

FAQ: Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund

WHY SHOULD I DO IT?

What is the advantage of applying for the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund?

Sewanee pays YOU to work for the organization of your choice. It allows you to pursue a meaningful internship that is otherwise unpaid.

It offers great leverage for you in arranging or creating an internship with a potential internship sponsor because you can offer to work for FREE.

Because the University will only fund meaningful work experiences (not grunt work), you'll work on REAL PROJECTS that give you insight into a career field and develop your skills.

It looks great on a resume.

Because you develop/choose the internship, you can dream big!! Past interns have worked for the UN in Vienna, in prestigious think tanks, at The White House, in governor's offices, with federal judges, Public Defenders, or District Attorneys etc...

CAN I DO IT?

How many students are awarded the Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding each year?

Because award funds available are based on the performance of the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund endowment funds, the number of stipends may vary from year to year. Students are selected from a highly competitive pool of applications. In past years, students who have applied have had, on average, a 50% or better chance of getting a stipend, assuming they have a strong application.

Do I have to be a Political Science major to obtain Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding? Would it help?

Students in ALL majors have received Tonya Public Affairs Internship Funds. A student's major does not play a role in the decision process.

I am a freshman/sophomore. Can I get Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding? What are my chances?

All class years have received Tonya Public Affairs Internship Funds. While a student's class year does not play a direct role, the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board does seriously consider the level and quality of work that you will be performing in your internship. In some cases, upperclasspeople are thereby

avored, because they have taken coursework that will allow them to perform more substantial work in their internships.

I received a Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding last year. Can I get funding again for this summer?

Due to the increased demand for a Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund stipend, the Board has recently voted to award only two Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund stipends to a student. Should you apply to receive more than one, please be aware that it is the intent of the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board for you to experience different career fields and offices.

The internship I want pays, but not as much as I need. Can I get Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding to supplement the internship pay?

This has recently become an issue. The Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board does not feel that it is appropriate for you to receive more than \$500 from your sponsor and to also receive the full Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund stipend. However, in cases where the employer takes care of housing for you, but is not paying you directly, you are still eligible for funding. Should the employer pay you a truly small amount, or only compensate you for nominal expenses, you may also be eligible. Please contact Career & Leadership Development for more guidance.

I don't have a very high GPA. Will that hurt my chances?

Your GPA is only a part of the criteria used. Be reminded that the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board is seeking indication that you will perform well in your internship. If your grades do not convey that, you will want to make sure that your proposal does.

How long can my internship last?

You can apply for up to 12 weeks maximum for both graduating seniors and for underclassmen; however, if funding is limited that year, it is possible that the total length of the internship might not be fully funded. The maximum length for the last several years has been 10 weeks.

Can international students apply?

Yes, the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund is open to full-time international students. However, due to INS regulations, additional requirements are necessary for the student to comply. The student should speak with an internship coordinator at Career & Leadership Development to discuss eligibility.

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

What types of internships would qualify as Public Affairs?

All Tonya Public Affairs Internship-funded internships must meet at least one of the following definitions of the term "public affairs":

- 1) The proposed work contributes to the formation, adoption, or implementation of a policy or program which applies to the general public or to an identifiable segment of the public
- 2) The work contributes to the understanding of a policy or program which applies to the general public or to an identifiable segment of the public
- 3) The work contributes to the understanding of an identifiable aspect of the political system.

Other important considerations:

- Excluded from consideration are projects in which the principal purpose involves partisan political activity or social service.
- The more an internship involves the implementation of policy, and the narrower the scope of that activity, the greater the importance that the experience involve exposure to, and opportunity to reflect on, the larger policy issues and political processes that provide the context for implementation issues.
- Non-profit interest groups and public affairs organizations do provide appropriate internship experiences. However, internships may not include participation in public demonstrations on behalf of particular viewpoints. Internships with for-profit organizations will be considered only when they present opportunities for both significant learning about public affairs and a well-established relationship to the applicant's academic and career interests.
- Internships may be in the United States or abroad.

Often, it is helpful to indicate which internships have difficulty qualifying for the Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding. These include:

- Law firms: a law firm is a for-profit business. Although they may allow you to accompany a lawyer to court, most likely your duties will be restricted to serving as a runner or file clerk.
- Art museums: Curatorial work will not be considered for a Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund. However, if the work involves programs with public content, such as public access to museums, or programs reaching out to the public or addressing improving the public good, they will be considered. For example, several Public Affairs interns have worked with museum programs reaching out to children in the community.
- Public service: Direct work with clients/students/patients as the main focus of the internship in most cases will not qualify
- Scientific/environmental field work: Pure research will not be funded by the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Public Affairs, unless there is a very clear and direct way in which it addresses the public good or public policy in which you will be involved.

What do I do if I still cannot tell whether my internship would fit one in this category?

It is often helpful to look through the list of internship sponsors from

previous years. The Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Directory, available in at Career & Leadership Development, lists all internship sponsors from the inception of the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund program. For further clarification for your specific internship, contact Career Services to schedule an appointment with an internship coordinator.

PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL

How to I submit my Preliminary Proposal?

Please submit your **preliminary** Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund proposal electronically [here](#). Deadline is March 1.

What should I write in the Preliminary Proposal?

The purpose of the preliminary proposal is to make sure that you are on the right track, and that you have applied for the appropriate internship fund. Briefly describe the organization with which you wish to intern and what duties you would be performing during the internship. For Public Affairs particularly, please make clear in what way the internship fits into the definition of Public Affairs.

I want to apply for a Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund, but it's already time to submit the Preliminary Proposal, and I am still pursuing multiple internship sponsors. Can I still apply? How can I handle this?

Yes, you can still apply. On your preliminary proposal, list the 3-5 internships you are seriously considering and include a brief summary for each describing what each organization does and what duties you would perform.

FINAL APPLICATION

What is included in the Final Application?

The Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund's **final** application can be found [here](#). The deadline is April 1. It is an electronic application form. In this form, you will need to include:

1. A well-written, brief executive summary (one page) outlining your job responsibilities; this part of the application will be forwarded to the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund board and it is very important that careful attention is given to your writing and editing skills.
2. A carefully edited and well-written 3-5 page proposal, which explains in greater detail the nature of the internship, the duties you will perform, and why you wish to undertake it. This part of the application, as well as the items listed below, will be reviewed by Sewanee professors in detail.
3. A list of two references; Sewanee professors are preferred (be sure to ask permission); list name, phone number and e-mail address.
4. A resume

5. A letter or official email (with electronic signature) from the internship sponsor confirming that you have been accepted for the internship. Ideally, this letter should include the dates of your internship and a brief confirmation of your duties.

I didn't submit a Preliminary Application, but I found and secured a great internship. Can I still put in a Final Application?

Possibly. You will need to contact an internship coordinator to discuss the opportunity. They can advise you whether the new internship sounds like it will work for the respective program, and whether you need to submit any additional paperwork.

How can I improve my chances of getting awarded Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding? What is the most important aspect of my application?

The better the internship matches with the eligibility requirements of this Fund, the better your chances! Everything else (proposal, etc.) does play a role, but the most critical factor is whether you are able to develop a substantial internship that will allow you to make a contribution to the organization, and will teach you about that career field.

All applications will be judged on the following criteria:

- The quality of the work (although some menial work can be expected in any internship, the major portion of the work must be substantive, and this should be clearly indicated not only in the proposal, but also in the employer's letter of commitment)
- The benefit of the work assignment to you and the participating organization
- The conception, definition, research content, and organization of the proposal. It is IMPORTANT for your report to be carefully written. An application with multiple writing errors will not be considered, even if it is a great internship
- Your qualifications, including academic performance
- The relationship of the project to your career interest, which is of particular importance for postgraduate internships.

Who should I list as references?

Anyone who knows your work well. Sewanee professors are your best choice, in that Sewanee professors will be selecting Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund recipients, and they generally trust fellow Sewanee professors' judgments. Employers or high school teachers (if you are a freshman) are also good choices.

I submitted a preliminary proposal for an internship, and since then, I found out I don't have that internship. However, I have found and secured another internship that I want. Can I change the name of the internship sponsor for my Final Application?

Yes, you can. However, you should contact an internship coordinator at Career & Leadership Development to discuss this new opportunity. They can advise you whether the new internship is eligible for this fund.

I won't be able to turn in my Final Application on time. Can I turn it in late?

No. All the uploaded documents will be bundled and sent to the selection committees automatically at midnight of the deadline.

I have everything but my employer confirmation letter, which won't get here until after the Final Application deadline. What should I do?

Try to head off this problem early on. Make your sponsor aware of your deadlines, and give him/her an earlier date by which you need the letter. If you know the letter will be arriving very close to or after the deadline, you may wish to have the sponsor fax the letter to Career Services (931-598-1166 - no charge) or email it to Career Services (careers@sewanee.edu). If you cannot get the letter prior to the deadline, submit your application without the letter, and indicate in your application when you expect to receive it. You should also want to talk with an internship coordinator about your situation. While your application may not receive equal consideration, it is possible that it will still be considered, however, a stipend will not be awarded without written sponsor confirmation.

My internship sponsor has told me that he/she won't make a decision until after the deadline for the Final Application. Is there any way I can still apply for the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund?

Some internship sponsors will not make a decision until late April or May, and these decisions will indeed be too late to receive consideration. However, if the sponsor is deciding in early April, and if the sponsor can indicate to you in writing that you are on a short list of candidates, you can submit this letter in your Final Application in lieu of the employer's final confirmation. You will still need to submit their final confirmation letter as soon as it arrives. Again, please contact an internship coordinator about the situation.

HEARING ABOUT ACCEPTANCE

When will I know if I have received the stipend?

Final announcement is made on or before May 1. Often, interns are notified 1-2 weeks earlier than this.

What happens once I find out I will receive the stipend?

When you are notified, you will be told the dollar amount you have been awarded, and you will be given a contract to complete, indicating that you have accepted the internship and the stipend. You MUST complete and return this contract by the indicated date. Additionally, you will be required to attend a meeting for all Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund recipients. Failure to turn in the contract on time, or to attend the meeting, will be taken to mean that you do not plan to accept the stipend, and it will be awarded to another student. If you know you

will not accept the stipend, please notify an internship coordinator as soon as possible, so that another student from the waitlist may receive the award as quickly as possible.

What does it mean if I am “waitlisted”?

Every year, the Board waitlists several students. Because students who are awarded Tonya Public Affairs Internship funding occasionally will have to decline the award, many of the waitlisted students will eventually receive stipends. Most waitlisted candidates are notified by mid-May. If you have been waitlisted, please keep in touch with the internship coordinator.

THE INTERNSHIP

Once I get the internship, what is expected of me?

Great work! The Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board expects that you will work at least 35 hours a week during your internship and that you will make Sewanee proud!

Additionally, you must:

1) Submit a final detailed report by September 1. This report will have two sections, an EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, and a DETAILED REPORT. The report must be of high quality, with careful attention to editing, as it will be made available to Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board members, as well as Sewanee students via the Sewanee website.

- The EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 page) will concisely describe the tasks and projects you completed as part of the internship, and will be forwarded to the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board.
- The DETAILED REPORT (3- 5 pages) will describe the tasks and projects, and other work you completed as part of the internship, what you have learned (this is the important part), and other benefits you have derived from the internship. This report will be reviewed by part of the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board.

2) Ask your internship sponsor to submit a letter of evaluation (or the evaluation report form from Career & Leadership Development), detailing the work you have completed and the quality of your work.

3) If you are not a graduating senior, attend the Fall Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Board Luncheon in November and be prepared to offer a brief oral report on your internship.

Please note: A portion of your final stipend will be withheld until your two reports and your supervisor’s evaluation have been received. A monetary penalty will be imposed for late reports.

What if my internship should turn out to be horrible?

Please contact an internship coordinator to discuss what is happening! It is Sewanee's intent that you should have a GOOD experience, and Sewanee will work with you to help you make your situation a positive one.

I am going abroad and need money before I leave to handle airfare/etc. Is that possible?

Yes, contact an internship coordinator in Career & Leadership Development.

When will I get my next check?

Each check is spaced out approximately one per month. If you work for eight weeks, you will get two checks, plus your final stipend when your reports are turned in. If you work ten weeks, you will also receive two checks, plus the final stipend when your report is received.

The amounts and timing of each check will be written on the copy of your contract that will be mailed home.

What if I lost my contract?

We have a copy on file and can (1) check these amounts for you, or (2) fax a copy of it to you.

I need to change the dates of my internship.

You are welcome to work longer than your original dates but we cannot increase your stipend. If you need to decrease your dates we will adjust your stipend with the Treasurer's office.

When will I get my final check?

After we receive your final detailed report, including the executive summary and your supervisor evaluation. Note that should your report be submitted without careful attention to editing and content, the funds will be held until the report is deemed well-written.

AFTER THE INTERNSHIP**How do I need to treat my Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund stipend in terms of income taxes? Does it affect my financial aid?**

Your Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund stipend should be considered earned income, and you should include it as income on your income tax return. The University does not report stipend funds for the Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund program on either a W-2 or a 1099. The burden to report lies with the receiving student.

According to the Financial Aid department, the stipend should be reported as other untaxed earnings on the annual federal financial aid application. For information as

to how it may impact your financial aid package, please contact the Financial Aid office.

When is the Fall luncheon?

Early November.

How do I know if I have to give a talk at the luncheon?

Melissa Webb, Internship Coordinator, will draw names out of a hat to choose three speakers for Tonya Public Affairs and two for Business & Economics. Melissa will notify you if you are a lucky winner!