

Recruiter

Talent Acquisition Manager at RTI
International



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Davidson College, Class of 2005



Describe your current position and the journey that led you here.

I currently work at RTI International, a non-profit that provides research, development, and technical services to government and commercial clients worldwide. I am the Talent Acquisition Manager for the International Development Group. In my position, I manage a team of ten people and we design, work on, and apply for funding for projects where we can partner with countries and their citizens to strengthen their institutional capabilities to services which enable people to grow and thrive.

What makes my current position meaningful is that the projects my team works on has the ability to impact millions of people around the world. As a manager, I find meaning in my role because I am able to invest and grow the people who work with me, both professionally and personally.

After graduating from Davidson College with a degree in Political Science, I worked for Teach For America (TFA) for four years. I was always interested in how you can enable people to have access to basic services which allow them to develop their full potential. This caused me to have a greater interest in international development. After my tenure with TFA, I started working for RTI International as a Senior Recruiter.

What do an average work day and year look like for you?

There is no average work day for me. My day-to-day revolves around a broad range of activities: attending meetings, helping directly write the responses to the government call for proposals, helping the team overcome challenges, etc. My average year has me traveling to different countries for two to three weeks once a quarter. My team is also split between North Carolina and Washington, D.C. because of this, I travel back and forth some.

What was the most important factor in landing the job you have now?

The job I have now is largely based on the performance that I had the previous roles. I was offered a job at RTI International largely because TFA is known to be a selective organization. I was able to articulate tangible results from what I have done at TFA. Another thing that helped me was when I was a Bonner, I was already thinking and living my life in the frame of relating my service work, academic, and career interests. Doing this allowed me to articulate why I was passionate about international development and describe the meaningful connection between what I had done in college, what I studied, what I read about, and



What are the best and worst things about working in your current role or sector?

RTI International works on the contracting side of the international non-profit sector. In international development, RTI helps developing countries and communities address complex problems in education, health, food security, governance, and economic development.

The hardest things about the contractor side are that it can feel divorced from direct impact. Your day to day can feel like “why does this matter?” and “what am I doing?”. The best part is when you receive the money and are able to implement these projects that have the potential to impact millions of lives.

What has been the biggest impact Bonner has had on your life or work?

Being a Bonner has kept the focus throughout my undergraduate career on others. College itself is a particularly inherent self-focused time. Often there is not an incentive for constant discussion that is not about you. Bonner allowed me to look at college as a way to make more of an impact in my community, instead of using it to only get a job. When I was looking for jobs, I only looked at the social enterprise or non-profit ones because I wanted to tangibly link myself to a bigger goal.

What do you wish you knew as a recent Bonner graduate preparing for this field?

Something that would have helped me would have been learning about cost calculators and the amount of money I would need to live on, given the kinds of opportunities and things that I was inherently drawn to and wanted to pursue. I had a job offer and it took me a minute to realize that I cannot afford to live in Washington, D.C. on what they would pay me. It would be beneficial for students to know: here are the choices I will need to make, and here are the ways in which I will fund myself.

How would you recommend interested students or individuals get involved in this field?

I would advise students to not limit themselves to only positions that allow them to work abroad. City Year, AmeriCorps, and TFA become funnels into the non-profit international sector. It is not the only way to get involved in the sector, but it will give you some of the networks you might need. However, if students are interested in international development, joining PeaceCorps is a good start. Furthermore, students should also be flexible in what you want to do. Look at each opportunity as an open door.