

**Reese Stonebraker**  
**JRCOSTEP Summer 2024**  
**East Tennessee State University**  
**Duluth Field Office**  
**Duluth, Minnesota**

My name is Reese Stonebraker, and I am from Elizabethton, Tennessee. I go to East Tennessee State University, where I am majoring in Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Sciences. I am on track to graduate in December 2025. This summer, I participated in the Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program (JRCOSTEP) and was assigned to the Indian Health Service (IHS), Bemidji Area, Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) to work with LT Joe Sarisky, Environmental Health Officer, in the Duluth Field Office. Working with the DEHS has been an incredible experience that has allowed me to grow and learn professionally and personally.



Brady Stidham, Arilyn Lee, Zack Shober,  
Reese Stonebraker, Joe Sarisky  
Lake Bemidji, MN

I learned about this externship through my academic advisor, who suggested I apply after I told him about my environmental health career goals of helping people directly and making a difference. I applied for JRCOSTEP during the summer of 2023. I loved the opportunity to move 1,000 miles away from home and serve tribal communities.



Measuring food temperatures at a  
powwow

My main duties included conducting food and institutional environmental health and safety inspections and report writing. I served seven tribes across Minnesota and Wisconsin, including Fond du Lac, Bois Forte, Shakopee, Saint Croix, Grand Portage, Red Cliff, and Lac Courte Oreilles. I completed over 50 inspections of a wide range of establishments, including restaurants, bars, community kitchens, temporary food stands, casinos, hotels, pools, and health clinics. I also attended a ServSafe class and collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health on a lead risk assessment. I had limited food safety knowledge before interning with IHS, but now I am confident with my food protection abilities. This internship provided me with a wide scope of work experience that combines fieldwork with office work. I was kept busy with travel, inspections, report writing, and independent projects. There was never a dull day at the office.

The highlight of my work experience was getting to travel all across beautiful Minnesota and Wisconsin. The JRCOSTEP also allowed me to have different cultural experiences and learn about Native American customs.

I enjoyed the diversity of this externship, and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity. I would recommend that anyone who has an interest in a career in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) should apply for this externship with the IHS.