

## **Henry Birkmeier CLIP Application Personal Statement**

Throughout high school, I discovered my passion for public service through different active political engagements. Serving as the Communications Chair of the St. Louis Mayor's Youth Cabinet provided me with invaluable experience in city government operations. This experience sparked my interest in understanding how governments function at different levels, and now I am eager to expand my knowledge to Missouri's state legislature through the Civic Leaders Internship Program.

My experience on the Mayor's Youth Cabinet taught me the tangible impact of local government on their communities. We worked directly with city officials to address youth concerns and participated in policy discussions with the Board of Aldermen. This is where I developed my professional communication skills when attending and working in fast-paced government environments. I learned to communicate effectively with diverse peoples, manage competing priorities, and maintain professionalism under pressure and when meeting elected officials. However, I quickly recognized that many issues affecting St. Louis requires state-level legislative action. These experiences have motivated me to seek out opportunities in Jefferson City, where I can further learn how state policy is crafted.

Currently, I am conducting research through the ASH Scholars State Politics team at the University of Missouri on state policies regarding AI deepfake usage in elections, which has deepened my understanding of emerging policy challenges facing state legislatures. This research has given me practical experience analyzing legislative language and comparing approaches to regulating a rapidly evolving technology across states. My research skills allow me to contribute meaningfully to a legislative office's policy work.

The CLIP internship represents an essential step in my career trajectory. Municipal government work is extremely interesting to me and is very important to implementation of state policy and actions. That being said, you do not have policies without a state legislature and I believe witnessing how state policy is developed and debated is vital to fully understanding the system. I am particularly interested in working with legislators who prioritize education, election integrity, and technology policy as those are areas where my research background and personal commitment can add value. This experience would help build professional networks and practical skills essential for a career in public service. I am ready to contribute my dedication and skills to a legislative office while gaining the knowledge that will shape my future in public service.