



Environmental Justice Fact Sheet

ECO Intern Program

The ECO Intern Program provides students with real-world experience by working in EPA on a variety of environmental and public health issues.

About the Program

Since January 1992, EPA has invested more than \$30 million in extramural funds to support this valuable program which has trained more than 2,500 ECO Associates to date.

The program benefits both the student and EPA. The student gets to spend up to 9 months working full-time at an EPA laboratory, regional office, or in a headquarters program while the EPA Sponsor gets the benefit of the student's skill and eagerness, for a nominal investment on the average of \$12,000 extramural dollars per trainee-ship. The Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) cooperative agreement is managed by Linda Smith (Project Officer) and Renee Goins (Program Manager) of the Office of Environmental Justice. For more information, call 202-564-2515.

Background

EPA and ECO have had a mutually beneficial partnership since the late 70's. Their goal continues to be to attract the best and brightest students with the hope that they will pursue a "green" career.

EPA is committed to equal employment opportunity and diversity in its workforce. Through innovative and effective internships, the Office of Environmental Justice has contributed significantly to these endeavors. At least 55 percent of the trainees are students of color, many from minority academic institutions of higher education.

One of the barriers to increasing the cultural diversity of environmental decision-makers, policy-makers and science managers has been the limited

number of students of color who choose to pursue environmental degrees, thus eliminating them from consideration for these positions.

To help address this concern, there is an easy, user-friendly vehicle for students from diverse cultural backgrounds to work in EPA through paid internships. This program allows an EPA Sponsor to meet qualified students and encourage them to pursue "green" careers. The most impressive year to date was 1997, when over 400 interns were placed!

Since the Office of Environmental Justice took responsibility of the program in November 1992, the program has trained approximately 2,500 interns, and about 50 of these students have been hired into permanent positions. Perhaps more importantly, the program has spurred about 25 percent of the participants to change their original career paths and choose environmental occupations.

In May 2004, EPA signed a new three-year cooperative agreement with ECO.

Intern Eligibility

To become an ECO Associate, the student must currently be enrolled at a university or community college, or have graduated within 3 months, or be planning to return to school within 3 months of the start of the internship.

The student may contact the EPA location at which he/she would like to train to see if an internship is available. Another option is for the student to apply directly with the Environmental Careers Organization and indicate his/her geographic preferences and/or be considered for an internship anywhere at EPA as well as at all other locations served by ECO.

In any case, to be considered, the student must e-mail his/her resume or complete the ECO

Application on the ECO Web site (<http://www.eco.org>) or send a resume to:

Environmental Careers Organization
Attention: Liz Cavano
30 Winter Street, Sixth Floor
Boston, MA 02108

EPA Sponsorship

To sponsor an ECO Associate, an EPA organization must develop a project for the internship (1 page or less) and have extramural funds available. The weekly stipend can vary but is usually \$500 for an undergraduate. The length of the trainee-ship depends on the EPA organization's need but is usually from 12 to 26 weeks (approximately \$14,000 for a 12 week undergraduate which includes \$2,500 for travel). Next, the EPA organization must notify Renee Goins, by phone (202-564-2598), by fax (202-501-1106), or by e-mail (goins.renee@epa.gov).

The EPA organization may either identify a student or have ECO send applications from their database which match the skills required in the project description. After selecting a student, the EPA organization must obtain a formal budget sheet from ECO which will indicate the exact cost of the intern, prepare a commitment notice for this exact amount, and forward the budget sheet, the commitment notice and the project description to Renee Goins, MC-2201A, or deliver the package to Room 2224 Ariel Rios South. The EPA organization will be notified of the date the intern may begin the trainee-ship with ECO.

Notice to Interns

- To be an intern you must be a U.S. Citizen.
- Interns must be students (see Intern Eligibility description on the previous page).
- An intern may be advanced an additional \$500 of stipend to compensate if a geographical move is required.
- Students must send a resume to ECO.

Notice to EPA Sponsors

- Children of EPA employees are not eligible.
- EPA Sponsors fund interns with extramural money.
- Any travel that the intern will do as part of the trainee-ship must be added to the cost of the internship at the time the original paperwork is submitted.
- The EPA Sponsor is responsible for ensuring that appropriate travel reports are submitted by the intern to ECO at the completion of each trip.
- Interns are ECO employees. They do not count under the EPA FTE ceiling.
- EPA sponsors must send request for interns to Renee Goins.

For General Information call:

Renee Goins
202-564-2598
202-501-1106 (fax)

Attention: EPA Sponsors

Send Project Descriptions and Funding Packages to:

via Regular Mail:

EPA Office of Environmental Justice
1200 Penn. Ave., NW (Mail Code 2201-A)
Washington, DC 20460

or

Hand Deliver or Federal Express to:
EPA Office of Environmental Justice
Ariel Rios South Building
1200 Penn. Ave. NW, Room 2224
Washington, DC 20004
(Tel. 202-564-2515)