



CCI 371.02
EFFECTIVE DATE: 8 October 2021

By Order of the Assistant Secretary for Health:

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SUBJECT: Junior COSTEP

1. PURPOSE: This Instruction describes the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps' Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP) and sets forth the criteria and procedures for participation.
2. APPLICABILITY:
 - 2-1. The policies in this Instruction apply to civilian applicants, JRCOSTEP participants, officers of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, and Agencies and Programs that employ JRCOSTEP officers.
3. AUTHORITY
 - 3-1. [42 U.S.C. § 218a](#), "Training of officers."
 - 3-2. Commissioned Corps Directive (CCD) [125.01](#), "Training."
 - 3-3. [42 U.S.C. § 204](#), "Commissioned Corps and Ready Reserve Corps."
 - 3-4. [Joint Travel Regulations \(JTR\) for Uniformed Service Members](#)
 - 3-5. [42 CFR § 21.54](#), "Students."
 - 3-6. [84 Federal Register 1752-1753](#), "Statement of Organization, Functions, and Delegations of Authority."
4. PROPONENT: The proponent of this Instruction is the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH). The Surgeon General (SG) is responsible for ensuring the day-to-day management of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and has delegated authority for daily operations to the Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ).
5. SUMMARY OF REVISIONS AND UPDATES: This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS) and replaces Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual (CCPM) CC25.2.4, "Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP)," dated 26 May 1999. This version:
 - 5-1. Updates all references to forms, documents, and CCHQ.

- 5-2. Updates sections on application (including the new electronic applicant enrollment system), selection, and termination.
- 5-3. Removes the chart on application dates, and clarifies that selections and timeframes are at the discretion of the CCHQ director.
- 5-4. Replaces references to an inactive reserve with the Ready Reserve Corps.
- 5-5. Clarifies JRCOSTEP's entitlements, allowances, medical benefits, and dependents' benefits.
- 5-6. Adds Section 7-3. on the responsibilities of JRCOSTEP officers.
- 5-7. Moves several procedures into new Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) 821.84, "COSTEP."

6. POLICY

6-1. JRCOSTEP provides full-time college students with an opportunity to:

- a. Become acquainted with the organization and mission of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Operating Divisions (OPDIVs), the programs and agencies to which Public Health Service (PHS) officers are assigned, and the career opportunities the USPHS Commissioned Corps offers in health-related professions.
 - (1) Such professions include, but are not limited to, careers in the fields of audiology, biological sciences, biostatistics, clinical psychology, computer science, dental hygiene, dentistry, dietetics, engineering, environmental health, health education, industrial hygiene, laboratory technology, medical record administration, medicine, nursing, nutrition, optometry, pharmacy, physical therapy, physical sciences, physician assistance, public health, social work, speech pathology, epidemiology, therapy (occupational or physical), epidemiology, and veterinary medicine.
 - (2) The Surgeon General (SG) may add or remove career fields to this list depending on the needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, but the inclusion or exclusion of a career field in this list is not determinative of JRCOSTEP opportunities.
- b. Gain experience and training in a professional environment while furthering their professional education.

6-2. To be eligible for JRCOSTEP, the applicant must:

- a. Be a United States citizen.
- b. Be under age 43 and a half at the expected date of graduation (unless the candidate has a number of years of active service, as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 212(d), for retirement purposes, equal to the number of years by which the candidate exceeds age 43 and a half);
- c. Have completed no more than eight years of active duty service in one of the uniformed services, other than the USPHS Commissioned Corps, before becoming a JRCOSTEP officer.
- d. Have accomplished, or be in the process of completing, one of the following:
 - (1) A minimum of the first required year of graduate study in dental, medical, nursing, optometry, pharmacy, podiatry, psychology, or veterinary graduate school prior to assignment.
 - (2) A minimum of two years of a baccalaureate program in the following courses of study: biotechnology, computer science/information technology, cybersecurity, dental hygiene, dietetics-nutrition, engineering, environmental health, health information, health physics, laboratory technology, industrial health, information technology, medical record administration, medical technology, occupational health and safety, nursing, physician assistant, or other fields according to the needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

- (3) Completion of any baccalaureate degree with subsequent enrollment in a master's or doctoral program in a commissionable health-related field, such as biostatistics, dental hygiene, epidemiology, health education, industrial hygiene, physician assistant, laboratory technology, occupational or physical therapy, physical science, public health, social work, or other fields according to the needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
 - (4) The Director, CCHQ, in consultation with the Chief Professional Officer of the respective category, may waive the education requirement in item d. in cases of uniquely qualified applicants.
 - e. Within three months after the date of completion of the JRCOSTEP assignment, be scheduled to:
 - (1) Return to college or university as a full-time student; or
 - (2) Enter a postgraduate degree program, the completion of which would satisfy the educational requirements for an unrestricted appointment in the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
 - f. Be recommended by a dean, faculty advisor, or department head at the college or university where the student is currently enrolled.
 - g. Be free, at the time of completion of the qualifying degree, of any obligation or responsibility that would conflict with extended active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps, should the student later qualify and apply.
 - h. Meet the appropriate appointment standards for extended active duty in the USPHS Commissioned Corps (as listed in Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [231.01](#), "General Appointment Standards"), except for those that do not apply to current students such as:
 - (1) Completing a qualifying academic or professional degree program;
 - (2) Possessing a current and unrestricted license; and
 - (3) Obtaining sufficient credible training and experience (as specified in CCI 231.01, Section 6-2., "Credit for Training and Experience").
- 6-3. JRCOSTEP enables students to participate in the USPHS Commissioned Corps' active duty assignments while still enrolled in college or university.
 - a. Under this program, students who are eligible, based on the criteria described in Section 6-2., will be:
 - (1) Commissioned in the USPHS Commissioned Corps' Ready Reserve Corps as Junior Assistant Health Services Officers; and

- (2) Called to active duty for training assignments during periods when they are out of school under their school's schedule. These assignments will last for at least 31 consecutive days, but no longer than 120 consecutive days in any fiscal year. For those occasions when the USPHS Commissioned Corps permits a JRCOSTEP officer to have two assignments, it will not recall him or her to active duty in the same calendar month that a previous tour ended.
 - b. JRCOSTEP assignments may range across a spectrum of public health activities in the research, clinical, regulatory, health promotion or disease prevention, and administrative areas. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will attempt to match the assignment preferences and educational interests of the student with the needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- 6-4. Selection of Students. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will select students for JRCOSTEP assignments based on the qualifications of the applicants and the anticipated staffing needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- a. Selections and timeframes are at the discretion of the Director, CCHQ. (See POM 821.84, "COSTEP.")
 - b. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will not permit any early reviews or pre-selections of JRCOSTEP officers (i.e., outside of the formal selection process).
 - c. The selecting OPDIV or program will notify the chosen student(s), as well as CCHQ, of their selection(s) within five workdays after selection. CCHQ will notify the applicants who were not selected or are ineligible for the JRCOSTEP program.
- 6-5. Each JRCOSTEP officer must receive professional supervision from a PHS officer, a civil service employee, or other designated health care provider approved by the Director, CCHQ, or designee, who is in an assignment related to, and appropriate for, the JRCOSTEP officer's field of education or training.
- 6-6. Entitlements, Pay, and Allowances. The Corps grants JRCOSTEP officers on active duty some, but not all, of the rights, benefits, and privileges accorded to PHS officers serving on extended active duty. JRCOSTEP officers have some restrictions on travel and transportation entitlements and health care, and they have no disability retirement or severance pay coverage.
- a. Base Pay. The USPHS Commissioned Corps appoints JRCOSTEP participants as ensigns with a base pay grade of O-1 (or O-1E if they have prior active duty enlisted uniformed service of at least four years and a day) in the Ready Reserve with full pay and allowances for this grade while on active duty.
 - b. The USPHS Commissioned Corps pays JRCOSTEP officers Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) based on their duty station while serving on active duty and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (meant to pay for food) of an O-1 grade officer. (Note: Officers assigned to military or government housing do not receive BAH.)
 - c. Base/Post Exchange and Commissary Privileges. JRCOSTEP officers and their bona fide dependents are entitled to base/post exchange and commissary privileges only during the period(s) the officer is serving on active duty.
 - d. While their school is in session and when they are not on active duty, JRCOSTEP officers are students and receive no entitlements, pay, or allowances.

- e. If the JRCOSTEP officer's school allows the JRCOSTEP tour to count as an internship as part of their academic requirements, the officer can receive both academic credit for this time and pay as a JRCOSTEP officer.
- 6-7. Termination of Commission.
- a. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will terminate the commissions of all JRCOSTEP officers at the end of each active duty tour. However, those students who still meet eligibility requirements can reapply to JRCOSTEP or apply to SRCOSTEP at a future opening as determined by the Director, CCHQ.
 - b. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will retain the files of JRCOSTEP officers for two years in case they apply again to JRCOSTEP, apply to SRCOSTEP, or wish to apply for General Duty commissions once they obtain their qualifying degree and their category is open for applications.
7. RESPONSIBILITIES:
- 7-1. The ASH may promulgate any additional Instructions necessary to implement the provisions of this Instruction. The SG will issue a POM to address matters within the SG's scope of authority raised by this Instruction.
- 7-2. To participate in the JRCOSTEP program, the OPDIV, Agency or program to which a JRCOSTEP officer is assigned, must:
- a. Commit the required funding for a full-time equivalent (FTE) position for the length of the active duty period.
 - b. Make available all necessary funds for the pay and allowances, uniform (if required), travel, transportation, and any training expenses of the officer, including Temporary Duty (TDY) expenses, if appropriate.
 - c. Make the request for a JRCOSTEP and submit any documents that are required by the SG in a POM (e.g., forms, statement of duties, etc.).
- 7-3. JRCOSTEP officers must:
- a. Complete the forms in the Welcome Package including W-4 and Notice of Arrival;
 - b. Take an online training program developed by the Director, CCHQ, or his/her designee, and score at the passing level as defined by criteria set by the Director, CCHQ or his/her designee. If the student cannot score at the passing level, he or she must retake the course until he/she does;
 - c. Respond to the Call to Active Duty personnel order, report to their assigned duty station as ordered, and fulfill their tour of duty;
 - d. Achieve and maintain the desired level of performance, and abide by the mission and values of the USPHS Commissioned Corps; and
 - e. Follow the USPHS Commissioned Corps' requirements regarding their personal conduct and obligations as outlined in [CCI 211.01](#), "Standards of Conduct."

- 7-4. At the end of the JRCOSTEP tour of active duty, the OPDIV or Agency and the JRCOSTEP officer must complete an out-processing checklist and send it to CCHQ attached to evaluation form [PHS-4469-1](#), "JRCOSTEP Evaluation Questionnaire."
8. PROCEDURES:
- 8-1. Travel and Transportation Entitlements. JRCOSTEP officers are entitled to travel and transportation allowances as set forth in the [Joint Travel Regulations](#) (JTR). The JTR provides that the Government will bear certain costs of travel and transportation for the officer and the shipment of certain household goods from the place from which called to active duty to the duty station and return.
- a. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will not authorize reimbursement for travel performed (including travel by dependents) or shipments of household goods sent prior to issuance of official copies of the call to active duty personnel order. If the JRCOSTEP officer fails to complete a minimum of 31 days of his/her tour, the USPHS Commissioned Corps will not provide the return travel costs.
- b. The Government may direct the JRCOSTEP officer to use a particular mode of transportation to and from the duty station. Travel and transportation allowances are summarized as follows for those situations where the JRCOSTEP officer is given a choice of transportation mode:
- (1) Travel by privately owned vehicle (POV). In this situation the officer is entitled to reimbursement of mileage for travel according to the mileage allowance set forth in the JTR. No per diem allowance is payable.
 - (2) Travel by common carrier. The officer may elect to travel by common carrier at Government expense (using a form provided by the sponsoring Agency or program); or at personal expense and then claim reimbursement later, not to exceed government cost, plus per diem allowances payable.
 - (3) Shipment of household goods by the Government. Officers may ship household goods not to exceed 600 pounds of personal effects at Government expense from the place (city) from which called to active duty and return to the same city. Upon receipt of personnel orders, the JRCOSTEP officer will contact the receiving agency's shipping officer to arrange shipment.
 - (4) Shipment of household goods by the officer. JRCOSTEP officers can ship personal effects (not to exceed 600 pounds) through a personally procured Do It Yourself (DITY) move and then claim reimbursement for that expense as long as it is approved by Agency OPDIV. The officer will contact the receiving agency's shipping officer for guidance and recommendations. (See [CCI 731.01](#), "Shipment of Household Goods.")
 - (5) Military Flights. JRCOSTEP officers are not authorized to use space available flights on military aircraft. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will consider attempts to do so as misconduct and grounds for termination of the JRCOSTEP officer's commission.

- c. If a JRCOSTEP participant attends an online school, the Government will pay for transportation to the duty station from the student's physical location in the continental United States (CONUS), Hawaii, or Alaska, and for the return trip to the original location, where he/she attends online classes, not the physical location of the headquarters of the online program. This travel is subject to the limits in Section 3-1. above.
 - 8-2. Health Care Benefits. The Government provides JRCOSTEP officers and their bona fide dependents with the same health care benefits during the officer's period of active duty as Regular Corps officers and their dependents, subject to the provisions of [CCI 671.10](#), "Health Care Benefits," and the Dependents Medical Care Act ([10 U.S.C. § 1076](#) et seq.). Dependents are eligible to enroll in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) when the JRCOSTEP officer is on active duty for more than 31 days.
 - a. JRCOSTEP officers and their authorized family members are eligible for TRICARE health care when the JRCOSTEP officer is on active duty for more than 31 days.
 - b. JRCOSTEP officers and authorized family members are eligible for direct care at a Military Treatment Facility (MTF).
 - 8-3. Sick and Annual Leave. JRCOSTEP officers can request sick leave as needed. They accumulate annual leave at the rate of 0.5 days of annual leave for each six consecutive days of active duty. JRCOSTEP officers can request, and may be granted, annual leave at the discretion of their OPDIV's or program's leave-granting authority.
 - a. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will not make lump-sum leave payments to JRCOSTEP officers for unused annual leave at the time of separation. Therefore, JRCOSTEP officers must use all their annual leave during their active duty tour or it will be forfeited.
 - b. Officers may not use annual leave to extend a tour of duty.
 - c. A JRCOSTEP officer must apply for any leave using the same system as officers in the Regular Corps. For further information on leave, see [CCI 361.01](#), "Leave of Absence; General."
 - 8-4. Toward the end of each training assignment, the USPHS Commissioned Corps will evaluate the JRCOSTEP officer and the assignment. For this purpose, each JRCOSTEP officer must use [Form PHS-4772](#), "Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP) Status Report," and his/her immediate supervisor must use [Form PHS-4469-1](#), "JRCOSTEP Evaluation Questionnaire." The JRCOSTEP officer can review this evaluation and retain a copy, if desired, prior to its being forwarded to the CCHQ. JRCOSTEP officers and the supervisor will sign the questionnaire as proof that they reviewed it.
 - 8-5. Privacy Act Provisions. Personnel records are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974. The applicable systems of records are: 09-40-0001, "PHS Commissioned Corps General Personnel Records, HHS/PSC/HRS"; and 09-40-0002, "PHS Commissioned Corps Medical Records, HHS/PSC/HRS."
9. HISTORICAL NOTE: This is the first issuance of this Instruction within the eCCIS and replaces CCPM CC25.2.4 dated 26 May 1999.