

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURTS  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
U.S. PROBATION**

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**STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**AGENCY**

**UNITED STATES PROBATION: NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**Brief Description of the Agency and its Mission**

Federal Probation Officers are employees of the Federal Judiciary. They are officers of the Court, and they have two basic roles: conduct presentence investigations on defendants, which will assist the Judge to fully understand both the offense and the offender, and supervising 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, 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 or 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 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 defendants 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.

Officers supervising offenders while in the community have three primary objectives: ensuring the offender's compliance with court ordered conditions, reducing risk the offender may present to any third party or the community in general, and providing correctional treatment to address social and economic concerns which correlate with criminality. For case management purposes offenders are assessed according to a number of risk factors. Supervision strategies are identified and activities are performed in order to effectuate the case plan. Officers balance trying to help people change their criminal lifestyle, and protecting the community. In the performance of both functions, officers consult with their supervisor for case staffing and review of reports submitted to the Court and other agencies. Officers meet with offenders in the office, at their homes, or elsewhere in the community. Officers network with treatment and other resource providers and may participate in counseling sessions. If the need arises, an intern may become involved with the Work Development Program or the Drug/Reentry Court.

The Workforce Development Program was designed to address the needs of the unemployed and the under-employed offenders who are under community supervision. This comprehensive program addresses two imperatives: that meaningful employment is key to the prevention of violations and revocation, and offender supervision must be aligned with these goals to lessen recidivism.

The Drug/Reentry Court is an alternate program for persons on supervised release called The Chance Program, which offers a creative blend of treatment and sanction alternatives to effectively address offender behavior and rehabilitation, as well as the safety of our communities. This is a voluntary program for persons reentering the

community following a term of custody. They must have a history of substance abuse, as well as a special condition of their judgment order for drug aftercare.

### **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. Additionally, the interview process involves a written assignment which may take up to two hours. 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 Deputy Chief Mark N. Neff approximately **seven 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. Neff 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 Deputy Chief Neff at (312) 435- 5737.

The office website is [www.ilnp.uscourts.gov](http://www.ilnp.uscourts.gov)

Updated March 2016  
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