



POM 821.85
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10 May 2024

By Order of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service:

VADM Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA

TO: All Candidates Seeking an Appointment in the Regular Corps or the Ready Reserve Corps

SUBJECT: Commissioned Service Obligations

1. In accordance with Commissioned Corps Directive (CCD) [122.02](#), "Force Distribution and Management," this Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) establishes the guidelines for Commissioned Service Obligations (CSO) to the USPHS Commissioned Corps and the length of CSO agreements.
2. Concurrent Obligations. An officer may serve other obligations (e.g., special pay obligation and training obligation) concurrent with the CSO outlined in this POM. When an officer completes their CSO as outlined in this POM, they must still complete all other outstanding obligations before requesting separation from the USPHS Commissioned Corps. A Regular Corps officer also must complete all outstanding active-duty obligations (ADO) before requesting an inter-component transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps.
3. Length of CSO. Except as provided in Sections 4., 5., 6., and 7. of this policy, prior to accepting an appointment in the USPHS Commissioned Corps, a candidate must agree to serve in the USPHS Commissioned Corps as follows:
 - a. Regular Corps.
 - (1) A candidate for the Regular Corps must agree to serve for a minimum of eight years, which the individual may serve in the Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps as outlined in this POM.
 - (2) A candidate for the Regular Corps must agree to serve an initial period on active duty of at least four years, unless waived by the SG.
 - (3) After serving the initial period of active-duty service, an officer of the Regular Corps may request an inter-component transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps and, if the request is approved, fulfill the remaining portion of the CSO in the Ready Reserve Corps.
 - (a) If the President and USPHS Commissioned Corps approves the member's inter-component transfer and appointment, the Director, Commissioned Corps Headquarters (CCHQ), will, based on the needs of the USPHS Commissioned Corps and availability of positions, place the officer into

one of the following (see Commissioned Corps Instruction (CCI) [322.06](#), “Ready Reserve Corps Management”):

- (i) The Selected Ready Reserve (SELRES);
 - (ii) The Active Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). However, while in the Active IRR, the CSO is served on a two for one basis (i.e., every two months served in the Active IRR counts as one month of the CSO) until the member transfers into the SELRES or an inter-component transfer back to the Regular Corps is approved (see Section 3.a.(3)(b)); or
 - (iii) The Standby IRR. However, while in the Standby IRR, the CSO is served on a two for one basis (i.e., every two months served in the Standby IRR counts as one month of the CSO) until the member transfers into the SELRES or an inter-component transfer back to the Regular Corps is approved (see Section 3.a.(3)(b)).
- (b) When the Director, CCHQ, places an officer in the SELRES or IRR, the officer may submit a subsequent request for an inter-component transfer and appointment back to the Regular Corps in accordance with Section 3.b.(3).
 - (c) An officer begins a new probationary period that commences on the effective date of their appointment to the Ready Reserve Corps (see [CCI 341.01](#), “Probationary Period”).
- (4) A Regular Corps officer who serves less than two years on active duty forfeits certain benefits specified in [CCI 387.01](#), “Separation of Commissioned Officer” (i.e., travel for the officer and/or the officer’s dependents; transportation of household goods (HHG); and transfer of, use of, or lump sum payment of unused annual leave).

b. Ready Reserve Corps.

- (1) A candidate for an appointment to the Ready Reserve Corps who is not requesting an inter-component transfer from the Regular Corps must agree to serve a minimum CSO of six years in the SELRES.
- (2) If the Director, CCHQ, transfers an officer to the Active IRR before the officer completes their SELRES CSO, the CSO is placed in hiatus until the officer transfers back into the SELRES.
- (3) An officer of the Ready Reserve Corps may request an inter-component transfer to the Regular Corps and fulfill the remaining portion of their CSO in the Regular Corps. If the Director, CCHQ, concurs and the President approves the member’s inter-component transfer and appointment, the Director, CCHQ, may appoint the officer in the Regular Corps and call them to active duty.
 - (a) The Director, CCHQ, will only issue orders to appoint the officer in the Regular Corps and call them to active duty after a Health and Human Services (HHS) Operating Division (OPDIV), Staff Division (STAFFDIV), or non-HHS organization submits a form PHS 1662, “Request For Personnel Action – Commissioned Officer,” to CCHQ for the appointment and assignment to a position that aligns with the mission of the USPHS

Commissioned Corps and is appropriate for a Regular Corps officer to hold.

- (b) A transferring officer begins a new probationary period that commences on the effective date of their appointment to the Regular Corps (see [CCI 341.01](#)).

- (4) Additional information on the SELRES CSO may be found in [CCI 322.06](#).

4. Special Programs/Positions. A candidate for appointment to the programs/positions outlined in this Section must agree to serve in the USPHS Commissioned Corps for the following periods:

- a. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) and Laboratory Leadership Service (LLS) Programs. A candidate for the CDC EIS or LLS program must agree to serve for a minimum of two years in the Regular Corps and then, if they remain on active duty after completing the EIS or LLS program, they must agree to an additional CSO as follows:

- (1) Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Officers. Medical, dental, and veterinary officers must agree to serve an additional two-year CSO. At any time during the remaining two years of their CSO, such officers may request an inter-component transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps to complete the remaining CSO.
- (2) All Other Officers. Officers who are not medical, dental, or veterinary officers must agree to serve an additional six-year CSO of which two years must be on active duty in the Regular Corps.

- b. Indian Health Service (IHS) Pharmacy Residency Programs. A candidate for an IHS PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency Program may agree to serve for one year in the Regular Corps, but must serve for no less than two years in the Regular Corps in order to be eligible for certain benefits.

- (1) If an individual remains on active duty after completing the PGY-1 residency, they must agree to an additional seven-year CSO of which three years must be on active duty in the Regular Corps, unless IHS selects them for a PGY-2 residency. However, if they separate from the Regular Corps after completing the PGY-1 residency, the USPHS Commissioned Corps will divest certain benefits upon their separation from the Regular Corps (i.e., travel for the officer and/or the officer's dependents; transportation of HHG; and transfer of, use of, or lump sum payment of unused annual leave) (see [CCI 387.01](#)).
- (2) An individual who remains on active duty after completing a PGY-2 residency must agree to an additional six-year CSO of which two years must be on active duty in the Regular Corps.

- c. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Fellowship Training Programs. A candidate for an NIH or FDA Fellowship may agree to serve in the Regular Corps for the length of the Fellowship and, if they remain on active duty after completing the Fellowship, they must agree to an additional CSO as follows:

- (1) Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Officers. Medical, dental, and veterinary officers must agree to serve a CSO that is a total of four years (includes time served in the Fellowship program); however, no CSO is required if the officer has already served four years. At any time during the remaining period of their CSO (after serving at least two years on active duty), such officers may request an inter-component transfer to the Ready Reserve Corps to complete the remaining CSO there.

- (2) All Other Officers. Officers who are not medical, dental, or veterinary officers must agree to serve a CSO that is a total of eight years (includes time served in the Fellowship program). An officer who remains in the Regular Corps after completing a Fellowship must serve a total of four years on active duty in the Regular Corps (includes time served in the Fellowship program).

Note: All individuals must serve for a minimum of two years in the Regular Corps to be eligible for certain benefits upon separation from the Regular Corps (i.e., travel for the officer and/or the officer's dependents; transportation of HHG; and transfer of, use of, or lump sum payment of unused annual leave) (see [CCI 387.01](#)).

- d. Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). A candidate for a medical degree at USUHS is subject to the obligations and conditions outlined in [CCD 125.03](#), "Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences," and is therefore not subject to a CSO as outlined in this POM. However, the Director, CCHQ, may require the candidate to complete a CSO agreement that aligns with the CSO outlined in CCD 125.03.
- e. Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP). The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not require a candidate for the SRCOSTEP to submit a Ready Reserve Corps CSO agreement. However, such candidates must submit an agreement to serve in the Regular Corps as outlined in Section 3.a. (or Section 5 for medical, dental, and veterinary officers) upon their graduation and transfer to the Regular Corps, unless they applied for a commission as a SRCOSTEP prior to 1 June 2022 (see Section 7.).
- f. Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP). The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not require a candidate for the JRCOSTEP to submit a Ready Reserve Corps CSO agreement.
- g. Non-career Appointments. The USPHS Commissioned Corps does not require a candidate for a position that is traditionally temporary and political in nature (e.g., positions that require appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate) to submit a CSO agreement.
5. Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Candidates. Candidates for the Regular Corps with a qualifying degree in the medical, dental, or veterinary professions must agree to serve for a minimum of four years (combined Regular Corps and Ready Reserve Corps) unless they are a candidate for one of the Special Programs outlined in Section 4. or applied for a commission prior to 1 June 2022 (see Section 7.). However, such candidates must serve for a minimum of two years in the Regular Corps to be eligible for certain benefits upon separation from the Regular Corps (i.e., travel for the officer and/or the officer's dependents; transportation of HHG; and transfer of, use of, or lump sum payment of unused annual leave) (see [CCI 387.01](#)).
6. Former PHS Officer Candidates.
- a. Regular Corps. A candidate for the Regular Corps who does not hold a current status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and who has prior commissioned service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps must agree to serve as follows:
- (1) Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Candidates. Medical, dental, and veterinary candidates must agree to serve a combined total (previous tour and current tours of duty) of four years with partial years discarded (e.g., an officer who previously served for two years and seven months must agree to serve for two years).

- (2) Candidates other than Medical, Dental, Veterinary:
 - (a) If the individual served less than four years during their previous tour of duty, they must agree to serve a combined total of eight years with partial years discarded (e.g., previously served for three years and seven months, must agree to serve for five years).
 - (b) If the individual served four or more years during their previous tour of duty, they must now agree to serve a minimum of four years.
 - (3) All candidates must serve for a minimum of two years in the Regular Corps to be eligible for certain benefits upon separation from the Regular Corps (i.e., travel for the officer and/or the officer's dependents; transportation of HHG; and transfer of, use of, or lump sum payment of unused annual leave) (see [CCI 387.01](#)).
 - b. Ready Reserve Corps. A candidate for the Ready Reserve Corps who does not hold a current status in the USPHS Commissioned Corps and who has prior commissioned service in the USPHS Commissioned Corps must agree to serve for a minimum of six years as outlined in Section 3.b. regardless of the number of years previously served.
7. Candidates Who Applied for a Commission Prior to 1 June 2022. Except as outlined above in Section 4.d., f., and g., a candidate for the Regular Corps who applied for a commission in the USPHS Commissioned Corps prior to 1 June 2022 must agree to serve for a minimum of two years in the Regular Corps. However, this Section does not apply to a candidate who applies subsequent to 1 June 2022 after CCHQ closed the application the candidate submitted prior to 1 June 2022.
 8. Responsibilities. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, is responsible for ensuring that candidates complete a CSO agreement in accordance with this POM. The Director, CCHQ, or designee, is also responsible for maintaining the forms [PHS-7087-RC](#), "USPHS Commissioned Service Obligation (CSO) Agreement," and [PHS-7087-RRC](#), "SELRES Commissioned Service Obligation (CSO) Agreement."
 9. This is the second issuance of this POM in the electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS) and replaces POM 821.85, "Commissioned Service Obligations," dated 1 June 2022. This POM will remain in effect until superseded or rescinded.