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Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research

Ohio Department of Public Safety: BMV D1 Field Services

Wellman Hill Grant 2025

This summer, I had the opportunity to pursue two internships in public service because of the Wellman Hill Grant. These internships allowed me to see drastically different fields within public service: state and non-profit work. The BMV District 1 Field Services division within the Ohio Department of Public Safety engages in regulatory oversight of 57 license bureaus (agencies) throughout 17 different counties. The Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research (FHC) is a non-profit that engages in advocacy, research, and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act in Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties.

In Political Science, we study the state. Some of the most important functions of the state are “invisible,” meaning most of their work is only “seen” when they fail. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles is one of these “invisible” agencies. I have heard it time and time again—most people have a negative opinion about the BMV; nobody wants to go renew their license or registration, wait in line, or interact with those rude clerks. Most people do not realize the tremendous task at hand, however. Every day, the BMV oversees the issuance of thousands of licenses and vehicle registrations, all while maintaining reasonable wait times and accommodating people of all backgrounds. Every piece of personal information for thousands of people every day needs to be documented correctly and in a timely manner. In my time as an intern here, I learned the efficiencies and inefficiencies in the completion of these important tasks. My major duties involved new-hire onboarding at the agencies and office administration, and I had the opportunity to help enforce new BMV policies and regulations for the agencies. One of the highlights of the summer was when I helped plan and organize a statewide conference for over

350 BMV staff and employees. These experiences were so incredibly enlightening and allowed me to see our studies as Political Science students in action.

At the FHC, I had the opportunity to work in the Education and Outreach department alongside some amazing professionals and advocates. My internship began with a multi-week deep dive into the Fair Housing Act, its provisions, and cases concerning people's rights to fair housing. Once finished with my introduction, I gave a training session on fair housing rights to landlords who violated fair housing law. Throughout the summer, I organized and facilitated multiple outreach events alongside the Education and Outreach team. The summer concluded with a blog post for the FHC blog about segregation, highways, and the fight for fair housing in Cuyahoga County which was received very positively throughout the housing advocacy community.

The Wellman Hill Grant was fundamental to my internship experience—without it, I likely would not have been able to pursue my passion for public service this summer. As an intern at the FHC, I was supposed to be paid. Following this administration's nationwide efforts to strip important resources of funding, however, the FHC lost the grant that I was going to be paid under. Because of the Wellman Hill Grant, I was able to defy the odds and intern at the FHC and BMV without having to worry about finances. I can honestly say that I will carry my experiences and knowledge gained this summer through the rest of my professional career! I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the Hill family, the Wellman Hill Grant selection committee, and the CWRU Political Science Department for helping me fulfill my aspirations and passions this summer.