

DRUG POLICY ALLIANCE

Reason. Compassion. Justice.

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Introduction to the Office of National Affairs Internship Program

What is the Office of National Affairs (ONA)?

ONA is the Drug Policy Alliance's primary means of influencing legislation in Congress and drug policy in the White House. ONA's primary mission is to accomplish substantive policy reform through congressional legislation, hearings and events. This mission is accomplished through lobbying, outreach and education activities. The Office of National Affairs consists of three staff: Bill Piper, Director; Jasmine Tyler, Deputy Director; Grant Smith, Legislative Associate. Due to the nature of our work, and limited resources, interns play an integral role in moving ONA's mission forward.

What do interns do?

The ONA internship program consists of up to two undergraduate-level positions and one (1) graduate-level position. All positions are unpaid. ONA interns conduct substantive work that is critically linked to both the day-to-day and long-term objectives of the office. Most work assignments will originate from either Jasmine or Grant, but Bill may occasionally have assignments as well. Assignments may be written out on a slip for tracking purposes.

Volunteers work on a variety of projects, for example:

- Conducting research on a variety of topics and issues
- Writing memos, briefs, summaries and letters on the basis of in-office research
- Conducting research for policy development purposes
- Editing and proofreading
- Lobbying activities (limited to phone banking and dropping packets on Capitol Hill)
- Some administrative tasks (e.g. running errands, photocopying, assembling packets, answering the general phone line during peak times)
- Other general, unspecified support for ONA staff

We strive to ensure that your time with us is meaningful – therefore, we keep administrative and monotonous assignments to a minimum. However, there may be busy times when we may ask you to do several in a week. Also, lobbying activities are reserved for those individuals who are not restricted from conducting such activities as part of a school or educational program that explicitly requests no lobbying for IRS/non-profit status purposes.

We generally expect interns to complete 16 hours a week. We are flexible as to when these hours may be served. We only ask that interns try to not break up the hours beyond four-hour intervals (e.g. two hours on Monday, three hours on Wednesday, one hour on Thursday etc.) Ideally, an intern will serve two 8 hour days. Of course, interns are not discouraged from working more than 16 hours per week if they wish. In addition, some ONA interns serve as part of a school-related program that is full-time in nature. It is helpful for ONA staff to know what your schedule will be each week for strategic planning purposes.

What can I expect as an intern?

- **Meaningful and substantive work** – Most assignments will involve brain power and some creative thinking – research, writing and analysis are common tasks for ONA interns.
- **Support and supervision** – ONA staff will provide ongoing support and provide for informal check-ins. Although formal evaluations are not conducted for interns, an intern may request formal feedback at any time. If appropriate, ONA may supply you with a reference if required for future employment
- **Room to learn and grow** – This internship program is just as much an opportunity for ONA to serve an intern's academic and career interests as it is an opportunity for an intern to serve ONA. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, utilize the resources available to ONA staff, reach out to other staff in DPA offices across the country, attend drug policy related events around the city, attend congressional hearings and events etc. If an intern is working on a dissertation or other academic pursuit, they should ask ONA staff who they should speak with on a particular drug-related subject.
- **Inclusion in ONA events** – We make a sincere effort to notify and invite all interns to any formal (and informal) events that ONA staff is planning on attending.
- **Expense reimbursement** - ONA will reimburse an intern for certain expenses incurred while serving hours in the ONA office. The reimbursable expenses are limited to: Metrorail or bus travel to/from events assigned by an ONA staff member, postage or mailing charges stemming from ONA-related mailing, other expenses incurred for ONA purposes as directed by an ONA staff member. Please note that ONA does *not* reimburse for lunch, or travel costs associated with reporting to ONA. Expense reimbursement is subject to approval from the Director of ONA. Receipts are required for any reimbursement.