

Independent Communications NEWS

Serving ACA Connects Members
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"Advocacy" Sauce**
Delivers as Senate
Passes Infrastructure
Bill

**ACA Connects
Members Invest in
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Working

**The Independent
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ACA Connects' First Intern Highlights "Intentional" Summer Experiences

By Nicole Powell

ACA Connects Regulatory Affairs Intern



Nicole Powell

If I had to describe my internship experience with ACA Connects in one word, it would be “intentional.”

My direct supervisors on the regulatory affairs team curated an internship experience for me directly in line with my tangible short and long-term goals. Although I am the first-ever ACA Connects intern, my experience has felt organized, thoughtful, and carefully planned. I was matched with ACA Connects through the Federal Communications Bar Association’s Diversity Pipeline program, which partners diverse first-year law students with telecommunications law

firms, organizations, and associations.

On my first day at ACA Connects, I was entrusted with the task of writing reply comments to the FCC on behalf of ACA Connects members’ interests. Although I was intimidated, I felt empowered that my supervisors trusted me enough to challenge me and push me into the role of an advocate. This feeling was sustained throughout the entirety of my internship experience. When I received my first round of edits from ACAC attorney Mike Jacobs, he talked me through the reasoning behind every single edit, and made sure to sustain my voice in the document. After writing the FCC reply comment, I was given the opportunity to create member advisories on pressing telecommunications law matters, outreach directly to members, and update documents to ensure that members were apprised of relevant legal requirements for their companies. The projects that I worked on did not feel like “busy work,” but rather felt integral to the ACA Connects mission of advocating on behalf of its members.

Outside of my work tasks, my ACAC supervisors poured into my development as a future attorney. Each week, they arranged one-on-one networking sessions among industry professionals, law firm partners, and senior FCC officials to learn the ins and outs of telecommunications law, to understand their unique career trajectories, and to glean nuggets of wisdom directly from the experts. This part of my experience was especially valuable to me, as a rising 2nd year law student with limited knowledge and connections in the field. I am immensely grateful for these “mini-master classes.”

I came to this internship with limited telecommunications law knowledge, and was intimidated at the prospect of supporting senior staff members. These anxieties melted away with each passing day at ACA Connects. This is not to say I was not challenged. My supervisors encouraged me to stay attentive to detail, research diligently, take initiative during meetings, and to always present my best work. I am grateful for not only the technical skills and legal writing experience, but also the authentic connections with legal advocates.

I am most inspired by the collegiality, warmth, grace, humor, and compassion of not only my direct supervisors, but the entire ACA Connects team. I could not have asked for a better place to begin my legal career. This internship not only aligned with the legal skills I hoped to attain, but with my values. I am grateful to the Federal Communications Bar Association and to ACA Connects for investing in me. ■