

Epidemic Intelligence Service

Frequently Asked Questions

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

What is EIS?

EIS is a highly competitive, 2-year post-graduate fellowship in applied epidemiology. This CDC program, established in 1951, is a unique combination of on-the-job-learning and service. Investigating outbreaks in the field is integral to the EIS experience. 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.

What do EIS officers learn?

EIS officers learn to apply the science of epidemiology to solve public health problems. They learn surveillance methods and advanced epidemiologic techniques. They gain a broad knowledge in biostatistics, public health ethics and law, and other public health topics. They also receive communication and media training, as they frequently represent CDC in media interviews.

After a month-long orientation, new EIS officers begin assignments as ready responders in infectious and noninfectious diseases, global health, injury prevention, environmental health, and occupational health. EIS officers also attend weekly seminars and the annual EIS conference where they present findings from their investigations and studies. Through these events, they learn about current public health investigations, challenges, and progress and develop their presentation skills. They also meet and learn from fellow officers, CDC epidemiologists, and other leaders in public health and epidemiology.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Physicians
- Doctoral-level scientists with background in public health or one of its disciplines
- Veterinarians
- Nurses
- Other healthcare professionals (e.g., dentists, pharmacists)

All applicants must meet degree, licensing, and experience requirements listed on our website. For complete eligibility criteria, visit www.cdc.gov/eis/application.html.



An EIS officer (left) and local veterinary technician collect a nasal swab from an animal carcass during a field investigation for an anthrax outbreak in Namibian wildlife.

Where do EIS officers work?

EIS officers are assigned to work in:

- CDC headquarters in Atlanta or other locations across the United States
- State, local, or territorial health departments
- Other federal agencies

EIS officers may be sent to another location on a temporary assignment. Although international work may be part of an EIS assignment, no EIS officers are based outside the United States.

How do assignments at partner organizations differ from those at CDC?

Each year, approximately 30% of EIS officers are assigned to state, local, or territorial health departments or other partner organizations or agencies. These EIS officers are referred to as “field assignees”.

Similar to their counterparts assigned to CDC, EIS field assignees participate in and lead epidemiologic investigations, conduct surveillance studies, interact with the public and the media, and produce high-quality scientific presentations and publications. They are jointly supervised and mentored by experienced epidemiologists—two or more at the partner agency and one at CDC. They have direct access to their CDC supervisor and CDC resources such as epidemiologic, statistical, and laboratory expertise.

Regardless of where they are assigned, all EIS officers participate in competency-based education and experiential on-the-job training.

What are the benefits of being an EIS officer?

During the 2-year fellowship, EIS officers:

- Are employed by CDC
- Receive competitive salary and benefits
- Are mentored and supervised by experienced, dedicated, and enthusiastic world-class epidemiologists
- Have many opportunities for front-line, hands-on work throughout the United States and around the world
- Have direct impact on domestic and global population health and well-being

What's after EIS?

EIS provides a pathway for a wide range of careers. Many EIS graduates choose public health careers at the local, state, or federal level. EIS alumni who stay in public health ensure that CDC and other agencies have sustainable epidemiologic expertise. Alumni include:

- Acting Surgeons General
- CDC directors and other CDC leaders
- Public health and medical school faculty and deans
- Non-governmental health organization executives
- State or medical epidemiologists
- Pharmaceutical and insurance industry executives
- State health officials
- Health and medical editors, reporters, and writers

Learn More

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www.cdc.gov/EIS



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