

Internship Preparation Recommendations

Washington, D.C. Global Leadership Program

1. **GET INSPIRED.** Look for an internship in an area that excites or inspires you—not simply something that seems like a good job opportunity. You will do much better work and be more satisfied in this kind of environment.
2. **MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** Take advantage of the unique opportunities that Washington, D.C. has to offer. Washington, D.C. is an incredible city to learn about public policy and global affairs, as well as explore ways you can make a difference in the world. D.C. is a city of national leadership and global influence where some of the smartest young people from all over the world come to try to solve the problems of the world. Take this opportunity to join them!
3. **PLAN AHEAD.** If you wait until you have only 2 or 3 months to look for an internship do not be surprised when you cannot find the internship of your choice. We **HIGHLY** recommend you begin looking at least 4-6 months in advance and in some cases you need at least 9 months (especially for White House, government agencies or the most competitive organizations).
4. **APPLY WIDELY.** Just like a search for a job, it is difficult to anticipate what companies or organizations will hire you. It is highly recommended that you apply to at least 7-10 internship opportunities. Many places take a long time to review applications and notify candidates, so if you wait until you hear back from an organization it will likely be too late to apply to others—so you should apply to all the positions that interest you early on. It may seem like a lot of work, but it is a great investment to get the right internship.
5. **APPLY WELL:** Make sure that you read the internship position description and application instructions carefully. When you write your cover letter and resume, be sure to tailor it to the duties and qualifications of the internship. Do not simply send the same cover letter for every position. Organizations are expecting you to show why you are uniquely qualified and excited to work for them, so you need to show them that you understand their mission and how you can support it—be specific and use words that you find in the internship position description. This takes time but this is what separates a successful applicant from an unsuccessful one.
6. **SEEK ADVICE.** When you come across an internship that interest you try to seek advice from others you trust or who have expertise in that area: professors, parents, friends, program staff, or other professionals you know. Also, if you are having trouble discovering an internship that interests you, seek advice from trusted sources, such as the **Career Center** and the **Washington, D.C. Program** staff. Just be sure you are prepared with your resume and some specific goals and interests you want to pursue in Washington, D.C.