Internships, Fellowships, and Other Work Experience Opportunities in the Federal Government

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Summary

This report describes Internet resources on major internship, fellowship, and work experience programs within the federal government. It is intended as a selective guide for students of all levels: high school, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate.

This report will be updated annually.
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Introduction

The federal government offers many opportunities for internships, fellowships, and work experiences. However, there is no single centralized source for finding information on every opportunity. This report describes the major and most popular Internet resources for such opportunities and gives applicants a place to begin their search. The Internet resources provided are not exhaustive. Telephone numbers for programs are provided if available.

Applying for an internship or fellowship is similar to applying for admission to a college or university. The application process takes time and effort, often requiring essays and interviews. Applicants should begin their search early and explore what best suits their interests and career goals. Application deadlines and program durations vary from agency to agency. Applicants should apply to more than one program because competition is stiff, with applicants often far exceeding the number of positions available. Opportunities are generally available in the spring, summer, and fall, with summer positions being the most popular and the most competitive.

The terms fellowship and internship are sometimes used interchangeably in the names of specific programs. Fellowships are generally intended for persons with advanced degrees or substantial professional experience and are usually salaried positions lasting nine months to a year or more. Internships, which are either salaried or volunteer short-term arrangements, usually require relatively little experience and are often filled by students.

Although they are sometimes confused with interns, congressional pages are high school students who serve Congress as messengers. The House page program ceased operations in August 2011, but the Senate still employs pages. For more information on the Senate page program, see its website at http://www.senate.gov/reference/reference_index_subjects/Pages_vrd.htm.

The duties, responsibilities, and salaries (if any) of interns and fellows vary from program to program. Most program responsibilities are substantive in nature and often involve challenging projects. They may range from conducting legislative research for a congressional office to biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health. Some programs or universities that offer academic credit may require the intern/fellow to produce a report on the work experience and obtain evaluations from program supervisors. In addition, some programs lead to federal job placement. Recruitment programs like Presidential Management Fellows and the Congressional Research Service Graduate Recruit Program may offer permanent employment after the successful completion of program requirements. Because program details vary from agency to agency, it is best to consult the appropriate website or to contact the program office directly.
General Government Resources

USA.gov

The federal government’s official web portal provides an A-Z list of all federal agencies and departments.
http://www.usa.gov/directory/federal/index.shtml

USA.gov also offers a “Federal Government Jobs” website.
http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Government-Jobs.shtml

Making The Difference—Federal Internships

The Making the Difference website, a joint initiative of the Office of Personnel Management and a non-profit organization, the Partnership for Public Service, promotes careers in the federal government. The Federal Internships portion of the website includes information on more than 200 federal internship programs.
http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships

USA Jobs—Student Jobs

The student jobs section of the official U.S. federal government employment website provides students with information on various educational opportunities available within the federal government, including internships, fellowships, apprenticeships, and cooperative programs.
http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/

Office of Personnel Management Programs


The Final Rule implementing the Pathways Programs has been published and is effective as of July 10, 2012. The final rule aims to improve recruiting efforts and offer clear paths to federal internships and careers. The purpose of the final rule is to provide training and career development opportunities for individuals starting on the career path to federal service. For more information on the Final Rule, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-11/pdf/2012-11068.pdf.

Some of the federal agencies that participate in the Pathways Programs include the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. General Service Administration, and the Department of Health and Human Services.
Internship Program

Created by Executive Order 13562 of December 2010, the Internship Program is for students attending high schools, community colleges, four-year universities, trade schools, career and technical education programs, and other qualifying educational institutions and programs with paid opportunities to explore federal careers while still in school. Participants must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a qualifying educational program. The Internship Program replaces the Student Career Experience Program and the Student Temporary Employment Program. More information is available at http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-authorities/students-recent-graduates/#intern.

Recent Graduates Program

Created by Executive Order 13562 of December 2010, the Recent Graduates Program is for individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs with developmental experiences in the federal government. Participants must have obtained a qualifying degree or completed a qualifying career or technical education program within the preceding two years. Veterans applying to the program who are unable to qualify within the two-year period due to military service may apply within six years of obtaining a qualifying degree or completing a qualifying program. More information is available at http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-authorities/students-recent-graduates/#graduates.

Presidential Management Fellows Program

The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program was created to attract outstanding persons from many academic disciplines to the federal government who are interested in, and committed to careers in, the analysis and management of public policies and programs. Applicants must have received, within the preceding two years, a qualifying advanced degree as determined by OPM. Technology Fellows serve a two-year appointment. As per Executive Order 13562 of December 2010, participants no longer need to be nominated by their educational institution but may apply independently. This program includes a special track, Technology Fellows, for technology and computer science professionals. Information about this track is available at https://cio.gov/technology-fellows-program/.
Tel: (202) 606-1040
http://www.pmf.opm.gov

Executive Branch Opportunities

White House Fellows Program

Intended for young professionals who have demonstrated academic and professional excellence, this program places recipients in Cabinet-level agencies, the Executive Office of the President, the Vice President’s office, or in smaller federal agencies. This is a one-year program. Fellows make domestic and foreign trips to study U.S. policy and take part in roundtable discussions with leaders from the private and public sectors. Applicants must have finished their undergraduate degrees and be working in their chosen fields.
White House Internship Program

This program provides unpaid opportunities to learn more about the daily processes of the White House. The competitive program selects about 100 interns every spring, summer, and fall. Each applicant must be a U.S. citizen, enrolled in (or recently graduated from) a college or university, and at least 18 years old on or by the first day of the internship.

Department of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a part of the Pathway Programs. Students and recent graduates are offered opportunities to work as interns in fields such as agricultural, science, technology, math, environmental, management, and business. Students work as assistants to scientific, professional, administrative, and technical employees.

Department of Commerce

The U.S. Department of Commerce offers a variety of paid and unpaid programs, including Commerce Postsecondary Grants Internships and a Workforce Recruitment Program for college students with disabilities. Commerce bureaus and offices with internship programs include the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Census Bureau, and the Patent and Trademark Office.

Department of Defense

The Student Summer Contract Program fills numerous positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) through private contractors and is limited to current students. The Unsalaried Internship Program allows students to gain experience in a professional setting and offers academic credit for the work performed. Programs can range from 10-weeks to full-time employment.

Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education offers internships in several departmental offices, such as Elementary and Secondary Education, Civil Rights, and Leadership and Teacher Development. These unpaid internships are available year-round. Students must be enrolled in a high school, trade school, technical or vocational institute, junior college, college, university, or other accredited educational institution.
Department of Energy

The Department of Energy (DOE) recruits interns to research positions at DOE labs. These positions cover a range of subjects and career levels, from high school students to faculty members. Positions are paid but do not necessarily lead to DOE employment.
http://jobs.energy.gov/entry-level-students/student-opportunities

The DOE Scholars program introduces undergrad, grad, and postgrad students to the missions and operations of the DOE. These are paid positions for enrolled students aged 18 and older, lasting either 10 weeks in the summer or 16 weeks during the semester.
http://jobs.energy.gov/home-page/entry-level-students

Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services’s (HHS’s) website provides a portal to student programs available in several offices. “Student Programs” at http://www.hhs.gov/careers/student/index.html is a listing of internship opportunities and research and training opportunities throughout the department.

The Emerging Leaders Program, described at http://hhsu.learning.hhs.gov/elp, is a two-year program designed to let applicants explore fields related to their academic background within HHS. The program involves rotations within departmental agencies during the first year and then a fixed placement the following year. Students must have one or more of the following degrees: bachelor’s (with work experience), master’s, JD, or PhD.

National Institutes of Health

The Summer Internship Program in Biomedical Research is open to students aged 16 and older who are enrolled in high school, undergraduate, or graduate programs. Positions are in various agency locations nationwide, and stipends are available for the eight-week-plus program. The National Institutes of Health Academy fellowship program is a year-long program with a stipend and is restricted to recent undergraduates. Other programs are available for specific subject areas.
http://www.training.nih.gov/programs

Department of Homeland Security

The U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) offers a variety of fellowship, scholarship, and internship programs in its agencies, which include Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Secret Service. Programs include a Summer Law Intern Program, the ICE Student Volunteer Program, the National Security Internship Program and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) College Intern Program. Most, if not all, of the programs require U.S. citizenship, and some require a security clearance.
http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/careers/content_multi_image_0011.shtm
Department of the Interior


DOI provides a listing of internships on their Youth in the Great Outdoors website, found at https://youthgo.gov/employment-program/internships. This listing shows various fellowship and internships programs throughout the federal land management agencies and bureaus.

Department of Justice

The Summer Law Intern Program accepts law students to salaried summer internships throughout the Department of Justice. The Volunteer Legal Recruitment Program offers legal internships to law students in their first through third years. This program is unpaid, with placement in U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, the Immigration Courts, and department field offices in cities nationwide, including Washington, DC. http://www.justice.gov/oarm/oppls.htm

Department of Labor

The Department of Labor (DOL) participates in the Pathways Programs; internships include working in DOL offices, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Employment & Training Administration (ETA), Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), and the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA). http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/internship/

Department of State

The department’s website provides a portal to available student programs, internships, and fellowships. Opportunities range from the Summer Clerical Program to the Thomas Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowships. To help students choose the most appropriate program for them, an online questionnaire is available. http://www.careers.state.gov/students#.UVndkNe2WUY

Department of Transportation

The department’s website lists several student programs, including the John A. Volpe Transportation Internship and Volunteer Legal Internships. Minority internship programs are offered by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Highway Administration. http://www.careers.dot.gov/stu_intern.html
Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups

The STIPDG is a paid internship program open to all qualified candidates without regard to their race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic prohibited by state or local law.  
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/education/stipdg.cfm

Volunteer Legal Internships

The Office of the General Counsel accepts applications from law students for various internships. These positions are available year round and may be with or without academic credit.  

Department of the Treasury

The Department of Treasury participates in student employment programs, including the Hispanic Serving Institution National Internship Program (HSINIP), Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS), National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), The Washington Center (TWC), and Disability Employment Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP).  
Tel: (202) 927-4800  
http://www.treasury.gov/careers/hq-careers/Pages/student-employment.aspx

Department of Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers programs for college graduates, VA employees, veterans, and outside applicants. These programs include the Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF), National Diversity Internship Program (NDIP), Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), and the Graduate Healthcare Administration Training Program (GHATP).  
http://mycareeratva.va.gov/Careerpath/Internships/Pages/default.aspx

Judicial Branch Opportunities

Supreme Court Fellows Program

This program places individuals for a calendar year in the U.S. Supreme Court, the Federal Judicial Center, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, or the U.S. Sentencing Commission. The paid fellowships are open to individuals from various professions and academic backgrounds. Applicants must have at least one postgraduate degree, two or more years of exceptional professional experience, and multidisciplinary training and experience, including understanding of the judicial process.  
Tel: (202) 479-3415  
http://www.supremecourt.gov/fellows/default.aspx
Judicial Intern Program

This program is geared toward advanced undergraduates and graduating college seniors interested in law, management, or social sciences. Interns work in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice. Internships are offered in the fall, spring, and summer and are unpaid.
Tel: (202) 479-3415

Legislative Branch Opportunities

U.S. Congress

Internships are available in many Members’ Washington, DC, and district or state offices, as well as in congressional committees’ offices. Internships are generally unpaid and offered year-round. Applications are often found at each individual Member’s or committee’s website, or candidates may contact the desired office directly. For lists of Member and committee websites and office contact information, see the Senate and House of Representatives websites.
Senate: http://www.senate.gov
House of Representatives: http://www.house.gov

Fellowships in congressional offices are offered by many organizations—such as the American Political Science Association (APSA), the American Psychological Association, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers—which give persons exposure to public policy and the legislative process. Placement for these fellowships is generally not done through the Members’ or committees’ offices but instead through the sponsoring organizations.

Because there is no centralized listing of all available congressional fellowships, finding them via the web is best done by searching on the phrase “congressional fellowship.” Some well-known fellowship programs offered by professional organizations include the APSA Congressional Fellowships, http://www.apsanet.org/content_3031.cfm; the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowships, http://fellowships.aaas.org/; and the Brookings Institution’s Legis Congressional Fellowships, http://www.brookings.edu/execed/fellowships.aspx.


1 House and Senate offices attempting to identify sources of possible congressional fellows may wish to request a copy of the Congressional Research Service congressional distribution memorandum, “Congressional Fellowship Programs” (available from the authors of this report).
Several congressional fellowship programs, such as those sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Women’s Research and Education Institute, are described in the “Minority Opportunities” section of this report. Some congressional fellowships are listed on the “Additional Opportunities for Students” page of USAJobs.gov at http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs.

Congressional Budget Office

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) provides Congress with budget-related information and explains possible budget ramifications of proposed bills reported by congressional committees. College students and recent college graduates can apply for paid 10-week summer internships, in which they work on analyses in CBO’s various divisions. CBO also offers paid Economic Policy Fellowships for applicants with PhDs.
Tel: (202) 226-2628
Internship website: https://www.cbo.gov/about/our-careers/our-internships
Fellowships website: https://www.cbo.gov/about/our-careers/our-fellowships

Congressional Research Service

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) provides research and analysis in all policy issue areas upon request to Members and committees. In partnership with several student-serving organizations and historically black colleges and universities, CRS offers a limited number of paid summer internships to outstanding minority students. Volunteer internship opportunities are available year-round but are available primarily to graduate students, postgraduate students, faculty, and other professionals. In addition, CRS offers special hiring opportunities under the Presidential Management Fellows Program, CRS Graduate Recruit Program, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Cooperative Education program, and CRS Law Recruit Program. U.S. citizenship is required for all programs.
http://www.loc.gov/hr/employment/index.php?action=cMain.showEmploymentPrograms

Government Accountability Office

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is a congressional auditing and investigative agency that makes recommendations for more effective government operations. College students who are U.S. citizens may be chosen to serve as paid or volunteer interns, generally for 10-12 weeks.
Tel: (202) 512-5811

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress offers unpaid and paid internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities in several departments such as the American Folklife Center, the Conservation Division, the Law Library of Congress and the Hispanic Division. Opportunities include the Junior Fellows Summer Intern Program, http://www.loc.gov/hr/jrfellows/, which offers a stipend. For more information, go to http://www.loc.gov/hr/employment/index.php, then choose “Internships, Fellowship & Volunteer Programs.”
Other Opportunities

Environmental Protection Agency

In addition to programs for graduate and postgraduate students, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers paid summer employment for high school students through the Student Summer Employment Program. Internships, fellowships, and other positions for all educational levels are available in Washington, DC, laboratories, and at regional EPA locations. Applicants must be 16 years of age or older and enrolled at an accredited institution.
http://www.epa.gov/careers/index.html

Federal Communications Commission

The Federal Communications Commission offers internship opportunities in several different bureaus or offices within the agency. The availability and timeframe for intern positions will vary by bureau or office. All application procedures function on a rolling admission policy.
http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/internships-available-fcc

Federal Reserve Board

The Federal Reserve Board provides internship programs for undergraduate and graduate students considering careers in economics, finance and accounting, information systems, and law. Both paid and unpaid internships are available. Each division under the Federal Reserve Board has different requirements for their interns.
http://www.federalreserve.gov/careers/internships.htm

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) website offers two lists of fellowships, internships, research, and educational opportunities. For students, options range from Applied Physics Laboratory Internship Project to the Marshall Robotics Academy summer internship program. For educators or faculty, options range from the NASA Administrator’s Fellowship Project to the Kennedy Space Center Intern Project.
http://www.nasa.gov/offices/education/programs/index.html

Smithsonian Fellowship & Internship Programs

The Smithsonian Institution provides various fellowship and internship programs and academic appointments within its museums and research institutes. Program descriptions are available on the Smithsonian Opportunities for Research and Study website.
Tel: (202) 633-7070
http://www.si.edu/ofg/intern.htm
United States Agency for International Development

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has several internship programs: the Paid Student Internship Program, Volunteer Student Internship Program, Internships in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Transition Initiatives, and other Regional Bureaus abroad. These internships are open to undergraduate and graduate students. USAID also offers fellowship opportunities for more advanced applicants.

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars

The center’s internship program provides unpaid opportunities in the Washington, DC, area to college students and postgraduates. Students are placed within the public (including the federal government), private, and nonprofit sectors. Several internship programs are available for minority applicants. Financial assistance is also available. The Washington Center is one of several organizations that place interns in the Washington area. Others include the Washington Internship Institute, http://www.wiidc.org; the Fund for American Studies, http://www.tfas.org; and the National Internship Program, http://www.nationalinternship.com.
Tel: (202) 238-7900
http://www.twc.edu

Minority Opportunities

Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies

The Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) offers paid and unpaid internship and fellowship opportunities to Asian Pacific Americans to encourage participation in the political process. Selected students work with a congressional office or government agency in Washington, DC.
Tel: (202) 296-9200
Internships website: http://www.apaics.org/index.php/pages/programs/summer_internships
Fellowships website: http://www.apaics.org/index.php/pages/programs/fellowships

Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Internship and Fellowship Programs

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) offers a Congressional Internship Program, including a specialized communications internship program, as well as two fellowship programs: the Congressional Fellows Program and the Louis Stokes Urban Health Policy Fellows Program. Both fellows programs aim to provide research and policy analysis opportunities for persons with graduate or professional degrees. All CBCF programs include either a salary or a stipend and housing.
Tel: (202) 263-2800
http://www.cbcfinc.org/cbcf-internships.html
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Internship and Fellowship Programs

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Summer Internship Program provides undergraduates with the opportunity to work in congressional offices. Interns receive housing, round-trip transportation, and a stipend. The CHCI Public Policy Fellowship Program provides graduate students, or recent college graduates, with the opportunity to obtain experience in public policy. The range of placements includes congressional offices, federal agencies, media, business federal affairs offices, advocacy groups, and government-related institutions. Fellows receive round-trip transportation and a stipend.
Tel: (800) 392-3532 or (202) 543-1771
Internships website: http://www.chci.org/internships
Fellowships website: http://www.chci.org/fellowships

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities National Internship Program

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program (HNIP) recruits undergraduate and graduate students from all academic majors for paid summer and semester internships at federal agencies and private companies in Washington, DC and throughout the country. Interns may also receive round-trip transportation and housing.
Tel: (202) 467-0893
http://www.hacu.net/hacu/HNIP.asp

Minority Access Internship Program

This is a paid internship program for undergraduate and graduate students. Applicants are selected by federal agencies and other participating organizations in the Washington, DC area. Interns may receive assistance with housing and travel expenses.
Tel: (301) 779-7100
http://minorityaccess.org/intern_program_04.htm

Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation Native American Congressional Summer Internship Program

The foundation offers Native American students the opportunity to work in congressional offices, federal agencies, or the White House for ten weeks. Interns receive round-trip transportation, housing, and a stipend.
Tel: (520) 901-8500
http://www.udall.gov/OurPrograms/NACInternship/NACInternship.aspx
Women’s Research and Education Institute Congressional Fellowship Program

The program provides graduate and post-graduate students the opportunity to work for nine months in congressional offices as legislative aides on policy issues that affect women.
Tel: (703) 812-7990
http://www.wrei.org/Fellows.htm

Bibliography

This selective bibliography lists more sources of information on internships, fellowships, and summer job opportunities. The publications can be used to find additional work experience opportunities, both inside and outside the federal government. These works may be available in local libraries or school or college guidance offices. Annotations identify publications that are issued annually. Other publications are updated irregularly; check with publishers for information on the latest editions.


Described as a “nuts-and-bolts guide to working in a Congressional office,” this publication includes a chapter on “Finding a job or another internship” on Capitol Hill. This handbook is used in many congressional offices.


This publication can be used to locate organizations by subject area. When standard internship directories contain no entries for internships in a specific field, relevant groups listed in this publication may be able to suggest contacts for internship opportunities. This work can be found in many libraries in print or in electronic form, as the Associations Unlimited subscription database.


This publication provides advice on “surviving and thriving” in political internships, including on Capitol Hill and in congressional district offices.


Listed here are profiles of internship opportunities across the United States and abroad. It includes indexes by geographic area, field of interest, and employer name. This work is generally available in bookstores.


Provided in this directory are state-by-state listings of more than 55,000 summer work experiences available to students, teachers, and others in a variety of fields. The index includes access to opportunities for interns and volunteers.

Information is given on more than 100,000 internship opportunities in such areas as law, television, advertising, sports, computers, journalism, music, health care, publishing, finance, education, and the environment. For each internship listed, the following is given: selectivity, compensation, location, field, duration, deadlines, work, perks, FYI, and how to apply.


This directory profiles internship programs at over 750 companies, organizations and government agencies. Some of this information is also available on the internship portion of the Vault website at http://www.vault.com/wps/portal/usa/internshiplanding.


This book provides information on how to become a valued intern and enhance networking skills. Insider tips are given on such things as how to deal with work related tasks and locating summer housing.

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