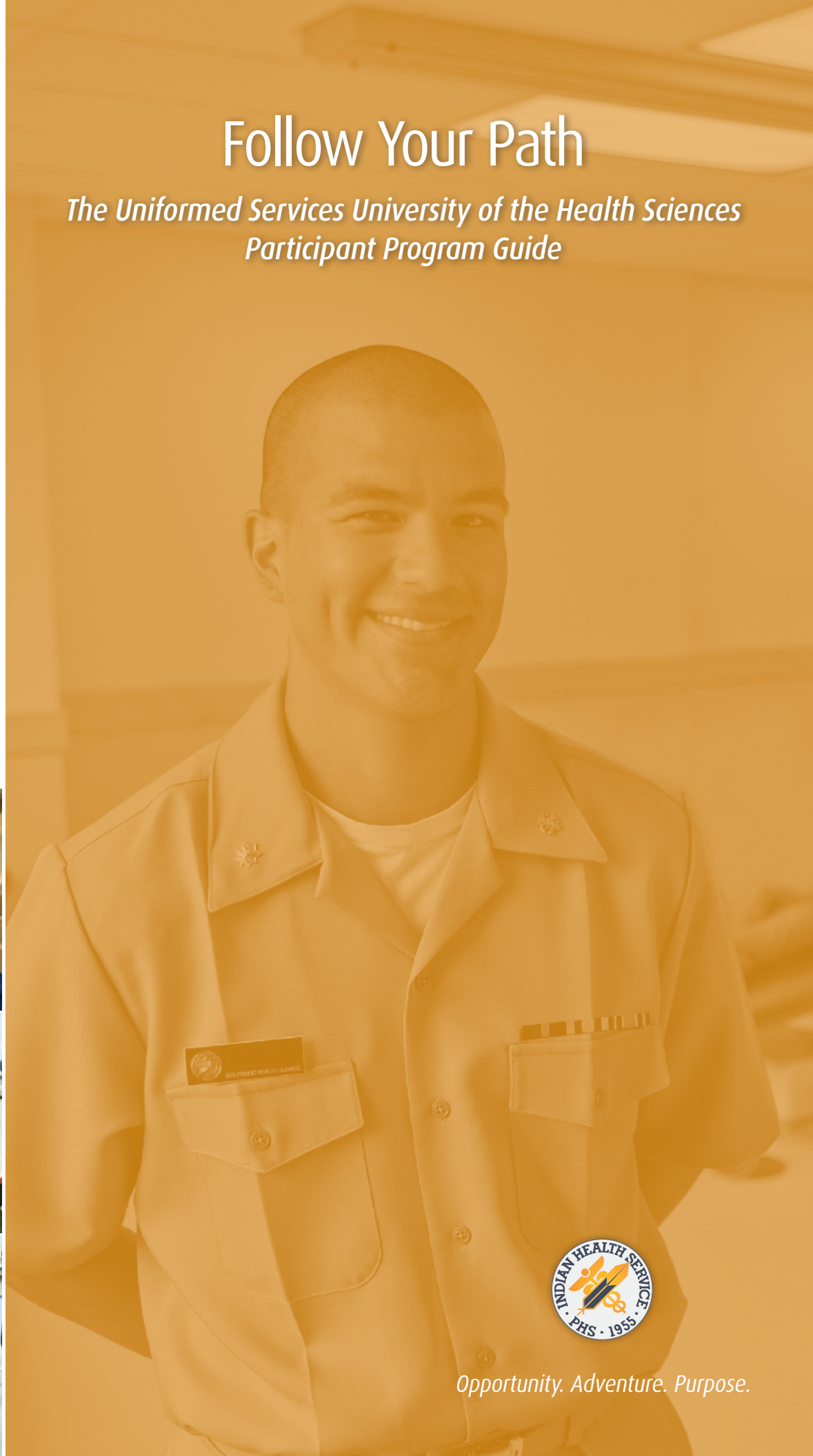


Follow Your Path

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Participant Program Guide

The USUHS mission is to train, educate and prepare uniformed services health professionals, officers and leaders to support the military health system, the US national security and national defense strategies and the readiness of our armed forces.



Opportunity. Adventure. Purpose.



OUR MISSION

To raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

OUR GOAL

To ensure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

OUR FOUNDATION

To uphold the federal government's obligation to promote healthy American Indian and Alaska Native people, communities and cultures and to honor and protect the inherent sovereign rights of Tribes.



The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

Train. Educate. Prepare.

Welcome to the start of the most challenging, rewarding and eye-opening adventure of your life — a journey in which you'll cultivate exceptional clinical skills, provide comprehensive, culturally competent care to a medically underserved patient population and reap the rewards of making meaningful change along the way by working for the Indian Health Service (IHS). You can experience all of this while discovering the beauty, heritage and traditions of the nation's vibrant American Indian and Alaska Native communities located in some of the most beautiful, unspoiled areas of the continental United States and Alaska.



CONTACT INFORMATION

ATTN: USUHS/IHS Program Liaison
 Indian Health Service
 Health Professions Support Branch
 5600 Fishers Lane
 Mail Stop: OHR (11E53A)
 Rockville, MD 20857

Phone: (301) 443-4242
 Fax: (301) 443-6048

The USUHS Program

Each year, IHS sponsors medical students to attend the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) in Bethesda, MD. The USUHS mission is to train, educate and prepare uniformed services health professionals, officers and leaders to support the military health system, US national security and national defense strategies, and the readiness of our armed forces. IHS-sponsored physicians are trained in several primary care specialties and provide direct health care and disease prevention services.

A USUHS education is provided at no cost to the medical student. Participants receive a full salary and have the rank of a junior officer while attending the four-year medical school program. Recipients chosen for sponsorship to the USUHS/IHS program must fulfill a 10-year service commitment providing clinical service in an IHS or Tribal high-priority site after graduation and completion of residency.

Through program sponsorship, training and clinical practice, USUHS participants/physicians grow to understand the immeasurable impact their care has on American Indian and Alaska Native communities. They find working with an appreciative and deserving patient population to be a rewarding experience and, throughout their tenure with IHS, they tap an adventure without parallel.

USUHS/IHS Liaison

A USUHS/IHS Program Liaison is assigned to each program participant and is the key contact for information about IHS, the US Public Health Service Corps (USPHS) Commissioned Corps or any problems experienced or questions that arise. Students must check in by phone or email with their assigned USUHS/IHS Liaison at least every quarter throughout their four years of school and must immediately notify the USUHS/IHS Liaison of any adverse events that may delay their graduation date.

The primary contacts for IHS-sponsored PHS medical students are the Office of Student Affairs and the Commandant's office, both of which provide on-site support and mentoring.

Benefits

During all stages of the USUHS/IHS program, participants enjoy a range of health, educational and personal benefits along with a competitive salary and stipends based on their rank and progress throughout the program.

Salary and Benefits

- During medical school, USUHS/IHS program participants receive the rank of Ensign (O-1), a junior officer in the USPHS Public Health Service and receive their monthly salary and benefits throughout the year.
- Upon graduation, program participants are promoted to the rank of Lieutenant (O-3) and receive a corresponding increase in pay and benefits.
- During both school and residency, program participants receive an additional monthly allowance for housing and subsistence, education-related travel and other pre-approved expenses.
- IHS will pay for relocation costs for USUHS/IHS program participants during their enrollment based on federal regulations. IHS will identify a shipping officer who will arrange for the transport of household goods at the expense of the agency for those in transition to residency or service commitment sites.
- During their service commitment, USUHS/IHS program participants practicing as physicians in priority Areas receive their physician salary, housing and subsistence allowance and do not have medical school loans.
- IHS physicians receive no-cost malpractice coverage, generous retirement, access to a Thrift Savings Plan and space-available flights on military aircraft, along with ample leave and continuing education benefits.
- Throughout the program, all funds are directly deposited at the end of each month with submission of a [Direct Deposit Sign Up form \(Standard Form 1199A\)](#).

Health Insurance

Enrollment in [Tricare](#), a federal health insurance program, includes broad coverage and access to top-notch hospitals and clinical care facilities throughout the continental United States and Alaska. Insurance coverage is provided to USUHS/IHS program participants and their dependent family members throughout medical school, residency and the service commitment term.

Time Off

- During their four years of medical school, USUHS/IHS program participants receive time off according to the USUHS academic calendar, including annual summer and winter breaks, as well as federal holidays. It's important to confirm all policies for requested annual and sick leave with the Office of Student Affairs/PHS Commandant and the USUHS/IHS Liaison.
- Medical residents are entitled to leave; the residency director and USUHS/IHS Liaison must approve any leave planned outside of the residency program scheduled breaks.
- Commissioned Corps physicians fulfilling their service commitment receive 30 days paid vacation, 10 paid federal holidays and sick leave as needed.
- Annual leave during any portion of a residency or service commitment must be requested through a [Request and Authority for Leave of Absence form \(PHS-1345\)](#) and approved through the USUHS/IHS Liaison.

Exam Fees

While USUHS/IHS program participants' benefits are generous, there are a few notable items that are exempt from coverage. Certification and licensure exam fees are not covered.



GOOD TO KNOW

All USUHS/IHS program participants must remain in good academic standing and are precluded from receiving compensation from any other non-IHS entity (including any additional salary, government funding, scholarships, loan repayment or grants) at any time during their tenure with the program.

Program Participation

There are three levels of USUHS/IHS program participation:

- **In School** — Four years of post-baccalaureate learning on USUHS' wooded 100-acre, Bethesda-based campus, enhanced by at least one IHS summer health care experience.
- **During Residency** — Three to five years of post-graduate training, depending on the area of medical specialty. The specialty must be from the approved IHS Post-Graduate Training and Residency Specialties list.
- **Your IHS Service** — After post-graduate residency training, at least 10 years of active-duty service as an IHS physician at an IHS-determined priority Area as a member of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.

Visit the [USPHS Commissioned Corps site](#) for more information including forms and policies.

In School

USUHS/IHS program participants arrive with strong academic records and at least a bachelor of science degree, as well as a depth of experience informed by the humanities, math, physics and a wide range of extracurricular interests and applicable volunteer work. Each has passed the MCAT. Many are attracted to the program's financial rewards, while others see USUHS' intimate network of classrooms and labs as a great way to learn medicine.

The First Four Years

- In July, prior to the start of classes, first-year USUHS/IHS program participants attend a two-week Officer Basic Course that outlines the customs and expectations of the USPHS Commissioned Corps.
- USUHS/IHS program participants enter as junior officers (Ensign, O-1) and, as such, they must comply with all uniform requirements and memorandums.
- After the first year of classes, USUHS/IHS program participants take part in a health care-related summer experience at an IHS-determined priority Area.
- Upon graduation from USUHS Medical School (usually four years), students are promoted to the rank of Lieutenant (O-3).

Determining a Specialty

During the third year of school, participants must choose among the IHS Post-Graduate Training and Residency Specialties list. It is recommended and encouraged that students apply to military residency programs before considering non-military residency programs. The USUHS Brigade Commander is available for assistance in identifying residency programs and application procedures.

Post-Graduate Training and Residency Areas

Three-year residencies:

- Emergency Medicine
- Family Practice
- General Internal Medicine
- General Pediatrics

Four-year residencies:

- General Psychiatry
- Obstetrics/Gynecology

Five-year residencies:

- General Surgery

Dual residencies, such as Family Practice/Psychiatry, may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your USUHS/IHS program liaison for prior approval.

Important Dates (School)

First-year Students

- Submit request for the summer experience location to the USUHS/IHS Liaison no later than March 1.
- Submit final transcript no later than 30 days after completion of the academic year.

Second-year Students

- Provide updated address and contact information to the USUHS/IHS Liaison by September 30.
- Submit final transcript no later than 30 days after completion of the academic year.

Third-year Students

- Provide updated address and contact information to the USUHS/IHS Liaison by September 30.
- With the USUHS/IHS Liaison's counsel, investigate the post-graduate clinical training and residency programs available (early in the third year).
- Notify the USUHS/IHS Liaison of the desired post-graduate clinical training specialty(s) and programs no later than April 30.
- Apply to the chosen post-graduate clinical training program/residency program (no later than the summer after the third year).
- Submit final transcript no later than 30 days after completion of the academic year.

Fourth-year Students

- Provide updated address and contact information to the USUHS/IHS Liaison by September 30.
- Submit final transcript no later than 30 days after completion of the academic year.
- Must arrive at residency site within five days of graduation from USUHS. Officers should not travel to their residency site without official travel orders.



Following Residency Acceptance

- Newly matched residents must also submit a completed **Request and Authority for Leave of Absence form (PHS-1345)** to the USUHS/IHS Liaison at least 90 days prior to graduation if matched to a military residency and 60 days prior to graduation if matched to a non-military residency.
- Residents must also submit (via mail or email) a Long-term Training packet to the USUHS/IHS Liaison containing the following documentation:
 - A **Request for Personnel Action form (PHS-1662)**.
 - An **Application for Training for USPHS Commissioned Personnel form (PHS-1122-1)**.
 - A copy of the acceptance letter from the residency program denoting the start date.
 - An **Extramural Training Agreement form (PHS-6373)**.
 - A completed USUHS Residency Program Training Purposes and Objectives form detailing the purpose and objectives of your residency training.

The USUHS/IHS Liaison will forward the Long-term Training packet to the IHS Division of Commissioned Personnel Support (DCPS) and then to the Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR) for approval.

During Residency

Depending on the chosen area of specialty, residents will spend the next three to five years further developing their clinical skills. This final phase of their medical education is where everything they've learned comes together.

As members of the USPHS Commissioned Corps, medical residents must maintain their basic readiness in the event, though unlikely, they may be deployed. Once a residency begins, transfers are not available without prior approval from the USUHS/IHS Liaison.

Important Dates (Residency)

Upon arrival at the residency site, residents must complete and submit the following documentation to their USUHS/IHS Liaison:

- A **change of address form for the Compensation Branch**, updated via Direct Access or by filling out a **Change of Name or Address form (IHS-856-22)**.
- Documents affirming graduation, licensure and certification, as needed.*

** To ensure a smooth transition into employment, medical residents are strongly advised to individually pursue applicable licensures and board examinations consistent with their chosen specialty during or at the completion of their residency program.*

The residency supervisor provides day-to-day counsel, but the USUHS/IHS Liaison remains the main point of contact for any issues that arise. Quarterly check-ins by phone or email are required, as well as submitting an **Annual Status Report form (IHS-856-16)** along with a letter of good standing from the residency director to the USUHS/IHS Liaison.



GOOD TO KNOW

Check in Regularly — The USUHS/IHS Liaison remains a source of support throughout the duration of service; please check in at least quarterly with your liaison by phone or email.

Your IHS Service

The final phase of USUHS/IHS program participation is fulfillment of a service commitment as a USPHS Commissioned Corps officer serving in an IHS-deemed high-priority site for 10 years.

The Service Commitment Transition

Before determining where to apply to practice, it's important for USUHS participants to note that many high-priority sites are located in rural and, sometimes remote, locations. Making the transition from an urban setting to a somewhat isolated community can be challenging. The first step is to become familiar with the geographic area, facility, Tribe and community. While many sites boast abundant opportunities for recreation in some of the most picturesque areas of the country, housing options, public utilities and conveniences may be different than those offered in metropolitan areas.

All medical residents are expected to begin their search for post-residency employment during their last year of residency. Service is expected to be in a full-time clinical position in the physician's specialty at a site approved by the USUHS/IHS Liaison. Residents should have completed all applicable licensures and board examinations consistent with their chosen specialty, including submitting a **Preferred Placement form (IHS-856-12)** to the USUHS/IHS Liaison specifying which sites and priority areas are of interest. An updated list of possible service sites is available online; **IHS recruiters** and the USUHS/IHS Liaison are also available to help. All jobs at existing sites must be applied for through the **USAJOBS site**.

Service Commitment Requirements

During the course of your service commitment, IHS physicians must submit the following:

- A copy of the personnel orders (upon acceptance of a service position) to their USUHS/IHS Liaison.
- An annual Commissioned Officer Effectiveness Report (COER) evaluated by the physician's supervisor to the USUHS/IHS Liaison annually.

FAQs

Q: I've received word that I'm failing one of my medical school courses and may need to retake it. What should I do?

A: At the first signs of academic difficulties, it's best to connect with your Brigade Commander and USUHS/IHS Liaison for help and counsel.

Q: Due to personal issues, I need to take a leave of absence from the program. How do I handle that?

A: First, connect with your Brigade Commander and USUHS/IHS Liaison about this to see whether there is an alternate route or a process for requesting a leave of absence.

Q: Now that I'm here, I realize this residency/IHS service site doesn't suit my needs or goals. Can I match with another site or transfer to another priority Area once I've begun to work there?

A: It is, of course, best to consider any possible pitfalls you may encounter at a residency or service site well in advance of applying to or accepting an offer of employment. But any transfers during residency or during one's service commitment must first begin as a conversation with your USUHS/IHS Liaison, your residency or clinic supervisor. Frank and honest discussions often lead to practical solutions that may allow individuals to remain in place and fulfill their service commitment.

Q: I was unable to land a job for my IHS service commitment after my residency. What do I do?

A: You must begin your Indian health career upon completing your residency. If you have not secured a position within 60 days of residency completion, contact your USUHS/IHS Liaison for assistance.

Q: I've decided to drop out of the program. What happens now?

A: Those who withdraw or drop out of their USUHS courses, leave their residency or who do not complete their IHS Service commitment will be found in breach of contract with the US government.

Such individuals must reimburse the government for all tuition, fees and salary paid based on the contracts signed with USPHS and IHS.





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www.ihs.gov/careeropps

 Indian Health Service
Health Professions Recruitment

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The policy of the IHS is to provide absolute preference to qualified Indian applicants and employees who are suitable for federal employment in filling vacancies within the IHS. IHS is an equal opportunity employer.

