

CHAPTER 13

Navigating the DC Internship Ecosystem

Michelle L. Chin

Archer Center and The University of Texas at Dallas

Students face an exciting array of internship options in Washington, DC that include public and private sector organizations engaged in domestic and international policymaking and politics. Navigating this ecosystem can be challenging for students and their advisors. This chapter provides faculty advisors with useful, practical information about the internship search, preparing for the DC experience, finding housing, and living in DC. Additional information about starting and managing a campus-, college- or departmental program-affiliated internship program is also provided. Helpful tips for finding a DC internship, descriptions of internship types, a comparison of four existing standalone internship programs, a budget worksheet, and housing, eating, and transportation considerations, are included as Supplemental Internship Resources for easy reference.

Introduction

Internships are filled with many thrilling possibilities. In DC, where local news is often national or international news, an intern can unwittingly change history. In 1972, UCLA student Bruce Givner applied for the Government Internship Program to work in a Washington, DC congressional office. He was sent to intern at the Democratic National Committee instead. On his third day at DNC headquarters at the Watergate Hotel, Bruce worked until 9pm and then remained for several more hours using the telephone service to make free calls to his friends and family. Because Bruce overstayed, a carefully planned break-in by Republican operatives was thrown off schedule and postponed until the intern left after midnight.¹ The burglars were arrested a few hours later, triggering a scandal that resulted in the resignation of President Nixon in 1974. “It is not a huge leap to suggest that without the delay the burglars would have been long gone before anyone noticed [. . .] They might never have been arrested; their ties to Nixon never discovered.”²

Interns with special language skills can also perform essential duties for their employers. In the summer of 1992, then-US Representative Joe Barton (R-TX) hired an undergraduate intern from Texas A&M University named Jeannie Morrison.³ At the time, the Congressman was working to build international support for the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC), a large particle accelerator that was being built in his district.⁴ After discovering that Jeannie was fluent in Japanese, the Congressman asked

her to serve as a translator for a delegation of Japanese dignitaries he had invited to tour the SSC site. She was the only Washington staffer to travel with the Congressman on this important trip and kept in touch with many of the dignitaries. Jeannie credits these connections with helping her subsequently obtain a prestigious scholarship to study at the University of Tokyo.⁵ In 2019, Matt Maldonado, an Archer Fellow and senior at The University of Texas at Austin, was an intern at the American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC). Matt, who is fluent in Russian, was asked to greet a visiting delegation from Ukraine and escort them from the airport to DC. He spent four days as the delegation's escort and translator, accompanying them to meetings in the US Senate and a US federal agency, a visit to a Smithsonian museum, and a tour of the US Capitol. Matt could not have predicted that he would sit in the Senate visitors' gallery translating for the Ukrainian delegation as senators discussed the White House memorandum of President Donald Trump's call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.⁶ After his internship ended, Matt was invited to continue working remotely as a writer for AFPC's Russian news publication, *Russian Reform Monitor*. After graduating in spring 2020, he was hired for a full-time position at AFPC.⁷

Washington, DC internships provide students who are interested in public policy and politics with practical work and learning experiences, opportunities to build their professional networks, and help open doors to new jobs. Students face an array of possibilities: they can participate in programs operated by non-profit organizations, pursue independent internships with public or private organizations, or enroll in their own campus's DC internship, if one exists. Given the enormous variety among opportunities, this chapter serves as a resource guide for faculty who advise students about seeking DC internships or who wish to organize a DC internship program for their department or larger institution. Practical dimensions such as finding an internship, collaborating with established Washington intern programs, locating housing, and working with university stakeholders and the DC government to set up your own internship program are explored.

WHAT KIND OF WORK DO INTERNS DO?

Around town, many organizations depend on interns for similar research and staffing support. For example, interns at think tanks like the Brookings Institution, American Enterprise Institute, Center for American Progress, or Heritage Foundation often work with scholars to conduct research and draft reports. It's not uncommon for these interns to publish blogs with their byline. At lobbying firms or advocacy organizations, interns often work closely with registered lobbyists, collaborating in strategy sessions and attending meetings with members of Congress and their staff. These internships also lead to post-baccalaureate jobs. In fact, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) reports that "at both the one-year and five-year marks, hires who have interned with the employer (internal interns) are more likely to be retained than hires who interned with other organizations (external interns) and hires with no internship experience."⁸

Interns in media organizations or who are working in communications internships are also given many opportunities to pitch story ideas and/or publish material. For example, one enterprising NPR intern realized the guest speaker in her class would make a good story for the show she was working on. She pitched the story to her producers and was able to book the guest.

Congressional offices often rely on interns to perform direct constituent service such as answering phones, greeting visitors in the front office, staffing constituent coffees, or leading tours of the Capitol. Of course, the interns also perform other essential functions such as opening and sorting mail or attending briefings and conducting research on legislative matters. At the White House, interns help staff a variety of offices. Interns in the Office of the First Lady often are asked to assist with the many social events hosted at the White House, from the annual Easter Egg Roll to holiday parties. At federal agencies, interns can gain experience working with career staff and political appointees, and often the experience is quite substantive. For example, one graduate intern recently worked with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development on the Opportunity Zone initiative that was a White House priority; as a result, the intern was an active participant in policymaking discussions at HUD and the White House. See the Congressional Research Service's 2020 report on federal government internships for more leads: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/98-654>.⁹

It is worth noting that Congress tends to operate on an apprentice model of work. For this reason, congressional interns who exercise humility and demonstrate a willingness to perform necessary tasks may experience exciting opportunities and find doors opening to new jobs. Speaking from my own experience, on the first day of my summer Congressional internship, I sat in the front office with another intern awaiting instructions for our work. My new colleague, a student at a large state university, informed me that he would be working on a special project to bring a presidential library to campus. Being from a small town and even smaller private university, I was simply excited to have an internship, but had only a vague idea of what to expect. At the end of the day, we both found ourselves sharing a small cubicle in the back of the office, opening and sorting mail. It was a big letdown for my colleague, who left DC by the end of the week because the work was not sufficiently substantive. At that time, the interns were also tasked with data entry of the annual constituent survey conducted by the representative. We had a daily quota of data entry, which was tedious. One of the graduate interns, who was also responsible for meeting the same daily quota, often got invited to join the legislative assistants in doing policy work (attending hearings and writing memos, for example) and would save his questionnaire entries for the end of the day. Late one morning, the representative's chief of staff informed us that any intern who had completed their daily quota by midday would be invited to join the representative at a White House bill-signing ceremony. The graduate intern was the only intern who could not attend. The following year, after I had graduated from college, I received a call from the representative's chief inviting me to apply for a job. It was a life-changing opportunity that influenced my graduate school research and created professional connections that have sustained my career to date.

UNDERSTANDING THE POLICY ECOSYSTEM

To achieve policy change in Washington, DC, it is often necessary to engage with multiple stakeholders and decision makers. This means that students who are interested in policy change have a variety of internship opportunities to explore (or to create). Each type of stakeholder or policy actor/decision maker in the policy ecosystem represents a different kind of internship opportunity. For example, some policy stakeholders act to influence public opinion by creating messaging campaigns or by issuing scholarly reports to advance their arguments.

Within the policy ecosystem in DC, there are institutions and actors who participate at every stage in the policy process from problem identification to agenda setting, policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. Table 1 provides some questions to help internship directors guide students to find the organizations and internship work that best suits their interests or professional goals.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Requiring students to earn academic credit for interning is not a standard rule in DC: intern employers in DC may or may not require it. For example, the House Paid Internship Program requires paid interns to be enrolled in an educational program and to receive credit for the internship.¹⁰ Students can obtain necessary credit by enrolling in an established, academically affiliated program or a program operated through their university. In contrast, the White House Council on Environmental Quality Internship Program does not pay interns and does not require that they earn credit for the internship.¹¹

Nevertheless, students on a tight budget may find it difficult to afford the costs associated with a DC internship, especially if it is unpaid. For these students, the best option may be to seek an internship independent of any academic program. For example, a student could obtain a Congressional internship by applying directly to a Congressional office. If they do not seek academic credit for the experience, they would save on tuition expenses and would still gain practical work experience. The costs of these credits will vary depending on the academic institution that provides the internship course. For example, tuition costs for three credits at a state school may be lower compared to a private institution.¹² It is worth noting, however, that students may not be eligible for financial aid from their home institutions if they participate in non-credit programs.

Table 1. Using Policy Stages to Determine What Types of Organizations to Target for Internships

Policy Stages	Problem Identification	Agenda Setting	Policy Formation	Implementation	Evaluation
	Defining the policy problem	Deciding whether the problem is relevant/needs to be solved	Determining a politically-feasible solution (not necessarily the “best” solution)	Ensuring that the policy is implemented according to Congressional intent	Assessment and evaluation of impact and effectiveness
Organized Interests	Who are the organized interests that are actively engaged at the various stages of the policy process? Think Tanks Lobbyists Advocacy coalitions Trade Associations				
Examples of Internship tasks	Research public opinion data. Prepare/proof policy background reports. Create messaging to amplify issue/ create salience.	Research policy priorities of key congressional leaders. Summarize policy reports to create talking points for lobbyists. Develop tracking lists for lobbyists. Attend hearings; monitor Congressional proceedings. Track White House/ executive branch actions.		Assist with rulemaking comments and oversight of executive branch actions. Prepare briefing reports for lobbyists with implementation updates.	Develop metrics for evaluating impact and effectiveness. Create messaging to stakeholders about policy success (or need for improvements).
Decisionmakers	Who are the policy actors responsible for making decisions about the policy change? Does the change require amendments to existing law (Congress)? Can the change be accomplished with an executive order (President) or an agency rule or recommendation (federal agency)? Congress President Federal Agency				
Examples of Internship tasks	<p><i>Congress:</i> Prepare materials for Congressional hearings, attend hearings, write briefing memos for legislative staff, attend meetings with constituent groups, draft letters to respond to constituents, assist in planning events to highlight Congressional action or to promote Congressional action on the issue.</p> <p><i>President:</i> Support legislative affairs team in compiling research on Congress members; assist public affairs team meetings with constituent groups; assist with administrative tasks for any member of the President’s staff.</p> <p><i>Federal Agency:</i> Prepare relevant responses to Congressional queries; conduct policy research for political appointees or career staff; assist in the implementation of programs and with program oversight.</p>				

HOW DO YOU FIND A DC INTERNSHIP?

There are many options for finding a DC internship, from DIY-internship searches and placements to working with a non-profit organization that provides internship placements, programming, and housing. Students do not need to be affiliated with any program or to pay a program to obtain internship opportunities; however, to obtain credit for the internship, their home institution may require participation in such a program. There are, however, social and cohort benefits from participating in organized internship programs. For example, students are able to build friendships and expand their professional networks in a more coordinated fashion. The following section contains information about various options for internship placements.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT, PROGRAMMING, AND HOUSING

Academically Affiliated Organizations

Students may enroll as visiting students at some of the colleges and universities in DC during their internship term. For example, students can take courses offered through **Georgetown University's Summer Session and Special Programs**. They earn academic credit for these courses but must arrange with their home institutions for approval to transfer the credits. **The Fund for American Studies (George Mason University)** and **Washington Semester (American University)** offer formal internship programs that include academic courses to which visiting students can apply.¹³ These programs provide students with internship placements or assistance in finding internships. Once in DC, the students work in part-time or full-time internships and participate in weekly meetings. In addition to the courses, the programs often include a seminar that covers professional development and leadership topics.

Other well-known non-profit organizations that partner with educational institutions to offer DC-based internship programs include **The Washington Center (TWC)**, **Washington Internship Institute**, **CET Academic Programs**, and **Osgood Center for International Studies**. These programs typically offer some classes for credit. In many cases, the organizations prefer to sign an articulation agreement with an academic institution that sets forth the course credit and billing procedures for the students. These organizations give preference to students recommended by the campus and may offer additional discounts on housing or fees. Partnership opportunities may be available.

A campus or department can customize a DC internship program for their students, or contract with the organization to serve a specific number of their students. The campus or department would be responsible for vetting the students, while the organization is responsible for providing the programming and housing in DC. All of these organizations also accept individual applications directly from students. The program and housing fees are two separate cost items. Programs are offered during the regular academic year and summer term.

A Review of Four Academically Affiliated Programs

This section takes a closer look at four established DC internship programs: American University's Washington Semester Program (WSP), The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) at George Mason University, The Washington Center (TWC), and The Washington Internship Institute (WII).¹⁴ These programs are offered in the fall, spring, and summer terms, and are open to domestic and international students, although some programs will not provide visas. Students work in internships and take classes during the term. They also have access to housing. At a minimum, the organizations prefer to designate campus representatives—a faculty or staff member—who can help promote the internship programs and recruit students. The programs all offer colleges and universities opportunities to establish partnership agreements. These agreements range from simple articulation agreements regarding the transfer of course credits and billing procedures, to agreements to create customized programs for a campus. In some cases, the partnership agreements can result in more favorable fees. See the Supplemental Internship Resources for additional comparison details.

The Washington Semester Program (WSP) at American University (AU) was started in 1947 by AU Dean Harold Davis to “expose students to DC’s cultural, educational, and governmental resources and give them ‘first-hand acquaintance with possible careers in public service.’”¹⁵ From a class of 24 students from six colleges, the program now serves over 200 students and has partnership relationships with 210 universities.

Admission is on a rolling basis, but application procedures depend on whether the student is from a university that has a partner agreement with WSP. Students who do not attend a partner institution can apply directly to WSP but are encouraged to first check with their faculty advisor about credit transfer, financial aid, and other requirements for off-campus study. Students who are accepted to WSP are enrolled as non-degree students at AU and have the same student privileges as degree-seeking students. They can customize their academic coursework and can take any electives that are listed in the

AU course catalog. At a minimum, students in fall/spring are required to take an internship seminar and one of the listed interdisciplinary WSP seminars, which include topics such as government, international affairs, public diplomacy, business and economics, criminal justice, and law. Summer students are required to take at least one WSP seminar in addition to working at their internship. Depending on the course load they wish to carry, students can add additional WSP seminars or electives from the AU course catalog. The tuition costs will vary depending on the total number of credits a student chooses to take. More detailed information about costs is included in the Supplemental Internship Resources section. All courses are taught by AU faculty.

Housing is available but is listed as a separate fee. Students can opt to find their own housing, live in furnished apartments managed by a third-party housing provider, or seek housing on campus. Students who choose to live on campus must buy a meal plan.¹⁶

Students receive an AU ID card and have access to all campus resources including libraries, recreation and health facilities, student services, and events. For this reason, students must pay additional mandatory fees for a Metro university pass (U-Pass) that provides access to Metrorail and Metro buses in DC, as well as technology, recreation and health facilities, and student activities.¹⁷

American University prefers to establish a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with its university partners. Typically, the MOA is set for a five-year term and outlines the classes that will transfer, the billing agreement, use of appropriate logos, and the application process. University partners are not charged a service fee and are not required to send a minimum number of students. In fact, there are universities that have no MOA but regularly send students to participate in WSP.

Washington Semester Program maintains a database of internships that students utilize to find internships. A WSP staff member monitors students during their search process and is available to assist in using the database. An AU professor oversees the internship course and meets regularly with the students to discuss their work. During the fall and spring semesters, students work three days and take classes two days each week. In the summer, the students work four days and are in class one day per week.

In summary, the WSP is an established program with a long history. It offers students a rich academic experience in addition to their internship. It is also quite expensive. An undergraduate taking a full load (12–16 credits) would pay tuition and housing costs totaling more than \$30,000.

The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) was started in 1967 by Charles Edison, Dr. Walter H. Judd, David R. Jones, Marvin Liebman, and William F. Buckley, Jr. with the goal to provide college students with a “balanced perspective on political and economic institutions,” although it has gained a reputation in recent years for being a conservative-leaning program.¹⁸ TFAS programs include academic courses, an internship placement and furnished housing in Washington, DC. Students participate in a variety of exclusive guest lectures, site briefings as well as professional development and networking events. TFAS students leave Washington with 250-plus hours of professional experience.

TFAS originally partnered with Georgetown University but in 2013 established an academic partnership with George Mason University (GMU). TFAS students are enrolled at GMU as non-degree-seeking visiting students and have access to campus resources such as the library and health center and receive a GMU transcript at the end of their TFAS semester.

In DC, TFAS offers academic internship programs each summer, fall, and spring. Summer program students are required to take the 3-credit core class and are encouraged to enroll in an elective class for additional credits. Capital Semester (fall and spring) students will be enrolled in 12 credits. The program is offered in two formats: virtual and in-person. Students select their preferred format when submitting their application. The in-person classes are held at GMU’s campus in Arlington, Virginia, which is accessible by Metro.

Capital Semester (fall and spring), students take three classes: Internship Seminar (6 credits), International Economic Policy (3 credits), and a 3-credit government class, either American Presidency (fall) or American Political Thought (spring). In summer, students are required to take one of three core economics courses (3 credits each): Economics for the Citizen, Economic Problems and Public Policies, or Economies in Transition. An optional Economics Boot Camp Seminar is offered during the first week of the program to help students who have never taken any economics classes become acquainted with basic economic principles. Students can also add one of the following 3-credit electives: US For-

eign Policy, American Political Thought, Internship Seminar–Public Policy & International Affairs, Internship Seminar–Politics and the Press. All classes are taught by TFAS faculty.

TFAS offers several program tracks: Public Policy and Economics, International Affairs, Journalism and Communications, Business and Government Relations, and Leadership and American Presidency. Guest lectures, Career and Industry Exploration discussions, networking opportunities, and site briefings feature professionals working in fields relevant to the student's program track. Additionally, TFAS offers a mentor program and numerous professional development seminars.

Application deadlines are posted on DCInternships.org and students are notified of decisions within three weeks of completing their application. Scholarships, which are determined based on need, academic excellence, extracurricular achievement, and leadership activities, are awarded at the time of admission.¹⁹ TFAS guarantees that students will find an internship, so each student is assigned a TFAS internship coordinator to work with during the pre-arrival search process.

The program fee includes furnished housing in Washington, DC, enabling students to manage their own meals. During the summer, students live in dormitories on the campus of George Washington University. During Capital Semester (fall and spring), students reside in apartments operated by Washington Intern Student Housing (WISH) in Capitol Hill. Roommates are matched by TFAS with two TFAS students per bedroom. Details are included in the Supplemental Internship Resources section.

Faculty and advisors are invited to nominate students, who then receive priority consideration in the admissions process. TFAS is flexible with university partnerships, which can range from informal partnerships to more formal partnerships that have a memorandum of understanding. TFAS works with each partner on a case-by-case basis. Universities interested in partnering with TFAS may reach out to the TFAS Admissions Department.²⁰

In summary, this program has a structured curriculum that focuses on political thought and economics, and emphasizes a cohort experience with the inclusion of housing. This program gives universities the opportunity to collaborate or create a co-branded DC internship program. Program costs, which include housing and tuition, for an undergraduate taking a full load (12 credits) total more than \$13,000.

The Washington Center (TWC) was founded in 1975 by the late William M. Burke and his wife Sheila McReavey Burke to provide students with internships and seminars. The program started with 51 students from 35 colleges, and today enrolls between 800–1500 students annually. TWC reports partnerships with over 400 universities in the US and 75 international universities.

In April 2021, TWC announced a School of Record partnership with Elon University, which enables students from institutions that do not have a partnership agreement with TWC to receive an Elon University transcript for up to 15 academic credit hours.²¹ Students take one academic course each week in addition to career readiness workshops. TWC offers opportunities for virtually all majors, but particularly those in the social sciences, communications, and business. The course catalogs for each term include courses on various topics depending on interest indicated by the students and university partners. Recent topics include American History, American Politics and Public Policy, Business and Administration, Communication, International Affairs, Law and Criminal Justice, Media and Communications, and Research. The courses are taught in DC by TWC faculty. In addition, each student is assigned a career advisor to provide guidance and support while the students are enrolled in the program.

TWC works with universities to create specific partnership agreements that articulate curriculum expectations, course equivalencies and transfers, program and housing fees, and billing procedures. There is no financial cost to the institution for enacting the agreement, and the duration of the agreement can vary. The agreements typically do not include a minimum number of student enrollments. Students who are applying from non-partner institutions must still obtain university approval for their participation in the TWC program. This ensures that students will receive credit for their internship and classes.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and decisions are made within several weeks of submission. TWC staff review applications to ensure suitability for internship opportunities with TWC partners. Students will not be accepted if TWC determines that there are no internship opportunities that align with the student's stated preferences. TWC has partnership agreements with internship employers and maintains an updated database of internship opportunities. TWC staff work with admitted students to prepare their internship application materials and to facilitate placements.

TWC provides furnished housing in their Residential and Academic Center located in the NoMa section of Washington, DC (see: <https://twc.edu/right-home-dc>) but does not require students to live there. TWC does not offer any meal plan, since the TWC housing includes furnished kitchens for students to prepare their own meals. TWC offers scholarships and furnishes a list of private and state scholarships available to students (<https://twc.edu/programs/private-scholarships>).

In summary, the TWC program has a long history of providing experiential learning, a broad network of internship partners, and a diverse list of courses. The diverse and interdisciplinary cohort creates many opportunities for students to build friendships and expand their personal and professional networks. Total program and housing fees for an undergraduate student are close to \$16,000 for a semester; however, students who opt out of TWC housing would only pay a program fee of \$9,415 (figures current as of 2021).

The Washington Internship Institute (WII) was founded in 1990 by Dr. Mary Ryan, the former vice president for academic programs at The Washington Center. The emphasis was on creating more customized internship programs. The cohorts range from 30–50 students per semester, and classes are small, in line with WII's mission to foster learning through more individualized experiences. WII offers programs for students in fall, spring, and summer. Students intern four days per week and take two classes on the day they are not interning: the internship seminar and one of two core courses (Inside Washington: Politics and Policy, or International and Foreign Policy Studies). Depending on the university partnership agreements, students may add additional online courses to take a full load. There are no evening or weekend classes. WII also offers customizable programs for their university partners, which can take the form of short immersion courses or semester-long courses. The classes normally meet in-person but were virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program fee covers course costs, although students may have to pay to transfer credits if their institution lacks a partnership agreement. These rates can also be negotiated in the partnership agreement.

WII offers furnished housing in the Crystal City section of Arlington, Virginia but does not require students to live there. The housing rates can be negotiated in a university's partnership agreement. Additional information can be found in the Supplemental Internship Resources section.

A notable innovation is the Faculty Fellows program, which WII offers in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). This program allows faculty to spend a semester or summer in Washington, DC working with a host organization and networking with professionals. Housing is provided. A Faculty Fellow's home institution is required to pay \$6,000 which is matched by the Fellow's host organization, but discounts are available to partner institutions. Details about this program can be found at: <http://wiidc.org/faculty-fellows>.

In summary, WII is a much smaller operation compared to the other three organizations discussed in this section. They offer university partners creative opportunities for customizing a program and for engaging faculty in the DC experience as well. Total program and housing fees for an undergraduate are over \$12,000 during the fall/spring term, and close to \$10,000 for the summer. Additional details can be found in the Supplemental Internship Resources section.

Minority-Serving Organizations

These civil rights organizations advocate on behalf of constituent groups and seek to increase participation of underrepresented persons in the policy process. Some of the more well-known programs are the **Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)**, **Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF)**, **Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)**, **Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI)**, and the **Udall Foundation Native American Congressional Internship Program**. Many of these organizations provide substantial financial support to their interns. For example, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus programs provide housing for their interns. Other minority-serving programs are listed in a document included in the Supplemental Internship Resources.

Paid Internships

Although many organizations still rely heavily on unpaid interns, there has been a move in recent years to change this practice. In 2018, the nonprofit organization, Pay Our Interns, successfully lobbied

Congress to include funding to pay Congressional interns. In 2019, the average total stipend for Senate interns was \$1,986 compared to \$1,612 for House interns.²² Their report compared the Congressional internship stipends to stipends offered by external internship programs (see table 2). Paid internships can also be found in other public and private sector organizations.

Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)	\$2,500
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF)	\$3,000
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Summer	\$3,125
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Fall and Spring	\$3,750
Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute	\$2,000
Source: Table 9 in James R. Jones, Tiffany Win, Carlos Mark Vera. 2021. "Who Congress Pays: An Analysis of Lawmakers' Use of Intern Allowances in the 116th Congress," https://payourinterns.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pay-Our-Interns-Who-Congress-Pays.pdf .	

Extra Work

Most internship programs discourage students from working a second job while completing their internship. The internship should be a priority. In cases where students are also attending classes, there is limited time for a second job. Nevertheless, opportunities exist for students to take on extra work. One student who worked as a barista at a Starbucks in Arizona was able to pick up shifts at a Starbucks in Foggy Bottom to help offset her expenses while working an unpaid Congressional internship. Low-wage Congressional staff also take on extra work; some staffers generated extra income by pet-sitting after signing up with Rover.com.²³ Long before he was elected Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan was just a recent college graduate and Senate staffer who also worked as a server at a Tex-Mex restaurant, Tortilla Coast. According to a *Washington Post* report, this was "a second job that [led] to him meeting his mentor, Jack Kemp... [then] Secretary of Housing and Urban Development."²⁴

Living in DC

Having landed a DC internship, the next task is to decide where to live, and how to budget properly to live in DC. In the supplemental internship section, you will find tips for securing suitable, safe and affordable housing, reliable transportation and a worksheet for creating a budget. If you are a faculty member looking to bring a group to DC, general housing options are available.

Student Housing Providers

There are several housing providers used by members of the Washington Program Consortium (dcprograms.org) a forum for institutions that offer experiential education and internship programs in DC. Institutions contract with these companies to provide housing for their students. An institution can reserve space for dedicated use by their own students, an arrangement that helps enhance the cohort experience. Some institutions sign multi-year contracts which can lock in affordable housing rates, while other institutions operate with an annual contract that provides greater flexibility in case of enrollment fluctuations. The contracts may stipulate that the institution pays a lump sum for the housing, or that individual students pay their housing fee separately.

These companies (see table 3) also accept housing applications from individual students working independently. In some cases, a student may be housed with students from other institutions if they do not wish to pay extra for single accommodations. Some companies like **WISH** (<https://internsdc.com>) and **The WIHN** (<https://www.thewihn.com/>) also organize social and professional development events for their student residents.

The companies may own or lease the properties that are offered to students. For example, a company may lease several large luxury apartments in addition to owning other townhouses. This means that an institution has options to house their students in a luxury apartment building that is home to other

Table 3. DC Housing Providers Used by Washington Program Consortium Members

Housing Company	Website
CapStay	capstay.com
Churchill Living	www.ChurchillLiving.com
Elite Intern Housing	https://www.eliteinternhousing.com/
LUXbnb	www.LUXbnb.com
Olympus Housing	https://www.olympushousing.com/
Globe Quarter (Locations in DC & VA)	http://www.globequarters.com/
The Washington Intern Housing Network (The WIHN)	https://thewihn.com
TurnKey Housing	tkhousing.com
ULodging	www.ulodging.com
Washington Intern Student Housing (WISH)	InternsDC.com

working professionals in DC, or in a townhouse that is reserved exclusively for those students.

There are advantages to housing students in a neighborhood of working professionals, including the building amenities—pool, rooftop entertainment area, gym—that increase students’ opportunities to network. For example, students housed in one building were surprised to discover a Supreme Court justice shopping at the grocery store. The disadvantage is that when students get rowdy, they may discover that the unhappy neighbor who was disturbed is a senator, White House staffer, or some other interesting person who they might otherwise wish to impress.

Housing students in a townhouse can help foster stronger bonds within the cohort. The house can then be identified as a home for many classes or “generations” of interns. Nevertheless, the maintenance and upkeep on some of these older (“historic”) townhomes can be challenging. Students have been known to encounter the famous enormous DC rats scurrying around the alleys behind and between these buildings.

These are not the only options for group housing. For summer programs, local DC-based universities may also offer summer housing on campus. Check with their summer housing department for more information.

A Unique Option for Women

In 1887, Congress chartered “a temporary home for young women coming to [. . .] the District of Columbia.”²⁵ This was known as the Young Woman’s Christian Home until 1937 when it was renamed **Thompson-Markward Hall (TMH)**. Today, TMH is located across from the Hart Senate Office Building and offers young women (ages 18–34) an affordable, safe, and temporary residence (minimum of two weeks to maximum of two years). The housing fee includes furnished rooms, daily breakfast and dinner (Sunday through Friday). For details see: <https://tmhdc.org/what-we-offer/>.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR SETTING UP YOUR OWN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

If you wish to establish a DC internship program that carries a university brand, there are some important things to consider. In this section, you will find general guidance for setting up your own internship program. *Please note that this information is not legal advice.* We strongly recommend that you consult with your home institution’s general counsel to ensure that you are in compliance with DC law as well as the regulations that govern your home institution.

First, be aware that your home institution must obtain permission from the District of Columbia **Higher Education Licensure Commission** (“HELC”, the “Commission”) to do business in DC. Institutions that partner with an academically affiliated organization to deliver their programming may

not be required to register with HELC; they should consult with their general counsel to be certain. The general counsel for the partner institution should review the HELC regulations and the partner agreement to ensure full compliance. Failure to comply with HELC regulations can result in hefty fines to the institution.

Second, be aware of the requirements and procedures imposed by your home institution, as well as the various stakeholders who have an interest in such a program. For example, the accreditation and program requirements may differ depending on whether a DC internship program is structured as a study-abroad program or set up as a satellite campus. The university president may take a personal interest in the program and its interns if the DC internship program is seen as a way to connect the campus (and students) with alumni and policy influencers (or federal funders).

Finally, peer support is available through the previously-mentioned Washington Program Consortium, a forum for institutions that offer experiential education and internship programs in DC. You can reach out to other program coordinators for ideas and advice about setting up your own program. The group meets monthly and has a Student Life committee that meets regularly to plan collaborative events for their students, such as a field day and a community service day. The meetings usually include a guest/expert presentation about a relevant topic; a recent speaker was the director of the White House Internship Program who explained the process for reviewing and selecting interns. Prior to the pandemic, the consortium would meet in person at member offices, such as the UC Washington Center or the ASU Barrett and O'Connor Washington Center, which allowed people to interact with each other and to also tour the facilities. As of summer 2021, meetings were on Zoom.

DC Higher Education Licensure Commission

The DC Higher Education Licensure Commission is a regulatory consumer protection agency that is authorized to issue educational licenses for postsecondary educational institutions in DC. Any out-of-state institution that establishes an educational program in DC, or which sends students to DC to participate in an educational program, must obtain a license or conditional exemption from the Commission before doing business in DC. The license or conditional exemption must be renewed every 12 months. Information about the application requirements can be found here: (<https://helic.osse.dc.gov/topic/helcadmin/institutions/frequently-asked-questions-for-institutions>). Please note that failure to comply may result in fines and penalties. The Commission's staff are accessible by email (see: <https://helic.osse.dc.gov/topic/helcadmin/about/staff-directory>).

University Personnel

In setting up an internship program that carries a university's (or department's) brand, it is important to make sure that you have contacted all the relevant stakeholders at your institution. DC internship programs can be hosted in different units on campus such as a department, a Study Abroad office, or a Career Services office. In some cases, the program may be operated as a multi-campus system program, or as a special program in the president's office. The approval process and chain of command will vary depending on where the internship program is situated.

In alphabetical order, here is a list of key stakeholders to know. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list.

Alumni: Contact your campus's Alumni Office to obtain a list of DC-based alumni. They are often willing and eager to host interns, serve as mentors, participate as guest speakers, and donate. If the institution has not had a strong DC presence previously, then alumni may be excited to establish an official presence and can be relied upon to help coordinate certain aspects of the program. Chance encounters with your institution's alumni can also come into play. In 2002, I was at the Amtrak counter at DC's Union Station when I overheard a conversation between an Amtrak clerk and a man who said he was from "government relations." As then-director of the Arizona State University (ASU) Capital Scholars program, I was always on the hunt for internships, so I introduced myself. Before I could ask about internships at Amtrak, the man smiled and replied, "I used to play football for ASU. Tell me more." To date, Amtrak has hired numerous ASU Capital Scholars as summer interns. When he left Amtrak to join The Madison Group, Marcus Mason also committed to hiring ASU Capital Scholars as summer interns.

Bursar/Billing Services: Knowing the staff in this office will help you sort out the problems that can occur, such as inadvertent overcharges for tuition and fees.

Career Services: Career Services Specialists are excellent allies, for they often have training and expertise in reviewing résumés and cover letters and can work with students to identify skills and knowledge deficits that need attention. They may also have updated information about internship opportunities across disciplines.

Communications/Public Affairs: Work with the institution's external relations/public affairs communications team to share stories of students' successes in DC with the public and with campus recruitment and admissions staff.

Development Office: The campus fundraising team can help you identify sponsors for your program and/or students. Get to know the development director and make sure that any fundraising campaigns you organize are not in conflict with other priorities of the university.

General Counsel/Contracts Officer: Be sure to include your institution's general counsel or contracts officer in your business plan. They should review any contracts for housing or internship articulation agreements or memoranda of agreement that require official signatures.

Government/Federal Relations: When establishing a DC internship program, it is useful to coordinate with the institution's federal relations or government relations team which is responsible for managing the institution's relationships with members of Congress and federal agencies and executives. Often, the federal relations staff can be helpful in identifying internship opportunities and connecting students with policymakers and their staff. They also can act as liaisons to good guest speakers and mentors.

President: The university president may play a significant role in the approval of this program, depending on where the program is situated and how the institution is organized. At a minimum, there are opportunities for publicity and photo ops with the students *before* they travel to DC, while they're in DC, and after they return. At each point, the students have an exciting story to share.

Provost/Dean: Academic officers may play a role in approving the program, depending on where the program is situated and how the institution is organized. These administrators also like to know what their students are doing and can marshal fiscal and human resources to support the program and its students. DC coordinators have a good story to tell, especially when they can demonstrate that the internships help students complete college and obtain gainful employment.

Registrar: Consult with the Registrar to make sure students are properly enrolled for the course or courses during their internship term. The Registrar can also verify that a student's course load is appropriate for maintaining financial aid, and that the program curriculum meets accreditation standards/expectations.

Student Affairs: It is important to communicate with the Dean of Students (or Student Affairs) about the students who will participate in the program, particularly to become aware of any unresolved discipline issues. Student Affairs can help navigate the process if a student experiences an adverse health event that necessitates an ADA accommodation; in that case, the campus ADA coordinator should also be notified.

Study Abroad: In some institutions, the DC internship program is considered a "study abroad" program. If this is the case, you may find it useful to conduct a variety of information sessions about the program to raise awareness outside your department or discipline.

Title IX Coordinator: Interns need to understand their Title IX protections, including how to resist and report inappropriate behavior in the workplace, classroom, and residence. Before students travel to DC, you should contact your institution's Title IX coordinator to provide appropriate training to help students navigate the workplace and residential life experiences. Make sure that your staff are also fully trained about proper reporting protocols.

OTHER PROGRAM MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other important considerations when setting up a DC internship program include planning for emergencies and crises, and responding to incidents of intern misbehavior.

Emergency and Crisis Management

In 2004, Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher flew to DC to attend the funeral of former president Ronald Reagan. As the plane approached Reagan National Airport, it veered into restricted air space over the Capitol, triggering fears of a 9/11 style attack and an emergency evacuation of the Capitol.²⁶ “Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, was on the third floor of the Capitol with her staff when the fire alarms first went off and they started walking out of the building. “We were walking until we were told to run, get out of the building,” Murkowski said, as one of her staffers tried to find a lost intern. “I got a little exercise this afternoon.”²⁷

Help your students plan and be prepared for emergencies while they are in DC by consulting your institution's police department, campus safety officers, emergency management coordinators, risk control and risk management offices. If you are operating a program, your institution's police department or campus security may have access to relevant security alerts that can help protect you and your students. For example, during the days leading up to the 2021 Inauguration, the University of Texas System Office of the Director of Police provided the Archer Center team with intelligence reports about potential security threats in DC. As a result of this information, the Director of Police recommended delaying the students' arrival in DC until after the Inauguration. At the Archer Center, we invite a safety specialist to provide CPR training to all Fellows. We consider having Fellows certified to perform CPR as a life-saving benefit to our program.

Interns Misbehaving

The DC intern experience can be quite stressful, especially if students are required to take classes in addition to working a full-time (or close to full-time) internship. In addition, students may feel greater social pressure to drink, to be extroverted networkers, to perform well at work, to compete against their peers, to prepare to graduate and get a job, or apply for graduate school. Undergraduate juniors and seniors who are thrown together into a new cohort may experience the same type of anxieties they experienced as freshmen when they were transitioning to college life. Students who are unfamiliar with urban life or who prefer wide open spaces with lots of trees and land can become depressed in the concrete jungle of DC. Students from sunny regions may be unprepared for the seasonally affective impact of long, dark, and cold days during the winter season. All of these externalities impact students' mental health and can erode their sense of well-being.

In 2018, a graduate fellow working for a member of the US House of Representatives was arrested and charged with releasing the private cellphone number of Senator Lindsey Graham, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which was holding confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.²⁸ The fellow was fired.²⁹ He later pled guilty to federal offenses and was sentenced to four years in federal prison.³⁰ He had behaved rashly because “he was angry about his termination in May 2018 from his employment as a computer systems administrator in the office of another US Senator (described in court documents as Senator #1). As a result, from July 2018 to October 2018, he engaged in an extensive computer fraud and data theft scheme.”³¹

There are resources to help a student who is experiencing a mental health challenge or struggling to control their anger, or others who are feeling anxious and afraid. Check with the Dean of Students at your institution to see what home campus mental health resources are available to students who are interning in DC. In some cases, telehealth services are available. Students often can use their health in-

surance to obtain mental health services in DC. There are also providers who will contract with a school to provide services to a group of students. For example, Parkhurst Associates (<https://parkhurstassociates.com/university-counseling/>) contracts with several universities to provide counseling (in-person and virtual) to students. Parkhurst charges the student a small co-pay for a limited number of individual therapy sessions and then bills the university for the remainder. Clients can schedule additional sessions at the full price.

In crisis situations where a student's behavior has drawn negative public attention, you should also work with your campus public affairs team to coordinate any public communications regarding the incident. Obviously, these situations can draw unwelcome attention to the individual and the institution they represent. For this reason, it is important to ensure that vulnerable students are aware of the supports they can access when interning.

Finally, any student behavior that requires a disciplinary response represents a case that will need to be adjudicated by the Dean of Students on the student's home campus. If you're operating an internship program for your campus or institution, having a good working relationship with the Office of Student Affairs and Dean of Students is essential in these situations. You should also be sure to work closely with the Title IX Coordinator and the director of student accessibility services.

CONCLUSION

After securing necessary approvals from appropriate university stakeholders, faculty members who wish to build an internship program can start by recruiting promising candidates to seek individual internships. While it's natural to look for students in political science departments, students from other disciplines also have interests in DC institutions and the policy process, and they bring a unique perspective to their internships. For example, one engineering student who interned at the House Science Committee was able to use his scientific knowledge to help the committee staffers conduct their research. A pharmaceutical company that was preparing comments for a federal rule was delighted to discover that their graduate intern, a practicing nurse, had clinical experience using their product. As a result, the intern was able to "provide constructive and unique insights... [and to contribute] significantly to formal comments filed...on policy recommendations to improve reimbursements and incentives for novel anti-microbials."³² So, while internship programs provide students with important professional opportunities and work experience, they can also provide organizations and institutions with vital input and new ideas. As a result, this wonderful, dynamic, exchange of information and experience contributes to a healthy policy ecosystem.

In conclusion, sending your students to live, learn, and intern in DC is an effective way to establish your home institution's reputation for excellence, and to prepare students for professional success. Increasing student enthusiasm for DC internships can generate potential support from key campus stakeholders such as the president, faculty, career center staff, alumni, public relations, and advancement/development leaders. Over time, the internship program can also build new information pathways between university scholars who are creating knowledge and the policymakers in DC who can apply that knowledge to solve policy problems.

ENDNOTES

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