



West Virginia Legislature

# Office of Reference & Information Journalism Internship Program

**Application Packet - 2020 Regular Session**





# Office of Reference & Information

## West Virginia Legislature

### HISTORY

Established in 1976 by the West Virginia Legislature's Joint Committee on Government and Finance, the Public Information Office was given the charge to respond to citizen and media inquiries.

To prevent duplicative efforts regarding research gathering and retrieval and dissemination of legislative information, legislative leadership combined the information office with the legislative library in 1989 thereby establishing the West Virginia Office of Reference & Information.

Today, the production of news releases upon request of lawmakers, educational brochures and the publication of the legislative newsletter Wrap Up are but a part to the office's civic education program.

Photography emerged as a result of constituent participation. Photos are taken during the legislative session to commemorate the civic contributions made by various organizations and community groups, academic and athletic achievements of state citizens, acts of local bravery and educational visitations of children on school-trips, among other presentations.

The office maintains the official legislative Web site and social media presence; and as such, all legislative informational materials and news releases are placed on the Internet to enhance public access and participation.

### STAFF

A division of the Joint Committee on Government and Finance, the office is overseen by the Legislative Manager. The office is apolitical and nonpartisan, and works for all 134 members of the West Virginia Legislature.

The Office of Reference & Information consists of a public information director, information representatives, legislative webmasters, a photographer, a graphic designer and a resource manager. All members of this office collectively work to secure and distribute data relevant to the lawmaking process.

During legislative sessions, up to four (4) interns may be employed by the office to strengthen the structure of the supportive team effort. Assigned responsibilities are equal to those of full-time staff.

## WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Interns will be assigned to:

- Cover floor sessions of both the House of Delegates and the State Senate
- Attend designated committee meetings
- Produce columns, news releases, media advisories and other publications relative to legislative actions
- Compose a “daily summary” of legislative activities for web publication
- Write a synopsis of legislative actions for the weekly newsletter Wrap Up
- Research and release material specific to local communities upon legislative request
- Respond to citizen requests via telephone, correspondence or email
- Enter photographic constituent data

## AVAILABLE POSITIONS

The office will be accepting up to four (4) qualified students to participate in its internship operations.

## LENGTH OF PROGRAM

Selected interns will be part of the team from **January 3, 2020** through **April 10, 2020**.

## STIPEND

Each Legislative Information intern will receive \$1,300 per month (a total of \$5,200).

## TUITION AND FEES

Payment of tuition and fees for the academic term is the responsibility of the student.

## CREDIT

Upon successful completion of the legislative internship program, each student will receive three (3) credit hours toward his/her degree. Public Information interns may enroll in other classes if their enrollment does not interfere with the responsibilities of this internship. (For example - while independent study courses, reading courses and courses of that nature are allowed, classes which require attendance more than one evening per week are prohibited because of the scheduling flexibility required of all Interns during the legislative session).

*Note: Students interested in participating in this internship should meet with their university advisor and internship coordinator to verify receipt of credit hours as well as investigating other educational requirements established by the schools of journalism.*

## WORKING HOURS

Historically, during the first several weeks of the Regular Session, the West Virginia Legislature's Office of Reference & Information business hours are 8:30 am to 5:00 pm daily. However, during the mid-to-latter weeks of the session, interns may be required to report to the Capitol early in the mornings, to stay late into the evenings and/or to work weekends. As the Session nears its close, the workload and working pace increase significantly. No intern will be excused from the responsibilities of this office to participate in other studies while the Legislature is convened in floor sessions or any other legislative activity within the Capitol Building, in addition to the "normal" office hours. While certain absences may be unavoidable and therefore excused, frequent missed work hours will result in removal from the internship program.

## MEALS & LODGING

Housing, meals and daily transportation to and from the State Capitol are the responsibilities of the student interns.

Furnished and unfurnished apartments are available for rent in the Historic East End of Charleston, located within walking distance of the Capitol. There are also several housing opportunities around the Charleston-Metro Area. Charleston maintains frequent bus service for those without automobiles who may choose to reside in areas of the city not within walking distance.

It is without hesitation that the Office of Reference & Information highly recommends that no student “commute” from a neighboring town located more than one hour from the capital city. As most Huntington/Charleston residents can attest, the Interstate connecting the two cities is heavily traveled and highly congested. In addition, winter weather is not conducive to safe driving practices with long working hours adding to the exhaustion of the driver.

To further encourage temporary residence in Charleston, this office will provide a listing of selected interns participating in all of the four full-time internship programs offered by the Legislature to all students so “pre-session networking” may effect shared living arrangements.

The Capitol Cafeteria provides substantial breakfasts at low costs while the lunchtime fare of a full course meal averages \$7. Vending machines are located within the Capitol building.

## PARKING

Good Luck! However, no staff member or intern will walk unattended to his or her vehicle after dark.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**Interested applicants must be:**

- **Enrolled in an accredited journalism school in the state of West Virginia**
- **In good academic standing with his or her university**
- **A sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student of journalism**

**NO APPLICANT WILL BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF RACE, GENDER, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, PHYSICAL DISABILITY, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR ETHNIC/NATIONAL ORIGIN.**

*Note: It is the responsibility of the applicants to review and understand the academic requirements of the institution they attend, including course credit, minimum grade point average, and any other requirement instituted by their college or university. All applicants are recommended to speak with their academic advisor to ensure all academic requirements are fulfilled while participating in this internship program.*

## SUBMISSION DATE

All application materials must be submitted together in **ONE ENVELOPE** and received by the committee at the address provided on the following page by no later than **November 1, 2019**.

Applicants are advised to keep copies of their application materials, as the Legislature is not responsible for material lost or damaged in the mail.

All materials submitted are for the confidential use of the West Virginia Legislature and its Student Internship Committee. Application material will not be returned.

## SELECTION PROCESS

The members of the Legislature's Student Internship Selection Committee will interview all applicants at the State Capitol in Charleston, West Virginia. Students will be notified of their status within a week of the interview.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Should there be any questions about the application procedure for this student internship program, please contact the Legislature's Office of Reference & Information.

### **Journalism Internship Program Coordinator**

Drew Ross

[drew.ross@wvlegislature.gov](mailto:drew.ross@wvlegislature.gov)

304.347.4832

### **Online Resources**

Legislature's official website: [www.wvlegislature.gov](http://www.wvlegislature.gov)

Office of Reference & Information's Webpage: [www.wvlegislature.gov/joint/legisinfo.cfm](http://www.wvlegislature.gov/joint/legisinfo.cfm)

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Students interested in the internship program should discuss the program with their academic advisors to ensure that potential participation will fit into their graduate education plans and complement their future career goals.

To apply for the Journalism Internship Program, students must submit to the Legislative Internship Committee the following:

1. Attached application form. (*The following three (3) pages.*)
2. A brief statement on why the applicant believes to be qualified and why he/she wishes to participate in the legislative process
3. Two (2) letters of reference obtained from college or university faculty who are aware of the applicant's academic performance (*strengths and weaknesses in professional and personal skills assist the selection committee*)
4. One (1) letter of character reference from outside the academic setting (*non-relative*)
5. No more than three (3) samples of the applicant's most recent, and most prized, written material (*This material can published independently or be the result of a non-journalism or journalism class assignment*)
6. Sealed copies of graduate and undergraduate academic transcripts with official stamps or signatures across the back flap

## SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

Mail the complete packet of your application materials in ONE (1) envelope to:

West Virginia Legislature's Office of Reference & Information  
ATTN: Drew Ross  
Room MB-27, Building I  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Charleston, WV 25305

Applicants may also email all documents to [intern@wvlegislature.gov](mailto:intern@wvlegislature.gov).  
Please place "Journalism Internship" in the subject line.



# Office of Reference & Information Journalism Internship Program

## Application Form

### I. Contact Information

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(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

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(Campus Address)

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(City) (State) (Zip Code)

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(Campus/Contact Phone Number)

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(Permanent/Home Address)

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(City) (State) (Zip Code)

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(Permanent/Home Phone Number)

## II. Resume

### A. Educational Information

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(University/College Attending)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Grade Point Average)      \_\_\_\_\_ (Graduate Studies GPA-if applicable)

Class Rank:      Sophomore\_\_\_\_\_      Junior\_\_\_\_\_      Senior\_\_\_\_\_      Grad. School\_\_\_\_\_

Academic awards, achievements, activities and studies:

### B. Employment Information

Work experience, paid or volunteer:

Have you ever been charged with a felony? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

May we perform a background check on you? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### **III. Essay**

Applicants must submit a brief statement on why you believe you are qualified and why you wish to participate in the legislative process.

### **IV. References**

A. Two (2) letters of reference obtained from college or university faculty who are aware of your academic performance.

B. One (1) letter of character reference from outside the academic setting (non-relative)

### **V. Writing Samples**

Applicants must submit no more than three (3) samples of your most recent written material.

### **VI. Transcripts**

Applicants must submit sealed copies of undergraduate and/or graduate academic transcripts with official stamps or signatures across the back flap.

