

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
U.S. PROBATION OFFICE**

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STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATION

AGENCY

UNITED STATES PROBATION: NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

Brief Description of the Agency and its Mission

United States Probation Officers are employees of the Federal Judiciary. They are officers of the Court, and they have two basic roles: conduct presentence investigations concerning defendants, which will assist the Judge to fully understand both the offense and the offender, and supervise offenders whom are under some form of community supervision. Officers uphold the integrity and independence of the federal judiciary. They conduct independent investigations, objectively analyze the corroborated information, and present the information in a non-argumentative manner.

Probation officers investigate through interviews, field contacts, and by retrieving and analyzing documents. With respect to the presentence investigation, the officer interviews the defendant (typically more than once), defense counsel, prosecutor, law enforcement agents who investigated the conduct which led to the defendant's conviction, victims, and the defendant's family and/or significant others. Interviews take place either in the probation office, at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago, Illinois, or at a local outlying jail which contracts with the U. S. Marshals Service. Pursuant to federal law, defendants are required to complete a detailed financial statement, which will be independently investigated and summarized in the presentence report, and sign an affidavit attesting to the accuracy of the information provided. Present or previous employers, school officials, doctors and treatment providers may be contacted personally, depending on the level of verification required to corroborate the defendant's statements. Officers appear in court for sentencing to answer any questions which the judge or attorneys may pose.

The presentence report, in addition to assisting the court in determining a fair and just sentence, also assists the United States Bureau of Prisons in designation, classification, programming, and release planning if the defendant is sentenced to a period of incarceration. This report is sent to the United States Sentencing Commission for data analysis and its report to congress, and to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals when the conviction or sentence is appealed. Further, it is relied upon throughout the supervision process.

Probation Officers are also responsible for the supervision of persons conditionally released to the community by the courts, the Parole Commission, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and military authorities. Officers recommend and implement conditions of release and monitor offenders' compliance with those conditions. Officers also work with offenders to facilitate their reintegration into the community as law-abiding and productive members of society.

Supervision is a dynamic process throughout which officers are to keep informed and, consistent with the conditions of release and individual circumstances, intervene with strategies designed to manage risk and provide offenders with the tools and social services they may require to improve their conduct and condition. It is through such intervention in higher-risk cases that officers further the goal of public safety during the period of supervision and beyond.

Officers carry out these responsibilities by assessing the risks, needs, and strengths of each offender to determine the appropriate level of supervision. They use skills from various disciplines to simultaneously monitor and, as necessary, control and correct offender behavior. These include the investigative skills of law enforcement and the treatment and service-delivery skills of social workers. Investigative skills are used for the primary purpose of planning for success rather than documenting failure. The primary focus of treatment and service-delivery skills is to improve circumstances

that are linked to criminal behavior (e.g., substance abuse, mental health, employment, education, and family and community support).

Officers maintain awareness of the behavior of those they supervise and, depending on the circumstances and conditions of the case, implement restrictive and correctional strategies to encourage pro-social behavior and facilitate positive change. This multidimensional role does not mean that each officer is expected to be an expert in all areas. Rather, officers are to serve as participating case managers, aware of the strengths and limitations of their role and knowledgeable of the range of expertise available in their offices and communities.

Training Experiences Available to Students

Students may avail themselves to in-house training programs, which typically address interviewing skills, supervision strategies, and correctional treatment resources and interventions. Training is provided on the Code of Conduct for Judicial employees, and human resources and other policies and procedures which govern staff conduct and practices. Safety awareness and training is provided, and emphasis is placed on mental preparation, threat assessment, crisis de-escalation, and “empty-handed” defensive tactics. Staff safety is always a priority. Students will not conduct home contacts.

Anticipated Tasks

Students will be provided an orientation to the main functions of officers, and will shadow the field instructor and other designated mentors. They will become acquainted with collateral investigations and report writing, which assist other federal probation districts throughout the country. They may participate in the presentence investigation process by not only shadowing mentors, but conducting interviews under the guidance of an officer, and writing portions of the presentence report. Supervision of offenders would occur, and depending on the offender’s adjustment, networking with social service agencies in the community is expected. Students may prepare status reports, and appear in Federal Court for any cause which may impact the offender’s status in the community. The extent of exposure to various tasks of all the probation functions may be determined by the length of the placement and requested areas of concentration.

Other Information for Students

Students will be expected to provide sufficient personal information for our agency to conduct a background check, which would include an arrest check. As federal judicial officers, judges must be assured of the high level of integrity of our staff. When students are accepted, they are issued the oath of office as a United States Probation Officer Intern and are held to the same standards of ethical conduct as any staff member. Students are provided with identification credentials as well as security cards to access court and office space. Students must possess a valid driver’s license, a student identification card, and must not have any physical conditions which would prevent them from meeting with offenders. Students shall observe the standard business hours (8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) and there is no requirement to work evenings or weekends. Finally, please note that all internships are **unpaid**.

Application Process

Students requesting consideration for an internship with our agency should send a letter of intent to Assistant Deputy Chief Jason D. Christiansen approximately **six months** in advance of the anticipated start date. A resume and description of academic course participation requirements should be included when available. Additionally, students are required to be taking a course for academic credit at their academic institution and descriptive information regarding the major/course should be included in the letter. After receipt of the above-mentioned information, Mr. Christiansen will contact the student to either schedule an interview, or to advise that we are unable to accommodate any additional student interns for the designated semester(s). Questions or requests for additional information may be directed to Assistant Deputy Chief Christiansen at (312) 435-7585.

The office website is www.ilnp.uscourts.gov

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