



THOUGHTS *to* ACTIONS

FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT.

Public Policy
& Infrastructure Curriculum
Jun. 15 - Aug. 3 | 8 weeks |
Artesia, CA

OVERVIEW

This 8-week internship immerses high school students in California and U.S. public policy. Through guest speakers, simulations, research workshops, and a culminating campaign project, interns develop the knowledge and tools to analyze existing laws, advocate for change, and launch real-world policy campaigns

Week	Topic	Week	Topic
1	The System (Public Policy & Commerce)	5	Campaigning & Political Advocacy
2	Understanding the Past for a Better Future	6	Communication & Research
3	Policy Analysis & Evaluation	7	Environmental, Social & Global Policy
4	Guest Speakers & Stakeholder Roles	8	Capstone Prep & Launch Presentations

ORIENTATION

1

& CODE OF CONDUCT

Day 1 — Welcome & Program Overview:

- Introductions, group icebreaker, and overview of the full curriculum and capstone project
- Case study activity: Examine a real California law and trace how it came to exist
- Introduction to professional conduct in public and policy settings

Day 2 — Character & Presentation:

- What it means to conduct yourself professionally across all areas of public life
- Discussion: Why your voice, identity, and character matter in policy spaces

THE SYSTEM

②

Before students can change the system, they must understand it. This week covers the full architecture of the American and California governments

Day 1: Stages of Public Policy Development:

- The policy lifecycle: problem identification, agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation
- Consequences of bad policy: real California and federal case studies
- Introduction to the American political system: federal vs. state vs. local authority

Day 2: Current Events & Why Law?

- Current events discussion: immigration, enforcement, and policy consequences (state vs. federal tension)
- Film clip analysis and discussion
- How does law reflect a society's values?

— JUN 29 - JUL 3 —

POLICY ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

③

Students go deep into evaluating policies using professional criteria and practice the rigorous, evidence-based thinking used by real policymakers, advocates, and lawyers.

Day 1: Analyzing the System

- [Guest Speaker] Journey Towards Justice: lived experiences intersecting with policy
- In-depth analysis of complex social “problems” unpacking root causes vs. symptoms
- Criteria for policy evaluation: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and unintended consequences

Day 2: Legal Perspectives

- [Guest Speaker] Pre-Bar Associate: how law and policy intertwine from a practitioner’s lens
- Workshop: Evaluate a real local policy initiative using the evaluation framework
- Activity: Students identify one policy they believe is flawed and begin building a case

GUEST SPEAKERS & STAKEHOLDER ROLES

4

Policy is shaped by many voices: lawyers, politicians, staffers, lobbyists, and judges. This week brings those voices into the room and teaches students how to engage as stakeholders themselves.

Day 1: Public Policy & Law in Practice

- [Guest Speaker] Public Defender: the legal system as seen from the front lines
- [Guest Speaker] Politician: how elected officials navigate policy from the inside
- Mock policy debate: Students take on roles of different stakeholders on a real-world issue

Day 2: Influence, Lobbying & Recap

- [Guest Speaker] Federal Lobbyist: how interest groups legally shape legislation
- [Guest Speaker] Political Staffer: behind-the-scenes of a policy office
- Discussion: Who really influences public policy, and how can everyday citizens compete?

CAMPAIGNING & POLITICAL ADVOCACY

⑤

The law begins with a campaign. This week teaches students how to build and execute a real advocacy and campaign strategy: the tools used to move public opinion, activate communities, and apply pressure where it counts.

Day 1: Your Right to Influence

- How every citizen has the right and responsibility to engage in politics
- Tools of advocacy: petitions, public comment periods, community organizing, ballot initiatives
- Understanding the roles of stakeholders, interest groups, lobbyists, and grassroots movements

Day 2: Campaign Strategy Workshop

- Anatomy of a political campaign: message, audience, channels, timeline, and call to action
- Digital and social media campaigning: how policy battles are won online
- Activity: Students draft a one-page campaign strategy brief for their capstone policy proposal
- Field trip (pending): Visit to a local elected official's district office (Sharon Quirk-Silva or Janice Hahn)

COMMUNICATION & RESEARCH

6

Great policy requires great communication and airtight research. Students learn to speak with authority, write persuasively, and find evidence that stands up to scrutiny.

Day 1: Communication is Key

- Protocol for communicating through the chain of policymaking: constituents, staff, legislators, media
- How to speak to a general audience: clarity, resonance, and emotional connection
- Practice: Interns deliver a 90-second public comment on their capstone policy topic

Day 2: Research Protocols

- How to identify trusted sources: government databases, peer-reviewed research, credible journalism
- Asking the right questions to uncover complexity behind a social phenomenon
- Activity: Interns build an annotated source list supporting their capstone bill or law proposal

— JUL 28 - AUG 1 —

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & GLOBAL POLICY

7

Policy does not stop at state lines. This week broadens the lens to examine how social welfare, environmental justice, and international policy all connect.

Day 1: Social Welfare & Domestic Policy

- Deep dive into healthcare, education, housing, and mental health policies in California
- [Guest Speaker] LCSW & Bill Contributor: the intersection of social work and legislation
- Debate: Students argue competing positions on a current social policy issue (e.g., rent control, universal basic income, mental health mandates)

Day 2: Global Perspectives & Model UN

- Overview of international relations and how global policy affects Californians (trade, human rights, climate)
- Model UN Simulation: Students represent nations in a structured debate on a global policy issue
- Film analysis: How policy is portrayed, distorted, or humanized through storytelling

CAPSTONE PROJECTS

⑧

The program culminates in each intern presenting an original policy project: a bill they propose, an existing law they seek to repeal or modify, and a full campaign strategy designed to make it happen.

Final Presentation Day (August 3rd):

- Each intern presents their policy project and campaign strategy to a panel of guest speakers and program mentors
- Panel provides structured feedback using real-world policy evaluation criteria
- Reflective group discussion: What did we learn? What will we do next?
- Certificates of Completion and closing ceremony