

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
Office of Appeals Counsel
Questions and Answers About Internships in the Office of Appeals
Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board

What is the Merit Systems Protection Board?

The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board is a quasi-judicial executive branch agency which, acting much as a court, hears and decides appeals from Federal employees of personnel actions, such as removals, demotions, and suspensions. The Board also decides cases involving claims of reprisal for whistleblowing, unlawful discrimination, and violations of veterans' rights.

The Merit Systems Protection Board is the guardian of the Federal Government's merit-based system of employment.

What does the Office of Appeals Counsel do?

The attorneys in the Office of Appeals Counsel serve as the principal legal advisors to the three presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed Board members. The office prepares decisions and explanatory memoranda regarding issues raised in appellate level cases.

The attorneys in the Office of Appeals Counsel are the principal legal advisors to the Board members who, like appellate judges, hear and decide requests for review of initial decisions.

What do interns in the Office of Appeals Counsel do?

Working closely with experienced attorneys, interns conduct legal research, prepare memoranda and draft decisions, and conduct final case review in cases pending before the Board.

Interns perform duties that are often assigned to entry-level attorneys. They perform substantive legal work and are assisted in developing their legal writing skills.

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 Appeals Counsel accept first year law students as interns?

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

Interning with the Board's Office of Appeals Counsel provides an excellent exposure to Federal-sector employment law and administrative adjudication.

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 and both the spring and fall terms. We are very flexible and will attempt to accommodate individual scheduling needs. We require at least a 30 hour per week commitment during the summer and a 12-15 hour per week commitment during the school year. Interns must make at least an 8 to 12 week commitment.

What is the application deadline?

There is no absolute deadline. We try to make intern selections for the spring term in November, for the summer in March, and for the fall in July, but even last minute applications will be considered.

Because the Office of Appeals Counsel is a small office, we are very flexible with intern schedules and the application deadlines.

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).

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
Office of Appeals Counsel
1615 M St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20419
(202) 254-4448
FAX (202) 653-6203
OACinterns@MSPB.gov