

ENS Carl Saviers
JRCOSTEP Summer 2018
The University of Toledo
Gallup and Crownpoint Service Unit
Gallup, New Mexico



Greetings to my friends, family, and all interested parties. I, Carl Saviers, am a graduate student at The University of Toledo. I am pursuing a Masters of Science in Occupational Health – Industrial Hygiene. I am currently registered as a Sanitarian in Training by Ohio Department of Health. I first learned about the JRCOSTEP during my research in federal government and military careers, and made it my goal to get into the program once I was officially accepted into The University of Toledo.

I was assigned to the Gallup District Office, Gallup, NM, and I assisted the Crownpoint and Fort Defiance Service Units at times, as I was the only JRCOSTEP in the region. My preceptor was Delores Loretto, Service Unit Sanitarian. I also worked heavily with Elvina Clark-Joe, District Sanitarian, and LT Joshua Liles, Field Sanitarian in the Gallup District Office, and Kristofferson Martin, Field Sanitarian, Crownpoint Service Unit.

The day-to-day work varied. Depending on the need, we could be conducting bed bug, lead, or indoor air quality investigations among other things as part of our home inspections program. We also administered rabies vaccines, followed-up on dog bite reports, led group presentations on subjects such as vector-borne diseases, safe food handling, and roadway safety. We performed seatbelt use surveys and performed inspections of construction and renovation projects as well as temporary food vendors and group homes.



ENS Saviers inspecting a temporary food vendor at the 4th of July Fair, Window Rock, AZ

The JRCOSTEP was worth the many hoops I had to jump through to get in. I was taken out of the candidate pool for “medical ineligibility” due to exceeding the USPHS height and weight standards, but was able to get a documented tape test at my local Army Recruiting station in order to be declared eligible. I would not have been able to do this program without their assistance. Consequently, I did not receive the phone call from Elvina until mid-afternoon on the last day for agencies to accept applicants. It was a major relief. The week before I got that phone call, I had applied for an Industrial Hygienist position at OSHA in Toledo, OH. I was later offered the position, and thanks to their flexibility, I was able to make the trek to Gallup and work the entire summer. While I am currently planning on continuing my career at the federal level with OSHA and the Department of Labor, this experience with the Indian Health Service was invaluable in helping me grow as a professional.

The U.S. Public Health Service opened my eyes to different career possibilities and I would strongly recommend the JRCOSTEP to anyone interested in a career in environmental health. Navajo Nation in particular has more to focus on than nearly anywhere else in the United States with endemic diseases such as the plague, Hantavirus, relapsing fever, and other vector-borne illnesses. While I did not have any direct experience with cases or investigation of these illnesses, I consider it a positive that the community was safe during my time here and believe education efforts contribute to the prevention of the occurrence of these illnesses.

My favorite part was experiencing a new culture and being able to provide services to the community that made a clear difference. The rabies vaccination clinics offer an important service for those without reasonable access to rabies vaccinations for their pets. The outreach we performed through educational efforts and inspections provided valuable information to the community that they likely would not have had the option to learn any other way. I loved my time at Indian Health Service, and will always look back on it with fondness!