

Tips for interning in Washington DC or locally from an SPGS student

- Before your first day, know about the organization/institution you will be working for, as it will give you an idea of your responsibilities and impress your supervisors
- Before your first day make a list of your strengths and weaknesses; strive to excel and improve
- Adapt to the working style of your supervisor, be flexible if you have multiple
- Find a mentor, even if it is not your supervisor
- On a daily basis ask yourself “Why am I here?” and apply yourself accordingly
- Take on every task with a good attitude and excel at it, no matter how mundane it may be
- Take opportunities to learn something new, so ask questions and take on assignments that will challenge you
- Get to the office early and stay around after hours to complete extra work, even if you do not have to
- Be easy-going with other interns; backstabbing reflects poorly on you
- Excel at communication, always be responsive with email or your cell phone, and make sure to close the communication loop
- When drafting a document, not only put your initials and the date you completed it on the document, but include that information in any correspondence you would be using the document in, that way your supervisor can use it in the future
- Keep a notebook on you at all times so you can take notes from your supervisor whenever needed
- Always dress professionally and have spare dress clothes if possible
- Talk to everyone you meet, even if they are fellow interns. Stay in touch with them and forge a professional relationship that might lead to opportunities for you both in the future
- Remember you are a representative of whichever organization you are working, so stay out of trouble
- Never speak about any confidential information entrusted to you
- Use the metro to your advantage, unless you want to rack up a ton of Uber charges
- Take advantage of all Washington, D.C. has to offer –there is even more to the city than what is on the National Mall. Ask your co-workers for recommendations. Do the same here in Phoenix, there’s more to Maricopa County than what you can do in Tempe
- Find a convenient place for grocery shopping as restaurants in Washington are not only pricey, but oftentimes close relatively early. Grocery stores like Safeway and Trader Joe’s tend to be the most cost-effective, but even convenience stores like Wawa can offer great deals
- Take the opportunity to travel while on the East Coast: You’re only a cheap bus or train ride way from Baltimore, Harper’s Ferry, New York, and Philadelphia. The same goes for Phoenix, as we’re only a short car ride away from the country’s best national parks like the Grand Canyon in addition to Sedona, Southern California, Colorado, and Mexico
- If you’re in Washington, be ready for extreme weather, so bring lightweight clothes for summer internships and bring plenty of warm clothes for the winter – you are not in Arizona any more, you are in a muggy swamp where it occasionally snows (November to March)