

# Epidemic Intelligence Service: Continue the Legacy

## Talking Points for EIS Alumni

### About the EIS Fellowship

- The [Epidemic Intelligence Service](#), or EIS program, is the world's premier program to train "disease detectives." It is the only applied epidemiology training program of its kind. EIS provides public health service through experiential learning and serves as a natural conduit to future generations of public health responders and leaders.
  - EIS has nearly 70 years of proven success training EIS officers.
  - EIS has trained over 3,800 disease detectives since 1951.
  - About 85% of EIS graduates enter the public health workforce.
- The goal of the EIS program is to provide the training, mentoring, and experiences for graduating officers to contribute to public health through scientific excellence and service. EIS alumni have gone on to fulfill critical and influential public health positions, such as:
  - CDC directors; leading CDC scientists; acting surgeons general; assistant directors-general, regional directors, and country directors at the World Health Organization; public health and medical school faculty and deans; city health commissioners; and state epidemiologists. Others are leaders in industry, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and the media.
- EIS is a two-year service and training fellowship. EIS officers provide a service to our local, state, or international partners while being trained in epidemiology.
  - About 10% of the training occurs through a rigorous mix of small and large group classroom instruction, case studies, exercises, and e-learning.
  - About 90% of the training is provided through hands-on assignments under the guidance of seasoned mentors and supervisors (usually EIS alumni).

### What EIS Officers Do

- As CDC's disease detectives, EIS officers are among the agency's first-line rapid responders.
- EIS officers help public health officials investigate and control infectious disease outbreaks and respond to natural disasters and other threats to the public's health.
  - EIS officers are on call to protect people. When a disease outbreak occurs or natural disaster strikes, we can mobilize our officers to go anywhere in the world to investigate and assist.
  - EIS has provided rapid response to urgent health threats for nearly 70 years—from investigations of possible biological warfare during the Korean war, to the smallpox and polio eradication campaigns, to the discovery of Legionnaires' disease and Lassa fever, to responses to Hurricane Katrina and 9/11, the 2014 Ebola outbreak followed by Zika virus and the 2017 hurricane season, in particular, Hurricane Maria.
- EIS officers serve CDC and its partners by providing rapid, creative, and effective solutions to public health problems. They are ready to go anywhere in the world at a moment's notice.
- EIS officers:
  - Conduct epidemiologic investigations of infectious disease outbreaks
  - Respond to natural disasters or other emerging public health threats
  - Conduct surveillance studies
  - Design, implement, and evaluate surveillance systems
  - Study infectious and chronic diseases, environmental and occupational health threats, injuries, birth defects, and developmental disabilities
- Benefits of being a CDC disease detective:
  - Are mentored and supervised by experienced and dedicated CDC experts
  - Have a direct impact on domestic and global population health

- Receive opportunities for life-changing hands-on experience in the U.S. and around the world
- Hired as a CDC employee with competitive salary and benefits for the duration of the fellowship
- EIS officers may deploy as a ready-responder to CDC's Emergency Operations Center or a field site to provide epidemiologic assistance for disease outbreaks and other urgent public health threats.
- In any given year, CDC has 120-160 active EIS officers across two classes.
  - The pool of active officers deploy more than 200 times each year to support field investigations for urgent public health problems.

## Qualification, Selection, and Application Period

- CDC looks for highly skilled professionals from a variety of disciplines—from nurses, physicians, and veterinarians, to scientists and other professionals interested in applied epidemiology and service.
  - CDC needs people able to deploy on a moment's notice to work in dynamic and unpredictable environments under challenging conditions, as well as people able to function effectively as part of multi-disciplinary teams.
  - Because of the program's domestic focus, a very limited number of non-U.S. citizens and non-U.S. permanent residents are selected each year.
  - Detailed eligibility criteria is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/eis/application/eligibility.html>
- CDC takes the selection of EIS officers seriously because this program helps shape future generations of public health leaders. Each year, only about 60-80 EIS officers are selected among the 400-500 applications received.
- CDC works hard to attract, select, and train bright, flexible, and passionate professionals looking for opportunities to make a greater impact and work at CDC to collaborate with state and local health departments and Ministries of Health to investigate and respond to public health challenges.
- The application period for EIS opens annually in the spring, usually April through June.
  - Those selected begin the fellowship in July of the following year with a month-long summer course.
  - EIS officers may be assigned to work in areas such as infectious disease, chronic disease, injury prevention, environmental health, or occupational health. Their assignments can be at CDC, another federal agency, or at a state or local health department.
  - Assignments are determined through a matching process based on an EIS officer's interests and those looking to host (supervise) an EIS officer.

## Recommended Steps for Interested Candidates to Take

- Check the EIS website to learn the [eligibility criteria and required documentation](#) for applying to the program. The application period opens annually in the Spring.
- Attend the [annual EIS conference](#), whether you're eligible now or interested in applying in future years. There is no cost to register, and it's usually held in April/May in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference offers opportunities to:
  - Attend scientific presentations of current EIS officers to learn about the type of training and work they do
  - Meet with EIS officers and alumni to learn about their experiences and the work they go on to do after EIS
  - Attend an interactive information session for prospective applicants to learn about the program and network with program staff and EIS officers.
- If you're eligible now and ready to become a disease detective, begin preparing your application in a way that you stand out among the highly competitive pool of applicants.
- Check the [EIS website](#) often for the latest news and information, stories, and engagement opportunities.

## Other Fellowship Opportunities

- CDC also offers numerous fellowship and internship opportunities that encompass many other disciplines, such as health economics, informatics, laboratory science, education, and more. For a comprehensive look at all CDC fellowships, internships, and learning opportunities, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/fellowships/>.