***For the NOAA GC Webpage and the NOAA Webpage:***

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Office of the General Counsel
Attorney Honors Program**

**Attorney Honors Program:**

The NOAA Office of the General Counsel’s Attorney Honors Program is designed to recruit highly-qualified law school graduates and judicial law clerks for entry-level attorney positions in our offices in the Washington, D.C., area and six regional offices in Seattle, WA; St. Petersburg, FL; Gloucester, MA; Long Beach, CA; Juneau, AK; and Honolulu, HI. Approximately two to four positions are available annually nationwide.

During the first 18 months of the program, attorneys will participate in three six-month rotations in the legal sections located in the Washington, D.C. area. Attorneys may volunteer to work in a regional office as their third rotation. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate an attorney’s preference for their rotations, consistent with the needs of the Office.

At the end of the third rotation, we will permanently place attorneys in a specific legal section in the Washington, D.C. area. Attorneys may volunteer to work in one of the six regional offices as their permanent placement. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate an attorney’s preference for their permanent placement, consistent with the needs of the Office. If a permanent placement involves a change in location, attorneys will be responsible for their personal relocation costs.

**Who May Apply:**

The Attorney Honors Program will be open to current third-year law students or graduate law students who will receive their degree by June 30, 2015; or recent law school graduates who will complete a judicial clerkship or a legal fellowship by October 2, 2015.

**How To Apply:**

For employment beginning in Fall 2015, the application period is tentatively scheduled to open on August 15, 2014, and close on September 15, 2014**.** We will accept applications (cover letter, resume and unofficial transcript) for this vacancy as described in a USAJOBS that we will post at <http://www.usajobs.gov/>. We will update this web page with a link to the USAJOBS announcement when it is available in August 2014.

**Interviews and Selection:**

The NOAA Office of the General Counsel will conduct on-campus interviews or initial telephone interviews in September and October 2014. We will then invite successful candidates to in-person interviews at our headquarter’s office in Washington, D.C., at one of our regional offices, or at an another convenient location. Applicants will be responsible for their own travel expenses. We expect to extend offers of employment by December 15, 2014, for positions starting in the Fall of 2015.

**About the NOAA General Counsel’s Office:**

The NOAA Office of the General Counsel employs approximately 110 attorneys at headquarters in the Washington, DC area and six regional sections. The Office provides legal advice to the NOAA Administrator and NOAA program offices on a wide variety of legal issues including U.S. and international fisheries, marine mammals, endangered and threatened marine species, preservation of coastal areas, marine sanctuaries, and licensing of commercial satellites. NOAA is a premier environmental agency located within the Department of Commerce and employs over 12,000 people nationwide. The agency's mission is to conserve and manage coastal and marine resources and to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment to meet the Nation's economic, social and environmental needs. For more information see [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov) and [www.gc.noaa.gov](http://www.gc.noaa.gov)

**The Work of an Honors Program Attorney:**

Attorneys in the Honors Program will work with seasoned attorneys and independently on a wide variety of assignments, such as:

* Working with NOAA scientists on regulations governing commercial and recreational fisheries; protecting marine species, such as whales, dolphins, and turtles and their habitat; and preserving national marine sanctuaries.
* Working with the Justice Department to defend cases brought in federal court challenging NOAA regulatory programs under important natural resources statutes, including the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.
* Bringing administrative enforcement actions to ensure compliance with the federal fishery laws and to protect marine species, such as whales, dolphins and turtles, and their habitat.
* Developing cases seeking to recover for damages to the nation’s natural resources from spills of oil and hazardous substances.
* Addressing complex international legal issues related to oceans, shipping, fisheries, marine pollution, aquatic invasive species, and marine scientific research.
* Working with NOAA scientists to address threats to coastal areas such as climate change, population growth, port congestion, and contaminants in the environment
* Addressing the legal needs of the National Weather Service, and the NOAA satellite programs that provide environmental data to support it.

**Ongoing Professional Development:**

Once hired, we will assign you both a peer mentor and supervisory mentor to help prepare you for the program and acclimate you to NOAA. When you arrive, you will meet with the General Counsel and Deputy General Counsels to discuss expectations and your rotational assignments. During your first several months, you will attend introductory trainings that will outline the inner workings of NOAA. You will also receive ongoing on-the-job training from seasoned attorneys throughout the NOAA Office of General Counsel.

**Promotion Potential:**

Attorneys hired through the Honors Program have the potential to be promoted up to the GS-15 pay grade. The minimum waiting time before promotion to the next higher grade is one year. Promotions to the next higher grade are based on the attorney’s performance at the current grade and an evaluation of their ability to perform at the next higher grade.

**Benefits:**

***Annual Leave:***  Federal employees earn a minimum of 13 days of annual leave each year. Attorneys earn vacation or annual leave based on the length of their Federal service (0-3 years of federal service = 13 days per year; 3-15 years of service = 20 days per year; 15+ years of federal service = 26 days per year). For more information, see the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Annual Leave Fact Sheet: http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/fact-sheets/annual-leave/

***Sick Leave:*** Regardless of the length of service, attorneys can earn 13 days of sick leave each year. Unused sick leave accumulates indefinitely. For more information, see the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Sick Leave Fact Sheet: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/fact-sheets/sick-leave-general-information/>

***Paid Holidays:*** Federal employees receive 10 paid holidays each year: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Presidents’ Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

***Health Care Coverage:*** Attorneys and their families can enroll in one of many health insurance plans with part of the cost paid by the government. Plans include traditional fee-for-service plans and prepaid plans (Comprehensive Medical Plans and Health Maintenance Organizations). In addition, Federal employees are covered by Medicare. For more information, see [Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program](http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.asp): <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/>

***Health Care Flexible Spending Account:***Attorneys can use Health Care Flexible Spending Accounts for expenses that are tax-deductible, but not reimbursed by any other source, including out-of-pocket expenses and non-covered benefits under the FEHB plans: http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/flexible-spending-accounts/

***Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program:***Attorneys may apply for the [Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program](http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/index.asp). Participants must be approved based on insurability. The coverage may continue post-retirement: http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/long-term-care/

***Life Insurance:*** Attorneys may purchase life insurance coverage through the [Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program](http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/index.asp)with part of the cost paid by the Federal government. Face value of the insurance is based on the attorney's salary, and coverage includes payment for loss of limbs and eyesight and accidental death. Additional insurance is optional and available to each attorney: http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance/

***Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS):*** The [Federal Employees Retirement System](http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/)(FERS) is a three-part retirement plan: social security, basic annuity, and the [Thrift Savings Plan](http://www.tsp.gov/)(TSP), a retirement savings and investment plan. Attorneys pay full social security taxes and a small contribution to the basic annuity. In addition, attorneys may make tax-deferred contributions of up to 14% of their annual salary to the TSP, and a portion (up to 5%) is matched by the government. FERS has many features that are portable, so that if the attorney leaves the Federal government, he or she may still qualify for the benefits. Click here for more information on FERS: <http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/> and here for more information on the TSP: https://www.tsp.gov/index.shtml

***Worklife Programs:*** NOAA's work-life philosophy offers an array of benefits to support employees and maximize their performance through practical and workable solutions to balancing the demands of work and personal lives. Benefits include: family-friendly leave programs, dependent care support (including a child care center in the Washington, D.C. area), dependent care resource and referral services, and flexible work options. An Employee Assistance Program offers confidential counseling and referral services. As part of the worklife program, subject to mission requirements, NOAA offers modified work schedules, such as flexible hours, compressed work schedules, telecommuting, and part-time schedules.

***Transit Subsidy:*** NOAA provides a transit subsidy to employees residing in areas served by mass transit to encourage the use of public transportation.

***Incentive Awards Program:***  NOAA offers cash and honorary awards for superior performance and special acts or services.