State of Connecticut

STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

Elections Public Policy Internship Program

INTRODUCTION

State Elections Enforcement Commission, Citizens' Election Program and the Elections Public Policy Internship Program

The Citizens' Election Program ("the Program"), an integral part of the State Elections Enforcement Commission, was created with the intent of changing the political landscape of Connecticut by curbing campaign spending and reducing the influence of special interest. The Commission's Candidate Services Unit was formed with the goal of assisting participating candidates, treasurers and campaign staff in understanding and complying with Program rules and requirements.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission recruits qualified candidates to participate in our internship program. The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity that will allow both undergraduate and graduate students to work with staff to design a program that will not only meet their individual needs, but will assist us in achieving our program and project goals. Our internships are offered year round on both a full and part-time basis, in conjunction with the educational institution to ensure that each candidate receives appropriate academic credit for their internship.

Interns conduct research of current and proposed legislation; assist in preparing the department's legislative package; preparing press releases; monitoring media about the Program; assist in the development of our legal research database; and related projects as required.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CANDIDATE SERVICES UNIT
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AGENCY'S HISTORY AND MISSION

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, the Connecticut General Assembly created a five member bi-partisan and independent State Elections Commission (Public Act 74-213) to ensure the integrity of the state's electoral process. The Commission was given the authority to investigate possible violations of the election laws, inspect campaign finance records and reports, refer evidence of violations to the Chief State's Attorney or to the Attorney General, issue advisory opinions and make recommendations to the General Assembly concerning revisions to the state's election laws. Appointments to the Commission are divided equally amongst the Governor and the four highest ranking leaders of the General Assembly.

In its first year of operations, the Commission was given a budget of $50,000 and utilized staff loaned by the Secretary of the State, temporary and summer workers. Until April 1975, the Commission conducted its activities without the benefit of a permanent office. Since 1974, the Commission's investigative and enforcement authority has grown. It has full subpoena power, can impound voting machines and absentee ballots, require a forfeiture of contributions or payments and impose civil penalties against violators. The Commission's enabling authority can be found in §§ 9-7a and 9-7b, General Statutes.

The Commission currently has a permanent full time staff of over 50 employees, headed by the Executive Director and General Counsel. More than 200 investigations are conducted each year, with sanctions imposed in approximately two-thirds of the cases. Commission staff responds to thousands of requests for oral and written advice. It regularly conducts training sessions for candidates, campaign treasurers and others concerning campaign finance requirements. Agency publications are available in both English and Spanish. Each year, the Commission makes recommendations to the General Assembly for revising election laws.

BASICS OF THE CITIZENS' ELECTION PROGRAM

Chapter 157 of the Connecticut General Statutes prescribes the Citizens' Election Program, a voluntary program which provides full public financing to qualified candidates for Statewide Offices and the General Assembly. The Program, administered by the State Elections Enforcement Commission (the "Commission"), is financed through the Citizens' Election Fund, a non-lapsing fund that receives proceeds from the sale of abandoned property in the State of Connecticut's custody. The Program has no effect on the tax liability of Connecticut residents.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The voluntary public financing program was designed with various goals, including:

(1) to allow candidates to compete without reliance on special interest money;

(2) to give candidates without access to sources of wealth a meaningful opportunity to seek elective office in the State of Connecticut;

(3) to curtail excessive spending in the State of Connecticut's political process; and

(4) to provide the public with meaningful and timely disclosure of campaign finances.

The Program was successfully launched and fully implemented through the 2008 election cycle, and 75% of General Assembly candidates elected to participate in the Program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What was the motivation for starting an internship program?

The motivation for starting this internship program is to provide an opportunity that will allow undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students to work with staff to design a field practicum level program that will not only meet their individual needs, but provide an opportunity to enhance their academic, professional and career development while achieving our program and project goals.

What is the structure of the Elections Public Policy Internship Program?

Interns conduct research of current and proposed legislation; assist in preparing the department's legislative package; preparing press releases; monitoring media about the Program; assist in the development of our legal research database; and related projects as required.

This is a non-paid internship program; offered year round on both a full and part time basis, with some interns working from four hours per week, up to 40 hours per week. Interns are recognized at our luncheon at the conclusion of the program. The Commission also coordinates with academic advisors at each university or college to ensure that interns achieve their credit goals.

Depending upon performance of their duties, an intern may be required to do a self-evaluation, in addition to completing an evaluation that the institution they attend may require. Monitoring of interns is done on a daily basis to assess their performance in completing tasks that are assigned, and to also provide an outlet for interns to voice any questions or concerns.

A high level of effort is required to have a successful internship program. In such a fast paced environment supervisors and fellow employees must be willing to not only teach an intern their required duties and responsibilities, but be willing to dedicate the time and effort to identify each intern’s weak and strong points and realize how to maximize their potential. Proper supervision and personalized intern projects provide opportunities for individual interns to gain in-depth knowledge and training in areas that they find personally interesting.

What is the structure of the Elections Public Policy Internship Program for Law Clerks?

Law clerks are accountable for performing various legal work other than that required to be done by a duly admitted member of the bar. Law clerks work under the supervision of the General Counsel and Legal Directors for the State Elections Enforcement Commission, as well as agency staff attorneys. Law clerks will assist staff attorneys, conduct research work in law and facts with reference to pending questions; assist in preparation of materials and cases to be tried by staff attorneys; index opinions of counsel, and perform related duties as required. Law clerks will also learn and apply policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the organizational unit and professional specialty to which they are assigned.

Law clerks may perform the following types of duties:

- Collect, record, organize, and analyze data relative to research of legal issues
- Research and verify points of law cited by attorneys in memoranda
- Prepare draft pleadings, correspondence, legal memoranda, opinions, briefs, and other documents
- Respond to requests for legal opinion at the direction of attorneys
- Research and download data from the computer, reviewing and extracting information from technical materials, including correspondence, reports, procedural guides, and instructions
- Draft correspondence, legislation, or other legal documents

DIRECTIONS

Capitol and Legislative Office Building (LOB)

The Legislative Office Building is located at 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

Traveling on I-84 East - Take Exit 48, Capitol Avenue, get into the right lane of the exit ramp. At the end of the exit ramp turn right onto Capitol Avenue (The LOB is the building on your right). Take the first right past the Legislative Office Building, proceed straight until the driveway turns to the right. Take a right to enter the garage (Use the staff and visitors lane). Park in any unreserved spot. You can enter the LOB from the third floor of the garage by a skywalk.

Traveling on I-84 West - Take Exit 48, Asylum Street, at the end of the exit ramp turn right at the light onto Asylum Street and immediately bear left onto Farmington Ave. At the YWCA (your first traffic light) turn left onto Broad Street, proceed under the highway overpass and turn left just after the State Armory Building. Proceed to the stop and turn left. Follow straight back. As the road begins to turn to the right, turn right to enter the garage (Use the staff and visitors lane). Park in any unreserved spot. You can enter the LOB from the third floor of the garage by a skywalk.

Traveling on I-91 North or South - Take Exit 29A, Capitol Avenue, proceed to the traffic circle. Go 1/2 of the way through the traffic circle and turn right. You will now be on Elm Street proceeding toward the Capitol along Bushnell Park. Proceed to the traffic light and turn left. Follow to the next light at the top of a slight hill. You will now be intersecting Capitol Avenue. Follow past the Capitol building and the I-84 entrance ramp, all on your right. Take the first right past the Legislative Office Building (the building immediately following the 1-84 ramps). Proceed straight until the driveway turns to the right. Take a right to enter the garage (Use the staff and visitors lane). Park in any unreserved spot. You can enter the LOB from the third floor of the garage by a skywalk.

Take the third floor skywalk into the LOB and exit at the revolving door. The Capitol will be on your left. Our office building is across the street from the Capitol: 20 Trinity Street.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street Hartford, Connecticut 06106—1628

Elections Public Policy Internship Program Application

Name: _____

Street Address_____Apt # _____

City _____State _____Zip Code_____

Telephone Number ( )_____

E-Mail Address: _____

School Attending This Semester_____

Degree Sought _____

Major _____ Minor_____

Freshman _____ Sophomore _____ Junior_____ Senior_____

Graduate _____ Law Student _____ Other _____

Grade Point Average:

Overall _____ Major _____

Date Available to Start: _____

Days and Times Available: _____

_____

_____

Number of academic credits you will receive for Internship: _____

Phone: (860) 256-2985 • Fax: (860) 256-2997 • Internet: www.ct.gov/seec

Advisor's Name _____

Telephone Number ( )_____

E-Mail Address: _____

What academic courses have you taken that have prepared you for this internship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What additional activities or experiences have you had that you believe will assist you during this internship?

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_____

_____

_____

What are you hoping to gain from this internship?

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Applicant Signature _____**Date:** _____