

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS

The Otto and Verdell Rutherford Summer Congressional Internship

Senator Merkley is offering a \$5,000 stipend for a summer internship position, based in his Washington, DC office. The Otto and Verdell Rutherford Congressional Internship* provides an opportunity to an undergraduate student from Oregon who seeks to experience public policy-making up close and further the cause of economic and social justice. This unique internship position is designed specifically for students who otherwise would not be able to afford the opportunity to intern in our nation's capital.

As the first in his family to go to college and having interned for former Senator Mark Hatfield in the 1970s, Senator Merkley has experienced firsthand the lifelong impact a Senate internship can have. Interns are integrated as part of the team and staff invest in facilitating interns' professional development. Interns are paired with legislative staff based on their interests and experience. Tasks include conducting research, drafting memos, attending briefings/hearings, and assisting staff in constituent services, correspondence and administrative duties. Senator Merkley's DC program includes a shadow day – a day in which an intern has the opportunity to experience a day in the life of a senator.

The ideal candidate is inquisitive, adaptable, rooted in community service, and possesses a keen interest in advancing social and economic justice issues. Candidates should demonstrate strong communications and interpersonal skills, keen attention to detail, an ability to multi-task as well as to maintain a positive demeanor while working in a fast-paced work environment. Oregon ties a must.

Summer internships are full-time. The summer term begins late-May to early June and ends late August. Housing is not provided; however, the intern coordinator can work with interns to provide resources and guidance for arranging housing accommodations.

To apply, candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, three references and answers to two of the following essay questions below to DC_intern@merkley.senate.gov. Please include Candidate for the Otto and Verdell Congressional Internship in the subject line of the email. Deadline to apply: March 30, 2016. If you have questions, please contact Jodi Niehoff, Senator Merkley's Administrative and Correspondence Director, who supervises the internship program.

** The internship is named in honor of Otto and Verdell Rutherford, prominent civil rights leaders in Oregon during the 20th century. Upon their marriage in 1936, Otto and Verdell began a life of activism, rooted in a love of community and respect for hard work and education. Together, they laid the groundwork to promote social change. Particularly, the Rutherfords' hard-fought efforts were key to the success of the 1953 passage of Oregon's Public Accommodations Act, a bill that ended racial discrimination in places of public accommodation, such as restaurants, hotels, hospitals and amusement parks. This landmark legislation, which was carried by then Oregon House member Mark Hatfield, was passed under Otto Rutherford's leadership as president of the Portland Branch NAACP and Verdell's important role as secretary. Moreover, Verdell volunteered her secretarial skills to other organizations and she saved hundreds of original documents and photographs which have been donated to Portland State University Library Special Collections Division known as The Verdell Burdine and Otto G. Rutherford Family Collection. This unique collection, which is available to the public, provides a rich historical overview of the personal, political and community life of the Rutherfords and African Americans in Portland over the course of nearly a century.*

ESSAY QUESTIONS CANDIDATES

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please answer Essay Question #1 and select one essay question between Essay Questions #2 and #3 to answer.

ESSAY #1 (In 600 words or less): What life experiences have shaped who you are today and what challenges have you overcome in achieving your education and goals? Please explain why you seek the paid internship position in Senator Merkley's office and how you would benefit from receiving it.

ESSAY #2 (In 500 words or less): Advancing social and economic justice is a priority for Senator Merkley. How have your community service experiences or your life experiences informed your understanding of social or economic justice?

ESSAY #3 (In 500 words or less): Identify one social, economic or political issue that you are passionate about and, in your words, describe why it is important. How have you seen community resources mobilized to address the issue? From your perspective, what ways do you think this issue could be further addressed? What should be done?