

Frequently Asked Questions about the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS)

What is EIS?

EIS is a 2-year postgraduate program in applied epidemiology for health professionals interested in public health; it provides competency-based training through classroom instruction, e-learning, and on-the-job experience. The program is modeled on a traditional medical residency program, where much of the education takes place through hands-on assignments and mentoring. During the 2-year program, EIS officers are employees of CDC and receive a salary and benefits. They provide service to public health while training as an epidemiologist.

What will I learn?

You will learn about applied epidemiology, biostatistics, emergency response, public health surveillance, scientific writing, media training, emerging public health issues, and other topics through various educational methods including classroom instruction, case studies, exercises, and e-learning. Only 5% of your learning is through coursework. Experiential learning makes up the other 95% and requires EIS officers to complete a range of activities, from conducting or participating in an outbreak investigation, to evaluating a public health surveillance system, to giving an oral presentation to a scientific audience.

What will I do as an EIS officer?

As you learn, you will gain broad, front-line public health experience. You will provide service to CDC and its partner agencies, especially state and local health departments. You may investigate outbreaks; conduct epidemiologic investigations or public health research; conduct and evaluate public health surveillance; study infectious or chronic diseases, environmental or occupational health, injuries, or birth defects and developmental disabilities; or respond to emerging public health threats.

If I am selected, when does the EIS class begin?

Each EIS class begins in July with a 1-month course at CDC headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Where would I be assigned?

You will be assigned to work in a state health department or in a CDC program. You might do international deployments as part of your assignment.

Am I eligible to apply to the EIS program?

You are eligible if you are a doctoral-level scientist with a degree in behavioral science, biostatistics, epidemiology, informatics, or nutrition; a health professional such as veterinarian, nurse (BSN, MSN), or dentist with an MPH or equivalent; or a physician with at least 1 year of clinical training. For most positions in the EIS class, U.S. citizenship or permanent residency and an active, unrestricted U.S. license to practice your clinical specialty are other requirements. Non-U.S. citizens eligible for a J-1 visa may apply, but a limited number are selected.

Is EIS a good fit for me?

EIS is a good fit if you are interested in applied epidemiology and using new technology to solve problems to improve public health. We seek EIS officers who are team players and have a positive attitude, with excellent interpersonal and communication skills. During the fellowship, EIS officers often serve on teams representing CDC in situations that require tact and diplomacy.

You will play an important role in supporting CDC's mission to protect lives and the well-being of the population at large and safeguard places where we work and live. You will be in the vanguard of public health professionals working on global health security, antimicrobial resistance, prescription drug overdose, and other priorities. Upon completion of EIS, you will become part of a network of distinguished EIS alumni applying what you have learned in your subsequent career.

What can I do after EIS?

You can go on to a distinguished career in public health or bring your world-class epidemiology and public health skills to whatever career you choose. Alumni serve as epidemiologists at CDC, in state or local health departments, and in health care settings. EIS alumni also lead top organizations around the world; serve as deans and faculty for schools of dentistry, medicine, preventive medicine, public health, and veterinary medicine; or edit and write for medical or public health journals and national media. EIS alumni have gone on to hold governmental leadership roles such as state epidemiologist, CDC Division and Center Directors, CDC Director, and U.S. Surgeon General.

For more information:

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