

**The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)**  
**Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP)**  
Frequently Asked Questions

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Public Health Service! Included below are answers to the most commonly asked questions we receive from academic administrators and students regarding the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Senior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (SRCOSTEP), which offers students a paid externship during school and federal career placement post-graduation.

**Q: Which students are eligible to apply during the application window of June 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020?**

**A:** Students who are graduating in 2022 may apply to the SRCOSTEP program during the upcoming application cycle. Students will proceed through the application process during their second to last year of schooling and will be paid and commissioned as a uniformed officer of the U.S. Public Health Service during their last year of schooling and training.

**Q: What options are available to students who are interested in the U.S. Public Health Service but graduate before 2022?**

**A:** Students graduating before 2022 may apply for the U.S. Public Health Service upon graduation at [www.usphs.gov](http://www.usphs.gov). Students who are interested in a career with BOP may also apply as a civil service federal employee and can email [medicalrecruiting@bop.gov](mailto:medicalrecruiting@bop.gov) for additional information. Converting from a civil service federal employee to an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service is also an option.

**Q: What financial assistance is offered by SRCOSTEP?**

**A:** Students accepted into the SRCOSTEP program will receive the following financial assistance each month while finishing their last year of schooling/training (up to 12 months). This includes the base pay salary of an O-1 uniformed officer (see [U.S. Military Pay Chart](#)), Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH; see [BAH Pay Chart](#)), and no/low cost healthcare through TRICARE. After completion of the SRCOSTEP program and a two-year duty station commitment, officers may also be eligible for a retention incentive.

**Note: The SRCOSTEP program does not directly cover academic tuition**

**Q: What would be my required shift schedule for work in SRCOSTEP?**

**A:** No work duties are required during the sponsorship period of your final school year. Your primary focus is to complete all necessary academic tasks, maintain good academic standing, and graduate! Work obligations begin after graduation with assignment to a BOP duty station.

**Q: Are non-U.S. citizens allowed to apply?**

**A:** Non-U.S. citizens are allowed to apply to the SRCOSTEP program. However, in order to be selected at the end of the application process and commissioned as part of the SRCOSTEP program, individuals must be U.S. citizens at that time.

**Q: Is a medical physical assessment required as part of the SRCOSTEP application process?**

**A:** A medical physical assessment is required to deem SRCOSTEP applicants fit for active duty. During the SRCOSTEP application process, student applicants will receive information on physical assessment and laboratory testing, with a majority paid for by the U.S. Public Health Service at approved medical facilities.