

OVADIA CP&P OFFICE

CAREERS IN LAW

A. Law Firms

Working for a law firm during the summer enables you to build upon what you learned in law school with invaluable practical experience. It also enhances your résumé and helps you to network with practicing attorneys. Law firms recruit students throughout the year, however, you should note the information set forth below.

Large Law Firms

Large law firms are able to project their growth and hiring needs better than smaller firms and therefore hire most of their summer associates through fall recruiting programs throughout the country. While most of their summer associates are second year students, some large firms hire first year students. You can find out which firms hire first year students by consulting the *NALP Directory of Legal Employers*, which is available online at www.nalpdirectory.com. According to NALP's Principles and Standards for Law Placement and Recruitment Activities, prospective employers and first year law students should not initiate contact with one another prior to December 1. All NALP-member firms (which tend to be the large firms) adhere to this guideline.

Mid- and Small-Sized Law Firms

Mid- and small-sized law firms offer more employment opportunities to first year students than large firms do. Many of these firms post open positions on Symplicity, and some participate in our Spring OCI program. Also, first year students can contact these firms directly by sending their cover letters and résumés to them even if the firms do not have published job postings at the time. The *Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory* <http://www.martindale.com> is a great research tool

for this type of self-initiated job search. We suggest that you meet with an Ovadia CP&P Office adviser to discuss this further before you begin to contact these firms.

B. Government

Federal Government

The federal government offers career opportunities in a broad range of legal fields, such as admiralty, banking, trade regulation, taxation and finance, labor law, communications regulation, international law, energy law, antitrust, patent law, public utilities regulation, criminal and constitutional law. For specific information on the role of attorneys in a particular agency, refer to the *Federal Yellow Book*, which is available online at www.LeadershipDirectories.com and *Now Hiring: Government Jobs for Lawyers*, which is available in the FIU Law Library. You can find over 1,800 volunteer positions at the Department of Justice at <http://www.justice.gov/careers/legal/volunteer-intern.html>.

The *Government Honors & Internship Handbook* contains detailed information about summer employment for first year students, and hiring information/application deadlines for many federal agencies. The Handbook is available at <http://arizonahandbooks.com/u/GHPPHandbookFIULaw> (contact the Ovadia CP&P Office for the password).

Another good resource is the Office of Personnel Management (www.opm.gov). It lists government jobs in all agencies, according to the criteria you select. A related website, <https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads>, provides information on government agencies with student employment opportunities. The *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (www.nalpdirectory.com) also has information on some government agencies, including contact information and hiring criteria. You should keep in mind that several of the largest federal agencies have formal recruitment programs, interview in early fall and make offers by December. If you are interested in a summer clerkship with a government agency, check with the Ovadia CP&P Office immediately upon returning to school in the fall of your second year.

Local and State Government

A number of internship opportunities are available to law students in local and state government agencies. Ideally, you should start applying for summer employment at local and state government agencies no later than mid-spring semester. However, most of these agencies are willing to hire students, as long as there is space available. An effective way to obtain information about internship opportunities at local and state agencies is to visit the website of the specific agency in which you are interested. Usually, the specific agency's website will provide detailed information regarding its internship program.

To obtain more information on opportunities with local and state government, as well as contact information for many local and state agencies in Florida, such as the Miami-Dade State

Attorney's Office, the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, the State of Florida Attorney General's Office and the City of Miami Attorney's Office, please contact the Ovadia CP&P Office.

C. Judicial Internships

A judicial **internship** is an opportunity for a law student to work with a judge while attending law school. A judicial **clerkship**, on the other hand, is an opportunity to work with a judge *after* graduating from law school. In this Handbook we have focused on judicial internships. Should you wish to obtain more information on judicial clerkships, refer to the *Judicial Clerkship Guide*, which is available in the Ovadia CP&P Office Library, or make an appointment to meet with the Assistant Dean, Ana Bierman.

Internship positions are available at the federal and state court levels throughout the academic year and during the summer. Depending on the court, an intern will typically attend court proceedings, assist in drafting memoranda and opinions, and conduct research for the judges. The process for applying for an internship varies by state and by court. When applying for an internship, it is recommended that you first have your résumé and cover letter reviewed by the Ovadia CP&P Office. Once you have an approved résumé and cover letter, and have decided where you wish to intern, you should do the following:

- Call the chambers of the judges for whom you would like to intern, and ask their judicial assistants if the judges are accepting applications for interns.
- Attend the Judicial Clerkship and Internship Information Sessions in the fall and spring.

Federal Judges

You may visit www.uscourts.gov to obtain biographical/professional information about judges with whom you are interested in working. Other online resources for judicial clerkships include:

OSCAR -Online System for Clerkship Application and Review: <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/>

Federal Court Information:

http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/U_S_Government/Judicial_Branch/Federal_Courts/

Federal Judicial Center: <http://www.fjc.gov/>

Vermont Law School's Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures:

<http://vermontlaw.edu/Documents/career%20services/JudicialClerkshipInfo.pdf>

State and Local Government on the Net: <http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm>

Florida State Appellate Court Judges

Visit www.flcourts.org to gather information on state appellate judges and follow the same procedure above.

Florida State Trial Court Judges

For the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court, visit www.jud11.flcourts.org. Each judicial district in Florida has its own website which can be found on www.flcourts.org. Thereafter, follow the same procedure as set forth above.

Judges Outside Dade County or Florida

If you are interested in interning for federal or state judges outside of Dade County, or outside of Florida, please consult www.uscourts.gov or www.judicialclerkships.com for links to the courts of other states, and *The Vermont Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures* is also available online. Please contact the Ovadia CP&P Office for your username and password. The process for applying to these judges is the same as the process discussed above for Florida judges.

Protocol for All Judges

If a judge offers you a position, you should accept immediately. As such, do not apply if you are not fully committed to accepting an offer. Once you have applied for an internship or clerkship, wait ten days to two weeks before calling to follow up on the status of your application. If you get an interview, you must fully research the judge prior to the interview and see Dean Bierman about mock interviews and other guidance.

D. Public Interest

Public interest law refers to legal areas that focus on matters affecting the public at large, and often involve an underrepresented constituency. The practice includes legal representation for a governmental entity or non-profit organizations.

The knowledge and skills utilized in public interest work is similar and transferable to private firms. One distinction is that in public interest, you will have earlier opportunities to meet directly with clients and appear in court.

There are many different types of public interest employers including:

- **Public Defenders Offices** represent indigent clients in criminal cases. The Directory of Legal Aid and Defender Offices in the United States – www.nlada.org
- **Legal Service Organizations** represent clients in civil cases
- **Public Interest Policy and Advocacy Groups** seek to influence governmental policy through regulatory comment, lobbying and advocacy
- **Public Interest Litigation Groups** support litigation that impact particular issues

- **Public Interest Environmental Organizations** work for the benefit of the environment
- **Trade and Professional Associations** represent the interest of their members in areas of legislative and regulatory policy

If you think that public interest is where you would like to begin your career, it is imperative that you get as much experience in the field as possible. Unlike most other areas of the law, public interest employers tend to hire based on experience and demonstrated interest, rather than solely on academic achievements. Additionally, you will find that the public interest community is relatively close-knit, and once you are known as a dedicated professional, finding work within the field will be easier through those networks.

Equal Justice Works (EJW) – www.equaljusticeworks.org

FIU Law is a member of EJW, an organization that connects law students and lawyers interested in the public sector. Through EJW you are able to attend the largest national public interest career fair in the country. More than 1,200 students from 165 law schools attend for two days of interviews, workshops, networking and other career opportunities each October. In addition, EJW sponsors summer fellowships and post-graduate fellowships in the public sector.

PSJD – www.PSJD.org

PSJD is an online database of domestic and international public interest opportunities. It houses information on volunteer projects during the school year and the summer, as well as post-graduate public interest employment. The database matches students with government agencies, legal aid societies, non-profit organizations, judges and private firms according to parameters you specify. Students must register for access and registration is free to FIU Law students.

Fellowships

Additionally, PSJD has a comprehensive list of all the major summer and post-graduate fellowships. Fellowships are a great opportunity for students interested in pursuing a career in public interest law. Post-graduate fellowships are awarded after law school graduation for a fixed period of time, while summer fellowships or semester fellowships are available to students during their first and second summers of law school, and during the academic year. Some fellowships are paid and others are unpaid. The following is a sample of fellowship opportunities available to students during the first summer of law school:

- ***ABA John J. Curtin, Jr. Justice Fund 2007 Summer Legal Internship Program***
(<http://www.abanet.org/homeless/curtin.html>)
- ***Equal Justice Works' Summer Corps***
(<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/programs/summercorps/general>)

- ***U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Summer Honors Law Program***
(www.sec.gov/jobs/jobs_students.shtml)

- ***Florida Supreme Court Internship Program for Distinguished Florida Law Students***

E. Corporations and Additional Organizations

Corporate Counsel

Corporate legal departments, like corporations themselves, vary in size, from a single attorney to over 200 attorneys. Since finding a position as corporate counsel is very competitive, interested students should start networking during law school by joining bar associations and relevant student organizations, and attending the seminars and functions sponsored by these associations and organizations. For more information refer to the *Directory of Corporate Counsel* and the NALP pamphlet, *Going In-House: A Guide for Law Students and Recent Graduates*, both of which are available on the NALP website.

Accounting Firms

Although the main business of accounting firms involves auditing, tax planning and management services, these organizations are also involved in the same work handled by private tax practitioners, including mergers and acquisitions, estate planning, foreign taxation and corporate reorganizations. In addition, many public accounting firms have diversified to provide a broad range of business planning and consulting services to a variety of clients.

Banking

Trust departments in banks employ law graduates to advise on matters of probate, personal trusts, pension, corporate and profit sharing trusts. The consumer lending departments, credit departments (commercial loans) and personnel departments (employment discrimination and civil rights law) of banks also employ law graduates. For more information, refer to the *Directory of Trust Banking*, published by the American Bankers Association at (www.aba.com).

University Counsel

University counsel work on legal issues involving contracts, gift planning, labor relations, college athletics and tax, as well as with issues particular to educational institutions. The National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA – www.nacua.org), located in Washington, D.C., is comprised of attorneys who serve as in-house counsel and attorneys who work for firms that represent educational institutions. NACUA can be a useful resource when conducting research on the position of university counsel.

Useful Resources on Non-Traditional Careers:

What Can You Do with a Law Degree – the Classic by Deborah Arron

Do What You Are – the variety of careers based on MBTI type by Tieger & Barron

What Color is Your Parachute – the classic general self-assessment guide by John Bolles

The StrengthsFinder – focus on what you do well and find a job that fits by Tome Roth

WishCraft – open up a world of possibilities by Barbara Sher

The Artist's Way at Work by Julia Cameron

Before making the decision to focus on non-traditional careers, you should consult closely with an Ovadia CP&P Office adviser about motivations and strategies. Many of these books are available in our office or can be ordered upon request.