

# INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



## The South Dakota Legislature Needs You

The South Dakota Legislature is currently in search of 22 college students to serve as interns during the upcoming 2021 South Dakota Legislative Session.



Interns provide the legislators with the assistance they need to survive the rigors of a hectic legislative session. While in Pierre, interns can observe the lawmaking process in action, learn about the many issues confronting the state, and may earn college credit all at the same time.

## Comments from Former Interns and Legislators

*"The most beneficial aspect was the many connections you are able to build with influential people from all over the state and from all types of industries." -Former Intern*

*"Living the legislative process is something you can't do in a classroom. The friendships and relationships made will have a lasting effect on me." -Former Intern*

*"The opportunity to engage in the legislative process first-hand is well worth the experience. One of the real values of the program is the chance to network with leaders from across the state. As you finish college and start a career, those friends and connections are an unbelievable asset." -Legislator*

## The Internship

To qualify, you must be enrolled at an accredited college or university.

**All majors** are accepted. Preference may be given to students who have completed a year or two of college coursework. However, all interested students are encouraged to apply.

Interns are needed to serve members of both parties. If you apply to serve as an intern, you will be asked to state your political party preference. This ensures that Republican interns are assigned to Republican legislators and Democratic interns are assigned to Democratic legislators. Party preference is not used to qualify or disqualify an applicant, but the number of interns selected from each party is reflective of the partisan composition of each house of the Legislature.

## Application Process

Application forms are available from your campus intern coordinator or on the Legislative Research Council (LRC) website, <http://sdlegislature.gov/> under the *Legislative Intern Program* link from the *Students' Page* tab.

To apply, simply fill out the online application form, **attach an unofficial copy of your college transcript**, and submit it by **October 9, 2020**.

You must also submit **two letters of recommendation**. Please have those individuals submit the letters on your behalf to the LRC as soon as possible by mail or email.

## Interview Process

Members of the LRC staff will interview applicants online or via telephone in October.

To prepare for the interview, a good source of information about the SD Legislature is the [Student Reference Series](#), available on the LRC website. Also, consider your particular areas of interest and where you might best serve in the legislative environment. For example, a student who is studying to become a teacher may like to work for a legislator who serves on the Senate or House Education Committee.

The selections are made in November following the general election, and applicants are notified of the outcome shortly thereafter.



## Intern Assignments

If selected as an intern, you will be assigned to an individual legislator, a group of legislators, or a standing committee. The leaders of the respective political party caucuses in both houses make the assignments based on requests from legislators and, to the extent possible, the interests of individual interns. Possible assignments include working for the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, or one of the caucus leaders in the Senate or House of Representatives. You may also be assigned to the chair of a particular committee, or certain legislators.

## A Typical Day in the Life of an Intern

A typical day for an intern would likely involve attending committee meetings in the morning and a political party caucus just after lunch. Most of the afternoon is devoted to the daily sessions of the Senate and House of Representatives.



Daily sessions usually begin at 2 p.m. on each legislative day. At that time, the members of both houses gather in their respective chambers to debate and vote on the many issues that are before them. In the beginning, the daily sessions are short in length, but it is not uncommon for the sessions to last into the evening hours as the end of session draws near.

During legislative session, most weeks consist of four legislative days consequently allowing more travel opportunities on the weekends. Interns are not expected to report to work on non-legislative days.

## Responsibilities

Other duties you might perform during the day depend largely on your assignment. Some of the most typical services provided by interns include **performing research, scheduling meetings, answering mail inquiries from constituents, and monitoring the progress of various pieces of legislation.** Many interns also assist with committee hearings and write bill summaries or newspaper articles on legislative activity.

## Work Hours

The legislative session begins on **January 12, 2021**, and runs through **March 11, 2021**, after which there is a break before the final legislative day. Interns are expected to be available throughout that time and report to work on each legislative day. Your hours will depend on your assignment. **Monday, March 29, 2021** has been set aside as the last legislative day -- the day the Legislature addresses any vetoes made by the Governor. Intern attendance on the last legislative day is optional.

## Intern Orientation

If selected to serve, you **must attend a one-day intern orientation seminar.** Members of the LRC staff conduct the seminar on the day before the start of the legislative session. At that time, you will be provided an overview of the structure of state government and most importantly, the Legislature. You will be taught how to use a variety of legal reference materials and familiarized with the legislative information available on the LRC website. The staff can also

answer any specific questions you may have about the program at that time. **The orientation seminar is scheduled for Monday, January 11, 2021.**

## Compensation

**As an intern, you will receive a salary of \$125 for each day you work during the Legislative Session.** Since the Legislature meets for 37 days in 2021 and one additional day is scheduled for orientation, this amounts to \$4,750.

## Accommodations

**You must arrange for your own housing for the duration of your internship in Pierre.** The LRC can provide you with a list of possible housing options, which generally includes rooms, apartments, and homes available for rent. Motels in the area may offer special rates during the legislative session as well.

## Additional Educational Opportunities



Colleges generally offer academic credit for participation in this program, and the LRC strongly recommends that you pursue academic credit. The amount of credit available differs among campuses. Check with your local campus intern coordinator for details.

Additionally, USD Online Education and Off-Campus Education at the University of South Dakota offers a three credit-hour course in Pierre during the legislative session. The course, ***State Legislative Issues***, is offered in the evening so it does not conflict with your duties as an intern. For information, contact:

**University of South Dakota-Online  
McKusik Technology Center, Room 211  
414 E. Clark St.  
Vermillion, SD 57069  
(605) 658-6140  
<http://www.usd.edu/usd-online>**

## South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship Recipients

Any student who is a South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship recipient, and who wishes to participate in the Legislative Internship Program, may seek a persistence waiver to exempt them from the scholarship's credit hour threshold requirements. If a student's participation in the program will adversely affect the student's ability to meet the credit hour requirements, the student can request that the executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents place his or her scholarship eligibility on hold during the spring term.

Recipients would then receive funding once they return to their participating institution. Students whose credit hour thresholds will not be affected do not need to submit a waiver request. It is the student's responsibility to seek the exemption from scholarship requirements. A student may request an exemption in writing by sending a brief letter or email to summarize his or her request to:

**Office of the Executive Director  
South Dakota Board of Regents  
306 E. Capitol, Suite 200  
Pierre, SD 57501-2545**

Email requests should be routed to the Executive Director of the Board of Regents at [info@sdbor.edu](mailto:info@sdbor.edu).

## Further Information

If you need further information about the Legislative Internship Program, you may call the LRC office in Pierre at (605) 773-3251. You can also visit with your campus intern coordinator or a legislator in your area. For some first-hand information, we recommend you reach out to a student who has recently served as a legislative intern.

Schedule for Legislative Internship Program:

Application Deadline	October 9, 2020
DDN or telephone Interviews	Late October
Announcement of Selections	November
Orientation Seminar in Pierre	January 11, 2021
Legislative Session	January 12 to March 11, 2021, inclusive, and March 29, 2021, designated as veto day