



NPS Academy 2016



THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE * STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

NPS ACADEMY PROGRAM OVERVIEW



The National Park Service (NPS) Academy was launched in March of 2011 by the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and the NPS, and is designed to introduce undergraduate and graduate students from diverse communities across the country to career opportunities within the NPS. More than 300 successful candidates have come away from this innovative program equipped with enthusiasm, professionalism, a strong work ethic, and knowledge of the NPS mission and Universal Competencies. The NPS Academy maximizes career opportunities with the NPS through strategic recruitment, training, mentoring and hands-on experiences.

In 2016, the NPS Youth Programs Office will fund approximately 60 summer internships.

SCA strategically recruits qualified NPS Academy candidates and makes selections utilizing critical input from the NPS and the partnering park units. The resulting candidate pool is a combination of first-year candidates and returning interns who are excited for additional experiences to grow their skills.



The goals of the NPS Academy are to:

- Build career skills among diverse students by providing classroom and experiential opportunities that prepare them for working within the NPS
- Enhance interns' connection to the NPS and skills for conservation careers through “on-the-job” training during summer internships
- Pair interns with NPS mentors who help deepen students' knowledge of and connection to the National Park Service
- Engage students in ambassador roles to engage their university and/or community by specifically sharing their NPS Academy experience. Students will also promote more NPS and SCA opportunities among their peers and faculty
- Facilitate a career development path for successful Academy members to join the NPS workforce as seasonal, term and/or permanent employees

Program Model:

The NPS Academy includes a multi-phased approach which includes:

- A week-long orientation in March
- A twelve-week internship beginning between May and September 2016. Internship locations are determined annually by an RFP. Please note SCA interns cannot participate in law enforcement, firefighting (prescribed burns are ok), or the supervision of youth.
- Post-internship, members are asked to serve as NPS ambassadors in their communities
- Career preparation through a wide range of future placements with NPS and SCA.
- This program is legally authorized under the Public Lands Corps Act. Interns meeting certain qualifications can become eligible for Public Land Corps' (PLC) non-competitive hiring authority for Federal positions.

Park/Program Office Benefits:

- Internships will be funded by the WASO Youth Programs Office, with a single task agreement funding all internship positions.
- SCA will provide pre-screened, highly qualified, and capable interns from diverse backgrounds. Participating parks and program offices have the opportunity to review application materials and interview candidates prior to placement.
- Academy interns with a strong understanding of NPS mission and career paths from their intensive week-long training program prior to internship placement or a returning Academy member with a previous field experience.
- SCA has 58 years of proven leadership and experience in managing and developing innovative youth programs for NPS sites and program offices.

Park/Program Office Responsibilities:

- The park/unit must provide each intern with a mentor, in addition to a position supervisor. Mentors who are outside the supervisory chain have been most successful at supporting previous Academy interns.
- Housing costs are the responsibility of the host park or program office. A subsidy for housing in high cost urban areas may be available.
- The host park or program office is also responsible for any federal background checks necessary for access to government computers or facilities.

Selection Criteria:

Requests for NPS Academy members will be evaluated on the following criteria. Superior proposals will include:

1) Internship description

A thorough description of a robust and valuable internship. This description must effectively articulate the quality of the intern experience. Specify the various duties, responsibilities, and desired outcomes, and include work assignments that can be successfully completed during the specified time period. Please note SCA interns cannot participate in law enforcement, firefighting (prescribed burns are ok), or the supervision of youth.

2) Training and Developmental Opportunities

A description of interdisciplinary trainings, hands-on experiences, job shadowing and developmental opportunities that will be made available to the intern for a more enriching work experience. Include a description of how these opportunities will deepen the intern's knowledge of the NPS mission, career competencies, and the individual park/office.

3) Park/Office Involvement

A description of how the NPS unit's and/or office's active involvement will assure the success of the intern(s). This will include assuring the Academy members' adequate supervision and the assignment and engagement of an active mentor. Please also describe opportunities for the member(s) to be paired with experienced park staff not attached to the direct work assignment.

4) Non-Work Experience

A description of the non-work experience in the park/unit. This includes opportunities that will more deeply connect the intern to the park, the Park Service, and the local community. This would include recreation and social opportunities (including the ability for the member to interact with other interns or peers).

Proposal should be submitted through SCA's online database by **COB October 30, 2015, see attached document for more details. Please contact Emily Poore (epoore@thesca.org) or Dave Barak (dbarak@thesca.org) for more information.**