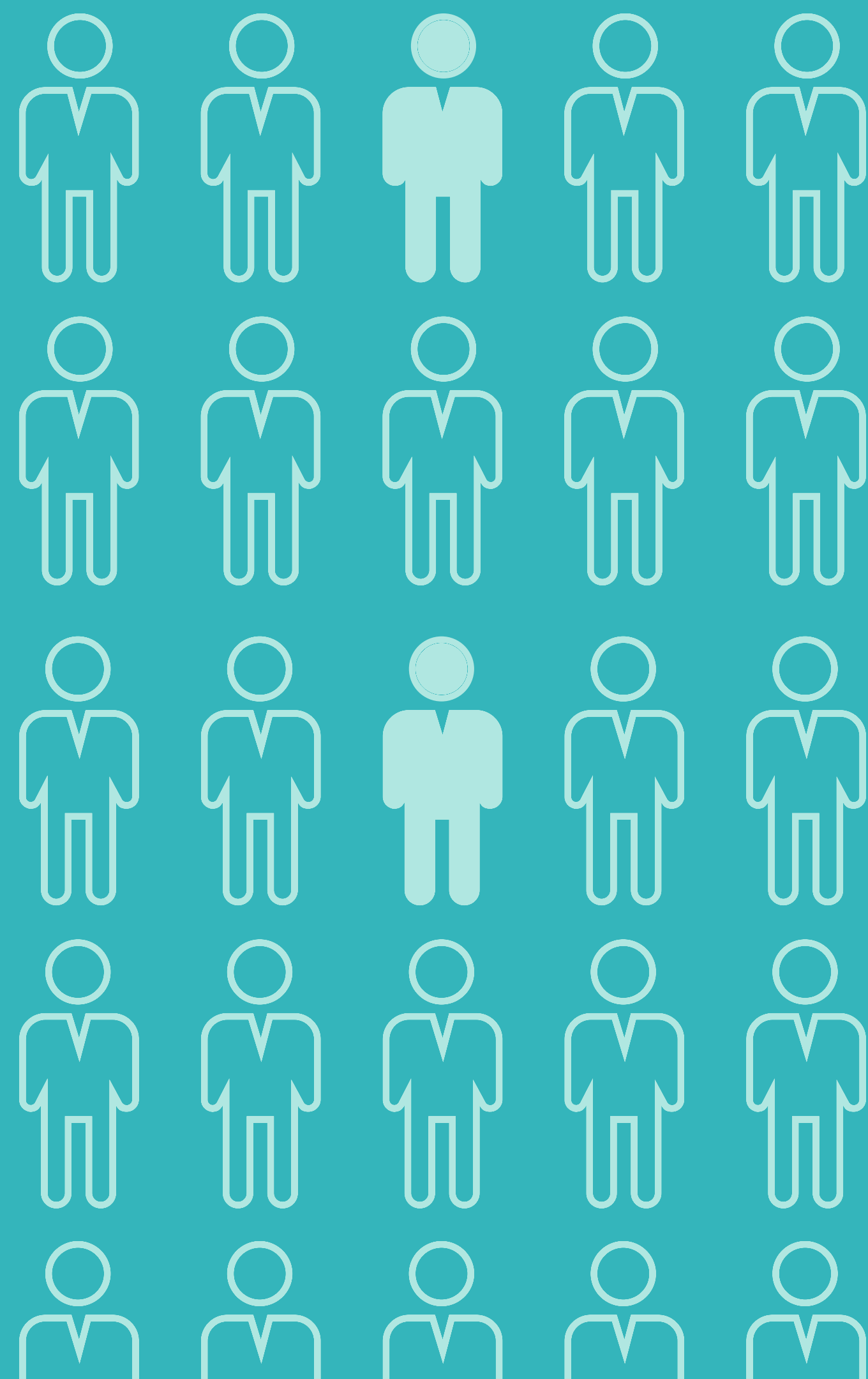


# STAND OUT IN YOUR IBWS INTERNSHIP APPLICATION (AND BEYOND)

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IDA B. WELLS SOCIETY FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING  
VIRTUAL WORKSHOP / SEPTEMBER 2025

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INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR  
INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON RACE AND EQUITY



# INTERNSHIP/FELLOWSHIP/JOB HUNTING 101



## TIMING

Understand when are newsrooms looking for candidates and if your respective timelines align.



## COMPETITION

Understand who else and how many people are applying for the same positions you are.



## FIT

Understand your experience may not be a match for a newsroom and visa versa.

# AM I OPPORTUNITY HUNT READY?

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- Cover letter (workable template ready)
- Résumé
- Organize opportunities/application deadlines
- Personal references
- Digital portfolio (with portrait/domain name)
- Personal introduction
- Social media profile pops
- Competitive, "in it to win it" spirit

# BIG QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

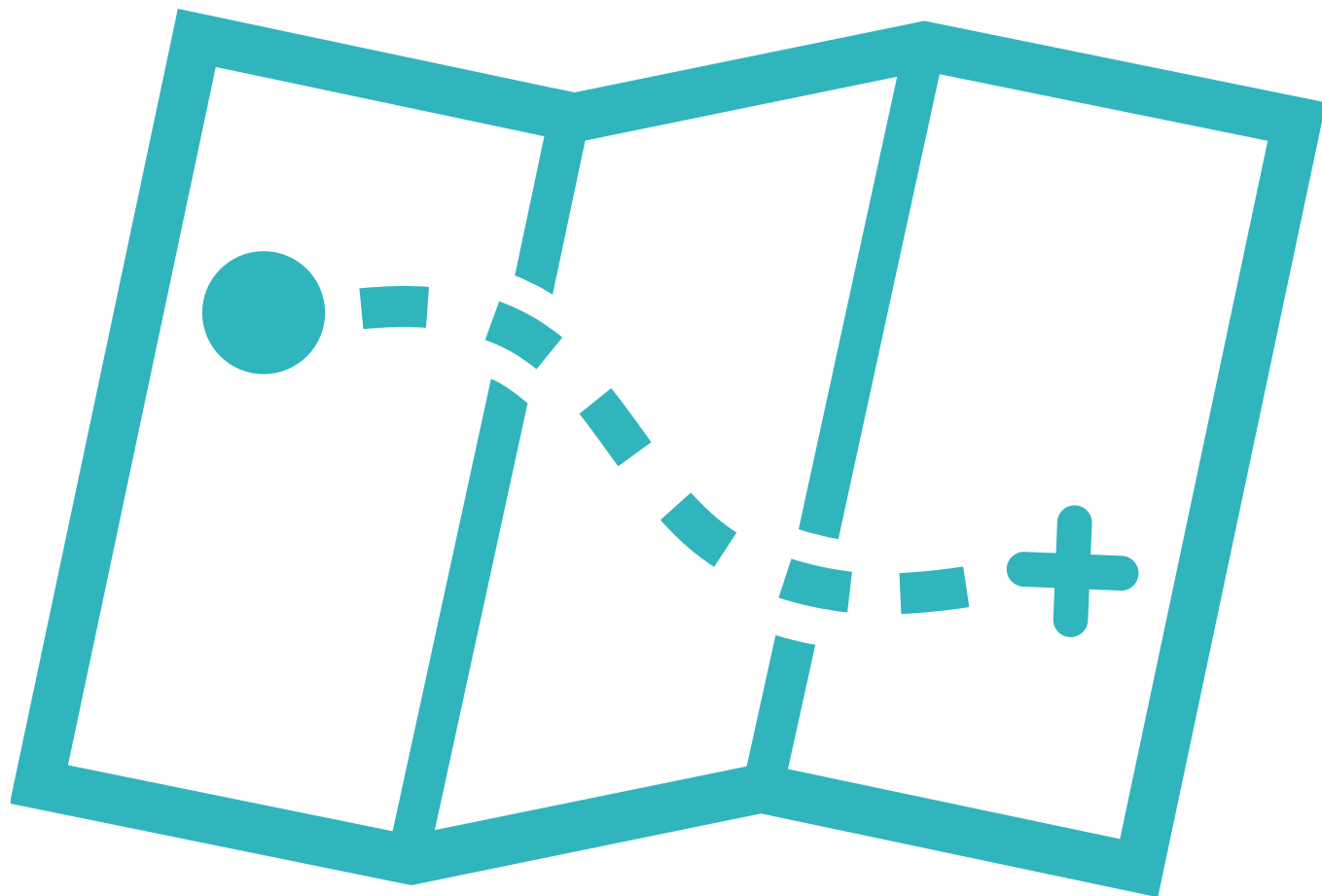
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- Who have I told that I'm internship/fellowship/job hunting?
- Why do I want this position?
- Where am I finding internship/job opportunities?
- Who has the job I want right now or in the future and how did they get there?
- What skills can I show in my application?
- What do I want to learn in this role?



# CREATE YOUR ROADMAP FOR SUCCESS

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- "ABC" - Always Be in Conversation
- Don't let position descriptions scare you
- Define what "opportunity hunting" looks like for you then measure your progress
- Don't compare someone else's opportunity hunt to yours
- Own your experience/your success
- Craft a financial plan for preparing for your internship

# IDENTIFY YOUR INTERNSHIP COSTS

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- Airfare/gas money (to and from your location)
- Car/car insurance/driving lessons (if needed)
- Housing (apartment deposit/first month's rent)
- Food
- Clothes
- Utility bills (gas, electric, water, internet)

# GETTING YOUR COINS TOGETHER

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- How much money can I save between now and the end of the school year?
- What resources does my university or alumni association offer for cash/scholarship assistance, housing, etc.?
- How much do I need to budget to make it until my first internship/job paycheck?  
When will my first paycheck come?
- How do my finances change when I'm in school and not in school?
- What did previous interns/fellows do?



# ACE YOUR INTERVIEW

- Be yourself/be confident/be positive
- Mind the hiring manager's instructions
- Know what environment you're coming into (look at archived projects, company outlook, unionizing, layoffs, etc.)
- Have three to four important/memorable points about you/your work you want to get across
- Have conversations with people you trust beforehand
- Find previous interns who may have intel
- Have questions for the hiring managers
- Study the newsroom's coverage in advance



# WHAT TO ASK A HIRING MANAGER

- Why do you like working here?
- How would you describe the office's atmosphere/vibe?
- What does success/failure look like to you in this role?
- What are opportunities for professional development?
- What are some areas you'd like to see the organization improve in?
- What's your timeline for hiring? How should I follow-up?
- How would people describe your management style?

# THE FIRST FEW WEEKS IN YOUR ROLE

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- Ask your manager what their expectations/goals are for you
- Virtually network around the office
- Listen/observe during the first few weeks
- Ask how feedback will be given
- Maximize professional development opportunities (brown bag lunches, conference attendance, etc.)
- Tell your managers your goals/aspirations



# NETWORKING

## DO

- Be genuine/positive
- Have a networking accountability buddy
- Reach out to people you admire
- Maximize modes of communication (coffee, happy hours, email, phone calls, etc.)
- Keep in touch with people you vibe with

## DON'T

- Go somewhere you're uncomfortable
- Be afraid to introduce yourself
- Ask someone to get you a job (if you just met)
- Be discouraged if someone doesn't get back to you

# THE ART OF THE COLD EMAIL

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- Be specific about what you want to talk about
- Ask if they'd be willing to make time to talk by phone, Zoom or in-person
- Be flexible with their schedule (they're doing you a favor)
- Follow-up twice (max) if you don't hear back; wait a few months to try again or let it go
- Follow-up if a conversation occurs and say thank you/send a check-in email a few weeks later

# AMA (ASK ME ANYTHING)

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