

ENS Chelsey Slone
Jr. COSTEP Summer 2010
Eastern Kentucky University
Santa Fe Service Unit
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Hello! I am Chelsey Slone. I was born and raised in Kentucky. I started off as a biology major, then athletic training, nursing, and finally environmental health science. Environmental Health has been my passion ever since I started studying the field. I've enjoyed every aspect of it and I'm always thrilled to gain new knowledge about Public Health.

I first learned of the US Public Health Service Jr. COSTEP internship from my Professional Standards class, taught by Joe Beck. Professor Beck has been a big supporter for the Public Health service and is always looking for students to seek opportunities with the service. I was fairly warned about the process and piles of paperwork you will have to submit when applying for the position. Let me assure you, it is well worth the ink. A couple months after my application submission, I received a call from CDR Jeff Dickson. He began telling me about the Indian Health Service and asked if I was interested in coming to Santa Fe, I was thrilled.



I was flown here, to the Santa Fe Service Unit, June 21st. Most interns are at their duty station in May. This summer COSTEPs were thrown a curveball. When the new healthcare bill was passed it deleted the internship program. I got a call a week before I was supposed to leave for New Mexico telling me about this news and I should possibly look for another internship that this one probably wouldn't work out this summer. Devastated, from the high expectations of this internship, I stayed confident it would all work out. I didn't want any other internship; it was and still is the best to me. Three weeks later an executive order was signed and COSTEP was a go!

At the start of my internship, I was given several projects to work on. I really felt this was beneficial to my professionalism. Other internships I've looked into, and even experienced, were more of a job shadowing than a job based on performance. Doing this internship gave me responsibility to get tasks completed and use my ideas to design and create projects.

The majority of the summer I performed food surveys, or non-regulatory inspections. We looked at several types of facilities including restaurants, kitchens, convenience stores/gas stations, and some grocery stores. Before I learned professionally how to inspect for food safety, I had a pretty good understanding of food safety and what to look for but, actually getting into the different types of facilities and experiencing it makes it more challenging. The most challenging one's we had to do, for me, were the temporary food establishments at the Feast Day's or any annual celebration. I hope you get to experience these traditional days.

There were two other surveys that I got to experience. The first one was an institutional survey of a dental clinic in a pueblo. We measured the amount of energy and size of the beam coming from the x-ray machine to ensure



there is no over-exposure of radiation to the patients. I found this to be really interesting. The other survey I helped conduct was a pool and spa inspection.

One of my favorite learning experiences this summer was the rabies clinics in the pueblos. My first clinic was with my preceptor, CDR Jeff Dickson. He taught me how to properly draw the right amount of vaccine in the syringe and then how to inoculate the animals, whether it was a cat or dog. This experience helped me to better understand the importance of this vaccine and the concern of rabies the people have in their communities.

The biggest influence on me this summer that I got out of this internship was not just the hands-on experience but, the smaller things. The first being communication skills. It has never been hard for me to speak to people until I came out here and met a challenge with a language and cultural barrier. Watching Katie, Jeff, and Anthony, as well as others, communicate with the people in the pueblos and how to bring across important information as far as food safety, rabies vaccinations, vector borne diseases, and other public health concerns; sharpened my skills on how to speak to people. I also learned how to properly write reports, of food surveys in a program called WEBEHRS, also known as, Web-Based Environmental Health Reporting System.

To those thinking about applying for the COSTEP experience, but feel that it may be too much weight on their shoulders, I say brace your feet. You won't regret it.