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

Welcome to the United States Public Health Service!

The 2023* TOP TIPS for Scientists in the USPHS

WEBSITES AND LISTSERVS

A. **Explore these key websites:**
1. Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS): Public Health Service (PHS) personnel management site where PHS-wide updates are posted (***check site regularly for updates***†): https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/
   - ***Login*** section contains access to officer personnel information websites.
   - ***Assignments*** contains information about Service Member Civil Relief Act and Permanent Change of Station moves.
   - ***COER*** contains information on your annual evaluation, the Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COER).
   - ***Financial Services*** contains information on retirement pay, regular pay, specialty pays, and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) retirement contributions.
   - ***Medical Affairs*** contains information on dental, immunizations, and the periodic health update (PHU).
   - ***Personnel & Career Mgmt*** contains CCHQ contacts, and information on awards
   - ***Policy*** contains information on current and past USPHS policies.
   - ***Promotions*** contains information on current and past promotion cycles, promotion checklists, and other promotion relevant information.
   - ***RDB*** contains information on the Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT), the Deployment Preparation Plan (DPP), readiness status, and the Readiness and Deployment Branch.
   - ***Training*** contains information on the Officer Basic Course (OBC), intermediate and advanced officer trainings, preparedness trainings, and partner agency training opportunities.
   - ***About CCHQ*** contains information about the organizational structure and staffing of Commissioned Corps Headquarters.
   - ***Corps Connections*** features the Officer Spotlight and CC Bulletins sections.
   - ***Corps Care*** contains details about a comprehensive program that assists officers with improving readiness and preparedness, building resiliency, and cultivating healthier lives (PHSCorpsCare@hhs.gov).
   - ***Forms*** contains links to forms for many parts of an officer's career.

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*Information is up-to-date as of August 2023.

†While the CCMIS website is updated frequently, not all pages are updated with the same regularity, so some information may be out-of-date.

- *Ready Reserve* contains information about Ready Reserve policies and FAQs.
- *Help Desk* offers contact information for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) IT Help Desk as well as the types of issues for which it provides support. The Help Desk can be reached at cchelpdesk@hhs.gov or 1-888-225-3302.
- *Officer Support for Licensure* provides information on requirements for maintaining licensure and updating it in your file. You can find this information here: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/Licensure_m.aspx

2. Electronic Commissioned Officer Resources Processing System (eCORPS) Leave system contains mandatory requirements to request and enter leave in eCORPS: https://phsleave.lyceum.com/Login.aspx

- Username is first four letters of last name (ALL CAPS) and last four numbers of SSN
- This system allows you to request different types of leave from your duty station, change or confirm leave taken, and shows your annual leave balance
- The system will require that you identify a leave granting authority

3. Officer Secure Area (OSA) sign in: https://dcp.psc.gov/osa/osa_security_statement.aspx. Login is through the Access Management System (AMS) chip-and-pin system. Main page is the **PHS Dashboard**, where you can find your SERNO (PHS ID), licensure status and expiration date, latest report of readiness status, latest report of physical examination, latest report of medical history, information on promotion status, and immunization details. Mobile devices can be registered to access OSA without a PIV card (instructions: https://ams.hhs.gov/amsApp/help/docs/JobAids/how-to-register-your-mobile-device-for-one-time-password.html). Once in OSA, links on the left margin will give you access to:

- Electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF):
  - View official documents related to your tenure in the PHS: Application Documents, Personnel Orders, PHS awards, past COERs, Promotion Board Score Sheets, and others.
- Interface where you submit your annual evaluation (COER, under Forms)
- Interface where you can input your billet number and retrieve a description
- Electronic Document Upload (eDOC-U) – where you can upload documents into your OPF including CV, Officer Statement, Continuing Education Documents, Letters and Certificates of Appreciation, BLS certifications, licensure, immunizations, and others.
- eCMCS Messaging Center – communication tool for conducting official business for officers and civilians who support Corps activities
- Readiness and Deployment Branch – where you can use the self-service tab to:
  - Update your **personal information**
  - Add your **readiness information** (physical fitness exam results, roles) and view your waivers and readiness status
  - Update your BLS **certification** and view your training history
  - Request assistance via the **readiness assistance form**
  - Update your **current supervisor** (needed for the COER "rater" section)

4. Commissioned Corps Learning Management System (CCLMS): platform for online training for Commissioned Corps officers (https://usphstraining.hhs.gov)

- As of March 10, 2023 the CCLMS website access has been suspended with no current date of resumption.
- While CCHQ is developing a new learning platform, an interim platform ("Box") exists to hold a limited set of trainings.
- Officers must contact phscota@hhs.gov to receive access to this

platform and view requested trainings and/or webinars.
5. Responder eLearn: https://respondere-learn.hhs.gov/
    - Eight basic readiness courses
    - Field Medical Readiness Badge Courses
    - The Field Medical Readiness Badge (FMRB) recognizes officers who have met criteria beyond the basic force readiness standards. This is an important recognition of deployments and knowledge of deployment related skills.
    - Username is first 3 letters of last name (lowercase) followed by 5-digit PHS SERNO
    - Email "technical support" at NDMSHelpdesk@hhs.gov if you have login trouble
6. Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC) site: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/
    - The Career Development Subcommittee website may be particularly useful for new officers and those up for promotion: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/careerdev-sc.aspx
    - The SciPAC Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee offers support to new officers through its New Scientist Officer Team meetings, Call to Active Duty seminars, and other initiatives: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/recruitment-readiness-retention-SC.aspx
7. USPHS Scientist Facebook group: facebook.com/groups/USPHSScientist/
8. USPHS Scientist Twitter: https://twitter.com/PHS_Scientist?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

B. **Sign up for key listservs to ensure receipt of current information.** Some recommendations are:
1. Scientist category:
    - via e-mail: LISTSERV@LIST.NIH.GOV Type the following text in the message body: "subscribe USPHS-Scientist" and provide your name
    - via web: https://list.nih.gov/ Find the USPHS-Scientist list on the List of Lists, then click on the list name to go to the main archive page for the list. Click "Join" or "leave the list" and fill in the form; you can also control type and frequency of communication here.
2. Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) provides programming, support, and leadership opportunities for all officers at temporary grade of O-4 or below: https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=JOAG&A=1
3. Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ): When you update your personal information in the Readiness Tab in the Officer Secure Area (https://dcp.psc.gov/osa/osa_security_statement.aspx), you will be added to the listserv.
4. Agency-specific listservs may be available. Contact your agency Commissioned Corps liaison officer for details.
5. Chartered advisory organization listservs exist for the Minority Officer Liaison Council (MOLC), Black Commissioned Officer Advisory Group (BCOAG), American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officer Advisory Council (AIANCOAC), Asian Pacific American Officer Committee (APAOC), and Hispanic Officer Advisory Committee (HOAC). Please check the CCMIS website (https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/default.aspx) for more information.
6. Other chartered group listservs exist for the PHS Athletics Group, PHS Ensemble, SG Honor Guard, PHS Band, Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG), Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB) and

Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE). Please check the CCMIS website (https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/default.aspx) for more information.

PAY AND BENEFITS

A. **Obtain ID cards and enroll in benefits**
   1. Common Access Card (CAC), i.e. Uniformed Services ID, is often obtained at Officer Basic Course (OBC)
   2. Dependent Identification Card (use the following link to find a facility): https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/
   3. Enroll self and family members into the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)
      https://www.tricare.mil/deers/
   4. Enrollment in TRICARE (military and uniformed services health care program): This is automatic for USPHS officers; dependents can elect to enroll in various health plans. Changes to the initial enrollment can be made via the TRICARE plans and eligibility page: https://tricare.mil/Plans
   5. Dental coverage is separate from TRICARE's medical coverage. The U. S. Public Health Service Active Duty Dental Program is administered through United Concordia. More information can be found by visiting:
      https://secure.addp-ucci.com/adsm
      Enroll dependents in dental plan through the following link:
      https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental/TDP
   6. Manage your Thrift Savings Plan retirement savings
      https://www.tsp.gov/index.html

B. **Understand your pay**
   1. Use the Regular Military Compensation Calculator to compute your regular military compensation (http://militarypay.defense.gov/Calculators/RMC-Calculator/), including:
      - Base Pay
      - Basic Allowance Subsistence
      - Basic Allowance Housing
      - Federal Tax Advantage
   2. PHSPay is a convenient 24/7 way for Public Health Service officers to view and manage their pay information online in a secure environment. The Online Payroll Self-service system is only available through the Access Management System (AMS), under the Open Access Internet Section, PHSPay selection.
   3. For additional questions (i.e. verification of employment for loans, to change TSP contribution, employer verification of Public Service Forgiveness Loans, etc.) contact the Compensation Team at PHSCCHQCompensation@hhs.gov or through eCMCS:
      - In eCMCS, under the drop down menu of the "Message Center" Menu Bar (blue bar at top) Access Secure Message.
      - Once the "Secure Message" screen is open, click "Search" next to "To:" to select recipient(s) of secure message. - for FSB mail: Description/Name: CCHQ FINANCIAL SERVICES MAILBOX; Type: MAILBOXES (Not MEMBER)
      - Click the "Add Selected" button.
      - Add attachments if any.
      - Click Send Secure Message button.
   4. Re-Certification of dependents

- Complete Form PHS-1637-1
- Annual BAH Recertification is necessary to ensure the officer still has dependents. The Military Pay Technician from the Compensation Branch sends an email to let officers know when it is time to recertify. Recertification months are based on the last digit of your social security number (SSN). For example, SSN 123-45-6789 would recertify in September (the 9th month).
5. Health Professions Special Pays (for Clinical Psychologists)
   - Eligibility requirements are listed in POM 821.70, CCD 151.05, and CCI 633.01
   - https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/HPSP/HPSP.aspx

CAREER MANAGEMENT

A. If your supervisor is not a PHS officer, meet with your supervisor to discuss:
1. The PHS mission: https://www.usphs.gov/about-us
2. Your readiness requirements and deployment operations: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG_essentials_m.aspx#MEMBERSHIP https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/RedDOG/Forms/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf
3. Supervisor role in the annual COER. See the Civilian Training Guide below for additional information: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/COER%20Civilian%20Guide.pdf
4. The benchmarks by which you will be measured for promotion: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PDF/2023%20PROMOTION%20BENCHMARKS%20FINAL.pdf

B. Understand the promotion process and get organized
1. Review standardized promotion benchmarks (for all categories): https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PDF/2023%20PROMOTION%20BENCHMARKS%20FINAL.pdf
   Additional Scientist specific resources: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/resources-and-links.aspx
2. Update your CV into the required format for all PHS officers: CV guidelines: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_curriculum_vitae_m.aspx
3. Mentorship: mentors can help with career navigation and promotion; contact the SciPAC Mentoring Subcommittee Chair: (https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/mentoring-SC.aspx).
4. SciPAC enlists other Scientists to review your CV and provide advice each fall. Contact the Career Development Subcommittee for more information: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/careerdev-sc.aspx
5. Review the COER (supervisory evaluation) process: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/COER/COER_Index_m.aspx
6. During promotion-eligible years:
   - Write a strong Officer's Statement (OS)—why you should be promoted: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_OS_m.aspx
   - Secure a strong Reviewing Official's Statement (ROS)—why your Reviewing Official (RO; second line supervisor or supervisor's supervisor) thinks you should be promoted. The ROS is a section within the COER completed by the RO. Plan and review during the promotional year with your Supervisor and RO: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_ROS_m.aspx
7. Complete readiness requirements—Basic Life Support (BLS), APFT (Annual Physical Fitness Test), the Deployment Preparation Plan (DPP), the Periodic Health Update (https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/Medical%20Affairs/MA_Periodic_Health_Update.aspx), deployment role (done after basic ready), online training (8 modules in addition to the 4

FEMA courses done at OBC), immunizations, height and weight requirements, assigned CCLMS trainings, and other requirements as identified.
- See RDB's Readiness Essentials for details: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ReDDOG/REDDOG_essentials_m.aspx#MEMBERSHIP
8. Make sure your certifications/licenses/credentials are up-to-date with CCHQ, if applicable. Check your OPF in the Secure Area: https://dcp.psc.gov/osa/osa_security_statement.aspx
   - For more info, see also: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PROMOTIONS_licensure_and_certifications_m.aspx

C. Awards
1. Familiarize yourself with the awards process: https://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/COAP/COAP_frequently_asked_questions_m.aspx
2. Understand the value of letters of appreciation and awards (See SciPAC Benchmarks): https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/promotions/PDF/2023%20PROMOTION%20BENCHMARKS%20FINAL.pdf

D. Job Vacancies
1. Once subscribed to the SciPAC listserv, you will receive weekly updates of job announcements from around the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Non-HHS agencies.

GROUPS: Officers are encouraged to join the organizations below based on their interest

A. Scientist Professional Advisory Committee (SciPAC): provides advice and consultation to the Office of the Surgeon General and to the Chief Scientist Officer on professional and personnel issues that impact Scientist Officers. In addition, the SciPAC functions in a resource and advisory capacity to Scientist Officers.
1. Monthly teleconferences: the teleconferences occur at 1200 ET on the first Tuesday of every month, unless otherwise noted. Meeting information may be updated on an annual basis and is distributed through the listserv. It is recommended to use Zoom to capture meeting attendance (if unable to join online, can also call the toll-free number: 1-669-254-5252, Meeting ID: 160 195 5364 Passcode 456892. Please note to check the most recent SciPAC Monthly Meeting invitation for Zoom link and dial-in information). All Scientist officers are encouraged to participate. Attendance on the SciPAC monthly call is taken into consideration when applying to become a SciPAC voting member. The need for an excused absence can be reported to the SciPAC Executive Secretary via email. Presentations often occur immediately following the SciPAC teleconference using the same dial-in number and passcode. The meeting information website is https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/meetings.aspx.
2. Subcommittees: there are 12 SciPAC subcommittees (Awards, Behavioral Health & Wellness, Career Development, Category Day, Deployment Preparedness, Mentoring, Policy, Recruitment & Retention, Rules & Membership, Science, Visibility, and Website: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/scientist/subcommittees.aspx for more information). The Chair of each subcommittee is a SciPAC voting member, as are some Co-chairs.

B. Junior Officer Advisory (JOAG, https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/JOAG**):** group of junior officers (rank O-4 and below) who seek to enhance their professional experience by involvement in group activities that further JOAG's mission.

1. Monthly teleconferences: teleconferences occur at 1 PM ET on the second Friday of every other month (toll-free number: 1-641-715-3580; passcode: 131583#). All junior officers are encouraged to participate.
2. Mentorship: contact information for the peer to peer mentoring network through JOAG can be found at: https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/JOAG/joag_mentoring_opp.aspx#peer
3. Committees: JOAG has 9 committees (Awards, Communications & Publications, Membership, Outreach, Policy & Procedures, Professional Development, Public Health & Uniformed Services, Readiness & Deployment, and Recruitment & Retention).

C. **Commissioned Officers Association (COA,** https://coausphs.org**): the organization exists to promote the mission and interests of the USPHS and its officers.**
   1. Annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium: sponsored by the sister organization of COA, the Commissioned Officers Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health (COF), the conference is held in late spring/early summer in a different state each year. It is a great way to network, hear and meet high-ranking leaders, and attend SciPAC's Category Day. Mark your calendar and book your room early. Go to https://www.phscof.org/symposium.html for details.
   2. Local COA branch: provides support and resources for anything from policies to uniform wear, as well as provides an opportunity to meet other officers in your area and participate in volunteer and other activities. Go to https://coausphs.org for details.

D. **Minority Officer Liaison Council (MOLC):** serves in a resource and advisory capacity to assist in the development, coordination, and evaluation of activities related to ethnic minority officers it represents in the PHS with specific objectives. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/molc/ for details.

E. **Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group (BCOAG):** provides assistance and consultation to the Office of the Surgeon General on issues related to the representation and participation of African-Americans in the USPHS. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/bcoag/ for details.

F. **Asian Pacific American Officer Committee (APAOC):** provides assistance and consultation to the Office of the Surgeon General on issues related to the representation and participation of Asian Pacific Americans in the USPHS. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/apaoc/ for details.

G. **Hispanic Officer Advisory Committee (HOAC):** provides assistance and consultation to the Office of the Surgeon General on issues related to the representation and participation of Hispanic/Latino Americans in the USPHS. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/hoac/ for details.

H. **American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officers Advisory Committee (AIANCOAC):** provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General on issues related to professional practice and the personnel activities (Commissioned Corps or Civil Service) of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/aiancoac/ for details.

I. **Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group (SOAGDAG):** provides advice and consultation to the Surgeon General on issues related to LGBTQ+ officers and other sexual and gender minorities and their allies in the USPHS. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/sogdag/ for details.

J. **Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE)**: provides officers with the opportunity to put themselves at the forefront of the National Prevention Strategy (NPS) by actively interacting with citizens at the community level. The focus is to educate the public about the Commissioned Corps, the NPS, and all other Office of the Surgeon General initiatives. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/pace/ for details.

K. **Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board (CCWIAB)**: identify and analyze key issues that impact women in the Commissioned Corps and develop action plans to address these issues. Go to https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/ccwiab/ for details.

ABBREVIATIONS

Familiarize yourself with key abbreviations, including those found in this top tips document:

AIANCOAC	American Indian/Alaskan Native Commissioned Officer Advisory Committee	HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
AMS	Access Management System	HOAC	Hispanic Officer Advisory Committee
APFT	Annual Physical Fitness Test	JOAG	Junior Officer Advisory Group
APAOC	Asian Pacific American Officer Committee	LT	Lieutenant
BCOAG	Black Commissioned Officers Advisory Group	LCDR	Lieutenant Commander
BLS	Basic Life Support	MOLC	Minority Officer Liaison Council
CAC	Common Access Card	OBC	Officer Basic Course
CAPT	Captain	OS	Officer's Statement
CCHQ	Commissioned Corps Headquarters	OSG	Office of Surgeon General
CCLMS	Commissioned Corps Learning Management System	PACE	Prevention through Active Community Engagement
CCMIS	Commissioned Corps Management Information System	PCS	Permanent Change of Station
CCWIAB	Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board	PHS	Public Health Service
CDR	Commander	PHU	Periodic Health Update
COA	Commissioned Officers Association	PIR	Promotion Information Report
COER	Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report	RDB	Readiness and Deployment Branch
CV	Curriculum Vitae	ROS	Reviewing Official's Statement
DEERS	Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System	SciPAC	Scientist Professional Advisory Committee
DPP	Deployment Preparation Plan	SERNO	PHS Serial Number
eCORPS	Electronic Commissioned Officer Resources Processing System	SSN	Social Security Number
eDOC-U	Electronic Document Upload	SOAGDAG	Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Advisory Group
eOPF	Electronic Official Personnel Folder	TRICARE	Health care program of the U.S. Military and Uniformed Services
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	TSP	Thrift Savings Plan
FMRB	Field Medical Readiness Badge	USPHS	United States Public Health Service

Bonus Tip: Do not hesitate to ask other PHS officers anything. Although the process can be overwhelming at times, other PHS officers have already been through it and can help you navigate.

Welcome Aboard!

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