

Dear Doctor of Optometry,

Are you looking for a chance to practice Optometry in a professional setting? Are you looking for a challenge? The Air Force Medical Service has exciting practice opportunities for optometrists. As a primary eye care provider, optometrists are an integral part of the military health care team. The scope of optometric practice includes:

- Comprehensive primary eye care evaluation, diagnostic, and treatment services for all eligible patient benefit categories
- Comprehensive specialty services including contact lenses, low vision and vision training
- Co-manage post surgical eye cases and ocular complications of systemic illness in the inpatient and outpatient setting
- Serve as the primary eye care consultant for other health care professionals in the military health care system

The Air Force has modern medical facilities with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. The optometric technicians complete 10 weeks of training in optometric assisting. There are no overhead expenses such as malpractice premiums, rent, or salaries. An Air Force optometrist's primary focus is professional development and care of the patient population. The Air Force salary and benefits package is comparable to packages offered to many civilian optometrists. The military has a premier non-contributory retirement plan (50% of final base pay after 20 years of service) and a thrift savings plan allowing you to shelter up to 7% of your pre-tax base pay for retirement. There are student loan deferment plans available and the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act. In addition, you'll have 30 days of paid vacation and 10 days of paid federal holidays each year. Spend it with your family, travel, pursue hobbies or other interests.

Air Force optometrists receive a direct commission as a Captain and have excellent opportunities for promotion. Grade credit may be awarded based on education and civilian work experience. Assignment locations vary across the United States and all optometrists have the opportunity to go overseas to medical treatment facilities in Europe, Japan, Alaska, and Hawaii to name a few. Scholarships are available to pursue a Masters or PhD in Physiologic Optics. Research opportunities exist in optical radiation and aerospace vision. Applications are accepted every year for the Air Force Optometry Residency Program at Lackland AFB, Texas.

From personal experience, I can tell you that there is no career better than that of an Air Force optometrist. An Air Force optometrist does not only have a professional commitment to provide the highest level of care to patients, but a sworn obligation to uphold the constitution and defend our great nation. Find out more about the rewards of an Air Force career. Visit our website at www.airforce.com or contact me by email at Mark.Welter@usafa.af.mil. Your inquiry will be held in the strictest confidence.

Sincerely;

Mark Welter Col(s), USAF, BSC
Optometry Consultant to the AF Surgeon General