

1L Public Interest Job Search Handbook



**University of Wisconsin Law School
Office of Career Services, Room 3221**

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*"The law is not an end in itself, nor does it provide ends. It is predominantly a means to serve what is right."
William J. Brennan, Jr.*

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<http://law.wisc.edu/publicinterest/pihandbooks.html>

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A. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Introduction to the World of Public Service Law

What is the Office of Career Services, and what can we do for you?

We teach our students that a law degree carries with it a responsibility to society to engage in public service and *pro bono* work. To this end, the Law School offers a rich assortment of clinical and externship programs, substantive courses in public interest law, student organizations focused on public interest/pro bono opportunities, funding for summer internships, loan repayment assistance grants, and an attorney in the Career Services Office who focuses on public interest law advising.

This 1L Public Interest Job Search Handbook is a guide to searching for your first summer public interest internship and planning a public service career. There are also handbooks specifically for the 2L and 3L year. Additionally, a wide range of job search information and materials are available in the Career Services Office (Room 3221) and on the Career Services website (www.law.wisc.edu/career). We also urge you to register for a password and begin using the resources of the Public Service Law Network (PSLawNet), at www.pslawnet.org. PSLawNet is the “one stop source” for public interest internships, fellowships, and permanent jobs; it also contains valuable information on summer funding sources, public interest career fairs, and publications.

Finally, if you would like to join an email listserv specifically designed to notify students of public interest opportunities and programs, please inform Kristin Davis, Public Interest Law Advisor in the Career Services Office (kristindavis@wisc.edu).

How do we define “public interest”?

We use the terms “public interest” and “public service” interchangeably to mean work that is pursued on the basis of individual or group concepts of justice, fairness, and advancement of the public good, rather than for commercial or personal gain. It is a deliberately broad definition, one that encompasses working in government, as well as in non-profit organizations or public interest law firms. Some non-profit organizations may focus on individual case representation, or on larger impact litigation, while others invest their resources in advocacy and public education. Public interest lawyers often take on issues such as:

- civil rights/civil liberties
- homelessness
- labor and employment
- children’s rights
- women’s rights
- domestic violence issues
- criminal defense
- environment
- disability rights
- LGBT rights
- education
- immigrants’ rights
- death penalty issues

At the government level, numerous positions in executive agencies, the legislature, the judiciary, and prosecutor/public defender offices attract public interest lawyers. In addition, a small but

growing number of private public interest law firms take on civil rights or other public interest issues and charge fees on a sliding scale for low-income or underrepresented clients.

Why should I consider working in public service during my 1L summer?

The number one reason is that your talents are needed in a world with so much poverty and injustice. Because we define public service broadly, you are sure to find an internship in an organization that works on issues you care about. Moreover, public service legal work offers a wide range of opportunities that are fulfilling on both a professional and personal level. Time and time again, alumni working in public service express great satisfaction with their careers. A 1L summer in public service can be **transformative**: you will make a real contribution and learn from dedicated lawyers.

Because most public service employers, both government and non-profits, operate with lean staffs, they often give their summer interns substantial projects with significant responsibility. Therefore, a summer in public service can enable you to hone your legal research and writing skills, develop other lawyering skills, and serve clients with compelling needs.

Even if you think that you want to work in the private sector when you graduate, spending your 1L summer in public service can give you invaluable experience and will introduce you to the intellectually complex and fascinating work that public service lawyers do. Moreover, it will introduce you to the multitude of underserved legal needs addressed by *pro bono* work.

What educational programs does the Law School sponsor that can teach me about public interest careers?

Throughout the year, the Office of Career Services and student organizations (including PILF and the Children's Justice Project) sponsor workshops on cover letter and resume writing, interviewing, and networking. We also sponsor panel discussions on public interest law generally, on public interest practice areas in particular, and on public interest fellowships. If you would like to join the public interest email listserv to receive notification of these events, please contact Kristin Davis (kristindavis@wisc.edu). Programs will also be posted in the Law School Newsletter.

2. Public Service Employers: The Different Types of Subject Areas & Practice Settings

Public interest includes many issues and practice settings. While some organizations work on one issue, many work on several. Additionally, practice settings often overlap: some of the most innovative public defenders now also provide civil legal services; many direct service providers also do significant law reform and policy work. Thus, dividing the world into categories is a risky business because categories blend into one another. Nonetheless, dividing public service into categories of practice can help students learn about the varied world of public service. In addition to major categories, including government agencies and non-profit organizations, there are other ones – such as labor unions, think tanks, and foundations – that we have not included due to space constraints.

Students should also note that within each practice setting, there can be many issues. For example, direct service providers work on a panoply of poverty issues, from community economic development to children's rights to housing law and more. Perhaps most notably, government lawyers work on every conceivable issue. Students may not realize, for example, that the U.S. Department of Agriculture addresses many cutting-edge environmental issues, such as factory farming.

Listed below are the major types of public interest practice settings.

Government Agencies (including work on the federal, state, and local levels):

Federal Agencies address certain areas of federal government and/or represent the federal government in legal matters (e.g., Department of Health and Human Services, Securities and Exchange Commission, Environmental Protection Agency).

State Agencies specialize in particular areas of state government (such as social services, environmental conservation, etc.). Typically, each agency has its own legal staff. Moreover, *State Attorneys General* bring actions on behalf of the state in a wide range of cases and also serve as defense counsel in cases brought against the state.

City Agencies specialize in particular areas of municipal government and represent the municipality in legal matters (e.g., New York City Housing Authority, City of Chicago Corporation Counsel).

For each level of government, there are also attorneys who work in the legislative branch, as legislative assistants on individual members' personal staffs or as staff attorneys for committees.

Prosecuting Attorneys

U.S. Attorney's Offices prosecute federal cases, both civil and criminal. Offices are located throughout the country and are a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice.

District Attorney's Offices are organized by county. Larger offices, such as those in New York City or Chicago, may have specialized units focusing on such areas as domestic violence or appellate work. For a list of district attorney offices in the U.S., see www.prosecutor.info.

Public Defenders – Funded by the government, these offices provide attorneys for indigent defendants in criminal cases. About half of the states fund state-wide public defender offices; in other states, offices may be organized by city or county. For a list of public defender offices in the U.S., see www.nlada.org. In New York City, the Criminal Defense Division (CDD) of the Legal Aid Society is the main provider of criminal representation for indigent defendants; in Wisconsin, the Office of the State Public Defender provides those services.

Direct Services Offices – The mission of these offices is to provide high quality civil legal services to individual clients who cannot afford an attorney. Areas of practice commonly include, but are not limited to: housing, family, consumer, government benefits, immigration, labor, employment, and education law. Some offices specialize in several practice areas, while others focus exclusively on one area. The Legal Services Corporation funds legal services offices throughout the country.

Law Reform/Policy Organizations – These organizations focus on law reform efforts in one or more specialty areas, or advocate on behalf of a particular group of people. Examples include the ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Inc., Earthjustice, etc. Law reform organizations can be found at the state, regional, or national level. As a general rule, law reform organizations in New York City focus on litigation as a primary strategy, while those in D.C. focus on legislative advocacy.

International Public Interest Work – The type of work in international public service varies widely, as do the settings in which attorneys practice, ranging from the State Department to non-profits in the U.S. and abroad. Most international employers demand proficiency in at least one foreign language.

Public Interest Law Firms – These law firms, which are often small, specialize in one or more public interest law areas (employment discrimination, labor law, police brutality, family law, immigration, civil rights, etc.) or working with an underrepresented group.

3. The 1L Job Search & Summer Funding

What sources of funding exist for internships?

The Law School and the Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) sponsor Summer Public Service Fellowships, which provide approximately \$2500 in funding for students working in summer jobs at non-profit organizations or government agencies. Applications are usually available in mid-February and are due at the end of March. You will be informed about application availability and due dates through email and the Law School Newsletter.

PSLawNet (www.pslawnet.org) maintains a comprehensive list of summer funding sources. Just click on “Community/Resources” and then on “Summer Funding Sources.” Moreover, certain

government employers, including the U.S. Department of Justice and the New York City Law Department, pay their second summer students.

Specialized sources of funding can provide special mentoring opportunities, and are an honor that you can list on your resume. One example is the Peggy Browning Fund (www.peggybrowningfund.org), which sponsors 28 fellowships at labor-related organizations around the country. Another funding source is the Public Interest Law Initiative (www.pili-law.org), which offers approximately 20 fellowships at public interest organizations throughout the Chicago area.

What is the timing of the 1L summer public interest job search?

Under National Association for Law Placement (NALP) guidelines, 1L students cannot begin applying for jobs until December 1. However, we urge you to begin in November to research internship opportunities that may interest you, revise your resume, and meet with Kristin Davis in Career Services. Please note that some of the more competitive organizations (e.g., NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Southern Center on Human Rights in Atlanta, Center for Constitutional Rights in New York) tend to have early deadlines, so it is wise to check PSLawNet and organization websites early to construct a list of deadlines for internships that interest you.

Most organizations do not make internship offers to 1Ls until February or later. So even if you apply in December, you may not get an immediate response.

Who does intern hiring in public interest organizations?

Unlike the private sector, which often has a designated recruiter/hiring professional, in most public interest organizations the person responsible for hiring interns also has a full caseload and often management responsibilities. Therefore, they may not be able to acknowledge receipt of all applications and may not follow a set timetable in processing them.

How should I plan a public interest job search?

Before you begin your job search, you need to assess your interests, goals and geographical requirements/limitations that will serve as the parameters for your search. Consider the skills you want to develop and the law you would like to explore in your first summer. This will allow you to establish some major boundaries within which to search for a job. Some questions to ask yourself are:

- What skills do I want to develop? (research and writing, client interviewing, investigation)
- Do I want to do civil or criminal work?
- Do I want to work with individual clients or with broad legal issues (such as law reform litigation, lobbying, public policy research)?
- Do I want to participate in litigation?
- Am I interested in community education and organizing?
- Do I want to explore government opportunities (and if so, federal, state, or local)?
- Do my current interests and background lead to any particular area of law?
- What legal and/or work-related experiences have been particularly enjoyable?

Once you have answered these questions, identifying internships that interest you should be a bit easier.

What if I am a student who knows nothing about public interest law?

A useful starting point is Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, a comprehensive handbook and directory published by Harvard Law School, which contains lists of public interest organizations as well as job search strategies and personal essays about the practice of public interest/service law. Volume I addresses domestic law; Volume II addresses international law. The Career Services Office has this and many other specialty guides that may be useful in the beginning stages of your job search.

Another useful guide is NALP's The Official Guide to Legal Specialties: An Insider's Guide to Every Major Practice Area. The guide has a chapter specifically devoted to public interest law which describes public interest practice areas, public interest employers, the daily life of a public interest lawyer, and the skills most important to public interest lawyers. It is a great resource to get a good overview of the myriad opportunities in public interest law.

How can I find public interest organizations that offer internships?

The most **comprehensive** resource is an on-line one: the Public Service Law Network (PSLawNet), the global public interest job search database of 12,000 domestic and international organizations, government agencies, and public interest law firms, at www.pslawnet.org.

PSLawNet is easy to use, and you can obtain a password simply by logging on to it. It contains two searchable databases: "organizations" and "opportunities." Within each database, you can search by geographical region, type of organization, and practice area.

The best way to use PSLawNet for your 1L summer search is to do an "organization" search for organizations that interest you in your preferred geographic regions. Directions for constructing an organization search are contained in Appendix 6.

To find out if an organization has a formal internship program, you could also do an "opportunities" search for internships. However, many public service organizations are glad to employ interns even if they do not advertise an internship program. You can opt to receive custom job information from PSLawNet that matches the your search criteria so you do not have to search the database every day (just check your email).

In addition to PSLawNet, the Symplicity Job Bank also contains numerous postings for public interest internships. Many of these postings are sent out to the public interest email listserv as well. Furthermore, the Career Services Office has handbooks on finding internships in various practice areas, including poverty law, environmental law, human rights and public affairs. We also have more generalized books on finding internships. Finally, many students have found internships simply by conducting a "google" search!

What can I expect from my meeting with a career counselor?

We will discuss your experience and goals and will help you plan your job search, as well as do a resume review. The appointment will be most productive if you do some initial self assessment and research beforehand. To schedule an appointment, just email Kristin Davis at kristindavis@wisc.edu.

Before your counseling session, please:

- 1) Register on the Symplicity system; we use it to communicate with students by email regarding notices of opportunities, deadlines, and other information.
- 2) Register on PSLawNet at www.pslawnet.org and conduct an “organization” search to compile a list of organizations in which you may have interest (see Appendix 6 for instructions).
- 3) Add yourself to the public interest email listserv by notifying Kristin Davis at kristindavis@wisc.edu.
- 4) Prepare a draft of your resume, using examples in this handbook, and bring it with you to your appointment.

How should I take geography into consideration?

Job seekers should consider what geographical limitations apply to them before starting their search. We encourage you to use your 1L summer to explore an area of the country or world that you may be interested in living in after graduation. If you are interested in employers in your home area, we advise that you apply to them before exams, if possible, and try to schedule an interview while you are home on winter break.

If you are interested in working abroad, please see Appendix 7, which sets forth special considerations in choosing an international internship.

What is networking, should I do it, and how is it done?

Very simply, networking is the process of using personal connections to gain information about careers; it is valuable both in finding out about job openings and in securing a job. Some studies show that as many as 70% of jobs are obtained through networking. Informational interviewing can be valuable in exploring career options that are new to you; most people love to talk about themselves and their work, so you can usually finagle at least a brief phone conversation with even the most accomplished lawyers.

You can certainly network with people you do not know personally. This is especially important if you decide to look for jobs in a substantive or geographic area with which you are not familiar. It is, however, easier to approach people with whom you have some connection; your college or law school’s alumni are a good place to start. The Office of Career Services maintains a list of public interest alumni from Wisconsin and across the nation; it is available on the table outside Kristin Davis’ office (Room 3221).

We recommend you begin networking by emailing a short note with your resume attached so that the person knows about you; emailing is less intrusive than a phone call and allows the person to reply at their convenience. The email note might say something like, “I am a second-year student at the University of Wisconsin Law School and I got your name from a list of public interest alumni maintained by the Office of Career Services. I am interested in _____ (area of law) and I was wondering if I could contact you to briefly discuss (the market for lawyers

practicing in [area of law] in [city])/(how you obtained your position in [area of law])/(any advice you might have for me in my job search). Please let me know if you would be available in the next few weeks to talk with me on the phone. I have attached a copy of my resume just to give you an idea of my interests and background. Thank you for your time.”

Don't forget to thank the people who have helped you. If you talk on the phone, a short thank you email is sufficient. However, if someone spends more than an hour with you in a networking meeting, it is best to send a handwritten note.

Bar associations: Becoming a student member of a bar association is an excellent way to increase your knowledge and make contacts. Membership entitles you to various benefits, including the opportunity to be appointed as a student member of a committee. The State Bar of Wisconsin offers a free Law Student Associate Program to students currently enrolled at the University of Wisconsin Law School. To join, you need to complete and submit a form, which you can obtain online at www.wisbar.org (click on “law students” on the left side bar). You can then join the Public Interest Section or any other section in which you have interest.

Will I have to undergo a security clearance to work in government?

If you work for a U.S. Attorneys' Office or the Department of Justice, you will have to pass a security check. The federal government notes that as part of this security process a credit report is required, which will reveal delinquent, unpaid, or charged off accounts. A pattern of delinquent payments and/or overall poor credit history could prevent you from receiving the required approval needed to participate in an internship program.

4. Application Tips: Resume, Cover Letters, Interviews, & Offers

How can I learn how to write a resume and cover letter?

Once you have determined the type of practice and geographic area in which you wish to work, and have researched potential employers, the next step is to compile your credentials and make contact with employers. We offer workshops designed to help students learn how to look for a job, write a resume and cover letter, and create a good impression in an interview. We believe that skills learned during your job searches will last you throughout your entire career.

The Public Interest Resume

The public interest resume is similar in many respects to any other resume. The resume, with the cover letter, introduces you to potential employers. It also will be the basis for your interviews; the resume is generally used as a “conversation starter” during an interview. In some situations, the resume and cover letter may be the only example of your written work that the hiring organization ever sees. The sample public interest resumes contained in this handbook are intended to serve as guides. See Appendix 8.

Resume Basics

Remember that a resume is often skimmed, not read. A successful resume is neat, well-organized, and quickly highlights the skills and experiences you want to market. Make sure that your resume is well-written, carefully proofread for spelling and typographical errors, and will guide the employer to your strengths during an interview.

Public interest resumes should demonstrate your commitment to public service. Your enthusiasm for public interest can be evinced through your academic accomplishments, previous jobs, volunteer experiences, internships, and any other relevant experiences. Relevant non-legal employment and experiences should be included. Descriptions of your experiences should focus on the skills you gained. Choose active verbs. Delete “throat clearing” terms: “worked assisting professor with research” can usually be edited to “researched.” Some resumes will focus on clients that were served in order to demonstrate the skill of working with a particular client base.

Information to Include

Your resume will start with your name and address (if your email address is not professional, change it!). Resumes are organized in reverse chronological order. The education section will include your year in law school, law school honors, and activities. Other graduate work comes next. Your college section should include honors and activities and, if applicable, the title of your thesis.

The experience section will vary widely depending on factors such as whether you worked between college and law school. Some college or law school activities, if significant (such as pro bono work, internships, and school clinics), should be set out in the experience section rather than as a school activity. For public interest resumes, you should consider highlighting:

- public service employment
- functional skills (research, organizing, client interviewing, drafting, analysis)
- experience in substantive areas
- volunteer work
- clinical experience, moot court, volunteer work with student organizations
- public service affiliations

- pro bono work
- other special skills or information, especially language abilities.

Resume Length

While a one-page resume is the norm for most 1L resumes, individuals with substantial public service and volunteer experience may be advised to lengthen their resume. Many public interest employers have no objection to concise resumes of more than one page, provided the information contained is relevant. And, as you gain experience during law school, 3L applicants for fellowships and permanent jobs often have longer resumes documenting their substantial skills and knowledge.

Cover Letters

The cover letter provides prospective employers with their first exposure to you; thus, it should demonstrate your commitment to (or interest in) public service. A successful cover letter is addressed to a particular person, starts with an introductory paragraph that identifies you and the position you seek, describes your qualifications, skills and interests, and concludes with an “ask.” In the cover letter it is important for you to demonstrate in the first paragraph that you know something about the work of the organization. You can then discuss in subsequent paragraphs how your skills fit the organization’s needs.

Unless you are specifically advised to use general forms of address, such as “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Sir or Madam,” you should address your cover letter to the hiring attorney by name.

In the introductory paragraph, you should identify yourself and the specific position you seek. You should mention how you learned of the position or organization; if you have a personal contact, mention this in the first paragraph.

The most common mistake students make when writing cover letters is describing only why the job would be perfect for them. While you may well want to discuss how a summer with the employer fits into your long-term goals, the objective is to sell yourself. You need to describe the skills and knowledge that make you stand out. Answer the question of why you are interested in this particular area of law or particular employer. What prior experiences have you had that gave you skills? **Don’t merely restate your resume**; the cover letter is an opportunity to **analyze** for the employer how you have the skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm they need, citing examples from your resume.

The conclusion should state your interest in arranging an interview to discuss the position and state the time during which you are available for an interview (during a Career Fair, over winter break when you will be in a particular city, etc.). Do not forget to include contact information where you may be reached.

After you have submitted a cover letter and resume, if you do not hear back from the prospective employer within two or three weeks, you can follow up with the contact person to make sure that your resume and cover letter were received.

Basic Rules for Resumes and Cover Letters

- Use the same font consistently throughout both the cover letter and resume (where necessary, use bold, italics, or small capitals).
- Use the same abbreviations throughout the cover letter and resume.
- Be consistent in your use of commas.

- If relevant, be sure to use the correct form of the journal or publication you worked on.
- Never use the first person in your resume.
- Be specific when describing job functions, cases worked on, research areas, and documents drafted.
- There are two spaces after the period at the end of every sentence and after every colon. Commas and semi-colons are followed by only one space.
- Spend as little space as possible discussing your reasons for wanting to work with a particular organization. **Focus instead on your experiences and skills.**
- Vary the structure of your sentences to avoid repeated rhythm.
- Do not start every sentence with “I”.
- Avoid using contractions.
- Make sure that the cover letter flows smoothly and that your transitions make sense.
- Proofread every document – do not rely solely on spell check, as it does not catch every mistake.
- Make sure that the name of the organization and the contact person are spelled correctly. If you are unsure of the contact person’s gender, call the organization to confirm.

Interview Skills and Training Practice

An articulate, professional first impression is a key component of achieving success in searching for a job. We encourage you to participate in our interview workshops, to schedule a mock interview with a counselor in Career Services, and also to discuss questions you may have about interviewing when you meet with a counselor.

What if I obtain multiple offers?

If you obtain an offer that is not one of your top choices, you should feel free to ask the employer for some time. NALP, the National Association of Law Placement, suggests that employers give two weeks, but most public interest employers are not members of NALP and many cannot wait that long. We advise you to ask for two weeks, realizing that you may be given less time. You can then use that offer strategically to call your first choice employer and let them know that you have another offer, but that they are your first choice. **Please note that principles of professional conduct require you to withdraw all applications once you accept a job offer.**

5. Looking Beyond First Year— Planning a Public Interest Career

What are public interest salaries and how should I plan financially while I am in law school?

Although public interest jobs do not pay as much as large private sector law firms, they provide a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. Salaries for entry-level public interest positions typically range from approximately \$35,000 to \$55,000 per year, depending on the employer and location, with salaries highest in the northeast and California. Legal services offices usually have the lowest salaries. Criminal justice salaries are somewhat higher; in Wisconsin, starting salaries for both prosecutors and public defenders are about \$47,000; they are approximately \$55,000 in New York, and they are even higher in California. Entry-level government positions (federal, state, and local) range from \$40,000 to \$79,000 per year, again depending on employer and location. Also, salary scales do advance! For example, federal government salary scales go up very quickly, so that in 4-5 years federal government attorneys often earn over \$100,000. While in law school, it is wise to live as inexpensively as you can and to not exceed your school's designated budget for students.

How does our Loan Repayment Assistance Plan (LRAP) work?

The University of Wisconsin Law School sponsors a Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP), which provides small grants to students who accept permanent public interest jobs after graduation. Since its inception in 2002, the LRAP has generally provided anywhere from two to six months of loan repayment in the form of a lump sum payment upon acceptance of a "qualifying position." In 2008, "qualifying position" meant a legal position at a non-profit organization or government agency with an annual salary of \$43,000 or less. Applications for the LRAP are made available in late March of your 3L year and are typically due in mid-April before you graduate.

You do not need to have accepted a qualifying position at the time you apply for an LRAP! Instead, in order to qualify for an LRAP, you must have accepted a qualifying position by April 1 of the year following your graduation.

If you have any questions about the LRAP, please contact Kristin Davis at kristindavis@wisc.edu or 608-262-6444.

Should I consider a term-time internship?

A term-time internship can be a good way to try out a new subject area, develop a new skill, or earn some extra money if you have the time given other commitments.

What should I do if want to work for a law firm after graduation?

If for financial reasons you choose to work in the private sector with the intention to move into the public sector a few years later, it is advisable to have a specific professional AND financial exit strategy. For example, lawyers who want to make this transition should maintain their contacts in public interest, continue to network in public interest circles, and involve themselves in as much pro bono and volunteer work as possible. A great resource on transitioning from law firm to public interest work is *The Great Law Firm Escape: Harvard Law School's Guide to*

Breaking Out of Private Practice and Into Public Service. Copies are available in the Career Services library.

What are post-graduate job opportunities in public interest?

Students often hear that it is difficult to obtain public interest jobs, but the reality is more nuanced. For example, criminal justice jobs are fairly plentiful, because both prosecutors and public defenders regularly hire entry level attorneys. Moreover, being a prosecutor or public defender is a great first job because they 1) offer substantial formal training; 2) enable new lawyers to obtain court experience, which is hard to obtain in civil cases; and 3) can lead to many other jobs in the private or public sectors.

Some government agencies also regularly hire entry-level attorneys. For example, the Department of Justice hires over 100 lawyers each year through its honors program.

Civil legal service providers also regularly hire entry-level attorneys. Law reform/policy organizations do not regularly hire entry-level attorneys; the major entry point for those employers is through a fellowship.

What do public interest employers look for in hiring for permanent jobs and is there a roadmap to get there?

Public interest graduates are given tremendous responsibility in their first jobs. Therefore, employers look for evidence that the student has gained the skills that the particular employer needs. All public interest employers look for clinical experience. Beyond that, it depends. Employers who do complex litigation will look for experience in doing sophisticated research and writing, and may prefer journal experience. Employers who do community organizing or direct client work prefer students who have interviewing skills, and are comfortable “on their feet,” either through student pro bono organizations, moot court, clinics, or other experiences. In general, public interest employers are less grade-focused than the private sector, but on the other hand, some prefer applicants who have clerked for a judge, which does require good grades.

Although there is no one “road map” for public interest students to follow, Appendix 2 is a Career Planning Timeline, which suggests typical activities for public interest students to do each year of law school.

Are the myths about public interest law really true?

There are two myths about public interest vs. private sector work that are worth addressing and debunking. It is also worth noting that many people will work in both sectors in their careers.

Myth: You must go to a law firm to get solid training.

Reality: Many law firms provide great training to be a law firm lawyer. However, what they train for, such as researching and writing long memoranda and being part of a large team, do not necessarily translate into the skills needed by many public interest organizations. If you want to be a good poverty lawyer, you should get training from the best poverty lawyers you can find.

Myth: Public interest law is for those who can’t “make it” in the private sector.

Reality: This myth originates from the idea that if you work for poor people, you must be a poor lawyer (a similar misconception is often applied to doctors who treat poor patients). The reality

is that public interest work is just as - or more - sophisticated, complex, and multi-faceted as work in the private sector. Moreover, because it is more competitive to obtain a public interest job after graduation, students who want to pursue a public interest path often distinguish themselves in law school, either through clinics, extracurricular activities, internships, or grades.

B. WHERE TO FIND PUBLIC INTEREST INTERNSHIPS

1. Job Resources— PSLawNet & More

PSLawNet--Public Service Law Network Worldwide

The most **comprehensive** resource is an on-line one: the Public Service Law Network Worldwide (PSLawNet), a database of 12,000 domestic and international organizations, government agencies, and public interest law firms, at www.pslawnet.org.

Harvard Job Search Guide

Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, a comprehensive handbook and directory published by Harvard Law School, contains lists of public interest organizations as well as job search strategies and personal essays about the practice of public service law. It is an especially useful guide for 1L students trying to orient themselves to public interest law. Volume 1 addresses domestic law; Volume II addresses international. Please note: HLS stopped publishing the Guide in 2006; it remains, however, a very useful resource, and copies can be obtained in the Career Services library.

Symplicity Job Bank

The Law School frequently receives postings for public interest positions, which we post regularly on the Symplicity Job Bank.

Other Resources

The best websites for domestic and international public interest jobs are described in Appendices 4 and 5. Also, see Appendix 3 for Career Services library resources.

Resources for Government Jobs

- The Government Honors & Internship Handbook, published by the University of Arizona School of Law, lists federal, state, and local government internship programs, and is the best resource for government internship programs. It is available at: <http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm>. The 2008-2009 username is “graham” and the password is “cracker.”
- NALP’s Federal Employment Opportunities Guide provides comprehensive information on federal departments and agencies, as well as the federal government hiring process. The Guide is available through the NALP website in PDF format at <http://www.nalp.org/jobseekers/fedempl.pdf>
- The United States Government Manual provides a brief description of every agency, its organization, mission, and locations. To download a free copy from the National Archives and Records Administration, go to <http://www.nara.gov>

2. On Campus Interviewing— OCI

The Office of Career Services’ On-Campus Interview Program (OCI) is primarily focused on large firm hiring. However, every year a number of public interest/government agency employers participate, including the City of Chicago Department of Law, the Cook County

State's Attorney's Office, the IRS Office of Chief Counsel, the Milwaukee County DA's Office, the National Labor Relations Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

3. Career Fairs

The University of Wisconsin Law School participates in the Equal Justice Works (EJW) Career Fair held each October in Washington, D.C., which features interviews and "table talks" (information tables) with about 150 public interest and government employers, as well as panel discussions. You must register in advance (usually two to three weeks before the Fair is scheduled) to participate in the Fair (registration is free). Resumes, cover letters, and other requested information should be sent directly to employers in which you have interest (instructions are on the EJW website, www.equaljusticeworks.org). After you submit your applications, employers will contact you directly to schedule interviews. **Students are strongly encouraged to submit resumes to employers several weeks before the Fair to allow sufficient time for resume review and scheduling of interviews.**

The University of Wisconsin Law School also participates in the Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference (MPILCC), held every February in Chicago. Registration for the MPILCC (which is free) typically takes place in December before the Conference. Employers participating in the MPILCC are public interest employers/government agencies, mainly from the Chicago area or other Midwestern cities.

The University of Wisconsin Law School also sponsors a public interest job fair in February of each year. Participating employers are public interest organizations/government agencies, mainly from Madison and Milwaukee. Students submit cover letters, resumes and other required information through the Symplicity system in January. More information about the Wisconsin Public Interest Job Fair will be disseminated in December.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Career Counselor Biographies

Kristin Davis is the public interest law advisor in the Office of Career Services. She can be reached at kristindavis@wisc.edu and 262-6444.

Kristin graduated in 1993 from Washington University in St. Louis. During her 1L and 2L summers she interned in legal aid offices in Iowa and Missouri. After graduation, she clerked for a justice on the Iowa Supreme Court and then took a position with a plaintiff-side law firm in Chicago, where she worked primarily on civil rights and employment discrimination matters. She left the firm in 1998, after it changed its focus to more transactional work. From 1999-2002, Kristin was the advisor for judicial clerkships, fellowships and teaching at Harvard Law School. She has been an advisor in the Career Services Office at the University of Wisconsin Law School since August of 2002, and has focused her advising on public interest and judicial clerkships since 2006. She is a member of the Law School's ad hoc committees on Public Interest Law and the Loan Repayment Assistance Program, and has been administering the LRAP since its inception in 2003. She is also a member of the Public Interest section of the National Association for Law Placement.

Appendix 2: Timeline for Planning a Public Interest Career

ONGOING

- Review calendar for events of interest to you.
- Build public interest credentials: student-run pro bono organizations, term-time and summer internships, clinics, journals, leadership in organizations.
- Attend Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference in Chicago and Wisconsin Public Interest Job Fair. If have job, network with employers at table talk.
- Network and conduct informational interviews with public interest students and alums.

FIRST YEAR

Fall

- Expand knowledge of public interest subject areas and types of lawyering by attending educational panels.
- Conduct 1L summer internship search.
- Write resume in law school format.
- Sign up for PSLawNet.
- Meet with counselor to discuss 1L summer and public interest career path.
- After December 1, begin applying for jobs.

Spring

- Continue conducting 1L summer internship search.
- Attend Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference and Wisconsin Public Interest Career Fairs.
- Attend meeting to prepare for summer internship.

Summer

- Work hard to get as much experience from your internship as you can; take advantage of brown bag lunches or other educational/networking opportunities offered by employer.
- Refine interests in subject area and type of lawyering.
- Consider whether summer employer is potential post-graduate employer or fellowship sponsor.

SECOND YEAR

Fall

- Reflect on 1L internship; determine whether you want to explore new area in 2L summer or deepen prior experience. Do personal inventory to assess your interests in subject matter and type of legal work. Consider how 2L summer relates to post-graduate goals.
- As one factor in your search, determine whether organizations have post-graduate opportunities. Do they regularly hire staff attorneys, do they have their own fellowship or have they successfully sponsored project fellowships?
- Meet with counselor to discuss long-term plans and how they relate to 2L summer.
- Conduct 2L summer internship search.

Spring

- Finalize 2L summer plans.

Summer

- Work hard at summer internship, realizing that 2L summer recommendation can be crucial to post-grad job search.
- If applying for fellowships, meet with a counselor.

For project fellowships:

- Educate yourself about relevant potential sponsors through PSLawNet and websites.
- Determine whether organization you are interested in has sponsored fellows before.
- Contact potential organization sponsors; solidify organization sponsorship as early as possible.
- Begin drafting project proposal.

For other post-graduate opportunities:

Use alumni contacts to “shadow for a day” an attorney who works in an organization you are interested in (especially good for public defender, prosecutor jobs).

THIRD YEAR

Fall

- Review on campus deadlines, Government Honors Handbook and PSLawNet fellowship information to construct personal calendar of deadlines.
- Meet with counselor to plan post-grad job strategy; revise resume; draft cover letter.
- Sign up to have jobs emailed to you from PSLawNet.

For project fellowships:

Finalize application.

For organization fellowships and government honors programs:

Network with prior fellows before finalizing application materials; prepare for interviews.

For public defender, prosecutor, and government jobs:

Determine if agencies you are interested in are interviewing at On Campus Interviewing or the Equal Justice Works Career Fair in Washington, D.C.

Spring/Summer

- Apply for fellowships with spring deadlines.
- Apply for non-fellowship jobs that post announcements in spring and summer.

Appendix 3: Office of Career Services Library Resources

The following books are available for check-out or perusal in Career Services:

Public Interest Directories/Domestic

Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, Vol. I–USA, Harvard Law School

The Directory of Legal Aid and Defender Offices, National Legal Aid & Defender Association
(in Kristin’s office)

Insider’s Guide to Private/Non-profit Legal Employers in the Washington, DC Metro Area

Lawful Pursuits: Careers in Public Interest Law

Public Interest Directories/International

Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, Volume II-International, Harvard Law School

International Public Interest Law: A Guide to Opportunities in the United States and Abroad

Finding and Funding International Public Service Opportunities (handout)

Opportunities with International Tribunals and Foreign Courts (handout)

International Opportunities Resource Guide

Careers in International Law

Fellowships

PSLawNet Comprehensive Fellowship Guide – The Ultimate Resource for Lawyers and Law Students (in Kristin’s office and on pslawnet.org)

Government

Federal Legal Employment Opportunities Guide, NALP, in cooperation with Partnership for Public Service

Working on Capitol Hill (handout)

Now Hiring: Government Jobs for Lawyers

Applying for Federal Jobs

The Book of U.S. Government Jobs

Federal Law-Related Careers Directory

Federal Jobs: The Ultimate Guide

The Public Service Employer Directory

Vault Guide to Capitol Hill Careers

Vault Guide to Government/Non-profit Legal Employers

Public Interest Law Firms

Private Public Interest and Plaintiff’s Firm Guide (handout)

Human Rights

Human Rights Internship Handbook

Human Rights Organizations and Periodicals Directory

Public Policy

Washington, DC Internships in Law and Policy

Miscellaneous

The Great Firm Escape: Harvard Law School’s Guide to Breaking Out of Private Practice and into Public Service

Appendix 4: Websites for Domestic Job Searches

GENERAL

PSLawNet, www.pslawnet.org (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Comprehensive listing of public interest legal positions, including volunteer opportunities, paid summer positions, and post-graduate positions and fellowships.

Idealist (Action without Borders), www.idealist.org (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Comprehensive listing of public service positions, both legal and non-legal, in over 140 countries. This is an especially good site for post-graduate job listings. Searchable by subject matter, country, type of position, and other categories.

National Legal Aid & Defender Association, www.nlada.org/jobop.htm (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

This is the best site for post-graduate jobs in civil legal services organizations and defender organizations. Other public interest organizations are also listed. Searchable by state.

Foundation Center, www.foundationcenter.org

Provides information about every foundation in the country. Much of this information is free, but some of it is for paying subscribers only. Job corner contains a database of job openings in foundations, corporate grant makers, and other nonprofit organizations. Searchable by type of employer and region.

GOVERNMENT

Government Honors & Internship Handbook,

<http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm> (2008-2009 username: "graham"; password: "cracker"). Contains information on federal government post-graduate honors programs and summer internship programs.

Office of Personnel Management, www.usajobs.opm.gov

This is the federal government's official one-stop source for federal jobs (permanent and internships) and employment information. Searchable by position, salary, and geographic location. Updated every business day. Can create an "agent" to email particular kinds of opportunities as soon as they are posted. **Note: when searching for federal jobs, you should also check the agency site, as not every job makes it into USA JOBS.**

National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), www.naag.org

The most comprehensive online site for the latest developments in the offices of the state Attorneys General throughout the country, including ground-breaking litigation, new appointments, and job opportunities.

Fedworld, www.fedworld.gov

Contains job listings, both law-related and other, with the federal government. Run by the Department of Commerce and links to USA Jobs.

Federal Jobs Search Page, www.hrsjobs.com

Similar to OPM and Fedworld sites listed above, this site is notable because it contains links to **state government web pages.**

Roll Call Jobs, www.rcjobs.com

Features jobs in government affairs, lobbying and other positions with organizations that do lobbying and other work with the federal government.

STATE-SPECIFIC JOB SITES

Chicago, <http://www.chicagobar.org/careerresources/>

To help law school graduates search for a public sector career, the Chicago Bar Association Government Services Committee and the Young Lawyers Section of the Chicago Bar Association of Chicago have compiled the most current hiring information available on numerous government agencies in Chicago.

Minnesota, www.mnjustice.org

The site of the Minnesota Justice Foundation, this site lists Minnesota legal internships.

New York City, www.gothamgazette.com

Gotham Gazette Classifieds, an on-line listing of public service jobs in New York City, includes many law-related jobs.

New York City (government jobs), www.nyc.gov/portal/index.jsp

SUBJECT-MATTER SPECIFIC

For subject-matter specific web sites, please visit the Career Services web site www.law.wisc.edu/career

Appendix 5: Websites for International Job Searches

Included here are bulletin boards or compilations of listings related to international public interest. We have also listed some specific organizations or entities, although this is only a sample of the major organizations – there are many more out there!

GENERAL

ABA-Section of International Law, Human Rights Committee E-Brief

Contains organization profiles, job listings, and weekly human rights news. Students can sign up to receive the weekly newsletter and also view past issues. Subscribe & see past issues at <http://mail.abanet.org/archives/inthumrights.html>.

American Society of International Law

Career resources for students are listed at <http://www.asil.org/careers/careerwebsites.html>.

Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)

Weekly listing of gender-related vacancies; often includes human rights jobs.

<http://www.awid.org/jobs/>

Communication Initiative

Website designed to facilitate communication among development professionals (legal and non-legal). Vacancies are listed at <http://www.comminit.com/vacancies.html>.

DevNet Jobs

Job listings in the development field, including many related to human rights and humanitarian work. Membership is required to view some listings. Free newsletter. www.DevNetJobs.org

Foreign Policy Association

Website and also weekly jobs newsletter. http://www.fpa.org/jobs_contact2423/jobs_contact.htm

Human Rights Blog <http://www.humanrightsblog.org/listings/>.

Human Rights Jobs

Some jobs open to all, others are for members only. <http://www.humanrightsjobs.com/>

Human Rights Resource Center

Links to numerous job pages at NGOs and inter-governmental organizations.

<http://www.hrusa.org/field/joblinks.shtm>

Human Rights Tools

This website has a variety of tools for human rights professionals. Job listings can be found at

<http://jobs.humanrightstools.org/>.

Idealist.org

Job listings in public service, including human rights positions throughout the world. If you enter your profile, Idealist will send you relevant listings. To sign up, fill out a profile at:

<http://www.idealist.org/en/ip/idealist/MyIdealist/Register/default?SID=7264eb90e386d68fd1d1645d9de4f63c>

One World

Similar to idealist.org. <http://us.oneworld.net/section/us/jobs>

PSLawNet

Can search organizations, jobs, fellowships and internships (paid and unpaid) throughout the world. Has better coverage of some countries than others. www.pslawnet.org

ReliefWeb

Lots of field positions are advertised here for mostly humanitarian and some human rights jobs.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/vacancies/>

REGIONAL JOB LISTINGS**American Association of Teachers of Slavic and Eastern European Languages**

Job index for people with Slavic language skills. <http://aatseel.org/jobs/job-index.asp>

Pambazuka News

Website and newsletter on social justice in Africa. <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/jobs/>

PAE-REACT

This is the contractor paid by the US State Department to select US citizens for seconded jobs with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. www.pae-react.com

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Criminal Court, http://www.icc.int/en/ICC_jobs.html

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Theoretically the ICTY's jobs are listed on the main UN site, but this is not always the case.

<http://www.un.org/icty/practical-e/index.htm>

United Nations

Check under "Human Rights", "Legal", and "Humanitarian Affairs."

<https://jobs.un.org/Galaxy/Release3/vacancy/vacancy.aspx>

For information on the competitive exam, see

<http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/exam.htm>.

UN Development Program

Some rights-related jobs <http://www.undp.org/jobs/>

For information on UNDP Leadership Development Program see <http://www.undp.org/lead/>.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Theoretically the High Commissioner's vacancies are all listed on the UN site, but in reality there are often jobs here that are never posted to the main site.

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/vacancies/index.htm>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Information on external vacancies and international professional roster at

<http://www.unhcr.org/admin/3ba1bdcb7.html>.

UNICEF

Some rights-related jobs. <http://www.unicef.org/employ/current.htm>

INTERNATIONAL NGOS

American Bar Association Rule of Law Programs

<http://www.abanet.org/rol/opportunities/opportunities-home.shtml>

Center for International Environmental Law http://www.ciel.org/Join/Join_Jobs.html

Center for Reproductive Rights, http://www.reproductiverights.org/ab_employment.html

Global Rights http://www.globalrights.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wwcd_index_44

Human Rights First http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/about_us/about_us.htm

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/jobs/>

International Center for Transitional Justice <http://www.ictj.org/en/about/jobs/index.html>

International Committee of the Red Cross www.icrc.org

International Crisis Group <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1152&l=1>

International Rescue Committee <http://www.theirc.org/jobs/index.html>

Open Society Institute <http://www.soros.org/about/careers>

DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS (sometimes have opportunities in international law)

National Lawyers Guild, <http://www.nlg.org/members/jobs.htm>

ACLU <http://www.aclu.org/jobs/>

Center for Constitutional Rights <http://ccrjustice.org/job-internship>

Appendix 6: How to Create Your Own Organization List Using PSLawNet

For a complete list of organizations involved in your area of interest, go to www.pslawnet.org and follow the instructions below.



1. Go to PSLawNet's Web Site (www.pslawnet.org) and register as a student/alumni. One-time registration is required to have access to PSLawNet. Register or edit your existing profile.
2. Once you have registered, click on Search Database button.
3. Enter your Log-in Name and Password.
4. Click on the Log-in Now Button.
5. Click on Search Organizations Button.
6. At the next stage, designate an Organization Type: Government, Judge/Judiciary, Law Firm, Non-profit (Legal Aid/Advocacy), or Non-profit (Cultural/Education).
7. Next, select one or more of the 49 particular Practice Areas.
8. You also have the option of selecting a particular Geographic Area.
9. Click on the Perform Search Button.
10. PSLawNet will then generate a list of all the organizations that match your query, and will provide you with the following information: Name, Location, Address, Phone, Fax, E-Mail, Website, Organization Type, Organization Description.
12. Then simply hit the Print function and print an entire specialty list for you to use.

Appendix 7: Tips for Students Applying for International Internships

Common objectives of summer internships include:

- Explore different kinds of work to help you figure out what you want to do later.
- Gain field experience and on-the-ground knowledge about human rights violations.
- Have an impact and contribute to protecting human rights in action.
- Make contacts and develop networks.
- Develop skills such as researching, interviewing, trial monitoring, brief-writing, etc.
- Strengthen language skills, and cross-cultural communication skills.

Identifying organizations:

Some organizations – such as UN agencies, international tribunals, and a limited number of local non-governmental organizations – have formal internship programs with set deadlines. These programs may be very competitive, and the application process is relatively similar to that for domestic internships. You should definitely apply if these interest you, but there is no need to limit your search there. Here are some other resources:

- PSLawNet and other internet databases such as ReliefWeb and PeaceBuildingPortal (see list of international links).
- Resources provided by Career Services, such as reports of where students have interned in past years.
- Network – attend symposia, conferences, etc. and talk to fellow students who have been abroad, professors, and practitioners.
- Web research on topics of interest to you.
- Be sure to think strategically about what you hope to get out of the summer and make sure to apply to places that will help you further your goals.
- Consider the cost of living in different areas, which can vary widely.

Applying for internships:

Check organization's website to see if they have a formal internship selection process. If not, and if you do not know how (or if) internships are usually handled in the country, use the following steps:

- Make initial contact early-ish in the spring semester. Contact them by email, and offer to follow up by phone. (Remember – through Skype and internet phone cards, you can call anywhere for free or very cheap.)
- Do not write a standard American cover letter – if they are not accustomed to receiving internship applications, they may not know what to do with it. This cover letter will be your first chance to practice cross-cultural communication skills – which will prove essential in your internship and international career.
 - Try to put yourself in their shoes and think about what questions they may have upon hearing from a foreign student out of the blue. You might include a little less boasting, and less detail about your skills and experience. Be sure to state whether you have funding, what you would like to do, and why you want to work with them.

- Be careful of American terms – e.g. note that our summer is their winter in the Southern Hemisphere (so it is best to say which months you are available); and college refers to secondary school in many countries (so you should say ‘university’ instead).
- Some organizations might not respond at all (most likely because they are busy and May seems a long way off). If you really want to work there, follow up with another email then a phone call after a couple weeks. Or write to more organizations.
- Others might respond immediately by telling you that they will be happy to have you – offering you the job without even an interview. Be sure to investigate further before you accept!

Considerations before accepting an internship:

- Research the organization - read their website, google them, learn what they do and about their reputation.
- Contact former interns to ask about their experiences.
- Talk to the supervisor on the phone, and ask detailed questions. Try to get a feel for what kind of supervision you would get. Make sure they know what you want to get out of the summer and ask for specifics of what you would work on. Also be sure to ask about logistical issues like workspace and internet access, and whether they will help you find a place to live.

Logistical planning before you get on that plane:

- Visas: be sure to get visas or work permits before you go, if necessary.
- Health & safety: read information on Centers for Disease Control and State Department websites. Consult a doctor 6-8 weeks before you leave to get necessary vaccinations and medications. Make sure you have travel insurance.
- Housing: figure out where you will live (or how you will find a place, and where you will stay the first few days while you are looking),
- Arrival: figure out how you will get from the airport. Will the employer pick you up? Are taxis readily available, and how much do they cost?
- Transportation: how you will get to work and around town?
- Money: is there access to ATM machines? Are there currency restrictions?
- Shopping: if there are products you cannot live without (e.g., contact lens solution), find out if they are readily available in the country and how expensive they are, and stock up before you travel if necessary.
- Communicate: touch base with your employer a few days before you go, to remind them you are coming.
- Gifts: it is a nice idea to bring gifts for your co-workers, host family, or people who may help you when you are there. Something as simple as a T-shirt from your home town or a box of chocolates from duty free will be much appreciated.

Substantive planning before you get on that plane:

- Research: learn the basics of the country’s history and legal system.

- Resources: find out what kind of information resources are available, and bring any necessary materials with you (e.g. if internet access will be poor, download relevant articles and cases before you leave.)
- Work plan: develop a mutual understanding of what you will do with your employer.
- Side project: identify an independent research project you may want to work on.
- Back-up plan: think about other organizations you may want to work with or independent projects you could do, just in case.

Once you arrive:

- Keep an open mind! Pay attention to how co-workers relate to each other, and try to fit in with the office culture.
- Be aware of cultural, political, and social sensitivities, and try to anticipate difficult situations before they occur. Observe or ask about local customs and try to follow them; be respectful if you can't.
- Clarify expectations: what do they want you to work on? Should communication be written, oral, or by email? Ask what resources you should consult, whether there is a sample you can use, and the time frame.
- Always take deadlines seriously, fulfill your commitments, and ask questions if you need help.
- Take initiative.
- Request feedback.
- The most common complaint of interns abroad is lack of substantive work to do. If you are in this situation, be proactive!
 - If you do not have enough work, let others know you are available.
 - Try to sit down with your supervisor, and explain why you are frustrated and what you would like to happen. If possible, make a concrete proposal of something you would like to work on (e.g. an independent research project that would further the organization's work.)
 - Express an interest in accompanying lawyers to court or meetings, or in helping with other projects.
 - Develop relationships with lawyers at other organizations, and offer to help them with their work.
 - Spend more time on your independent research, and turn to your back-up plan.

When the internship is over:

- Request written feedback, and possibly a letter of recommendation.
- Write an evaluation of your experience and give it to the Career Services Office.
- Maintain contact with the organization and your colleagues.

Appendix 8: Sample Public Interest Resumes & Cover Letters

Mock 1L Resume with substantial experience before law school

Christina Y. Ellington

525 E. Washington, Apt. 34
Madison, WI 53702
608-555-5555
ellington@wisc.edu

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, WI

Candidate for J.D., May 2010

Activities: Public Interest Law Foundation, Member
Student Hurricane Network, Member
Wisconsin Journal of Gender and Society, Cite Checker

Rice University, Houston, TX

B.S. in Biology, May 2004

Thesis: The Symbolism of Wilderness in North America
Honors: Departmental Award for Excellence in Biology
Activities: Young Biologists Club
Student Council Senator

EXPERIENCE

Wisconsin CASA Unit, Madison, WI

Court Appointed Special Advocate, August 2005 – August 2006

- Monitored the relationship between pre-adolescent sisters and their foster mother through home visits and telephone conversations
- Wrote status reports and attended permanency-paneling hearings in order to communicate the needs of the children to the court and offer recommendations

Office of the Appellate Defender, Madison, WI

Legal Assistant, Appeals Division, August 2004 – July 2005

- Conducted research on a variety of issues, including the efficacy of the Battered Wife Syndrome defense under Wisconsin law and the exclusion of DNA evidence
- Cite-checked and proof read briefs

Museum of Natural History, Anchorage, AK

Assistant Curator and Docent, May – August 2003

- Contributed to the collection and presentation of a new exhibit tracing the development of arts and crafts in Inuit culture and the influence of Inuit culture on Alaskan folk art
- Successfully pursued private funding for the new exhibit

PERSONAL

- Conversational Spanish
- Enjoy swimming, tennis, and skiing
- Extensive travel in Mexico and Central America

Mock 1L Resume with less experience before law school

Paul Gomez

55 W. Wilson, #44
Madison, WI 53706
608-222-2222
pg983@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, WI

Candidate for J.D., May 2010

Activities: Latino Law Students Association, Member
Law Students for Choice, Member

Brown University, Providence, RI

A.B. in Political Science, *magna cum laude*, May 2005

Honors: Brown University Honors Program

Activities: All-University Conference on Entrepreneurship, Chairperson
High School Tutoring Program, Spanish Tutor

EXPERIENCE

Unemployment Appeals Clinic, University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, WI

Student Advocate, October 2007 – Present

- Represent individuals in unemployment hearings before administrative law judge.

MK Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL

Account Executive, June 2005 – August 2006

- Worked closely with government and non-profit leaders in community development and affordable housing for boutique public relations and consulting firm.
- Wrote and edited press releases, brochures, and fundraising materials for a variety of clients.
- Developed and maintained contact with members of the media to encourage story placement.

Brown University, Providence, RI

Teaching Assistant, Political Science Department, September 2004- May 2005

- Prepared and presented lectures to 20 students in Introduction to Politics class.
- Worked individually with political science majors to develop original research topics; performed review and critique of proposals, outlines and drafts of senior thesis projects.

Office Depot, Chicago, IL

Assistant Manager, Summer 2004

Customer Service Representative, Summers 2001-2003

PERSONAL

- Fluent in Spanish.
- Enjoy bicycling and running.
- Other experience includes an enumerator for the United States Census Bureau and a vendor at Wrigley Field.

525 E. Washington, Apt. 34
Madison, WI 53702
ellington@wisc.edu
January 5, 2008

Jane Buechner, Director
Legal Services for Children
40 W. 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

Dear Ms. Buechner:

I am a first-year student at the University of Wisconsin Law School, and am writing to express my interest in a summer internship at Legal Services for Children. I am committed to advocating on behalf of children, whose interests, my experience has taught me, are all too often overlooked. It would be a privilege to join in your organization's efforts this summer.

I believe my experience both before and during law school would be valuable to Legal Services for Children. I have gained skills in legal research and writing not only through my first year Legal Research and Writing course, but also through my work as a Legal Assistant at the Office of the Appellate Defender before law school. In addition, I have experience working with a variety of clients, including children. After college, I spent a year as a Court Appointed Special Advocate with the Wisconsin CASA Unit. In this position, I monitored the relationship between three sisters and their foster mother. My skills in working with clients, coupled with my ability to think and write analytically and work effectively in a team environment, would enable me to make substantial contributions as a summer intern at Legal Services for Children.

I have enclosed my resume for your review, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss my interest and qualifications with you. I will be in New York from January 10-17, and can be reached at 608-555-5555 or ellington@wisc.edu. Should you wish, I would be happy to forward a writing sample, references, and/or a copy of my first semester grades, when they become available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Y. Ellington

Enclosure

Paul Gomez
55 W. Wilson, #44
Madison, WI 53706
608-222-2222
pg983@gmail.com

January 13, 2008

Louis Rodriguez
Staff Attorney
San Diego Public Defenders
233 A Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

I am a first year student at the University of Wisconsin Law School, and I am extremely interested in a summer internship with the San Diego Public Defenders. I am especially interested in providing criminal legal assistance to those unable to afford it, and your office is noted to be one of the nation's finest training grounds for young public defenders.

I believe that I have the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful intern at your office. I have developed considerable skills in critical thinking, research, and writing through my work experience, my first year of law school, and my strong undergraduate education at Brown University. Moreover, through my work as a Student Advocate with the Unemployment Appeals Clinic, I have gained practical experience representing clients in unemployment hearings.

My previous employment at MK Communications, where I worked with government officials, non-profit leaders in community development, and members of the media, gave me experience in dealing with a wide range of people. Furthermore, as Chairperson of the All-University Conference on Entrepreneurship, I developed a strong ability to multitask as I worked to coordinate events and people. I am fluent in Spanish and believe that this skill, coupled with my commitment to public service and strong background in organization, has provided me with the ability to be an asset to your office.

I have enclosed my resume, writing sample, and the names of three references for your review. Should you wish to schedule an interview, or if I can provide you with any other information, please contact me at (212) 443-3547 or pg983@gmail.com. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Paul Gomez

Enclosure