

First Weeks at the Trust!

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I am wrapping up my first few weeks of work at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private non-profit which lobbies for government action to promote the preservation of historic places and coordinates local preservation efforts. As the Trust's Preservation Tax Credit Intern, I work within the Government Relations team, which operates out of the Trust's Washington DC central office in the Watergate building.

While my formal title is '[Preservation Tax Credit Intern](#)' I actually get to work on a broader range of subjects than simply analyzing the national historic tax credit

program. During the initial application phase my supervisor anticipated I would focus on work with state historic tax credit policy, but the administration's goal of comprehensive tax reform places the federal historic tax credit in jeopardy—thus, I am assisting advocacy efforts on both the federal and state levels.

My main job so far has been to overhaul promotional/advocacy materials promoting the historic tax credit. First I will edit and re-organize a report on states' historic tax credits by region, then I will similarly update and re-organize a similar report currently generated for the federal historic tax credit. I will also help consolidate other materials to be used for future outreach, overhauling the Government Relations' section of the Trust's image database, and assembling a national directory of local and state preservation organizations for our team to better conduct future outreach.

During my initial search for a summer internship, I knew I was interested in historic preservation, but I did not know where I should look to pursue that interest. I was lucky enough to discover a website called [Preserve Net](#), which has a regularly updated board posting jobs and internships in the historic preservation field. I found the posting for the position I currently hold early in the spring semester, and began preparing my application shortly thereafter. From this experience, I offer a few tips for other potential interns applying for their dream positions!

1. *Don't be afraid to apply for a position* that may seem outside of your field of expertise if you are genuinely interested in it. My resume predominantly reflects women-centered work and research, i.e. Research Assistant for the [NCI's Women on Corporate Boards project](#), Intern at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center. I did not have any previous positions working in historic preservation or public policy. However, the experiences I did have provided me with opportunities to work extensively in analytical writing and editing, which were key to receiving my internship offer. Combined with my personal passion for historic preservation efforts and a desire to get involved in the field that I emphasized in the interview, I was able to secure the position.
2. *Kill it in the interview.* While interviews can be stressful, know that if your potential supervisor is scheduling an interview with you, they are definitely interested. Try to build camaraderie with your interviewer, i.e. by asking them how they arrived in this position, and see if you have things in common you can talk about. Getting them talking about an aspect of the job that they love can give you an inside scoop into your interviewer's professional life and a potential

path into the position, show genuine interest in the employer and its workers past the position itself, and leave a positive impression of you with the interviewer.

3. Prepare for other possibilities! While I secured funding from the NCI for the housing near my internship I am currently residing in, I technically secured the funding before I fully secured my position at the Trust. Even in my initial application, I listed several organizations I had applied to in the area as reasons I should have my housing funded—this way, my [DC housing](#) could be used no matter what position I ended up receiving offers from/accepting. I was lucky enough to receive an offer from another position shortly after I accepted mine at the Trust, and on top of being a confidence boost, it reminded me that I would have still had other internship opportunities even if I had not received an offer for my present position.

My first weeks have been fantastic! Besides starting the aforementioned tasks, my first week was filled with on-boarding activities with my fellow interns. The Trust organized an after-work activity where we saw a performance at the Kennedy Performing Arts Center's Millennium Stage at so that we could meet interns outside of my department. It even reminded me a bit of New Orleans, since the dance series ended with a second line! Even though not all of us could attend that evening, I was still able to meet several interns from other departments I would not otherwise encounter—especially considering I am the only intern in my department.

I also discovered that one of my roommates at GW, Holly, works at the Trust with me! As an added bonus, I get to walk to work with someone every day. My other two roommates, Susan and Jess are interning in public health and environmental policy fields, so I also reap the benefits of meeting people working in the city in a discipline besides my own.

I have been able to sit in on numerous team meetings, both wider Government Relations department meetings, meetings with individuals working on federal tax credits, and state tax credits. It has allowed me to see the inner workings of the trust, and a nonprofit in general within different groups of workers in the Trust. Attending these meetings also makes my work easier, integrating me further into the team, and providing me further insight on what other members are doing so I can understand my work's role within their efforts.

I was also lucky enough to accompany members of my team on the Trust's [Lobby Day](#) on the Hill! My team worked with representatives of developers, banks, and other groups interested in preserving the historic tax credit to raise awareness about and defend the federal historic tax credit in anticipation of tax reform. To show Congress the program's genuine local impact, we encouraged its members to visit sites in their districts being rehabilitated using the credits during their upcoming recess. Overall, approximately eight teams assembled for the effort, and I accompanied one team where we sat down with staff members from Senators Dick Durbin (IL), Debbie Stabenow (MI), and Gary Peters (MI).

In the coming weeks, I expect to learn more about how a nonprofit works, more details of different states' tax credit policies, and how to best prepare public policy materials so it can resonate as effectively with the public as it does with legislators.