

Sexual Assault Prevention in New Orleans with STAR

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This summer, I worked with the New Orleans branch of STAR, Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response. STAR is a non-profit in Louisiana with three branches, working together to prevent future instances of sexual violence in Louisiana and help survivors of past instances of sexual violence get access to the resources they need to heal. Within STAR, I worked as an operations and grant intern.

In my capacity as an operations and grant intern, my main responsibility was to complete a grant for STAR. The title of the grant is New Orleans City Council-Harrah's New Orleans Casino Community Support Grant Program, and it is a grant that allows non-profit organizations in New Orleans to receive money from various city council members. I worked with STAR to write a grant that requested funds that are vital to allowing STAR to continue to serve survivors at their current rate and ensure that their staff are able to work in a safe and comfortable environment. Writing a grant was a new experience for me, but it was a valuable learning experience. I researched past grants that STAR had completed to educate myself on appropriate language to use within the grant. The language used in the grant is central to ensuring that various city council members in New Orleans will be enticed to give money to STAR. In this process, I also educated myself on the way in which writing and receiving grants is necessary to allow non-profits to run and do the work they set out to do.

During my internship, I also completed a blog post for STAR's blog about the relationship between instances of sexual violence on college campuses and football season. I researched the way rates of sexual violence increase on days when there are either home or away football games. This relates to the sexual violence prevention and education work that STAR pursues, but it also is very relevant to Louisiana, as a state with two highly competitive football teams at LSU and Tulane.

While I was with STAR this summer, I made it a priority to understand the leadership structure of a non-profit. As I enter my senior year, I am curious about the possibility of working full-time in nonprofits. Working with STAR and conducting informational interviews with people who hold leadership roles allowed me to understand more deeply what it would mean for me to embark on a career working with nonprofits.

This summer was an invaluable learning experience, and I am grateful to STAR for allowing me to grow as an advocate, educator, and member of my community.