



COUNCIL *for* OPPORTUNITY *in* EDUCATION

# Thomas R. Wolanin

# Internship

Application Guide

2025 - 2026

**WEBSITE:**

[www.coenet.org](http://www.coenet.org)

**POINT OF CONTACT:**

Angela L. Holley,  
Director of Student  
Opportunities



202-347-7430



Thomas R. Wolanin

## 2026 Thomas R. Wolanin Internship

Are you—or someone you know—ready to step into the heart of federal policy-making and make a meaningful impact on educational opportunity?

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is now accepting applications for the Thomas R. Wolanin Congressional Internship Program, which will take place from February to May 2026. This is a paid, full-time opportunity in Washington, D.C. This program is designed for individuals who are the first in their families to graduate from college and are eager to explore public policy through hands-on experience.

Here's what the internship offers:

- A 2–3 week placement at COE, a national higher education association, where interns gain foundational knowledge of the policy process
- A 3–4 month placement in a Congressional office, where interns engage directly with legislative work and advocacy
- Connection to a national network of educators, researchers, and policy leaders committed to expanding educational opportunity

*Named in honor of Thomas R. Wolanin, a former Congressional staffer and lifelong advocate for access to higher education, this internship is more than a resume builder—it's a launchpad for future leaders who understand the barriers to college access and want to help dismantle them.*



## Primary Responsibilities

Expect to:

- Research legislation and policy issues
- Attend and summarize briefings, hearings, and meetings
- Draft talking points, memos, and communications
- Support Congressional Committee staff with real-time tasks

## Qualifications

To be eligible, you must:

- Have earned your bachelor's degree within the past 5 years
- Have participated in a Federal TRIO Program (pre-college or undergraduate)
- Be passionate about public policy and expanding college access
- Communicate clearly and professionally—both in writing and speaking
- Thrive in fast-moving environments
- Think critically and solve problems creatively
- Work well independently and as part of a team
- Be proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook)

Benefits	Details
Monthly Stipend	\$2,700
Housing Allowance	\$1,500
Travel	Round-trip airfare to/from Washington, D.C.



Application Link

THE APPLICATION CAN BE ACCESSED AT THE  
QR CODE OR LINK PROVIDED BELOW



<https://bit.ly/26COEWL>



## Application Checklist

**ENSURE ALL ITEMS ARE INCLUDED BEFORE SUBMISSION.  
INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

- Respond to all questions on the application!
- Provide **three references** (two must be from professors familiar with your academic work)
- Upload a **Resume**
- Upload a **Transcript** (an unofficial copy is acceptable at this stage of the application process)
- Upload a **Personal Statement**
- Upload a **Letter of Recommendation** from your **TRIO Project Director**
- Upload a **Letter of Recommendation** from a **Faculty Member/Academic Advisor** outside of TRIO



## Strategies for Success

### *Writing a Strong Personal Statement*

- **Open with Impact** – Start with a statement that shows your passion.
- **Customize It** – Align your statement with the internship’s goals and values.
- **Highlight Key Experiences** – Focus on relevant academic, volunteer, or work examples.
- **Show Your Strengths** – Mention skills that make you a good fit.
- **State Your Goals** – Explain what you hope to gain and how it fits your career path.
- **Be Authentic** – Let your personality and motivation shine through.
- **Use Clear and Professional Language** - write in a confident and positive tone.
- **Make It Yours** - AI can be a great tool, but use it sparingly and intentionally. It should be a support, not a substitute.
- **Keep it Concise** – Stay within 500–750 words and avoid fluff.
- **Proofread** – Check for grammar and clarity before submitting.



## Strategies for Success

### *Elements of a Strong Recommendation Letter*

- **Clear Endorsement**
  - A confident statement of support for the applicant's candidacy.
- **Knowledge of the Applicant**
  - Demonstrates a genuine understanding of the applicant's character, work ethic, and goals.
- **Relevant Examples**
  - Specific anecdotes or achievements that highlight leadership, advocacy, academic excellence, or community involvement.
- **Professional Tone and Format**
  - Well-organized, free of errors, and written on official letterhead if possible.
- **Insight into Potential**
  - Speaks to the applicant's future contributions to the field and their readiness for a policy-focused internship.
- **Contact Information**
  - Includes the recommender's name, title, organization, and contact details for follow-up.



## Dates and Contact Information

<b>Due Date</b>	<b>October 15, 2025</b>
<b>Anticipated Date of Notification</b>	<b>November 10, 2025</b>
<b>Point of Contact</b>	<b>Angela L. Holley, Director of Student Opportunities</b>  <b>Email:</b> <b><a href="mailto:angela.holley@coenet.org">angela.holley@coenet.org</a></b>  <b>Phone: 202-347-7430</b>



“If someone’s going to apply for the program, they should work with their current employer or TRIO program. During the application process, my supervisor helped me figure out how the internship would fit into my career plan. I’ve also been a public policy addict and loved seeing the favorable impact policy can have on everyday lives. I would say, go into it with your eyes wide open. This is not just a summer internship, but it’s a real opportunity to develop your career, and that’s priceless.”

-Brandy Dailey (First Wolanin Intern)

