UNEDITED REALTIME FILE

# **AAPD**

**Summer Internship Program 2024 Webinar**

## October 3, 2023

## 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET

## *LIVE REMOTE CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY:*

## *Ennis Captioning Solutions, LLC*

## *www.enniscaptioning.com*

## *Lisa Johnston, RMR, CRR, CRC*

## \* \* \* \* \*

## This is being provided in a rough-draft format. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings

## \* \* \* \* \*

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Hello there! Good afternoon. We're going to get started in just a moment.

Hi there, everyone. Good afternoon! Thank you for being here. We're just going to give everyone a moment to hop onto Zoom. But feel free to say hello in the chat box. And if you would like, make sure to change from host and panelist to everyone so everyone can see what you're saying below there.

And this PowerPoint, as well as some additional materials, will be available following today's webinar. So more to come on that. Thank you. And welcome!

I love to see so many people joining today. We'll go ahead and get started.

Good afternoon. My name is Katie Johnson, I use they/them pronouns and I am the program manager for AAPD's internship program.

A brief visual description: I am a white person with buzzed brown hair. Today I am wearing a tan‑colored top and some gold hoop earrings and I am seated in my home in Washington, D.C.

And I am really, really excited to chat with you all more about our summer internship program. It's great to see so much interest in this program. And today we're going to share more about what the program is, what to expect from our application that's open now, as well as hear from some of our alumni, who I'm excited for you all to meet.

So a few housekeeping items before we get started. This information session is being recorded and the recording will be available on our web page following this event.

It usually takes a few business days to get up on our website, since we do get it closed captioned.

We do have live captioning available during this webinar. You can access it by clicking the CC button at the bottom of your screen.

We also have an ASL interpreter here today. The ASL interpreter should be visible for you now. If you have any issues throughout the webinar where you can't see the interpreter, please let us know.

And then lastly, there's going to be some time for questions and answers at the end of the webinar. We have the Q&A box enabled, so if you want to drop your question in as we're going through this, that will be a good way for us to keep track of what questions you have, to make sure they get answered.

Wonderful. So, we will go ahead and get started.

So, again, our agenda for today, on this slide I have a photo of our 2023 summer intern cohort who are standing outside for a picture in a courtyard.

And we're really excited that during today's webinar, we will be recruiting for the 2024 cohort. So this could be you here pictured in Washington, D.C. or one of our remote interns.

So what we're going to cover in the webinar today, our agenda, we're going to go over briefly what the summer internship program is like. Some of the key elements that make our program what it is. We're going to go over the application process and timeline.

So when our application is due, what components you need to submit, and how to submit.

And then we'll save most of our time to hear from three of our alumni, so you can learn more about what their experience was like, you know, from people who have actually been through the program.

And then at the very end, we'll have that Q&A, and our wrap-up. So please, again, use the Q&A feature to submit your questions.

So, for the 2024 summer internship program, we have a hybrid program. We've had a hybrid program for the last two summers, so this will be our third summer as a hybrid program.

And that means that some of our interns join in‑person in Washington, D.C. and then some join remotely.

Last year, and our plan for this year, is 20 interns, with eight of them joining remotely and 12 of them joining in‑person.

The internship is a ten‑week‑long program and it's a paid internship opportunity.

You would be working full‑time, so that's 32 hours a week. And that's from Monday to Thursday.

And then on Fridays, you're actually with the rest of your cohort, with our Disability Advocacy Certificate Program, which I'll talk more about on the next slide.

And for your internships, we partner with a variety of different organizations to place you in your internships. So you're not doing your internship at AAPD, you're actually going out and will be placed in either a congressional office, a federal agency, a non‑profit, or a for‑profit organization.

On our website, and then in the link in the slides, which hopefully we can get dropped into the chat box, is a list of some of our past placement sites.

So, you know, for our congressional placements, it's good to know that, you know, we placed people in congressional offices on both sides of the aisle. You can express your interest in being on the Hill and getting to be a Hill intern, but knowing that AAPD is a non‑partisan organization, we can't guarantee you will be in a specific office.

A lot of times it's based on the state you live in or the state where you go to school.

Some of our federal placements, you know, we've had people at the National Council on Disability, you'll hear from someone who was at the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, a wide variety of federal partners.

And then for non‑profits, that's really ‑‑ we have a wide variety of non‑profit partners. Some of them are disability focused organization, like the National Disability Rights Network, some are based on a particular interest area, we had someone from the Human Rights Campaign and the Center For American Progress the Disability Justice Initiative.

And for our for‑profit, we have a few for‑profit placements, we partner with different organizations, like Centene, Elevance Health, American Airlines, the way the placements work is you ‑‑ sorry, I see a question in the chat, so I'm just going to pause.

There is an ASL interpreter. So let's make sure that you can get access to that.

April, would you be able to make sure that the interpreter can be seen or spotlighted?

>> APRIL DEMSKO: Yes, one second, please.

Okay. Just let me add a second spotlight on you.

And both of y'all should be showing now.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: And I just want to confirm that you're able to see the interpreter now?

Okay. I'm going to let, April, if you're able to help troubleshoot on mobile.

You might have to select a different view.

Just checking in to see if that's any better?

>> APRIL DEMSKO: I'm going to try to join from my phone as well real quick, just so I can troubleshoot it.

[Pause].

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thanks for everyone's patience. We just want to make sure that everybody can access what's there.

So... we also have our CART available and someone from our team is going to follow‑up with you directly to make sure you're able to access it.

The meeting is recorded, so we'll make sure you get a copy of the recording if you miss any parts in the meantime, but I am going to keep us going.

For our internship placements, you can go to different sites and where you would love to in a dream world.

And AAPD takes that information and your preferences and tries to match you with your placement site.

And then once ‑‑ it looks like we have a good match, you know, we met a bunch of different preferences and needs related to the placement type, related to the format, and then we will set up a time for you to meet with the potential placement before it's confirmed.

So, we really try to find internships that match your interests and we can talk more about that in the Q&A.

So I want to talk a little bit about the disability advocacy certificate program and this is what our interns participate in during their internship summer.

The class is focused on advocacy especially around storytelling, how to tell your own story as a form of advocacy and to think of advocacy not just in traditional ways, like policy advocacy or, you know, having a protest, but all of the ways that disabled people create change in their communities.

It includes weekly speakers who are members of the disability community and ongoing class discussions.

I have two photos on the slide, one is from a breakout room discussion, some interns sitting around a conference table.

And then the second photo on the slides in the photo is the Disability in American History was a history presentation and a bunch of interns sitting around a conference table.

So it's a very discussion‑based and an opportunity to learn from your peers and others in the disability community about disability advocacy.

And then as far as our assignments, there are assignments that come with the course, last year, last summer, some assignments were a policy memo, where you got to learn about a disability issue and a policy solution, and then as a group, they wrote a policy memo around that issue.

You get to meet with an elected official, so they took their issue and they met with someone, an elected representative, and talked about and educated their member about the issue that they had done in their policy memo.

And then there was also a final presentation where they created an advocacy plan as a group and presented that plan to their peers and to others in AAPD.

All righty. Some other aspects of our program are the mentorship component. All of our interns are paired into one‑to‑one mentorships with community leaders that match their interest and four mentors.

And we have ongoing community events throughout the summer, so most of our ‑‑ we have weekly virtual events that interns get to take a part in, they're more social in nature and about topics that interest them.

Some examples include, like, disability and dating, we brought in some YouTube famous disability couple to talk about dating and disability.

We've also, last summer, talked about abolition and disability injustice, and it depends what the cohorts are interested in.

There's a variety of networking opportunities.

I have some photos on the slide. The top left photo is actually from our 20th anniversary event that happened two years ago ‑‑ it happened last year ‑‑ yeah, last year ‑‑ with a few of our interns that are signing on the rooftop overlooking the Capitol.

The second photo is one of our mentor/mentee pairs, they met, and the bottom photo are interns when they went to the White House and standing in front of the White House for the signing of the ADA.

And there are lots of networking opportunities this summer for you.

I'll talk to you a little bit about the application and we'll have a chance to dig into some of those program elements with our interns that are here, our intern alumni that are here.

But I want to review what is included in the application, the different components. So there's the general information section, there's a section where you put in your résumé and your references. Your placement preferences. There's three essay questions and the demographics.

So I'm just going to work through each of those in turn.

So, for the general information section, this is where you share your contact information, you answer two questions related to eligibility.

So, I want to talk a little bit about who's eligible to apply to this program. So this is a program that's for college students or recent graduates with disabilities. And so first you have to identify as a person with a disability. This does not mean that you need to have paperwork or fill or submit something; it just means that you do identify as a person with a disability.

And then the second component, that you're currently enrolled or a recent graduate of a U.S.‑based institution. So that means you're in a post‑secondary program or you graduated in the last five years.

And so you'll get asked some questions in the application that helps show that you are a person with a disability, who is a current student, or a recent graduate of a U.S.‑based program.

That could be a college, that could be a technical school, it could be a post‑secondary transition program. It's a pretty broad range.

So if you have any questions about your specific eligibility, please do reach out.

Next, you'll submit a copy of your résumé. It helps if that is in an accessible format. Some of our reviewers need accessible formats to read your résumés, so please double‑check that they're accessible and easy to read through, showing a bit about your experiences.

And then next are the references. So for the summer of 2024, we have a section for you to submit two references. One of those references, at least one, needs to be a professional reference. So that might be someone who is a professor, a former employer, someone that worked with you in leadership, when you were in a leadership role.

And one can be personal, so that could be, like, a coach or a mentor, a neighbor or a counselor. But we're only asking for their information.

Sections three and four, we have our internship preferences, so this is where you share if you want to be a congressional, federal, non‑profit, or for‑profit organization.

You also share if you prefer to be in‑person, remote, or flexible.

So, again, this is a hybrid program, so this is, at the time that you applied, would you rather come in‑person to spend the summer in Washington, D.C.? Would you rather not come to D.C. and join remotely? Or are you flexible and could go either way?

The bulk of the application are the three essay questions. The essay questions are listed in the copy of the application. I just wanted to highlight some of what you should be thinking about when you're writing your essay responses.

In your responses, they help us understand you as a leader. Please be as specific as you can, sharing about your experience or your interests. We're really looking for people who want to develop and grow their leadership and advocacy skills.

So the more you can tell us about how you understand yourself as a leader, the better it is to read your application.

We want details and specifics. And we ask that you answer the questions fully.

And then the last section is our demographic section. This is optional. It just helps us ensure that we're consistently having a diverse internship cohort that's diverse in a lot of ways.

And so we'll ask some information if you would like to share about your disability, your sexual orientation, your gender and pronouns, your veteran status, your race, your age, and your religion.

And these are all open‑ended questions, so you can self‑identify however you'd like, and they're optional.

And then the last thing is our timeline. So, the application is due on October 19th at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

The application is submitted through an online portal. So you'll see a link on our website to a Google Doc, which has all of the questions that that you'll need to submit. Once you've gathered all of your information and read the essays and gathered the information, click through an online portal called Survey Monkey and get it in there by 5:00 p.m.

After we get your applications, we will review them and the application review will happen early November, late October/early November, and then we will begin conducting interviews starting in November, all the way through January.

Everybody should expect to hear back from us either way by the end of January 2024.

Okay. I saw the chat box had so much going on and our Q&A is filled with questions, which I love to see, and we will get to them. But before we do, I'm excited to welcome some of our alumni who are here to tell you more about their experience and kind of give life to some of the things I was talking about.

So we have three alumni joining us. First is Jessica Lopez, who was a remote intern this past summer and she did her internship at the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Next we have Christina Stafford, who was also a 2023 intern. She did her internship in‑person in Washington, D.C. at the Center For American Progress.

And then last we have Zandy Wong, who was a 2022 in‑person intern with the Office of Representative Katie Porter.

So I'm so glad that each of you are here to share more about your experience with the internship program! Thanks for taking the time to talk with some prospective applicants.

If you could start by introducing yourself, sharing your names and pronouns, a brief visual description, and then your internship year and placement site, and what you're up to now.

I'll start with Jessica.

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, hi, everyone, this is Jessica Lopez speaking. I am a young Hispanic woman with straight brown hair and I'm wearing a black top and I have kind of like a blurry Zoom background behind me.

Yeah, so I am a remote intern this summer, 2023, and I was placed in the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy and that was a really incredible opportunity for me.

I was remote, 100% remote, so everything that I did was 100% from home. I actually live in San Diego and the Department of Labor is based in D.C., but I was able to fully participate remotely.

And the internship process was an incredibly life‑changing opportunity for me. I got to meet a lot of people within the panel.

I am going to be transferring to Arizona State and so I am in my last semester at community college.

And over the last semester, I have been kind of working on my disability advocacy at my college, I've had the opportunity to work with two AAPD alumni over this summer towards the last semester of my advocacy in college.

So we're working together on some events whether my college started. It's been a great opportunity so far.

And it's great to still have that relationship too.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Jessica. I will pass it to Christina to introduce herself.

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Can you hear me?

>> KATIE JOHNSON: We can now.

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: [No audio].

>> KATIE JOHNSON: We're not anymore.

[Pause].

>> KATIE JOHNSON: No...

[Pause].

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: All right. How about now?

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Yes.

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Okay. Sorry about that! Hi, my name is Christina Stafford. I use she/her pronouns. A brief visual description of me: I am a black African‑American woman with long faux locks and glasses and a black T‑shirt on.

My internship year was just like Jessica, just this past summer in 2023. And I was working at the Center For American Progress which is the Think Tank in D.C.

And I was completely in‑person for the entire summer.

And so what I'm up to now, I am a junior at ULINE University and my majors are English and political science and I'm doing research right now I hope to publish in the next few years, so I'm very excited about that

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Wonderful! And then Zandy.

>> ZANDY WONG: Hello, everyone, my name is Zandy Wong, my pronouns are she/her. Visual description of me, I am an Asian‑American woman with short black hair, I am wearing a Navy blue collared shirt and a white background.

I was part of the 2022 internship cohort. I was working in‑person at Representative Katie Porter's Office. I am still involved with disability advocacy efforts at the state and local level, working with disabilities in general, and I'm looking forward to sharing more about my experiences

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Great. Thank you all. This is Katie. We'll get started. If you could share a little bit about what the day‑to‑day was like, what internships you completed, what tasks you were working on, what typical day looked like? I'll have Christina start.

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Absolutely. So, for me, my internship was really focused on a lot of research. At Center For American Progress, the thing they work on the most is putting out publications about current issues for both advocacy groups and for people who are affected by the issues, to have a better understanding of what's happening in the field.

So a lot of my day‑to‑day looked like going into the office. We had kind of a set time that we had to be in by and then we would be either doing some set research or project that we were working on at the time, or at the end of the project, for most of the people at that site, we did kind of like a final project, so we were also working on one large research project that we got to submit for publication by the end of our internship.

So, a lot of it was just, like, either sitting and doing the research or also going to meetings, meeting a lot of people in the community.

Seeing what was happening at the time, it was a really exciting time to be in D.C. and I got to meet so many different advocates in D.C. and on Zoom, so it was a really great opportunity there; yeah.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you. And then Zandy?

>> ZANDY WONG: So my day‑to‑day, like, at my internship working for Representative Katie Porter was more on the formal side. I usually went in four days a week, dressed in completely full suit and everything, which excited me but the humidity in D.C.....

I sorted the mail for them, I answered a lot of constituents' e‑mails, letters that came in for them. I was the main call center person, so any time a constituent called in.

I was there during the summer when Roe versus Wade fell. And whenever Representative Katie Porter spoke, it was talking about the elected president.

And I guess being the collective tissue between the public and Representative Katie Porter. It was nice to meet her.

Some of the other things I worked on was that I wrote policy memos talking about issues that I was passionate about. Digital accessibility, healthcare, those kind of things.

So other big highlights was including recommending two pieces of Title IX legislation for Representative Katie Porter to co‑sponsor and one was through a coffee chat for the legislative team to write federal policy related to digital accessibility, which is really exciting.

And another opportunity for a couple other interns, once you get in, it's easy to get into events on Capitol Hill, especially during Pride Month, it was nice to meet a lot of people and eat a lot of good food, which is great as an intern.

Is there anything else? No, I think that was it. Happy to chat.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: That was great, Zandy, thank you. And yes, definitely taking advantage of the free food is a great experience.

Jessica, I know you did your internship remotely and lots want to hear about you completing your internship remotely. Can you tell us about your day‑to‑day?

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, my day was usually, it was pretty low key, it was not, like, super high pressure, I was able to kind of log on at a set time every day.

And my manager was super flexible. I live on the West Coast and they're on the East Coast and he was super flexible allowing me to start at a time that worked for me and not at, like, 6:00 a.m. in the morning, when, like, everybody else is already, you know, at noon.

So, I think that was a really great benefit, that they gave me that flexibility and understanding, you know, I'm on a different time zone.

In terms of my day‑to‑day, I did a lot of research and did research on transportation benefits for people who are in the workforce.

I also did a lot of research on trying to keep tabs on different policy events or considerations that are happening around, you know, D.C., any sort of laws that are being passed, and forwarding that to our team.

And really making sure that there was kind of like a brief every week, you know, what's going on within the disability community, so that we know how we can support people in the workforce who live with disabilities.

Some of the other things that I did was I hosted, like, kind of like an all‑hands, like, event towards the end of the semester or the end of the summer, and that was a lot of fun, I got to meet other interns who were at the Department of Labor and we kind of did, like, a trivia event.

And I really had a really fortunate opportunity to be able to do some work that went directly to the Assistant Secretary, the Office of Disability Employment Policy and some of the things I did went directly to her office and I had some of that impact going and putting things all the way up to our leaders.

So it was a great experience, so...

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you all. That sounds like great work that you worked on and I appreciate you sharing some specifics on the topics. A lot of times people don't know what the internships are and that's helpful.

I'm wondering as we're launching our third hybrid program, I'm wondering if you can share what your experience was like as a remote or in‑person intern and how you connected with the whole cohort, people are going to have to share their preferences and it would be great to hear from you what your experience was.

Zandy, do you want to go first?

>> ZANDY WONG: Sure, I can go first.

For the 2022 internship program, I'm not sure what it was for 2023, but, like, I would say 70% of us were in‑person and the other 30% were remotely. We were in the dorms and it was the first time I was off campus and living by myself and learning to cook.

A lot of the interns were helpful and learning where you're going. There's not many in D.C., go to Trader Joe's after Pennsylvania Avenue, but the in‑person part is really cool, not only are you working in D.C., you're really part of the community in D.C.

I think Jessica and Christina will talk about it later, we went to the congressional baseball game, D.C. Pride, and it was great being part of the D.C. community.

That was great. Yeah, I had a great time.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thanks so much, Zandy.

Christina, anything you would add from an in‑person perspective before we pass to Jessica?

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Yeah, I think Zandy covered it really well. A lot of it was being able, as an in‑person intern, to experience the culture of D.C. and to experience, like, how to navigate the city.

As, like, a completely new city. It was also being able to interact with all of my other cohorts, both in‑person and remote. We were able to interact through both our certificate program that we had every Friday, we would basically be able to see each other for sure once a week to be able to connect and see how each person was doing, both in‑person and remote.

And we would have community events every week where we would get to connect.

And we would also just hang out and both try and make sure we had options for in‑person and to connect that way as well and it was a great opportunity to get to know everyone there.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you. And then let's pass it to Jessica. What was it like from a remote perspective?

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, it was a really incredible experience. I was able to fly out to D.C. for the first week of orientation and I had the full, you know, it was the whole nine yards. Like, we really got the opportunity to get to know each other, you know, I got to navigate, you know, the system, you know, go on the Metro, see the AAPD and various buildings.

And I was really sad to go home because I was, like, this is an incredible experience and I want to stay here, I loved the city. And I actually want to move to D.C. now because of how incredible that city is.

But, like, once I got home, I never felt like I was missing out on anything. AAPD internship team, they were really accommodating for us and making sure that we had everything that we needed to be included. We had Tuesday night social gatherings where we could get together and talk about whatever.

We were able to join and do everything with our internship program on Fridays and do it remote and sometimes we were broken up in groups and in Zoom, we were able to participate in each of those groups.

That was really incredible for me and in our cohort, we had built a bond with our friends in D.C. and they said we really want to include the interns and they were, like, maybe we can do Zoom calls over the weekend and do Zoom calls as we visit different places and they did that.

And I think that was really incredible to see, like, not only the AAPD team, including all of the interns, but our in‑person cohort also included us as well.

It was an incredible experience and I never felt like I was missing out; I felt like I was a part of the cohort and I wasn't isolated, with the other remote interns we had, I felt a connection with everybody, and it was a great experience

>> KATIE JOHNSON: This is Katie. I'm so glad to hear that. I know AAPD worked really hard to build a hybrid opportunity, even as hybrid opportunities are going away, it's important for us in the disability community to continue to offer all offerings.

But we're trying to do so in ways that are really engaging and connections between the cohorts and I'm glad that was your experience this past summer.

And so to wrap up, I wanted to ask one last question and then make sure we have lots of time for Q&A.

But our AAPD summer internship program is more than just the internship of the placement site itself. It obviously includes our Disability Advocacy Certificate Program on Fridays, the one‑to‑one mentoring and our virtual community events you just mentioned.

Could you talk about your favorite, or one of your favorite experiences from the summer that was related to some of these other elements?

Christina, do you want to go first?

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Yeah, for sure. So for me, one of the greatest kind of opportunities was definitely towards, you know, the weekend, everyone was able to kind of find ways to come together and connect.

I remember during the first week or so there, we all met up at a food hall that was right by all of the dorm and living areas, and we even, like, connected on a Zoom call so we could talk with all the remote interns there.

And it was, like, community events like that that are just really relaxed. It was either just, like, getting a meal or I know towards the middle to end of June, we went all to Pride together and it was a really great experience, to have all of those kind of things.

Just, like, little moments that added up into, like, a really great community that really made a difference.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you. What about you, Zandy?

>> ZANDY WONG: One of the biggest aspects of the internship program that really has been actually really helpful for me for finding a job for next year has been the mentorship piece.

I was patched with Merrill Friedman who is a disability policy officer, that's her sort of title, at Elevance Health which used to be Anthem and is helping me with emergency preparedness and helping people with disabilities and other disability‑related projects.

At the time, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go into policy or healthcare or be a lawyer. She was helpful with me and helping guide me toward a path that's going to be good with me. So I met with her almost every week, and I still meet with her once a month even after the internship program, I'm actually meeting with her next week, to discuss what options I should look at for next year.

She's written me job recommendations, we've met up in D.C., I'm pretty close by in Baltimore and it's great to see her and know I have her support. And she's been able to connect me with so many people.

I remember there was one time, Elevance is a huge company and they know I'm into cream puffs and figure skating.

And sometimes you're often afraid to go into big spaces because you feel like, hmm, maybe I'm not qualified, I'm a newbie here, but with her support, you feel confident to network with people and take advantage of what the AAPD program has to offer

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Zandy. And we hope through some of the sessions share information with the cohort and share what makes an effective mentoring. Like you said you like ice skating and being able to connect personally with someone as a full person and develop meaningful relationships is one of the definite benefits of the program and its mentorship component.

So I'll pass it to Jessica to share her thoughts.

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, I think one of the best things about AAPD is how attentive they are to accommodations. So when I flew out to Washington, D.C., I needed to bring a personal care attendant with me because of my disability, I use a wheelchair and I need some help with that.

And so one of the first things I noticed about AAPD that I love telling people about is when they gave us, like, the registration form, they needed our information, like, where are we flying from, do we want to stay in D.C. the whole time?

You know, all of those considerations. In those forms, they ask if you need to bring a personal care attendant with you and I filled that out and they asked for your personal care attendant's name and information and they asked if your personal care attendant also needs accommodations.

I had never seen this anywhere in the world. Like, this did not happen. They don't think about personal care attendants as possibly being disabled as well, and they thought about super minute details if my personal care attendant will need accommodations, what she would need when we're there, is there anything that they need.

And they were also super detailed about what accommodations that I might need, whether it's, like, trying to learn how to, you know, do transportation in D.C. and kind of, like, any sort of accommodation that I needed while I was there to be comfortable.

And I think that is really a testament to how critically thinking AAPD is, just because they're really thinking about all of those details that people might not think about when they are trying to support people with disabilities.

And I think that was a really incredible experience, to see that leadership from AAPD, which I'm going to take that and tell everyone I know and say this is how you need to be doing it.

And while I was there, I really did enjoy being able to meet different people within, you know, the disability community. We visited the Microsoft Office on our first day, which is an incredible opportunity to see, like, a Microsoft Office in D.C., it was incredibly, you know, it was really fancy, I'm just going to say that!

And it was such a great opportunity, just to, you know, kind of have that experience of D.C. and the other interns and, you know, learn from leaders within the disability community that I have always looked up to and, you know, have that ability to be, like, one‑on‑one and connect with them.

So, yeah, that was a great experience for that reason.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much!

So, I am going to start us off on some Q&A and then ask our alumni to help out with some of the questions, just because I know we have a good number here.

So I saw that there was a question about part‑time internship. So I just wanted to say for our summer program, our interns work full‑time internships unless we are ‑‑ in the event it's related to disability accommodation, we have disability accommodation converted to part‑time and that's a case‑by‑case basis.

We urge people to look into our fall program as well which has full‑time internships there.

And that's something we want to talk about on a case‑by‑case basis, since it will have impacts on other things.

But it's definitely something that can be discussed as an accommodation. So thank you for asking that question.

I had a question about if you're not already doing work related to disability advocacy, is this a good internship for you or not? Is this a good opportunity for someone to ‑‑ I lost the question... um... I think it dropped down here ‑‑ here we go. Is it a good opportunity for you to enter a space for disability advocacy or is it really for people with a lot of experience?

And so the answer is that we are looking for a diverse group of interns in our cohort. Some people might have a lot of experience, some people might not. This is a great place to build your advocacy skills no matter where you are.

Do any of our panelists want to add to that, on your journey? Christina, I see you're nodding

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: Yeah, for me, I definitely knew at the beginning, I knew I was interested in advocacy but I didn't know where to start, I didn't really have a lot of tools around me. I hadn't really interacted with a lot of people who were in an advocacy space.

So, for me, I was kind of coming in as a complete beginner, but I was also able to interact with people in my cohort that have experience with it.

It was beneficial to us both. While we were all also learning from the program, we were all also learning from each other and I think that made a huge difference from it.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much. All right. I see a question about if the internships are usually about disability policy or are they more of a typical internship experience? What about the STEM internship?

I'm glad that you mentioned the STEM internship, I didn't go into that in as much detail as I wanted to so I would like to talk about that first.

So AAPD is open to anyone of any major. We pair people on internships based on their interests and sometimes people's interests are in disability policy and advocacy and that is a part of our program through the certificate program, but some of our interns want to do disability policy although their placement site.

Some ‑‑ at their placement site.

Some want to do climate and learn about business and marketing. It's you and your major, what you want to do.

As far as our STEM internship goes, we do have STEM opportunities, that's science, technology, engineering, and math, and there are always dedicated spots for STEM students in our program.

We have a specific STEM internship that places interns in a federal agency who are studying science, technology, engineering, or math.

A lot of times that intern has been, like, like the U.S. Access Board, for example, and last week it was at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

But, yes, open to all majors.

Okay. Someone asked if there are opportunities open for people who are not disabled but interested in practicing disability work.

There are lots of people not disabled but in this space, and we encourage you to get involved, but this opportunity is for disabled students.

And one of the best parts of what we're doing here is learning about cross‑disability solidarity and cross‑disability pride, and it's really important everyone who applies to the program and the only way you can apply is if you identify as a person with a disability.

But, yes, check with our partners who have opportunities available.

Okay. I'm just jumping around a little bit.

So someone asked a question about DACA, Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals, and if there's anything you can defer participation or follow‑up on e‑mail.

We, we can follow‑up on e‑mail for any student has a DACA status.

U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for AAPD's program. Some of our placement sites that we partner with do have U.S. citizenship requirements. And so during the placement site process, we would need to, you know, discuss and make sure that the appropriate match is made.

Most of our ‑‑ all of your federal agencies and I believe all of our congressional placements would require U.S. citizenship, so you just might end up in more of, like, a non‑profit, just so you know.

And the only thing that is required is that you have work authorization. So for international students, under international student visa, if you are authorized to work while you are here, then you can do the internship here. We have a lot of times have students doing CPT or OPT here and we can talk about international students and DACA students and please reach out to AAPD to talk more about that.

Someone asked what's covered during orientation week. Would one much our alumni want to talk about what orientation week was like? Maybe Zandy or Jessica?

>> ZANDY WONG: I mean... oh, well, I'll talk about orientation week. We had a lot of great speakers come in. One I'm still connected to. But the main benefit of it was really just getting your foot in the door of learning what it's like to live in D.C. for a week before they put you in a job.

As far as, like, the lessons itself, we had a headshot session, I use that professional headshot on my LinkedIn profile.

We talked about disability advocacy, et cetera, if you are new to the field like I was at the time, that was great to learn that.

I'm not sure, it's been a while, we did the Profile In Courage at that time and that was a big thing during Disability Pride Month as well.

And it was really important building community and getting to know other interns and learning more about how to behave in a professional setting, and ‑‑ well, they were already disabled, but how to bring your disability into the workplace and ask for accommodations, while understanding how I guess valuable it is to be disabled.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you, Zandy. Anything you'll add, Jessica?

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, I think orientation covered kind of everything. And we often did a lot of stuff before the internship program even started. We did, like, you know, ten books and we read a book and read some of the stories in the book. And we were able to get training around, like, transportation, like in D.C. and the training, like, going across the country.

And so we had a connection with each other a little bit, like, even before the internship even started, and I think that was really impeccable and it was a big surprise.

I have book reading assignments that I have to do before the internship starts? [Chuckles] and I'm, like, I thought that was really cool. I did it and it was not, like, a lot. I don't want to scare anybody. It's not like you have to read, like, five books, you read a couple pages or you read a story and we discuss that story.

So it was a really great way of bonding.

And the orientation week in D.C., we kind of continued that story, the book club, as well as disability history and disability policy, kind of, like, how to incorporate your story into your advocacy and how disability advocacy fits into every role.

Not just within D.C. but fits within the tech space and schools and et cetera, and we had a lot of time to chat about a lot of fun things and making jokes. But we also talked about really impactful things as well, and it was really awesome.

And when I tell everybody and talk about this program, even the smartest people in my cohort, they were the smartest people I had ever met and it was great to talk about real things with each other, and not just, like, superficial things, so it was great to talk to each other

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Jessica. This is Katie. I read something about is there a GPA requirement. There is not a GPA requirement to participate.

I did want to highlight that we are looking for a diverse cohort, a cohort of people who bring a lot of different experiences.

It's not that you go to the best college or you have, like, a million things on your résumé, I know someone else asked a question that's similar, what experiences do you bring.

We are looking for people who are passionate about improving the lives of people with disabilities and eager to learn and grow.

So things like GPA or what school you go to or the stuff on your résumé is not really as important to us. We're looking to have people who are passionate and excited to help.

And I wanted to highlight that about the GPA requirement.

Okay. And then there was a question about advice to make a good candidate that's chosen by AAPD and what we're looking for. So, yes, that's what we're looking for, we are looking for people leaning into growth, growing their advocacy skills, their leadership skills, and that they're passionate about disability issues.

And so the more that you can include that in your essay responses, the better.

Someone asked a question about incorporating your career goals and your dream placement sites into your essay questions or is there another space to share that information?

So in your application, you can definitely talk about what you're passionate about, what you want to do with your career and how it relates to the internship program. That's really helpful for us when we're reading them, oh, this is where they're headed, this is what their goals are.

There's a question about a disability issue and then coming up with a solution for it. That's a great place to choose an issue that you're passionate about or connects your interest.

The second part to answer your question, after you're accepted into the program, you fill out the placement forms, the ones that Jessica was talking about at one point, and that's where you can share in‑depth what placements you want, what your preferences are related to your career goals.

If you know that now and want to include it, please include it in your application, but there will always be time later.

Okay. I'm going to keep scrolling.

There was a question about transition programs and if there is a possibility that you could be placed at the current place that you're employed? I would love to follow‑up on that specifically over e‑mail. But I did just want to emphasize that this program is open to people in schools‑based transition programs.

And if you have any questions about whether or not your program counts towards the eligibility requirements, please do send us an e‑mail.

All right. I see another question for one of our panelists. From this internship, how did you grow as a disability advocate? What did you learn?

Who would like to go?

[Pause].

>> CHRISTINA STAFFORD: I can start. So, yeah, as I mentioned before, when I started, I didn't really know a lot about the practical steps of advocacy, really how to do it, how to get involved.

I knew it was something that I was interested in, but I didn't know how to really practically put it into practice.

And so, for me, what I really gained out of it was actionable items. Things that I could be doing right then or things that I could follow up within the next year.

Things like creating my story and being able to learn how to share it. Learning what types of strategies work best when you're asking for different things and trying to fit which strategy works best.

And then also a lot of it was just kind of learning from my fellow interns in the cohort to see what they were doing in their lives and on their campuses, to see what I could be doing in my life.

And a lot of that was kind of just talking to a lot of the fellow cohorts and talking with a lot of the speakers that we had, to see what they had been doing and how we could kind of apply that to wherever we were coming from.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much. Yeah, go ahead, Zandy.

>> ZANDY WONG: I think the internship gave a lot of credibility to my work as a disability advocate. Having the mark of an AAPD intern actually gives you a lot of credibility in the disability justice and disability rights movement and they were able to help us support and advance my work.

Since then I have served as the youth advisor to the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy here in D.C. and Maryland as well and it's exciting to be a part of cool projects that I wouldn't have had without the support of the AAPD community, so I'm really grateful for that.

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much. All right. I wanted to stress to people that in a lot of our questions, thank you to Christine, who has been busy answering some of them, so if your question wasn't answered verbally, please check there.

I'm going to try to get through one or two more.

Someone asked about how to prepare for the interview. Does any of our alumni want to talk about how they prepared? Jessica, go ahead.

>> JESSICA LOPEZ: Yeah, I was really nervous, because I didn't know what to expect, and there's like so many placement options that you have.

I think the best thing is to focus on what you care about. Like, they want to hear about who you are as a person. They want to know, like, what you're doing, what you care about. They want to know if you have certain passions. Maybe you don't want to be a disability rights advocate, but you are a disabled student who is making change some other way.

They want to know about that as well.

They want to know about the intersection part of your identity, whether you identify with, you know, different parts of your identity.

And I think the biggest thing is that I think it's just really important to share, like, what you're working on, what are you working on in school, maybe you have some cool projects you want to share or maybe you want to share, like, you're in student government, those are really great things to share with the AAPD when you're in that internship placement interview.

And once they put you in an interview with, like, Michelle I interviewed with the Department of Labor, once I had that interview, I shared that as well, for myself, I had a great experience and that conversation we vibed and I shared my passions and they had the same passion.

Share who you are and they will love you for who you are, so...

>> KATIE JOHNSON: Thank you so much, Jessica, I could not have said it better.

We're just at time and I know that we didn't get to everyone's questions. So I just wanted to share where you can get more information or if you need something that's maybe a little bit more specific to you, please e‑mail internships@AAPD.com. I just threw that e‑mail into the chat box.

Again, our application is due on Thursday, October 19th at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

I'm dropping the link to the summer internship program web page. This has all of the information you need. It also has the link to our ‑‑ to the application itself and the application portal.

And we will be putting the recording from today's events, along with the slides and the transcript, up on that web page.

So that's where I would check back in.

And I hope ‑‑ yeah, I know we won't get to everyone. But thank you so much to each of our panelists for sharing about your experience!

And to everyone for attending. We had a great turnout!

We look forward to receiving your applications. Reach out if you have any questions and we're excited to read your materials soon.

So enjoy the rest of your evening! Thank you all so much!

Bye now.

[Concludes at 5:01 p.m. ET].