

THE JOB SEARCH – AN OVERVIEW

Before you can find the job you want, you need to know what job you want.

The first step in your job search process should be identifying what it is that you want to do. Some of you may have known this from the first day of law school (or even the first day of kindergarten!), while others may have no idea. For those of you in the latter camp, the following steps can help in making a decision and narrowing down your options in order to focus your job search.

Identify what you want. What are your values and interests? What motivates you? Honestly assess your skills and abilities. Recognize and acknowledge your preferred work styles and settings. Don't only focus on practice areas, but also the type of employer for which you would like to work. For example, being an environmental lawyer working for the EPA or the Sierra Club is not the same as being an environmental lawyer working for a major corporation, although they all technically fall under the same practice area. Ask yourself questions such as:

“Do I need to work with people, or do I prefer to work on my own?”

“Do I enjoy the business aspects of practicing law, such as billing and client development?”

“What will make me feel more fulfilled – achieving a high salary and obtaining prestige, or doing work for a cause I strongly believe in?”

“Do I prefer a fast- or slower-paced work environment?”

“How important is my free time?”

“What are my strong/weak points?”

It is important to note that there are no wrong answers to these questions. Only by taking the time to do an honest self-assessment can you find the type of work that will ultimately lead you to happiness and success in your career. We have resources in the CSO to help you.

Research & Gather Information. Gather as much information as you can to help you find practice areas and settings that will suit you. Use resources in the CSO and on the Internet to learn about practice areas. Other sources of information include:

- Talking to peers, professors, and CSO counselors about areas of interest
- Attending speaking events at the law school and local bar associations
- Joining professional organizations
- Talking to family and friends
- Informational interviewing

Finding Employers:

Jobs are usually found through one of three ways:

1. Advertised Positions
2. Cold Call Letters
3. Word of Mouth (Jobs found through networking)

Advertised Positions can be found by:

- Participating in On-Campus Interviewing and Job Fairs.
- Applying through formal hiring programs offered by government agencies, public interest organizations, and large firms.
- Viewing job postings on REVS, organizational job banks (ex. TDCAA), Pslawnet.org, and the Intercollegiate Job Bank, etc. on a regular basis.

OCI & Job Fairs: OCI normally begins as soon as school starts in the fall. Deadlines for job fairs usually occur in late spring and summer. Dates and instructions are posted on the Career Services website.

Formal Programs. Several government agencies, public interest organizations and large law firms offer structured summer and permanent hiring programs. Although most of these programs are geared towards 2Ls and 3Ls, some organizations do offer summer internships to 1Ls. The CSO website has links to information on formal government and public interest organization internships. Information on summer associate programs and recruiting at large law firms can usually be found on firm websites, or by using the NALP Directory.

Cold Call Letters. While this is generally the least effective way to find a job, if you engage in a targeted search it can work. Use resources in the CSO, such as Martindale-Hubbell, and the Internet to find employers you're interested in. Talk to a CSO counselor about your interests and job search plan. Be sure to write a cover letter that shows why you are interested in the particular employer you're writing to, and what you have to offer.

Word of Mouth Jobs (Network, Network, Network!). This is most effective way to find jobs. The majority of jobs are never advertised, and are instead found through networking. How? By

- Joining local bar associations, attending meetings, luncheons, and other events, and talking to attorneys.
- Doing informational interviewing. Contact attorneys in practice areas you're interested in and ask to speak to them about their practice. **DO NOT ASK FOR A JOB IN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS.** Your goal is to connect with the attorney and gather information. Afterwards, you can follow up with a thank you note or phone call.
- Letting EVERYONE know you are looking. Talk to friends and family members, professors, everyone – and let them know who you are and what you are doing.