Summer Associate Program

The summer associate program is one of the most important elements of the firm’s recruitment effort. If you receive an offer to join us as a summer associate, we have made an initial judgment that you can make a valuable contribution to the firm's practice. A significant portion of our associate hiring each year comes from the summer associate group of previous years, and a very high percentage of our former summer associates who enter private practice return to the firm.

Work Assignments

We make every effort to give our summer associates a rounded view of a Washington law practice. Summer associate assignments are designed to provide a variety of substantive work and the broadest possible exposure to our lawyers. In order to help ensure that these assignments match the work preferences of our summer associates, they select their projects from an online database that contains a variety of assignments from all areas of the practice.

Professional Development

Professional training is a year-round process at Steptoe. Summer associates are invited to all professional training programs offered during the summer, but some program, such as practical tips from associates are planned exclusively for the benefit of summer associates. We host weekly seminars that cover the firm's organizations, our practice, and other matters of topical interest, with presentation by speakers both inside and outside the firm.

Over the summer, we provide opportunities for summer associates to attend trials, arguments, depositions, negotiations, and other legal activities in which the firm is involved, and we encourage summer associates to attend as many of these practical experiences as possible. We host weekly seminars that cover the firm's organization, its practice, and other matters of topical interest, with presentations by speakers both inside and outside of the firm. We also try to give our summer associates direct exposure to those institutions that make Washington unique: the Supreme Court, Congress, and the executive agencies.

It is our intention that each summer associate will be a better lawyer after spending a summer with Steptoe. To this end, we pay careful attention to the evaluation process. The summer associate's mentor provides a comprehensive review of the their first project before the work product is submitted. The first and all subsequent assignments will be discussed with the summer associate by at least one of the lawyers who supervised the project. In addition to this ongoing feedback, the Chair of the Summer Program Committee conducts a mid-term and exit review with each summer associate.

Social Events

It is important to us that we get to know our summer associates not just within the office environment, but also in more informal settings. We sponsor a varied program of events, ranging from sailing to theater outings, at which summer associates have the chance to get acquainted with Steptoe's lawyers as well as with one another. Our most popular events include a day of sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, shows at the Kennedy Center, tours of Washington, cooking class, and a night of baseball to see a Nationals game.

Split Summer Policy

We extend offers for the full 10 weeks of our summer program and strongly discourage split summers. Requests by second-year summer associates to split the summer are reviewed by the chair of the Hiring Committee on a case-by-case basis. Summer associates have the opportunity to spend a week or two at another Steptoe office; these requests are reviewed by the chair of the Hiring Committee on a case-by-case basis. We do not permit split summers for first-year summer associates.

We strongly encourage qualified women, minorities, Veterans, individuals with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community to apply.