



# press release

## PUERTO RICO FISCAL AGENCY AND FINANCIAL ADVISORY AUTHORITY

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### AAFAF Summer Internship draws its most recent edition to a successful closing

*Twenty-two young students took part in this year's José M. Berrocal Internship, which included a full agenda of talks and visits focused on stoking their passion for public service*

[SAN JUAN, PR] - The most recent edition of the José M. Berrocal Summer Internship has its successful conclusion today, Wednesday, after nearly eight weeks of educational lectures, field trips and work experiences designed to provide theoretical and practical knowledge about the duties and responsibilities of the Fiscal Agency and Financial Authority (AAFAF, in Spanish) and other Government of Puerto Rico agencies, announced AAFAF Executive Director Omar J. Marrero.

In total, 22 students participated in the fifth annual edition of the Internship, which provided them with the opportunity to work alongside experienced professionals and obtain valuable information on the inner workings of AAFAF and the public finance industry in general, explained the official.

The agenda of educational activities throughout the summer included a tour of the governor's mansion (La Fortaleza) and a talk with the governor of Puerto Rico, Hon. Pedro Pierluisi, where the governor gave a frank and entertaining account of his professional career. The students also participated in community impact events, such as volunteering at the Food Bank, a non-profit organization that serves disadvantaged populations.

"This initiative is an important part of our mission to promote Puerto Rico's development, as well as a clear sign of our commitment to provide university

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students with the skills and experience they need to succeed in their careers,” said Marrero, who also serves as secretary of State.

“We have gained a lot of knowledge about how many battles have been fought to ensure Puerto Rico's economic and fiscal recovery,” said José Berríos, one of the internship participants. “It has also been a first-rate legal experience that has trained me as a better professional and as a conscious Puerto Rican ready to give back to the island,” he added.

During the first days of the internship, the students participated in talks given by the directors of the different offices under the AAFAF, including Fiscal Agency, Legislative Affairs, Legal Counseling and Tax Recovery, among others. In addition, a talk was given by the Real Estate Evaluation and Disposal Committee (CEDBI), which is part of AAFAF and supervises the disposal of the Government's unused properties to raise more funds for the Treasury.

Throughout the following weeks, the students received various talks from agency heads, among them Nelson Pérez Méndez, acting secretary of the Department of the Treasury; Fermín Fontanés, executive director of the Public-Private Partnerships Authority; Juan Carlos Blanco, executive director of the Office of Management and Budget; Eduardo Rivera, executive director of the Housing Finance Authority; and Luis Pérez Vargas, executive director of the Office of Government Ethics.

Other speakers included Gabriel Maldonado González, secretary of the Department of Labor; Dr. Edwin González Montalvo, executive director of the Highway Authority; Zahira Maldonado, executive director of the Office of Human Resources Management and Transformation; CPA Luis Cruz Batista, executive director of the Legislative Assembly Budget Office; Joel Pizá, executive director of the Ports Authority; and CPA Yesmín Valdivieso, Comptroller of Puerto Rico, among other high-ranking officials.

The students also participated in extensive tours of La Fortaleza and the Department of State building, as well as the Department of the Treasury, where Acting Secretary Pérez himself spoke to them in detail about the agency's operations; the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, where they spent some time with



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Associate Justice Erick Kolthoff Caraballo; and the Capitol of Puerto Rico, during which they spoke with Senate President José Luis Dalmau.

The participants were also able to tour the Convention Center District and chat with its executive director, Mariela Vallines, as well as enjoy a grand reception by the Mayor of San Juan, Hon. Miguel Romero, at the San Juan City Hall.

Finally, the youth had the opportunity to experience first-hand the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) summer conference, held in San Juan in early July, which brought together state officials from across the United States for high-level public policy discussions.

“As of press time, over 70 students have taken advantage of this unique opportunity since the program was established five years ago,” Marrero said. “Beyond providing valuable lessons and experiences that will be of great benefit to them for the rest of their professional careers, this time we also focus on awakening their passion for public service and doing things right for the benefit of the people,” he added.

Participants in the Berrocal internship come from more than a dozen different universities, including the Rio Piedras, Bayamón and Ponce campuses of the University of Puerto Rico; the law schools of the Inter-American University and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico, as well as off-island universities such as New York University; University of Michigan; American University; Boston College; Wake Forest University and Louisiana State University, among others.

The José M. Berrocal Summer Internship is named in honor of José M. Berrocal, who served as the youngest president of the Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico and was a respected leader in the field of public finance before his tragic passing in 2000.

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