United States Public Health Service (USPHS)
Social Work Career Map &
Mentoring Guide
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Developed by SWPAG Mentoring Subcommittee
Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) Mentoring Subcommittee’s charge is to represent the needs of social workers to the HS PAC Mentoring Subcommittee and HS PAC Mentoring Program; Provide operational-level support to the HS PAC Mentoring Program; Provide the SWPAG with advice regarding the program; Actively encourage 100% participation in the HS PAC Mentoring Program by SWPAG members; Provide guidance to the SWPAG representatives to the HS PAC Mentoring Program; Track common issues that emerge during mentoring activities.

The Social Work Career Map & Mentoring Guide serves to provide the social work officer and his/her mentor with basic guidelines to begin developing a long-term career path as a Commissioned Corp Officer in the United States Public Health Service.

The information provided in this guide is expected to achieve the following:

**Our Goals** –
- Educate the USPHS social worker on career choices
- Educate the USPHS social worker on promotion process as it relates to career choices
- Provide the mentor & mentee with a guideline for discussing long term careers within the USPHS

**DISCLAIMER:** The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) of the linked websites, or the information, products or services contained therein. Such links are provided consistent with the stated purpose of assisting in accessing career progression and promotion information. Additionally, the Social Work Career Guidance & Mentoring Guide does not guarantee promotion or employment, within the United States Public Health Service. promote or solely endorse any particular offerings through the resource links.
Acknowledgments

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Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) – Mentoring Subcommittee

Social Work Career Map
Tips for Success:
✓ 100% Basic ready – ALWAYS
✓ Manage your career
✓ Obtain a mentor
✓ Join a deployment team (MHT, SAT, RDF) & deploy
✓ Actively participate in PHS sponsored groups & activities

Link for USPHS HSO Promotion Information:
http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/promotions/promotions.aspx

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Social Work Careers in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS)
Clinical Social Work/ Direct Practice

Examples of Continuing Education Options:

- Doctorate in Social Work or other degree
- Specialized training in Child & Adolescent, Couples, Geriatric, Chronic Mentally Ill, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Family Violence.

Tip: Advancing your career as a USPHS officer takes short and long term preparation, development and dedication!

Examples of Position Titles In USPHS

- Individual Clinical Social Worker (Clinical)
  NIH – Grade O6

- Individual Clinical Social Worker (Mental Health)
  DoD/TMA - Grade O5

- Sr Clinical Social Worker & Clinical Social Worker (Supervisory)
  IHS – Grade O5

- Individual Clinical Social Worker (Clinical)
  BOP – Grade O4

- Individual Clinical Social Worker
  DHS – Grade O3

- Clinical Social Worker (Mental Health)
  DHS – O2
Administrative Social Work

Examples of Continuing Education Options:

- Master’s or Doctorate in Health Care Administration.
- Graduate Certifications in areas of Business, Leadership, Healthcare Administration, Public Health, Epidemiology, Disaster Management, etc.

Tip: As an administrator, it is helpful to have coursework and training in healthcare operations, leadership, and organizational development!

Examples of Position Titles In USPHS

- Work-Life Division Chief, US Coast Guard
  DHS – Grade O6
- Health Services Administrator
  IHS – Grade O6
- Social Work Internship Program Director
  DoD – Grade O6
- Program Coordinator
  ACF – Grade O5
- Program Management Officer
  SAMHSA – Grade O5
- Program Coordinator
  ATSDR – Grade O4
- Analyst
  CMS – O3
Policy & Research Social Work

Examples of Continuing Education Options:
- Doctorate in Health Sciences
- Masters of Public Health
- Graduate Certifications in areas such as Epidemiology, Global Health, Research and Statistical Evaluations, and Survey Methodology.

Tip: Obtaining the training and education for the field you want to specialize in is career planning and advancement. Be a subject matter expert (SME)!

Examples of Position Titles In USPHS

Analyst
NIH – O6

Research Officer
AHRQ – O5

Research Scientist Officer
CDC – O4

General Health Services Officer
FDA – O3

Individual Clinical Social Worker (Clinical)
NIH – O2

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The Five Pillars & Social Work
Commissioned Corps Five Transformation Pillars

These transformation pillars were developed and implemented throughout in an effort to redirect the recruitment mix of the future to become more clinically oriented.

(2012 CPO Update: The State of the Health Services Category by RADM Epi Elizondo, Ph.D., PA-C)

**Transformation Pillar**

*(incorporated in 2014 benchmarks):*

1. Assignment to underserved and vulnerable populations;
2. Assignment is in a hardship location (or difficult-to-recruit position) where there is significant unmet need for qualified professionals;
3. Assignment requires individual to be available for rapid deployment – domestic or international – at the direction of the agency head (as distinguished from deployment for natural disaster or international response) or requires availability to perform duties 24/7, including when on leave;
4. Assignment requires regular engagement with other uniformed services;
5. Assignment does not meet criteria 1-4 but cannot be filled without the Commissioned Corps and will address an important public health need.)
As a social worker in the United States Public Health Service you will have many opportunities to successfully meet these pillars. Most likely, each pillar provides some opportunity for social work, however the best pillars for social work are Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 3 and Pillar 4.

**Pillar 1 – Underserved Populations**

Social workers who serve in the following agencies will meet this goal: BOP, IHS and ICE: Social workers whose primary job is to provide a service, program or develop policy for underserved populations also work in HRSA, SAMSHA, NIH, ACF and other Health & Human Service agencies.

**Pillar 2 – Hardship Locations**

Social workers who serve in difficult to recruit or hardship locations may work for agencies such as ICE, IHS or the FDA. They provide services ranging from direct care to program and/or agency management.

**Pillar 3 – Rapid Deployment**

Social workers work with ASPR, FEMA, and other Health & Human Service agencies that allow for rapid and immediate deployment to provide specialty care and services.

**Pillar 4 – Engagement With Other Uniformed Services**

Social workers who work with any of the other 6 uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, US Coast Guard, National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration [NOAA Corps]) in any capacity (e.g. direct care, policy, administration, leadership).
Agencies that Employ Commissioned Corps Officers

- ACF – Administration for Children & Families
- AHRQ – Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality
- ASPR – Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
- ATSDR – Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry
- CDC – Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- FDA – Food & Drug Administration
- HRSA – Health Resources & Services Administration
- IHS – Indian Health Service
- NIH – National Institutes of Health
- DCCPR – Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel & Readiness
- SAMHSA – Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
- CMS - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- BOP - Federal Bureau of Prisons
- DHS - Department of Homeland Security
- USDA - Department of Agriculture
- EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
- NOAA - National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
- USMS - U.S. Marshals Service
- DOI - Department of the Interior
- DoD - Department of Defense
- ICE – Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Commissioned Corps Liaisons: 
http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/PDF_docs/sgpac.pdf
USPHS Employment Websites

- Commissioned Corps Liaisons
  http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/PDF_docs/sgpac.pdf

- USA Jobs
  https://www.usajobs.gov/

- Department of Defense (DoD)