



AAPD SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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AAPD's Summer Internship Program takes a two-pronged approach to address employment disparities within the disability community. 1) AAPD provides the opportunity for students and recent graduates with disabilities to gain hands-on professional experience to help advance their career goals. Through the Summer Internship Program, AAPD seeks to give a class of people with disabilities the skills, resources, and networks they need in order to not only become employed but to be employed in meaningful and high-level positions. 2) AAPD's Summer Internship Program also benefits the organizations who host an intern. The AAPD interns are ambassadors from the disability community, reducing fears, countering myths and stereotypes, and removing barriers to full inclusion. Our interns help to create a more inclusive and diverse work environment, which is proven to be good for business.

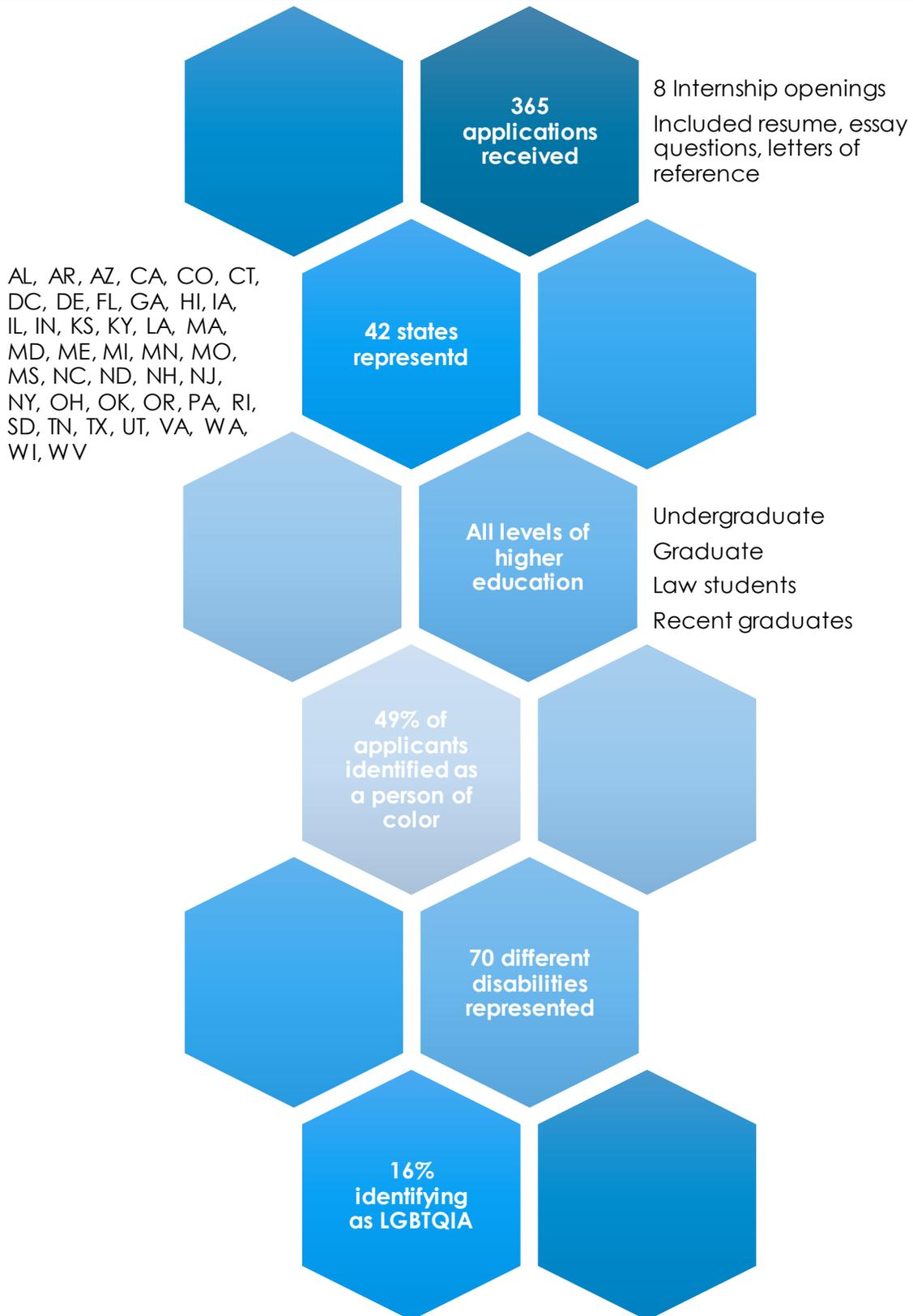
The AAPD Summer Internship Program engages students and recent graduates with disabilities from all across the United States. Our program covers the costs of travel and housing, in addition to providing a living stipend, ensuring AAPD is able to recruit a diverse class of interns that may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in a program like ours. Each intern class represents diversity across race, gender, education level, type of disability, and more. For many students, participating in AAPD's Summer Internship Program is their first exposure to the broader disability community, which empowers them to be self-advocates and sets them on a path to employment.

In addition to placing each intern on Capitol Hill, in government agencies, national nonprofit organizations, or the private sector, AAPD also matches each intern with a mentor connected to the disability community. The AAPD Summer Internship Program is unique and effective because we offer a comprehensive experience that goes beyond the normal 9-5 intern work week.

Outside of the internship hours, AAPD educates our interns on the history of the disability rights movement and the struggles our community still faces today. The interns also have numerous opportunities to participate in social and professional networking events. For example, each year many of the interns attend and participate in the annual conference held by the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL).

For more information about the AAPD Summer Internship Program and how to get involved, please visit <http://www.aapd.com/summer-internship-program/>.

2016 Application Statistics



2016 AAPD Intern Biographies



AHILAN AMIRTHANAYAGAM

Placed with the Federal Communications Commission

Ahilan Amirthanayagam is a student at the George Washington University majoring in Communication with a minor in Psychology. He was born in New York City but has spent most of his life abroad. Having lived in seven different countries (India, Ethiopia, US, Kenya, Singapore, Bolivia, and Barbados) and having had the opportunity to visit over 60, he is fascinated by different cultural groups and their interactions.



CAITLIN CHASAR

Placed with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Caitlin Chasar is a 24 year old graduate student born with spina bifida. She is originally from North Wales, Pennsylvania and has three sisters and two brothers. Currently Caitlin is pursuing her graduate studies in Clinical Rehabilitation and Clinical Mental Health Counseling and is set to graduate with her Master's in December 2016. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communications with a specialization in Public Relations from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in 2013. Caitlin considers herself an active advocate for individuals with disabilities and has a passion for advocating for equality in the workforce and education for those with disabilities. Her hobbies include traveling, participating in wheelchair sports (especially wheelchair basketball and swimming), and spending time with family and friends.



JILLIAN GRUETZNER

Placed with the Department of Homeland Security

A proud Michigan native, Jillian Gruetzner is currently a senior with a double major in Communication Studies and Accounting at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. She has a several years' worth of experience in customer service through working a variety of positions within Gallaudet University's Office of Residence Life. In that time, Jillian had come to realize her affinity for crunching numbers and her skills in writing would be useful in a career as an accountant, leading her to pursue her second degree in Accounting in addition to one in Communications. A "switch-hitter" of sorts, Jillian seeks to obtain both her CPA and CMA certifications in order to be able to offer a broader and better range of services to her

future clients. When she has time off from studying for her certification exams, Jillian enjoys spending time at her family's cottage by Lake Huron and traveling by backpack to different places around the world. Her most notable experiences to date are skydiving for the first time over the Swiss Alps and visiting a church made entirely out of human bones in the Czech Republic.



FRANCES ISBELL

Placed with the Administration for Community Living

Frances Isbell is from Gadsden, Alabama, and graduated summa cum laude in 2014 from Samford University with a degree in English and Political Science. She is currently a rising third-year law student and Dean's Scholar at the University of Alabama School of Law. While in law school, she has clerked with the Protection & Advocacy Program in Alabama, externed with a federal district judge, and worked as a research assistant for a law professor on mental health law. Frances was recently selected as a U.S. Albert Schweitzer Fellow, and through that fellowship, has opened a chapter of

NMD United in Alabama. As President of her law school's Public Interest Student Board, Frances has also volunteered with multiple community service and pro bono projects, including the Southern Immigration Detention Documentation Project and her law school's Free Legal Advice Clinic. After law school, Frances hopes to pursue a career in disability advocacy and policy.



CATHERINE JACOBSON

Placed with Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MI)

Catherine Jacobson is currently a junior at Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She is pursuing a double major in Public Health Sciences, and Social Justice, with a Health Equity concentration. Catherine was adopted from South Korea when she was only six months old by her loving, and blind parents. Catherine is also blind, and she has albinism. Catherine had the privilege of growing up closely knit to the blind community with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB). The NFB has given her various opportunities including being a 2014 summer intern for their national headquarters in

Baltimore, Maryland. While Catherine is at school she holds numerous leadership positions within her university's office of student activities, counseling and health services, creative writing program, and the dean of students office. Catherine hopes to continue school by getting a masters in Public Health with a concentration in Public Health Policy and Administration. Her career goal is to be an administrator for an organization that works towards health equity through policy work.

ISABELLA KRES-NASH

Placed with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senate HELP Committee



Isabella Kres-Nash is studying Political Science and History. Isabella is finishing her second year at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, but she is originally from Seattle, Washington. Throughout her time at Brown University Isabella has been active in several social justice initiatives on campus, and has worked as a Minority Peer Counselor in the Brown Center for Students of Color. Isabella hopes to continue working with marginalized communities, especially focusing on identity and coalition building, at Brown and beyond. Isabella is also preparing to study abroad in Granada, Spain in the upcoming year.

JESSICA MCHALE

Placed with the US Agency for International Development



Jessica McHale attends American University where she is majoring in International Studies with a concentration in Justice, Ethics, and Human Rights. Her interest in international relations began when she completed a project on economic development and read "The Bottom Billion" by Paul Collier in her high school economics course. During the fall, as part of her American Constitution class where she studied Constitutional Law, Jessica participated in a mock appellate court in front of a panel of attorneys, when she realized that she is also passionate about law. She aspires to work on international law

for a non-profit organization. Jessica spends her free time reading and exploring Washington, D.C. with her friends.

JOVAN RUVALCABA

Placed with Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)



Jovan Ruvalcaba is a student at the James E. Rogers College of Law. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a double minor in French and Spanish. Jovan has volunteered with Pima County Teen Court in Tucson, Arizona for more than thirteen years where he now serves as court magistrate. Prior to entering law school, Jovan studied International & Comparative law at Sciences-Po Paris for five months. Jovan also served two terms with AmeriCorps. More recently, Jovan taught English and researched accessibility issues as a Fulbright Fellow in Curitiba Brazil.

AAPD Internship Program Orientation

AAPD leads a comprehensive orientation training to prepare AAPD Interns to succeed in their internships and throughout the summer. 2016 Orientation sessions included:

- Panel on Careers in Public Policy with panelists:
 - Jennifer Mathis, Deputy Legal Director and Director of Programs, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
 - Dexter Brooks, Associate Director within the Office of Federal Operations, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
 - Andy Imparato, Executive Director, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
 - Michael Gamel-McCormick, Associate Executive Director for Research and Policy, AUCD
- Know Your Rights presented by Kelly Buckland, Executive Director, National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
- Disability Disclosure in the Workplace Training
- Accommodations in the Workplace Presentation by Derek Shields, Vice President, Axiom Resource Management, Inc.
- Networking and elevator speeches workshop
- How to be an Effective Disability Policy Change Agent presented by Bobby Silverstein, Director, Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy
- Financial Literacy Workshop with Michael Morris, Executive Director, National Disability Institute
- Social Media Presentation from Concepts Communications, including Rebecca Skipper, Communications Consultant, Diana Zeitzer, Disability Policy and Communications Specialist, and Emily Ladau, Communications Consultant
- Viewing of *Lives Worth Living*
- Session on stress management and self-care
- Fun Things to Do in DC
- Movie and Discussion of *X-Men: Days of Future Past*
- Team building activities
- AAPD Summer Internship Program Alumni Panel featuring panelists:
 - Dana Fink, Institute for Educational Leadership
 - Arissa Nakamura, State Department
 - Kristin Duquette, Presidential Appointee, Obama Administration
 - Brandon Pace, Department of Homeland Security
 - Anupa Iyer, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Panel on Current Issues in the Disability Community with panelists:
 - Samantha Crane, Legal Director & Director of Public Policy, Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
 - Rachel Patterson, Director of Public Policy, Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
 - Liz Weintraub, Advocacy Specialist, Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Events and Activities

The 2016 AAPD Summer Interns participated in a wide variety of events throughout the summer. Interns learned about the disability rights movement with a workshop, *The Disability Rights Movement – From Pennhurst Until Today*, with former US House Representative Tony Coelho. Interns also received innovative training from disability leaders on advocacy with a Social Media Activism workshop co-hosted by #CripTheVote, a Telling Your Narrative workshop with the Disability Visibility Project, as well as a Parenting & Disability presentation from 2015 AAPD Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award recipient, Robyn Powell.

Professional development activities included a resume and Schedule A workshop hosted by the American Institutes for Research. Interns also attended various events around Washington, DC for networking including the Advocates in Disability Award reception hosted by The HSC Foundation and the Roll on Capitol Hill reception hosted by United Spinal Association. Interns also attended many fun, youth-focused community building events such as the Connect 4 Social Hour hosted by the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia and a movie night hosted by Hidden Army, a group for young professionals with disabilities in the Washington, DC area.



Partnering with other internship programs

Over the summer, the AAPD Summer Interns engaged with other internship programs. For example, AAPD co-hosted a Briefing on the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities with the interns of the United States International Council on Disability

Connecting with AAPD Intern Alumni

One of the benefits of the AAPD Summer Internship Program is the large and diverse alumni network. AAPD Summer Internship Program alumni continue to give back long after their internships end, often by participating in intern trainings during the summer, supporting interns as mentors, and even serving as their supervisors at their high-level internship placements.

In the photo below, AAPD Interns chat by videoconference with Emily Ladau, a former AAPD Summer Intern from 2013.



To celebrate the 26th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July, interns attended the AAPD ADA Celebration, an annual event that brings together the national cross-disability community with business and government leadership. The interns closed the summer with the National Council on Independent Living's Annual Conference and participating the historic march and rally to Capitol Hill.



Mentoring the next generation of disability leaders

AAPD Interns connect with 2015 AAPD Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award recipient and founder of the Disability Visibility Project, Alice Wong (above).

Where Are They Now?: AAPD Intern Alumni



Stacy Cervenka, '04

Interned for Senator Sam Brownback

Stacy is currently the Executive Officer of the California State Rehabilitation Council, an advisory body that provides oversight to the Department of Rehabilitation.



Leah Katz-Hernandez, '09

Interned for Congressman Steny Hoyer

Leah works in the White House as the Receptionist to President Obama. She is responsible for welcoming all of the President's guests to the West Wing.



Kevin Fritz, '08

Interned for the Office of Senator Barack Obama

Kevin Fritz is an associate in the Labor & Employment practice group of Seyfarth Shaw LLP. He counsels employers on matters related to the ADA, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and more.



Jasmin Bailey, '13

Interned for the Department of Labor

After completing the AAPD Summer Internship Program, Jasmin joined AAPD permanently as the Manager of Business Operations and Executive Assistant to the President & CEO.

**Are you a former AAPD Intern? We'd love to stay in touch!
Send us an update by email at internships@aapd.com.**

2016 Placements

Administration for Community Living



Association of University Centers on Disabilities



Department of Homeland Security



Federal Communications Commission



Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Charles Schumer

Senator Patty Murray, HELP Senate Committee

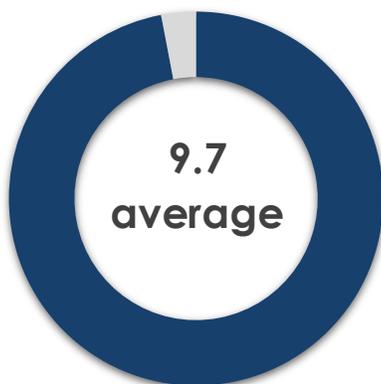


Post-Program Surveys

Would you recommend the AAPD Summer Internship Program to friend?



On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the impact this internship has made on your career and/or academic goals?



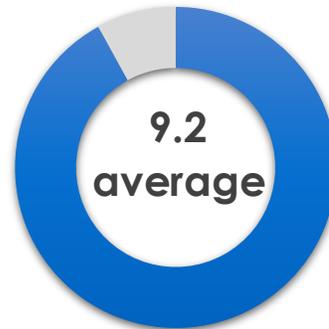
"The best thing about this internship was being totally engrossed in the excitement of working for a common cause, the disability movement. Every event or experience that I took in caused me to learn new things that I could use in my professional and personal life as a person with a disability. I also loved meeting so many passionate, intelligent people who were motivated to make a difference in the community in all different ways imaginable. I don't know if there is anywhere else in the country that can offer this experience for people with disabilities. The disability community in D.C is very unique and inclusive -- anyone can be part of this movement if they want to learn and help."

Intern response from anonymous post-program survey

"This placement clearly has experience working with interns with disabilities and there is a wide scale of areas that an intern can learn...This is also a very diverse staff and that was one of my favorite things about the internship."

Intern response from anonymous post-program survey

On a scale of 1-10, how helpful was your mentor in helping you grow professionally by providing you with guidance and assistance?



A few skills interns acquired this summer through their placements:

- Administrative skills
- IBM training
- Research skills
- Communication and writing skills
- Database skills
- Discussing accommodations with an employer
- Analytical writing skills
- Excel skills
- Leadership skills

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable did you feel in your employer's work environment?



2016 AAPD Summer Intern Demographic Information

Self-disclosure

- 100% self-disclosure of disability

Disabilities represented

- Spina Bifida
- Cerebral Palsy
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy
- Blindness
- Dyslexia
- Deafness
- Daily Chronic Migraine
- Bipolar Disorder

Race or ethnicity

- 50% identified as people of color

Geographic

- 8 states represented across the country

AAPD Interns in the Media

The AAPD interns are ambassadors from the disability community, making a number of appearances in the media. Below are just a few of those occasions.

- On July 8th, Kate Chasar spoke about trends in disability employment on the nTIDE Lunch & Learn Webinar Series. The report and presentation can be found [here](#).
- Ahilan Amirthanayagam and Kate Chasar attended the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, PA. Kate later wrote a blog post reflecting on the experience that was shared on AT&T's Connect To Good blog.
- On August 2nd, Frances Isbell, Jovan Ruvalcaba, and Kate Chasar were interviewed on Tuesdays with Liz:

Disability Policy for All.

'Tuesdays with Liz' is a weekly video series highlighting current issues in disability policy. It is hosted by Liz Weintraub, a long-time disability advocate, and produced by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). The interns discussed their summer experiences and their disability policy interests. The video of the interview can be found [here](#).

- Each of the interns contributed entries for the AAPD Power Grid Blog about their experience in the AAPD Summer Internship Program, disability policy issues, and more. To view the blogs, visit the AAPD Power Grid Blog [here](#). Forthcoming blogs will be posted on a weekly basis.



AAPD Interns (L to R) Kate Chasar, Jovan Ruvalcaba, and Frances Isbell with Liz Weintraub

Intern Highlights

A few of the highpoints from the 2016 AAPD Summer Internship Program:

- Writing memos for the Pakistan Embassy to grant travel visas
- Shadowing Andy Imparato, Executive Director of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
- Wrote memos on briefings and hearings for Legislative Assistants in Congressional offices
- Attending briefings and hearings on Capitol Hill on a wide range of policy issues including health, foreign policy, trade, and more
- Receiving career development tips and connecting with Deputy Directors at USAID
- Conducting Congressional research training
- Opportunity to hold informational interviews with staff at internship placement
- Attending a roundtable discussion regarding autonomous vehicles
- Celebrating LGBTQ Disability Day at the White House
- Attending the Democratic National Convention
- Attending the ADA Celebration Luncheon
- Attending meetings about the International Harkin Employment Summit
- Participating in the Congressional intern series for professional development for Capitol Hill interns
- Joining meeting and conferences with the International Bureau at the FCC
- Brown bag events with FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler



2016 AAPD Summer Intern Jovan Ruvalcaba with Senator Chuck Schumer

AAPD interns are advocates in action



2016 AAPD Summer Intern Kate Chasar with Senator Bob Casey

AAPD Summer Internship Program Sponsors

AAPD would like to thank AT&T, the Alcoa Foundation, The HSC Foundation, and the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation for their generous support of the 2016 AAPD Summer Internship Program



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Praise for the AAPD Summer Internship Program

“This summer I have been able to more fully claim my identity as a person with a disability, and understand that each time I do so it is a powerful political act. I was able to understand myself more fully because I gained access to so many incredible members of the disability community. This community has given me the confidence to step into the workforce, and greater world as a confident woman with a disability. Thank you to AAPD for guiding me through this process.”

“The AAPD Internship Program enriched me personally and professionally. It is individualized enough to help you achieve your aspirations, but does not let you lose sight of your collective identity and values. It teaches you to grow roots, but gives you space to grow up and out.”

“AAPD was an incredibly eye-opening experience for me. As a person with a disability who was constantly shut down for years for having a disability, AAPD gave me the confidence to speak about my experiences, to become an advocate, and to help others who are hurting. I would definitely recommend this program to a friend to not only encourage their own growth their identity as a person with a disability, but to learn more about the disability community.”

“Being an AAPD Summer Intern was a life changing experience. This program provided me with the opportunity to learn about the disability movement in full capacity -- how it originated, what we have accomplished, and how far we still need to go. It also allowed me to grow on a personal and professional level. Interning within the disability movement has empowered me to continue fighting for the rights of all people with disabilities.”

“My AAPD intern experience was completely life changing. I was placed in my state Senator’s office and got to focus on the policy area I am interested in pursuing a career in. I was matched with the perfect mentor who helped me think about my future. I met amazing friends who have different disabilities than me and we got to learn from each other and learn to work together to create affective change in the world.”

“My experience as an AAPD Summer Intern was profound. I appreciated working and interacting alongside people with unique challenges and stories on how they are living positively with their life challenges. Thank you.”