Volunteer College Internships
“Real-World” Juvenile Justice Work Experience

Real World Experience

In the competitive world of professional employment, practical experience in a student’s field of study is an invaluable addition to classroom learning. For many college students at least some of their education takes place outside the classroom at potential employers in the form of internships. Recognizing the value of this experience the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) partners with colleges and universities to provide volunteer internship opportunities at DJJ county offices, and at other DJJ institutions and locations.

DJJ volunteer college internships are open to college students from 2 and 4 year institutions and graduate students with majors in criminal justice, sociology, psychology, social work, and other human services related disciplines, who are interested in gaining work experience in their respective fields of study.

The “real-world” experience of a DJJ internship exposes students to things they may have only read about, and can help them decide which particular career path would be best for them. Interns learn first-hand about the juvenile justice vocation, gain experience in the demands of specific jobs, and learn critical professional and personal skills that will be useful if they choose to enter the field.

Internship Structure

DJJ Internships are unpaid and usually 120 hours in length, depending on the institution’s requirements. Interns work alongside full time DJJ employees doing many of the duties associated with their jobs including probation/parole officer, intake counselor, social worker, psychologist, and clerical positions. They attend meetings with juveniles and families, attend interdisciplinary staffings, observe in Family Court, and have contact with other human service organizations and law enforcement agencies.

Interns typically work during regular DJJ office hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, after hours and weekend internship opportunities may also be available to accommodate an intern’s schedule and other commitments.

Qualifications

All students applying for an internship must meet the following qualifications:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Pass a thorough criminal background check through the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and both the state and national sex offender registries.
- Have no record of child abuse, neglect, or threat of harm.

How to Apply

Candidates must be referred to DJJ by their instructor or department chair in writing as far in advance as possible of the semester they wish to work; lead time to apply and be processed for acceptance can be up to 6 weeks. The candidate will meet for an interview with the local DJJ manager where they will be working, provide a résumé, and complete a short volunteer application.

Once accepted, interns attend an orientation class, receive an identification card, and are assigned to a full time DJJ staff member. Following completion of the internship, students are evaluated by their assigned DJJ employee using forms provided by the student’s institution.

For more information on interning at DJJ institutions please contact:

Jennifer N. Wallace, Director of Volunteer Services Office: (803) 896-9583  •  Email: jnwall@scdjj.net

For more information on interning in the counties please contact your local DJJ County Office (full listing on next page) or:

R. Michael Smith, Director of Community Development Office: (864) 260-4041  •  Email: msmith@scdjj.net

For additional DJJ resources please visit our website: http://www.state.sc.us/djj/
The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the state cabinet agency responsible for providing custodial care and rehabilitation for the state’s children who are incarcerated, on probation or parole, or in community placement for a criminal or status offense. Our mission is to protect the public and reclaim juveniles through prevention, community services, education, and rehabilitative services in the least restrictive environment.