

2009 Program Administrator Job Description

Introduction...

The Washington Workshops offers experiential, one-week programs for junior high and high school student leaders on the legislative process in Washington (since 1968). Our organization offers students a seminar with study visits to the best Washington has to offer in memorials, museums, and exposure to three branches of government. On the junior high level, students attend with their classmates and teachers. Their trips highlight the foundations of U.S. government, the basics of Washington as a city and its rich history, as well as the colonial and civil war eras of our history. On the senior level many participants are highly motivated leaders seeking to engage elected officials, executive officials, and foreign diplomats and ask first-hand questions on current domestic policy and international issues. They also participate in a model congress simulation and seminars maintain a general introductory flavor. Many of these students pursue government or law degrees in college but more frequently come from multiple interest areas. We also offer elite internships on Capitol Hill for upper-class high school students during the summer months.

The Position...

As *resident* leaders of our seminars, the role of the administrator is to maintain the program schedule and implement the educational aspects. Insuring a safe environment in all respects is the first priority. Our program administrators need to take initiative to make the program a success for students from diverse areas of the country who are accompanied by teachers striped by differing styles and interests. The position calls for flexible yet assertive decision-making. Educating our students and offering outstanding customer service requires careful planning in four critical areas: meeting expectations of student-participants, meeting expectations of teachers, handling program logistics and itinerary, and creating educational commentary. This is especially true for our Junior High/Middle School program, which composes 2/3 of our season. Balance on this team can only be achieved through skilled time-management, effective communication, and a cooperative, caring attitude. Take a moment to read through the accompanying brochures and browse our website, www.workshops.org, for a complete description.

The Program...

Successful ingredients for the program include the following responsibilities:

- 1) ***The Schedule:*** Oversee the day-to-day schedule on Capitol Hill and around Washington, including greeting speakers and coordinating transportation.
- 2) ***Educational Commentary:*** Run our interactive government simulation for Junior High/Middle school seminars and Model Congress sessions for High School. Administrators must develop a working knowledge of DC to present regularly on the busses and at other key times. Some locations include the National Memorials (Lincoln, Vietnam, etc.) and Capitol Hill (Supreme Court, Capitol Building, Library of Congress, etc.)
- 3) ***Logistics:*** Confirm bus schedules, maintain site visit details, greet speakers, and keep accurate head counts. Administrators must take proactive steps in leading groups from 60-150 people each week by constantly communicating with the other administrators, the director, and the teachers. Our goal is to mesh student and teacher interests with the program design while seamlessly accommodating schedule changes with professional customer service.
- 4) ***Communication:***
 - To the Director* - The Director will be in regular communication with the program administrators to update them about changes in the schedule, messages to students, and other important issues. It is important that the administrators also report the happenings of the day to the director and other pertinent information to make the week run smoothly.
 - Between Our Team* - Coordination of our program hinges on constant communication about everything from bus pick-up to hospital visits ensuring that all members maintain up-to-date information. We will hold concise yet substantive meetings to keep us heading in the right direction.
- 5) ***Participant Interaction:***
 - Students* - As an authority figure and leader, the administrators thrive by developing a fun and mentoring relationship with students. *The administrators are responsible for participants every hour of the seminar week and must supervise them on and off site.* Thus, the administrators must develop high levels of trust not only with 7th graders (the youngest) but also with 12th graders (the oldest). Regardless of the age, students look to the administrators for directions, information about the city, and a friendly face in their

new home away from home. It is key that they develop a strong understanding between being a friend and being an authority figure.

Teachers/Chaperones – Together with the teachers, the administrators form a team to facilitate the best learning experience. Teachers hope to provide experiential education and often use the seminar as a way to supplement their school curriculum. They also come with their own goals for the week, which we try to accommodate. Successful communication always paves the way to team success with them.

6) Seminar Check-In/out: The first day is the student's first impression of the city! Welcome them! It is also the time to issue key cards, nametags, materials, and to announce other important information as participants arrive throughout the afternoon. Administrators must ensure proper room assignment and resolve other logistics. An orientation meeting that evening expands on the expectations of the week and allows the group to get acquainted. Friday morning is check-out.

7) Discipline: We have rules to insure safety! Our best technique for discipline is to bring focus to the potential of the week and show participants ways to enrich their experience rather than detracting through misbehavior. We ask all staff to take a sensible, straightforward approach that helps students understand a clear definition of community norms. When participants do not follow the accepted norms, they must face consequences of (usually, but not limited to) warnings, spending the day with a chaperone, or missing events. We also require administrators to do a nightly bed-check and patrols hallways during unstructured evening time.

Workshops Staff...

Other elements of the position include working with the rest of the Workshops team:

Training: A weekend retreat and a weeklong practicum with books and an administrator handbook.

Office Duties: Administrators may assist with seminar prep and materials between sessions.

Team Building: We'll need everyone's participation and cooperation to make this season a hit! Team Building will be a central issue amongst staff during the year.

Counselor Training and oversight: Throughout the season, we will hire supplemental counselors who are usually former students attending college. Their help will be invaluable to the administrator staff, but it will require oversight and in-the-field training.

Program locations...

We will host programs at several places throughout the city and Northern Virginia. These include the National 4-H Youth Conference Center, Marymount University, and several hotels: the Georgetown Suites, the Virginian Suites, and the Washington Suites. In all but Marymount, student housing will be quad occupancy; adults will be housed two to a room. The hotels provide upscale continental breakfast, while local restaurants, food courts, or hotel caterers provide dinner. On campus, the cafeteria is the norm. Administrators will usually share rooms during program sessions.

Salary...

- \$700 per seminar week, plus room and board (exclusive of some meals and non-program weeks).

Advantages...

- Exposure to top government and policy leaders with opportunities to explore long-range job options.
- Opportunity to work closely with the junior high and high school students as a leader and educator.
- Contact with educators from all over the country.