input on the team members' impact for the operational year.

b. Letter of Appreciation

All SciPAC Recruitment and Retention SC members in good standing are formally recognized for their contribution to the SC with a letter from the Chief Scientist Officer at the end of each SciPAC year which may be placed in the officer's OPF. The SC Chair provides to the Executive Board the names of the SC members who should be recognized with a Letter of Appreciation.

V. TRANSITIONING

a. Incoming Chairperson and Co-Chairperson Preparation

The outgoing Chair/Co-Chair debriefs the incoming Chair/Co-Chair on SC procedures, current projects and transfer related files/documents. This transfer occurs via handoff of max.gov privileges. The outgoing Chair/Co-Chair is available for inquiries as needed.

b. Incoming Chairperson and Co-Chairperson Expectation

The following are the tasks the incoming Chair needs to accomplish:

1. Determine the need for additional SC members to ensure that the membership adequately addresses the objectives of the teams.
2. Send a request for new SC members, if needed, within the first month of appointment.
3. Hold an "All Hands" meeting to brief new and returning members on the responsibilities of the SC, membership requirements, and timelines for team goals and objectives.
4. Ensure all Teams have a Lead and a sufficient number of team members.
5. Update the new Recruitment and Retention SC's objectives for the new operational year.

VI. DATA AND COMMON FILE STORAGE

All documents and files containing Scientist Officer information are stored in folders on max.gov with access limited to team members. Access to max.gov sub-folders is controlled by the Chair/Co-Chair. These files include presentations, recruiting materials, excel spreadsheets, database information and other files as necessary and related to operational work.

VII. REFERENCES

- A. Scientist Professional Advisory Committee Standard Operating Procedures (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/documents/SciPAC-SOP-2018.pdf>).
- B. Scientist Professional Advisory Committee Charter (<https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/documents/10.18.2017-SciPAC-2017-SG-APPROVED-Charter.pdf>)

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

None