

Department of Environmental Protection Office of General Counsel's Internship Program

I. Purpose

To expose law students (interns) to the practice of law from the perspective of a public-sector attorney. Interns will be exposed to the Office of General Counsel's (OGC) diverse practice areas, such as administrative, appellate, environmental, land use, legislative, litigation, finance, and real estate law. Each intern will have an opportunity to explore our practice areas under the supervision of knowledgeable, experienced attorneys.

II. Statement to Law Schools

Each academic semester, OGC recruits top students from leading law schools throughout the United States. Both Florida and out-of-state law schools are encouraged to seek placement of a law school student as an intern in OGC.

III. Program

A. Time Frames

Normally, an internship will last one semester, approximately 16 weeks. The fall semester typically begins the last week of August and runs through the second week in December. The spring semester typically begins the second week in January and runs through the first week in May. The summer term typically begins the second week in May and runs through the second week in August.

The internship can be a full-time or a part-time position. If part-time, the position should not exceed 20 hours per week and if full-time, the position should not exceed 40 hours per week. Schedules are determined by mutual agreement between the Internship Coordinator and intern.

Interns will ordinarily be interviewed at least one month prior to the start of the internship. Placements will be determined no less than one week prior to the beginning of the semester of the experience.

B. Materials to Submit

Candidates should send a letter or email to the Internship Administrator (OGC.Intern.Admin@dep.state.fl.us) explaining their interest in the Department and attaching a resume, transcript and writing sample. These materials must be received by OGC no later than: March 14 of each year, for positions beginning the following summer; July 14, of each year for positions beginning the following fall; October 1 of each year, for positions beginning the following spring.

Candidates should also indicate if they are willing to work at one of the Department's District offices throughout the State. No candidate will be asked to work at a District office without having previously indicated such a willingness to be located at a District.¹ Absent an express willingness to work at a District office, the candidates will be considered for placement solely within OGC in Tallahassee. Although OGC will attempt to accommodate requests to work at a District office, a willingness to intern at a District office does not guarantee placement at a District office. The needs of OGC shall dictate the placement of interns. Additionally, all District office interns must complete one week of training at OGC's Tallahassee offices at the beginning of their internship.

C. Compensation – Interns Do Not Receive Any Form of Financial Compensation from the Department

Typically, the internship is completed by the student for the purpose of earning pro bono experience or academic credit.

OGC interns – both in Tallahassee and the Districts – do not receive any form of financial compensation; however, candidates may apply for a fellowship with the Environmental Law and Land Use Law Section of the Florida Bar or their law school, if available.

D. Intern Job Description.

Each internship experience is unique, based primarily on OGC's needs and the calendar of work that arises during a given semester. Generally, interns should expect to enjoy many of the following opportunities:

1. Assignments that ensure an informative exposure to many of the Department's practice areas and attorneys. Often interns research and draft legal memoranda, prepare motions, assist with preparation for trials or administrative hearings, engage in developing administrative rules, observe depositions, assist in preparing rule packages, or assist in preparing the necessary legal documents for real property transactions;
2. Inside exposure to how the Department runs and operates, potentially including meeting with top officials from federal or state agencies;
3. Potentially attending arguments or trials in federal or state courts and hearings before the Division of Administrative Hearings; and
4. Social outings with the opportunity to interact with our lawyers on an informal basis.

To accomplish this, interns working in Tallahassee will spend one-half of their internship assisting the litigation sections (Defense and Enforcement) and one-half of their internship assisting the program sections (Public Lands and Programs).

¹ Currently, OGC places Interns in the Northeast District (Jacksonville) and Central District (Orlando).

Interns are generally not permitted to work for another law office while completing their internship with the Department.

Interns selected for placement in a District office shall spend the first week of their internship at the OGC offices in Tallahassee for initial training.

V. Pro bono opportunities

OGC often receives requests from law students to fulfill their pro bono requirement through service with OGC. OGC will consider such requests at the time they are received, and on a case-by-case basis. The procedures outlined herein will not govern such situations. Requests to provide pro bono service at OGC should be submitted to OGC.Intern.Admin@dep.state.fl.us.