PREPARING FOR YOUR PUBLIC SECTOR JOB SEARCH
CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR PUBLIC SECTOR JOB SEARCH STRATEGY

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

- Do I want to work in a legal services organization, a public policy organization or a government agency?
- Or am I open to different types of organizations and various approaches to my focus area?

FOCUS OF THE WORK

- Do I have an interest in a particular substantive area of the law?
- Is there a particular population I want to concentrate on?
- Is there a field or issue that I specifically want to pursue?
- Do I want to do criminal work or civil work?
- Do I want to work for the prosecution or the defense?

LEGAL SKILLS

- Do I want to work with clients?
- Do I want to be research and writing focused?
- Am I interested in litigation, transactional, or legislative work?
- Do I want to do direct service, impact litigation or policy work?
SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Please keep in mind that each individual will have a different timeline based on their interests and specific job applications. However, it is best to begin early so that you don’t miss a deadline for an organization where you may want to work.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: MAY

Meet with counselors, administrators, professors, peers and upper class students to discuss plans before leaving for the summer.

Update your application materials on a rolling basis.

- Update your resume to reflect your summer position(s).
- Use this as a process to identify what skills and activities you want your summer position to provide and to provide a framework for the work you will actively seek out, in addition to any work that may be assigned to you.
Research public sector employers and create a timeline for when you need to apply to jobs.

- **Government**: Start with the Arizona Guide, but also check on Symplicity and PSLawNet.org. Always check CP&P’s website (it links to the Arizona Guide and alumni lists) and check with counselors for more resources.

- **Public Interest**: Start with PSLawNet.org and Symplicity. Check CP&P’s website for links and alumni and check with counselors for more resources.

- **Public Defenders/Prosecutors**: Check resources on PSLawNet.Org, in CP&P and on CP&P’s website. Contact CP&P to find out more about specific offices and timelines for hiring of different offices.

- Be sure to ask CP&P if the due date for an application listed actually reflects when an application should be submitted – for example, a posting may list applications as being due by November 15, but they may in fact prioritize applications received in August.
Prioritize the organizations you have a strong interest in.

- Connect to contacts at those organizations and plan to reach out over the summer for informational interviews.
- Find out which 1Ls, 2Ls and 3Ls have worked at that organization and reach out before graduation (and people disappear) to find out more.
- Plan to meet with Penn alumni and other lawyers working in the organizations or subject areas of interest to you.
HAVING A HARD TIME GETTING STARTED?

• Review post-graduate job listings to determine what work the organization’s attorneys do and the skills and experience they require.

• What makes you excited?

• What speaks to your passions, your interests, your heart, and your head?

• What have you been waiting to add to your resume?

• What have you done that you would like to do more of?
OCI/Job Fairs

• Review who will attend Penn Law Fall OCI. Plan to bid on public interest and government employers in your area of interest. If you are interested in private law firms attending OCI, research firms, including who allows summer splits and which firms have strong and ongoing commitments to public interest and pro bono.

• Review who will attend GPALS DC and Philadelphia. A number of federal government agencies attend both the DC and Philadelphia events.

• Review who attended last year’s Equal Justice Works Career Fair. Also, if you learn about an organization that aligns with your priorities, submit an application through EJW and their regular application process.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: JUNE

Get a writing sample from your summer placement.

- Do a great job on the work you are assigned. Be proactive.
- In addition, be sure to seek opportunities that will be useful to you in practicing legal research and writing and opportunities to take on substantial independent work. Don’t be shy! Ask for the work you seek (tactfully).

Get to know the attorneys at your organization and ask for their advice regarding your second year job search.

- Take them to lunch or coffee. Be honest about what you are looking for. Ask them how they started doing the work that they do.
Begin networking with other lawyers/organizations in your desired geographic area.

Have your resume reviewed by CP&P by June 6 for OCI and in early June for other opportunities.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: JULY

Have a first cover letter reviewed by CP&P.

Register for Equal Justice Works, and GPALS DC and Philadelphia.

Submit your bids for OCI.
Select your courses.

• Select courses that will heighten your public interest profile and help you learn skills and law for the future. Register for clinics and courses that cover both practice and theory and that connect you with relevant professors and essential sources of law for practice.

Enjoy your summer job.

• Complete tasks thoroughly and in a timely fashion, take on work that allows you to learn and grow, and share your enthusiasm with your colleagues and attorneys. Get involved and find what makes you excited (or not) about the work. Continue to get to know your attorneys and colleagues!
Arrange for interviews in your current city if that is where you want to work. If possible, do so before you return to school.

Attend Regional OCI Interviews.
Begin to apply for jobs!

- Submit applications for jobs with early deadlines (like DOJ SLIP, competitive private public interest firms, competitive legal services and policy organizations, and big city public prosecutor and defender offices).
- Submit applications for your first choice job if it accepts applications at this time.
- Have cover letters reviewed by CP&P.
- Prepare for OCI and other job interviews by requesting a mock interview.
When you return to campus, schedule a meeting with a counselor and other administrators, professors and resources who you find helpful.

Attend OCI.

Attend Public Sector Jobs Application parties with CP&P and TPIC student advisory board.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: AUGUST

Continue to ...

Research positions that you might be interested in.

Network with Penn students and alums, attorneys at your current position, and attorneys at organizations of interest to you.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: SEPTEMBER

If interviewing with firms, attend call back week. Consider how their work may fit into your short and long-term plans.

If you have applied for jobs in the early cycle, you may begin to interview with public sector employers.

Attend Public Sector Jobs Application parties with CP&P and TPIC student advisory board.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: SEPTEMBER

Continue to interview with public sector employers through Penn’s Fall OCI program – employers, especially from public interest organizations, often continue to come to campus.

Participate in GPALS Philadelphia and DC Job Fairs.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: SEPTEMBER

Submit your resume and cover letter to EJW employers.

Attend the Public Interest Retreat sponsored by CP&P and TPIC. Get re-energized about your social justice commitment. Re-think and re-commit to your career and life goals.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: SEPTEMBER

Continue to ...

- Apply for jobs - write cover letters, seek edits and feedback, and do mock interviews.
- Research positions that you might be interested in.
- Network with Penn students and alums, attorneys at your current position, and attorneys at organizations of interest to you.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Meet with a counselor!

October: Attend Equal Justice Works Career Fair for interviews and table talk.

November: Register for the PIPS Career Fair (Philadelphia) in February.
Follow up on any outstanding applications.

• Remember, phone calls to check on your application may be just that, or they may be a 30 second job interview – especially at public interest organizations, you never know who may answer the phone. Be prepared with your “elevator speech”.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE:
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Continue to ...

- Apply for jobs - write cover letters, seek edits and feedback, and do mock interviews.
- Interview for jobs.
- Research positions that you might be interested in.
- Network with Penn students and alums and attorneys at organizations of interest to you.
SUGGESTED TIMELINE: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

Don’t forget to keep checking Symplicity, PSLawNet.org, and other sites on a regular basis. If you don’t see opportunities at your desired organization yet, network with contacts to find out when they will begin to accept applications.
QUESTIONS?

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