

PRACTICE SETTINGS

Capitol Hill and Lobbying/Government Relations Jobs

There are tons of opportunities for attorneys and law students to work on Capitol Hill, both with Senators and Representatives creating policy, and as lobbyists who influence policy making. However, there is no central clearinghouse of Capitol Hill job listings; most offices act as autonomous businesses doing their own hiring, and many openings are filled through word-of-mouth. So, the best resources to find a job on Capitol Hill are persistence, networking, and patience! Who you know, and who knows you, is extremely important. Also, hiring is affected by the political nature of the Hill; election years (especially the months immediately following the election) provide the most opportunities. This handout will tell you about the types of work Capitol Hill offers, and where to find and how to get jobs.

Political Positions

Members of Congress (Senators and Representatives) - Personal Offices

Each MOC has a staff to advise on legislative matters and assist in responding to constituents' needs. The size and composition of staffs (and salaries) vary, and each staff is divided between DC and home offices. Generally, Senate offices have larger staffs, higher salaries, and may offer federal student loan reimbursement (but this is not guaranteed). Staffs typically consist of: Staff Assistants and Legislative Correspondents, who handle administrative matters and constituent services/correspondence; Legislative Assistants, who research and advise the MOC regarding legislative issues; a Legislative Director who oversees the Legislative Correspondents and Legislative Assistants; a Chief of Staff, who is the head of the office and the main staff advisor.

The primary points of entry for attorneys on the Hill are as a Legislative Assistant (LA) or a Legislative Director (LD). Often, LAs or LDs previously worked in the same office as an intern. Each LA is responsible for certain substantive areas dictated by the Member's committee assignments and constituent concerns. Each LA researches her area and advises the Member on bills that will come through the committee or up for vote. LAs are often the first point of contact for lobbyists, and stay in frequent communication with the committee and subcommittee staffers and the Office of Legislative Counsel. The Legislative Director is a more senior position responsible for long-range planning of the Member's legislative activities.

Working as an LA can provide great experience, but there can be uncertainty working on a MOC's staff, especially House Members who come up for reelection every two years. When a bill is coming through that involves your area of responsibility, there may be long hours of

preparation. Working on an individual Member's staff tends to be fast-paced and politically oriented.

LA job openings are usually for immediate needs, so apply when you are ready to go to work. Networking with Members and staffers is essential. You must spend time informational interviewing and seeking out internships with MOCs. Start with Members from districts where you have ties (ie, your hometown, undergraduate school location, etc.), and note which Senators/Representatives have larger staffs (depends on the size of their state).

Committee Work

Usually more than 50% of the staff members on a committee are attorneys. Committee staffs, which serve as information resources for Members, draft and generate legislation, write reports creating legislative history, assist Members in debates, organize hearings and witnesses, oversee administration of their executive branch agency, prepare remarks and briefing papers for Members, and answer constituent mail. As a committee staffer, you become familiar with a particular area or issue of law. Each committee (and subcommittee) have staffs for both the minority and majority sides

Committee staff members find work rewarding and feel privileged to have a voice in forming policy. Salaries tend to be higher than personal office staff; however, the hours can be long, especially when Congress is in session. Regular turnover is typical, as opportunities arise to go to a government agency or become a lobbyist, but there is the opportunity to become a subject matter expert which allows survival even with regular changes in committee leadership.

Committee work is not the traditional practice of law, but committees do hire people directly out of law school. Your primary contact will be the Chief of Staff, but you should write to the committee chair and minority leader. Don't forget to apply to subcommittees. When applying for opportunities, emphasize your home state and your interest in the committee's substantive focus. Remember, the size of the staff fluctuates if the majority changes, and some committees have larger staff.

Party Positions

There are political positions that function as party offices and are unaffiliated with specific member offices. For example, the Senate Republican and Democratic Policy Committees are steering committees that coordinate party platform issues; the Republican Democratic Conferences serve similar functions. The Leadership Offices, including the Majority and Minority Leader, Speaker of the House, Majority and Minority Whips employ political staffers to assist party leaders with their responsibilities.

Applying and Salary

To apply for summer volunteer positions in a member's personal office, write to the Chief of Staff or Legislative Director. For committee work, write to the majority or minority staff director or to the Chief of Staff. Your political background with one party may affect an opportunity for

employment with the committee staff of the other party, so you may need to adapt your resume accordingly. Remember to follow up in a few weeks with a phone call.

Direct writes are advisable to apply for permanent positions, but there are other additional sources of information. Though positions on Capitol Hill are not typically advertised, both House and Senate have placement offices that handle job listings. The Senate Placement Office has a weekly bulletin available online at www.senate.gov/employment. The House of Representatives posts jobs in the Longworth House Office Building, Room B227. The Committee on House Administration (CHA) sets up a resume drop area following House elections to facilitate staff hiring for newly elected Members. The CHA website (www.house.gov/cha) provides lists of House organizations which can be good networking opportunities. Finally, there is the tradition of going from office to office in person to leave a resume with a junior staffer. This is your opportunity to ask about vacancies, learn what skills are of interest to each office, and get information about how to follow up on your applications. This is a common and effective process.

Hill salaries are substantially less than private sector salaries. For more specific information, check out www.legistorm.com. Keep in mind, many offices are reluctant to hire people for more senior positions that do not have Hill experience. Taking a Legislative Assistant job can position you to move up at a moment's notice in a field with lots of turnover and advancement opportunities.

Non-Political Positions

House and Senate Administrative Offices

The Offices of Legislative Counsel (House and Senate) are non-partisan offices that provide technical expertise in legislative drafting to Members and committees. Attorneys in these offices do not set policy, they make sure the draft of a bill accurately reflects policy. Counsel meet with Members and staffs to discuss legislative proposals, attend committee meetings, research prior legislation, and draft bills and amendments.

Substantial political activity will disqualify people from employment. Though the work load is unpredictable and requires long hours, these jobs are prestigious and involve a wide variety of interesting work. There are no lateral hires, only entry-level positions, and these offices look for the top 1/3 of the class and strong writing skills. There is a six-week training program for drafting skills. They frequently look for people with graduate work in public policy. Positions are filled as-needed, and there is limited turnover.

The House Office of Legislative Counsel (HOLC) employs about 40 attorneys and has 2L summer associates (paid). New graduates are hired with starting pay of approximately \$67,000, with earning capped at \$166,000. To find employment opportunities, check out the website at <http://legcoun.house.gov/>.

The Senate Office of Legislative Counsel (SOLC) employs about 30 attorneys and has 2L summer interns (paid). New attorneys are hired with starting pay of approximately \$67,000, and

can move up to about \$120,000 within five years. More information can be found on the website at <http://slc.senate.gov/>.

Senate Legal Counsel and House General Counsel

Both the Senate and House have offices of attorneys to represent Members and committees in their institutional capacity.

Law Revision Counsel

After Congress passes a bill, the Law Revision Counsel's Office works to get it codified and cross-referenced to other laws.

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress (LOC), the research arm of Congress and national repository of information, has over 150 J.D. jobs, and a Master in Library Science is not required. These are civil service jobs, meaning they are not tied to the election schedule (so there is more security). You can learn about job opportunities at www.loc.gov/hr/employment.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is the public policy research arm of the LOC. It has six research divisions that employ experts to provide information and analysis for issues. Within these divisions, the American Law Division (ALD) (www.loc.gov/crsinfo/divwork/aldwork.html) is the chief employer of attorneys, who provide written analyses and legal opinions at stages in the legislative process. The ALD takes law students as summer volunteers, and hires attorneys who come through the CRS Law Recruit Program (www.loc.gov/crsinfo/lawrecruit.html).

Executive Offices

The Office of Counsel to the President

This office advises the President on all legal issues concerning the White House, is responsible for advising on all legal aspects of policy questions and ethical issues, oversees judicial selection, handles presidential pardons, reviews legislation, and serves as the White House contact for DOJ.

Students can apply for summer work at the White House Counsel's Office. Each term, the office hires two inters to assist the approximately 20 Associate Counsels. Internships are unpaid and applications go through the White House Internship Program (www.whitehouse.gov/government/wh-intern.html).

The Office of Management and Budget

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) assists the President in developing and executing policies and programs. It is composed of divisions organized by agency and program area or by

function. The OMB's General Counsel's Office has lawyers doing public policy work, and takes summer law interns (unpaid) (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recruitment/index.html).

Lobbying/Government Relations

Lobbying is when individuals and organizations promote the interests of their employers or clients by monitoring legislative and executive activities to influence policy, legislation, regulations, or negotiations, on behalf of governments, industries, companies, and interest groups. Political Action Committees (PACs) also carry out lobbying, by representing constituencies or themselves on stated issues. Further, there is a subdivision of the Executive Branch Legislative Offices that represents various departments/agencies of the U.S. Government's Executive Branch that is charged with influencing the Congressional Branch on legislative affairs.

Lobbying is a highly competitive industry, and vacancies are rarely posted as positions are filled by networking and referrals. Job titles include: issues analyst, research analyst, and research assistant or associate. Salaries vary based on experience and professional contacts. To land a lobbying job, you need government experience, excellent communication and people skills, knowledge of legislative procedures, and a willingness to work long hours.

Placement Services

Congress also maintains resume banks in order to assist new Members in establishing their staffs.

House of Representatives

House Resume Referral Service – The House Resume Referral Service is a non-partisan service of the House Office of Human Resources. It acts as an employment referral service for Members, Committees, and Administrative Offices of the House. Each office is an independent employer with various salaries, job requirements and conditions of employment that exist within the guidelines set by the House. When an office requests assistance in filling a position, the Service sends the requesting office copies of resumes from people who meet the minimum requirements. Requesting offices review applications and contact applicants in whom they are interested. Staff positions are usually administrative, press, or clerical in nature. You can search job listings and apply on line at www.house.gov/cao-hr/.

Or you can send a resume and cover letter (stating the area/capacity in which you would like to work along with minimum salary requirements) to:

Office of Human Resources
102 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6610
Fax: (202) 226-7514

Because of security concerns, mail to government offices is often delayed, so email or online applications are often preferred. Resumes will remain active for three months, after which to reactivate you must send another resume and cover letter.

Office of the House Majority Whip (partisan) – The Capitol, Room H-329, Washington DC 20515, (202) 226-3210. The office maintains an active resume bank for three months.

Senate

Senate Placement Office – SH-116 1st Floor, Senate Hart Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-9167. The Senate Placement Office Maintains an active resume bank for one month. To be added to the resume bank you must visit the Office, fill out an application and have an interview. Interviews are conducted on a walk-in basis Monday – Friday 10:00a.m. - 12:00p.m., and 1:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. The Office also publishes select job notices every Tuesday in an Employment Bulletin, which may be picked up at the Office. These listings are also available on a **Job Hotline at (202) 228-JOBS**. This hotline is updated on Sunday nights.

Online Resources

Capitol Hill

- www.cq.com (Congressional Quarterly; lists job vacancies)
- www.hillnews.com (newspaper for and about Congress; select Employment under Classifieds menu)
- www.hillzoo.com (job vacancies by political party)
- <http://dyn.politico.com/politicojobs>
- www.jobsthatareleft.com (Democrat)
- www.conservativejobs.com (Republican)
- www.loc.gov/crsinfo (Library of Congress Congressional Research Service)
- www.opajobs.com (Opportunities in Public Affairs; biweekly publication on job openings)
- www.gpoaccess.gov/plumbkook/2009/index.html
- www.pslawnet.org
- www.rcjobs.com (Roll Call)
- Symplicity Student Evaluations (information on other students' Hill jobs)
- www.leadershipinstitute.org/facebook (become a Leadership Institute fan) or www.leadershipinstitute.org/linkedin (get LinkedIn)
- www.bradtraverse.com/job.listings.cfm (nominal fee)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/yda-jobs/>
- <http://www.hillzoo.com/democratjobs.htm>
- <http://www.jobsthatareleft.com/>
 - *Please also note accompanying:*
 - Myspace account: <http://www.myspace.com/jobsthatareleft>
 - Blog: <http://jobsthatareleft.blogspot.com>
 - Listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jobsthatareleft/>
- www.leadershipinstitute.org/facebook
- <http://www.leadershipinstitute.org/linkedin/>

House of Representatives

- www.house.gov (general info on Representatives)
- www.house.gov/cao-hr/ (House job postings)
- House Action Report (job listings)
- www.house.gov/cha (Committee on House Administration lists House staff organizations)
- Leadership Directories (accessible through Portal)
- <http://legcoun.house.gov/> (House Office of Legislative Counsel)

Senate

- www.senate.gov (general info on Senators)
- www.senate.gov/visiting/common/generic/placement_office.htm (Senate job postings updated weekly)

Campaign Committees

- www.campaignjobs.com
- www.dscc.org (Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee)
- www.dccc.org (Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee)
- www.nrsc.org (National Republican Senatorial Campaign)
- www.nrcc.org (National Republican Congressional Committee)

Lobbying/Government Relations

(see also Capitol Hill above)

- www.martindale.com (search for law firms with Government Relations practice area)
- www.alldc.org (American League of Lobbyists)

Print Resources (available in the CDO Resource Library)

- Associations Yellow Book (directory of major trade and professional associations)
- Committees in Congress (comprehensive look at House and Senate committees)
- Congressional Quarterly's Washington Information Directory (contains information on Federal government offices, Congressional committees and non-profit organizations in DC)
- Congressional Yellow Book
- Government Affairs Yellow Book
- Legal Times
- National Trade & Professional Associations Directory
- State & Regional Associations Directory
- Washington Job Source
- Washington Representatives