

**ENS Hayden Hamilton  
JRCOSTEP Summer 2024  
East Central University  
Oklahoma City Area Office  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

I attend East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, as an undergraduate majoring in Science and Environmental Health. I intend to pursue a master's degree in Occupational Health and Safety once I graduate in May 2026. I have always had a desire to assist people, whether it be in a public setting or at work. I find the area of environmental health to be quite fascinating due to its diversity. The many trends related to public health interest me the most.



ENS Hayden Hamilton at a meat processing facility

Numerous factors are essential to maintaining people's safety and my goal has always been to use my career to help people directly. My father, who was also a member of the Commissioned Corps, first told me about the Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP) which inspired me to apply. I was assigned to the Indian Health Service, Oklahoma City Area Office (OCAO) located in my home state. The Oklahoma City Area (OCA) consists of eight service units and includes more than 39 tribes across Oklahoma, Kansas, and a portion of Texas.

CDR David Bales was my preceptor and serves in a variety of capacities, including the Area Injury Prevention Specialist. Working at OCAO has given me exposure to a wide range of specialties. The main services include General Environmental Health, Injury Prevention, and Institutional Environmental Health. During my stay, I gained knowledge in food safety and how to perform surveys. Additionally, I gained knowledge about radiation exposure using various equipment, such as the Piranha x-ray meter, a tool for determining the dosage of radiation given to a patient.

I conducted air ventilation surveys testing the pressure relationship and air changes per hour to prevent airborne disease transmission in hospitals and clinics. I was able to visit regions of Oklahoma that I was unaware even existed and met many Environmental Health Officers around the state. I went to a wide range of tribal establishments, including casinos, Head Starts, clinics, and hospitals and met numerous tribal members from various tribes.



Measuring air flow in a medical clinic

As a participant in the JRCOSTEP, I was assigned a project to assist in promoting an IHS-based food safety training program. To aid with the ServSafe Food Protection Manager program, I developed a cheat sheet to assist instructors with the course establishing the groundwork for tribal food faculties to obtain appropriate food handler training.

After participating in the JRCOSTEP, I feel even more driven and motivated to contribute to the field of public health. I have gained knowledge and respect for the values of serving Native Americans to improve community health outcomes. Health and safety are key factors in improving the healthcare system. I strongly believe that emphasizing these principles can help society shape into a better lasting future within the public health community. I am very thankful for all the support and guidance that I received from the OCA. I recommend this program for anyone who is interested in public health, or simply just serving others.



Measuring radiation from a dental x-ray unit



Measuring radiation from a portable dental x-ray device