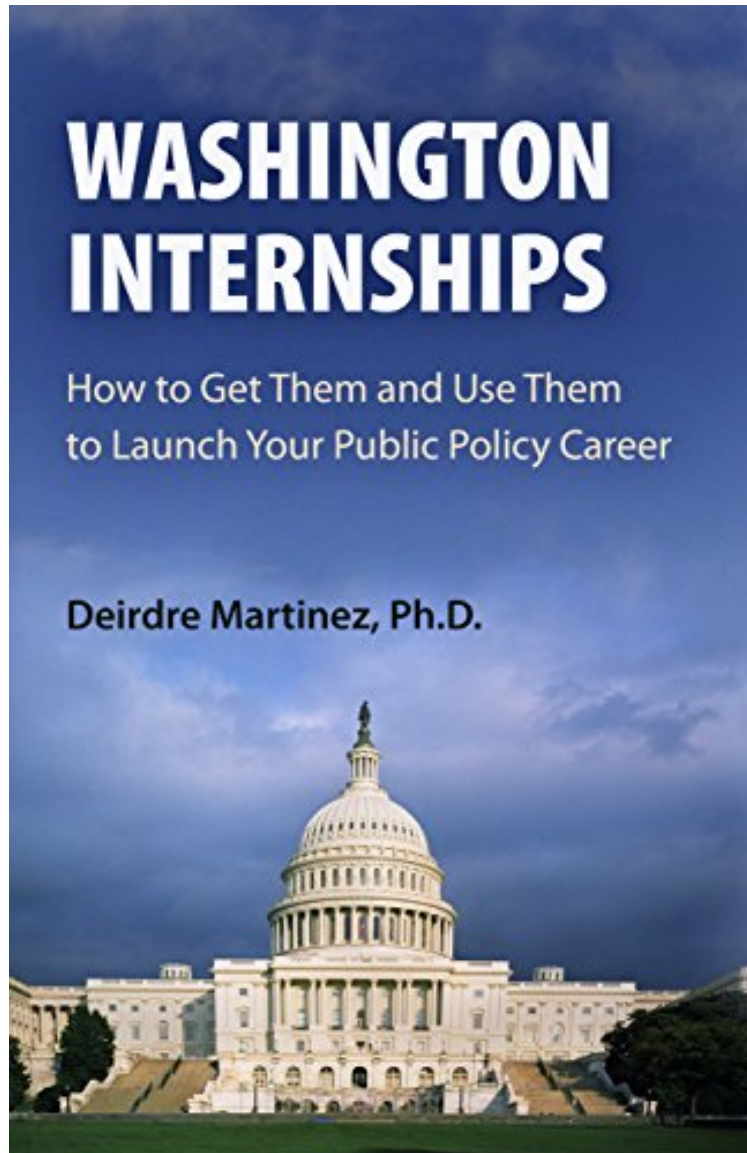


(Download) Washington Internships: How to Get Them and Use Them to Launch Your Public Policy Career

# Washington Internships: How to Get Them and Use Them to Launch Your Public Policy Career

*Deirdre Martinez*

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**Deirdre Martinez : Washington Internships: How to Get Them and Use Them to Launch Your Public Policy Career** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Washington Internships: How to Get Them and Use Them to Launch Your Public Policy Career:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Every High School student needs to know that there are fantastic opportunities available. This book can be life changing.By CustomerI bought three copies and gave them to recent

high school graduates. Most high school kids are not aware of the many opportunities available to them. This book absolutely shows that dreams can come true. You can get a terrific internship in the field of your choice in Washington DC. How cool is that? The author certainly has the experience and networking necessary to help change a life. Excellent. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. RecommendBy Crow123Very helpful book for the purpose. Gave some good direction. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Useful and Practical GuideBy Steely Dan(Review written by David Thornburgh, published via Rebecca's account.) I thought Dr. Martinez's book really hit the spot. It's got great advice not only about how to get yourself a great Washington internship, but also how to get the most out of the experience. Highly recommended for college and graduate students "in the hunt" and for parents, friends, professors, and advisers to students thinking about a career stop in Washington.

For students interested in a career in politics and public service, *Washington Internships* is an invaluable guide to landing that crucial first position in America's capital. Deirdre Martinez, a former policy analyst and legislative director, shares practical strategies for each phase of the internship process. She has helped place hundreds of young people in internships of all kinds, and shares not just what to do but when to do it. The book shows how to develop relevant interests, what skills to develop, how to enhance the resume (poli sci course work not required!), and how to ace the interview. Just as important, it shows how to become a valued intern and build the relationships that lead to post-graduation job offers. *Washington Internships* also provides insider tips on dealing with grunt work, the pitfalls of "crossing the aisle," and how to find summer housing, deal with background checks, and negotiate Washington fashion ("zombie chic"). *Washington Internships* is the only career publication focused on entry-level policy and government work. It covers all branches of government, federal agencies, lobbying firms, advocacy organizations, and think tanks. Whether you're a young activist or a future power broker, this book will help you grab the first rung of the public service career ladder.

About the AuthorDeirdre Martinez, Ph.D., is Director of the Fels Public Policy Internship Program and the Penn in Washington program for the University of Pennsylvania.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1. IntroductionWashington, D.C., has been called the "internship capital" of the United States, and with 20,000 interns every summer, the name probably fits. More than any other city, Washington welcomes interns with open arms, giving students the opportunity to see how the United States government functions up close and personal. In Congress, media organizations, lobbying offices, and nonprofits, interns open mail and answer phones and run errands but they also write policy briefs, get published, and hear Members of Congress use words they wrote.Washington is at once a small town whose streets and neighborhoods will quickly become familiar to you and a huge metropolitan area where you can find internships in a vast number of fields. As Director of Penn in Washington at the University of Pennsylvania, I have helped hundreds of students find internships in Washington. Some students know very little about how our government actually works and want to just be there to soak it all in; where better than the front desk of a congressional office? Others have been close observers of D.C. politics and are ready to leap in and join the fray; for these students, a summer at the Republican or Democratic National Committee feels like the center of the world, and in some cases these experiences and the contacts made have led to entry-level political jobs and exciting careers in politics. Other students have very specific ideas about what they want to do; a student a few years ago was particularly interested in Brazil's economy, had spent a semester in Brazil, and had studied Portuguese. Not only was the Brazil U.S. Business Council happy to have him as an intern, when he graduated the following year they eagerly offered him a permanent position.As in other industries and cities, internships can and often do lead to offers of permanent employment. While not all interns go to Washington with the stated goal of securing full-time work, an internship is certainly the first step on that ladder. In addition to making your resume look good, Washington is an exciting place to be, particularly if you take full advantage of the opportunities available to you. Washington is a place where people come to be heard, and typically these people like an audience, which means speaking events are often open to the public. D.C. is also a natural location for political demonstrations and protests, which are fascinating either as participant or observer. A center of American history and culture, Washington is a popular destination for tourists, the site of numerous national landmarks and monuments, the world's largest museum complex, galleries, universities, cathedrals, performing arts centers, and institutions. So while this book is focused on helping you get the most out of your internship, I also spend a little time encouraging you to get the most out of Washington itself.This book fills the gap between what students typically know about Washington internships and what you need to know to find the right internship and use it to launch an exciting career. Beginning with an introduction to the major institutions in Washington and types of internships within each, the book guides students through planning, the search process, securing the internship, and using it as a stepping stone to an entry-level job. Along the way the chapters provide advice on a range of issues, from improved communication skills to knowing what to wear. The book offers tips from students, Washington insiders, and internship sponsors, and provides useful internet resources.Who Can Use This BookYou might think that the typical D.C. intern is a college junior or senior with a political science major. While there certainly are thousands of students that fit that description, not only do interns come from all kinds of majors, but

they also include younger and older candidates. I have successfully placed English, communications, history, and other majors in a range of internships where sponsors are looking for strong writers, clear thinkers, and self-starters. As for age/education requirements, they also vary widely and many sponsors are very flexible. High school students are increasingly being offered the opportunity to intern, though those positions are less common and often the work is more likely to be administrative than substantive. College graduates who didn't get around to deciding that they wanted to work in Washington until later in their academic careers can often start out as a summer intern after they graduate and either use the time (off the clock, of course) to job hunt or endear themselves to their internship sponsor such that they transition to a full-time permanent position. Whether you don't know the first thing about Washington or you've been reading the Washington Post online for the past three years, this book can help you think through the best internship options for you, how to get in the door, and how to take full advantage once you're there.

**How To Use This Book**The book is laid out in a (I hope) fairly logical order; having purchased this book, you've made the decision to focus your internship search on Washington. That's step one. Step two is to get the lay of the land; with so many options available to you, it's necessary to start limiting your search to a few broad categories of D.C. internship sponsors. In Chapter 2, I provide detailed descriptions of employers in various categories, and include lots of comments from students who interned in these places so that you have a very solid sense of not only who these sponsors are (some of whom are also quoted in the chapter), but also what you would be spending your time doing and what you can expect to take away from the experience. Once you've decided for or against internships in the seven sectors laid out in Chapter 2, you're ready for Chapter 3 (and step three), which gets down to finding specific potential sponsors. Resources that you can use to develop your list and important strategic advice are provided in this chapter. At this point, list in hand, you are ready for step four. Chapter 4 is chock full of very Washington-specific advice on preparing the best and most appropriate application materials. This chapter also provides interviewing tips and suggestions from internship sponsors on what they think is most important in a cover letter/resume, and who their ideal intern is. Step five is often overlooked; this includes everything that happens after you get an internship offer. In addition to practical aspects, which include finding a place to stay and making sure your wardrobe is up to the task, you also need to think about what you want to get from your internship experience and then make sure you do everything it takes to achieve your goals. The remaining chapters help you do all that, and also help you orient yourself in Washington and include some ideas on must see/do things in D.C.

**When To Use This Book**Students often ask me when the best year/summer of college is to participate in an internship. Policy internships are great for students between their junior and senior year of college because they have honed their writing skills, they may have definite ideas about particular issues they want to explore, and they may have some qualifications (like courses taken) that are attractive to internship sponsors. But an internship earlier in college and increasingly in high school can help students gain skills that will make them stronger internship candidates, which will lead to better internships, higher-quality work experiences, and stronger contacts with supervisors and mentors. Another advantage to participating in internships in high school and after your first year of college is that it provides an opportunity to rule out some avenues so that by the time you get to your junior year, you are very clear about what kind of internship you want to do and where that might lead you. One easy way to get your foot in the door is to intern in the district office (the local office where you live, rather than the office in Washington, D.C.) of your Member of Congress or Senator early in your college career, perhaps before or after your freshman year or even while you are in high school. If the timing is right and you're more interested in politics than policymaking, you could also volunteer for a local congressional campaign. While the work will be largely administrative (though that may not always be the case), working in a district office or on a campaign is a great way to get to know staff, familiarize yourself with how that office functions, and maybe even get to know the Congressperson or Senator. If you still have the policy/politics bug the following year, getting an internship in the Washington office of your Senator or Member of Congress will probably be a sure thing (assuming you've followed all the advice this book provides), and even if after working in the district office or on a campaign you don't think a congressional office or on a political campaign is where you want to be, you will have made some contacts that are likely to be helpful as you apply to other internships in Washington.

As for when in the year interning is best done, the vast majority of interns use their summers to do an internship because they are focused on classes and other on-campus activities during the school year. One alternative to consider is taking a semester off and doing an internship during the academic year. In a city such as Washington, where internship sponsors are faced with a feast or famine depending on the time of year, you may get accepted to a competitive internship program in the fall or spring that would have gone to more qualified candidates in the vastly larger summer intern pool. Finally, as to when you should start your application process, as the timeline in Chapter 4 makes clear, ideally you will start thinking about your summer internship the summer before. A number of the most prestigious internships in Washington have November 1 deadlines; which means you'll have to start collecting your materials and putting applications together in late summer.

Let's turn now to the actual internship sponsors in Washington. The next chapter will help you think about where you want to be and what you want to get out of the Washington experience.