

FALL RECRUITING AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST JOB SEARCH

Think positive! It's easy to get discouraged in your public interest job search when OCI gets rolling, but by exercising patience, diligence and creativity, and focusing on practice areas and geographic areas of genuine interest, you should be successful in finding a rewarding and meaningful public interest job.

The public interest job market is substantially different from the private sector market, and in many ways, more competitive. First of all, most public interest organizations do not conduct campus interviews, but instead expect students to apply independently. Secondly, many public interest employers have separate hiring timelines, and fill job vacancies throughout the year. Thirdly, in addition to academic performance, public interest employers value different types of experiences and skills. Lastly, the public interest legal market offers fewer overall employment opportunities.

Keeping these factors in mind will help you plan a more focused and productive job search this fall. Remember – early planning is the key to success! You are encouraged to explore the following seven (7) options:

1. Participate in OCI

Approximately 40 employers representing the government and public interest sectors will participate in campus interviewing. Follow bidding instructions in the *Nuts & Bolts of the Fall 2007 On-Campus Interview Program* handout. Don't forget that bidding ends at midnight on August 3, 2007. Some of the participating employers are:

American Civil Liberties Union	Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
Bronx District Attorney's Office	Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights
Central Intelligence Agency	Service Employees International Union
Cook County State's Attorney's Office	State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Defender Association of Philadelphia	U.S. Air Force JAG
Federal Election Commission	U.S. Department of Labor, Administrative Law Judges
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	U.S. Department of State, Office of the Legal Adviser
Federal Reserve Board	U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of General Counsel
Federal Trade Commission	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of General Counsel
Federal Public Defender (Delaware)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Suspension & Debarment Div.
Internal Revenue Service, Office of Chief Counsel	U.S. Government Accountability Office
Miami-Dade County State's Attorney's Office	U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Legislative Counsel
Michigan Court of Appeals	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
New York Civil Liberties Union	U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission
New York City Law Department	Washington State Attorney General's Office
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest	
New York County District Attorney's Office	
Office of the Comptroller of the Currency	
Office of the Public Defender (Baltimore)	
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	
Philadelphia District Attorney's Office	
Public Defender's Office (Miami)	

2. Government Honors Programs & Summer Programs

Honors programs are one avenue by which federal government agencies hire law school graduates for entry-level positions. Several federal government agencies also

have summer honors programs, which provide students with excellent training and exposure to agencies or departments and also increase their likelihood of obtaining permanent, post-graduate employment. Each program has a unique set of requirements, application procedures, and deadlines. Beginning this summer, you should carefully review each program's requirements. Many of these agencies have early application deadlines!

Best source: University of Arizona College of Law's website at www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm (obtain username and password from Office of Career Services)

Other sources: NALP's annual Federal Legal Employment Opportunities at www.nalp.org

Google agencies' websites for information and applications

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In addition, do not forget to explore non-federal government agencies for employment opportunities. Many state and local agencies hire summer interns and entry-level attorneys.

Sources: Google agencies' websites for information and applications

Review *State & Local Government Yellow Books* located in the Office of Career Services

3. Fellowships

Many public interest organizations that do not hire permanent entry-level attorneys often sponsor post-graduate fellows. Fellowships are short term positions (usually one or two years) designed to give new law graduates experience in their fields of interest. Hundreds of fellowships are offered each year, and collectively, they are among the best ways to enter into the public interest job market. All students with aspirations of practicing in the public interest sector should consider them. Many fellowships have late summer to mid-fall deadline dates, so begin applying early.

Best source: Harvard's *Public Interest Job Search Guide* located in the Office of Career Services & Externship Office

4. Judicial Clerkships and Internships

Clerkships are one or two-year post-graduate positions with federal, state, local or administrative law judges. Judicial clerks obtain great research and writing experience, knowledge of court or administrative agency procedures, and often develop strong mentor relationships with their judges. Contrary to popular myth, clerkships are not just for the top 10% of the class; many judges look beyond class ranks to fill their clerkship positions. Internships are part-time and summer positions. These positions also offer great opportunities to research, write, become

familiar with the court systems, and develop an inside track to post-graduate clerkships.

Sources:
(Clerkships)

Federal Law Clerk Information System –
<https://lawclerks.ao.uscourts.gov/>

OSCAR – www.oscar.symplicity.com

Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures –
http://www.vermontlaw.edu/blank_template.cfm?doc_id=94
(ID: guide2007; password – Juneau). Check with Office of Career Services for 2008 ID and password

Sources:
(Internships)

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www.internships-usa.com (check with Career Services for current password)

5. Equal Justice Works Career Fair

Equal Justice Works will sponsor the 2007 Career Fair and Conference in Washington, DC at the Omni Shoreham Hotel on Saturday and Sunday, October 6-7. This event is the largest public interest recruiting fair in the country. Hundreds of public interest employers will interview students for summer and permanent positions. Howard Law School will pay registration fees for up to 20 students (other students must pay their own \$40.00 registration fee). If you are interested in participating, email careerservices@law.howard.edu as soon as possible. Subject line: EJW Career Fair; include your name, class year, telephone number and email address. Free registration is first-come, first-served. Registered students will have access to the employer database sometime in August. Students must apply directly to participating employers, who will notify students directly of their interview selections.

6. General websites for public interest jobs:

- PSLAWnet - www.pslawnet.org (create your own account using your email address)
- The Idealist – www.idealists.org
- Public Interest Clearinghouse – www.pic.org
- Environmental Law Internships by state – <http://www.internships-usa.com/grlawtoc.htm>
- Government jobs – <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>
- Department of Justice – <http://www.usdoj.gov/oarm/>
- Equal Justice Works – <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org>

- Opportunities in Public Affairs (legislative & congressional jobs) – www.brubach.com/opawebversion2/opa.htm (username – howardlaw; password – howard)
- Internships (all categories) - www.internships-usa.org (get password from Career Services)

7. Job Listings and Externships

Because public interest employers seek candidates who demonstrate a commitment to their issues, and place great weight on experience and dedication to public interest causes, students should take advantage throughout their law school careers of opportunities to volunteer or intern with public interest organizations, government agencies, and judges. Many such school-year, summer and permanent job opportunities are listed throughout the year in the [Jobs] section of Symplicity, so check these employment options frequently. There are also many excellent *Externship* opportunities (for credit) available through the Clinical Law Center; students should contact Professor Carmia Caesar for updated information and advice.