



Welcome to the United States Public Health Service!



The 2014 **TOP TIPS** for Scientists entering the PHS

A. Make time to explore and know these key websites.

1. USPHS personnel management site where PHS-wide updates are posted: <http://dcp.psc.gov/>.
2. Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) secure area: <https://dcp.psc.gov/cclogin/ccmislogin.aspx>. Active duty USPHS officers that do not know their username and password to access the website can call or e-mail the Commissioned Corps Systems Help Desk at (888)-225-3302 or cchelpdesk@psc.gov. Specifically, CCMIS secure area includes:
 - a. Officer, Liaison, and Leave Maintenance Clerk Activities:
 - i. Login ID is the first four letters of your last name and last four digits of your social security number.
 - ii. electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF)- USPHS-related information regarding the officer (e.g., orders, Curriculum Vitae (CV), Officer's Statement (OS), awards, past Commissioned Officers' Effectiveness Report (COERs).
 - iii. Promotion Information Report (PIR)- PHS short history, job description.
 - iv. COERs- job description, goals, and accomplishments.
 - v. Commissioned Officers Leave Tracking System (COLTS)- leave balance and projected leave.
 - vi. BlueBook- Limited information about every active duty USPHS officer.
 - vii. Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERs) Frequently Asked Questions- Provides basic information regarding the medical insurance system for dependents.
 - b. Direct Access Resources:
 - i. Login ID is your personal PHS number.
 - ii. Entry system for personnel information –e.g., Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT) results, readiness roles.
3. Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) Readiness and Deployment Operations, formally know as the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD), site: <http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/>.
4. Scientist category site: <http://usphs-scientist.org/>
 - a. The Career Development website may be particularly useful for new officers: <http://usphs-scientist.org/careerdev.htm>

B. Participate in the Scientist Advisory Committee (SciPAC) monthly teleconferences. The teleconferences occur at 12 PM ET on the first Tuesday of every month (Toll-free number: 1-866-782-0573, Passcode: 2214354#). All Scientist officers are encouraged to participate. Attendance on the SciPAC monthly calls is taken into consideration when applying to become a SciPAC voting member. When we have a training session, it will occur immediately following the SciPAC teleconference starting ~ 11:45 – 12:00 PM using the same dial-in number and passcode.

C. Get a mentor by contacting the SciPAC Mentoring Subcommittee Chair at <http://usphs-scientist.org/subcommittees.htm>.

- D. Become an active SciPAC subcommittee member. There are 10 SciPAC subcommittees: Awards, Career Development, Category Day, Mentoring, Policy Review, Recruitment, Retention & Readiness, Rules and Membership, Science, Visibility and Website—see <http://usphs-scientist.org/subcommittees.htm> for more information. The Chair and Co-chair of the subcommittees are typically SciPAC voting members.
- E. Consider applying to become a SciPAC voting member. The SciPAC voting membership includes 19 officers appointed by the Surgeon General who provide advice and consultation directly to the Office of the Surgeon General and to the Scientist Chief Professional Officer.
- F. Participate in the Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) general meeting teleconferences. The teleconferences occur at 1 PM ET on the second Friday of every other month (Toll-free number: 1-218-936-4700, Passcode: 7919605#). All junior officers (Lieutenant or Lieutenant Commander for Scientists) are encouraged to participate. POC: LCDR Qiao Bobo at qiao.bobo@fda.hhs.gov
- G. Become an active JOAG member. JOAG has 10 committees: Awards, COF Planning, Communications and Publications, Development, Public Health and Community Service, Membership, Policy and Procedures, Professional Development, Recruitment and Retention, and Welcoming.

For more information about JOAG please go to: <http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/joag/>

- H. If you are a psychologist, you can join the Psychologist Professional Advisory Group (PsyPAG) by contacting the current Membership Chair listed at <http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pags/psypag/roster> or by sending an e-mail to psypag.usphs@gmail.com.

PsyPAG is an advisory group for clinical psychologists with members from SciPAC and the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HSPAC). PsyPAG teleconferences are held 6 times a year (February, April, June, August, October, and December) on the first Wednesday of the month at 12P M ET. (1-866-782-0573, Passcode: 2214354#). To learn more about PsyPAG, members can go to: <http://usphs-hso.org/?q=pags/psypag>

- I. Become an active PsyPAG member. PsyPAG has 6 subcommittees: Policy and Procedures, Membership, Recruitment and Retention, Professional Development, Advocacy, and Science. Opportunities for involvement include subcommittee volunteer, subcommittee Chair, subcommittee Co-Chair. PsyPAG also hosts a monthly teleconference to support psychologists pursuing board certification and provides opportunities for involvement during the annual USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium.
- J. Sign up for key listservs to ensure receipt of current information. Some recommendations are:
 - 1. Scientist category:
 - a. via e-mail: LISTSERV@LIST.NIH.GOV. Type the following text in the message body: “subscribe USPHS-Scientist” and provide your name.
 - b. 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.
 - 2. Office of Commissioned Corps Operations (OCCO): <https://list.nih.gov/archives/ccinformation-1.html>
 - 3. JOAG: <https://list.nih.gov/cgi-bin/wa.exe?SUBED1=JOAG&A=1>
 - 4. Job vacancy listserv: http://dcp.psc.gov/CCMIS/message_signup.aspx
 - 5. DCCPR: When you update your profile through Direct Access, you will be added to the listserv.

6. Agency-specific listservs may be available. Contact your agency Commissioned Corps liaison officer.

K. Obtain I.D. cards and enroll in benefits.

1. Common Access Card (CAC), i.e. Uniformed Services I.D.—Done at Officer Basic Course (OBC).
2. Dependent Identification Card (Not done at OBC; use the following link to find a facility).
<http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site?execution=e1s1>
3. Entry of self and family members into DEERS—Done at OBC.
4. Enrollment in TRICARE (Health care plan) — 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 patient portal link:
<https://www.tricareonline.com/portal/page/portal/TricareOnline/Portal>
5. Enroll dependents in dental plan through the following link:
<http://www.tricare.mil/Dental/TDP/Enrollment.aspx>

L. Understand your pay.

1. Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH): <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>
2. Base pay: <http://militarypay.defense.gov/>
3. Tax withholding information:
<http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/paydeductions/taxwithholding.html>
4. Call the Compensation Team at 301-427-3280.
 - a. Request that they walk through your pay stub and answer any questions you may have.
 - b. Ensure they have the right address and contact information on file.
 - c. If applicable, have them connect you to the Travel Office to process move monies.

M. Once you become more comfortable explaining the role of a PHS officer, meet with your supervisor to discuss:

1. The PHS mission.
2. Your readiness requirements and deployment “on call” times.
3. The best fit between PHS and agency requirements.
4. Supervisory role in the annual COER.
See the below website for additional information:
http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM25_1_1.pdf
5. The benchmarks by which you will be measured for promotion.
http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/2015%20SCIENTIST%20Benchmarks%20-%20Final.pdf

N. Consider joining the Commissioned Officers Association (COA) and your local COA branch. This organization exists to promote the mission and interests of the USPHS and its officers. There are local branches that may be able to provide support and resources for anything from policies to uniform wear. Go to <http://www.coausphs.org/> for details.

O. Understand the promotion process and get organized.

1. Review Scientist Category benchmarks.
http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/2015%20SCIENTIST%20Benchmarks%20-%20Final.pdf
2. Update your CV into the required format for PHS Scientists: http://usphs-scientist.org/documents/careerdev_content/CV_Guidelines_2012.pdf
http://usphs-scientist.org/careerdev.htm#Other_Resources.

3. SciPAC enlists other Scientists to review your CV and provide advice. Contact the Career Development Subcommittee for more information (Chair: LCDR Mike Smith, Michael.smith2@fda.hhs.gov, Co-Chairs: LCDR Alfredo Sancho, Alfredo.Sancho@hhs.gov and LCDR Zewditu Demissie, izj5@cdc.gov).
4. Review the COER (supervisory evaluation) process—see informative links below.
http://usphs-scientist.org/documents/careerdev_content/COER.pdf
http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/COER/COER_Index.aspx
5. Learn how to write a strong OS—why you should be promoted, see link below.
http://dcp.psc.gov/cebuletin/articles/Officers_Statement.aspx
6. When needed, secure a Reviewing Official’s Statement (ROS)—why your second line supervisor (or supervisor’s supervisor) thinks you should be promoted, see link below.
<http://dcp.psc.gov/cebuletin/articles/ROS.aspx>
7. Complete readiness requirements—Basic Life Support (BLS) and APFT, annual (self-reported) and 5-year full medical and dental exams, deployment role (done after basic ready), online training (8 modules in addition to the 4 FEMA courses done at OBC), immunizations.
 - a. Basic Readiness Compliance Checklist
http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/ofrd/Readiness/Basic_Readiness_Checklist.pdf
8. Make sure your certifications/licenses/credentials are up-to-date with DCCPR. Check Direct Access and your eOPF (See the Secure Area at <http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CCHELP.aspx>). See http://ccmis.usphs.gov/CCMIS/promotions/Licensure_and_Certifications.aspx for more info.
9. Understand the value of letters of appreciation and awards. See SciPAC CV Guidelines http://usphs-scientist.org/documents/careerdev_content/CV_Guidelines_2012.pdf

P. Additional information:

1. OBC link:
<http://ccmis.usphs.gov/CCMIS/COTA/obcdates.aspx>
2. Medical Affairs Branch, see link below containing contact information
<http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/MAB.aspx>
3. Compensation Branch, see link below containing contact information
<http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CB.ASPX>
4. Commissioned Corps Contact Information
<http://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/CCHELP.aspx>

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

Welcome Aboard!