



U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

MSPB OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Internships with MSPB's Office of the General Counsel

Questions and Answers About Internships in the Office of General Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board

What is the Merit Systems Protection Board?

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board serves as guardian of the Federal Government's merit-based system of employment. Its Administrative Judges and presidentially-appointed Board members hear and decide appeals from Federal employees of personnel actions, such as removals, demotions, and suspensions. The Board also decides cases involving improper political activities by government employees, claims of reprisal for whistleblowing, and unlawful discrimination. In addition, the Board conducts reviews and studies of Federal personnel systems.

"As an office with just eleven attorneys, we give our interns substantive legal assignments that would otherwise be assigned to an attorney and provide them with a helpful and comfortable work environment in which to develop their legal skills."

B. Chad Bungard, General Counsel

What does the Office of General Counsel do?

The Office of General Counsel provides legal advice to Board members and other Board officials. It represents the Board in litigation (mainly before the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit) and prepares proposed decisions for the Board on civil service, FOIA, and Privacy Act matters. The Office of General Counsel also conducts the agency's ethics program, coordinates the Board's legislative policy and congressional relations, and coordinates investigations under the Inspector General Act.

"My internship allowed me to apply the legal research and writing skills I learned in law school to real-world legal problems."

Frislanda Goldfeder, American University Law School, 2007 Intern

What do interns in the Office of General Counsel do?

Interns will work with staff attorneys and the General Counsel on a typical range of duties present in the practice of law with a small federal agency such as, conducting legal research, preparing memoranda, drafting appellate briefs, and writing decisions for

the Board. Interns will also work with the legislative counsel to identify, summarize, and monitor legislation affecting the Board and the federal civil service.

"The assistance of our intern in drafting a brief to the Court of Appeals was invaluable."

Tom Auble, Attorney, Office of General Counsel

Are interns paid? Is academic credit available?

We are unable to provide paid positions, but are happy to provide the documentation required by the law school to grant academic credit upon satisfactory completion of the internship. A public transportation subsidy is available.

Does the Office of General Counsel accept first year law students as interns?

Yes, students who will have completed their first year of law school are encouraged to apply.

Where are the Board's offices?

The Board's offices are located near the Farragut North Metro Station in downtown Washington.

When are positions available?

Positions are available in the summer, fall, or spring. We are very flexible and will attempt to accommodate individual scheduling needs. We require at least a 25 hour per week commitment during the summer and a 12 to 15 hour per week commitment during the academic year. Interns must make at least an 8 to 12 week commitment.

What is necessary to apply?

To apply for a position, we require a resume, writing sample, and an interview (which can be done by phone). A first-year legal methods document is an acceptable writing sample. We also require at least one reference who can attest to your legal skills. You may submit your application material to the address below (we prefer electronic applications).

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