Post Graduation Jobs in Government and Public Interest

Sponsored by the Career and Professional Development Center and the Public Interest and Pro Bono Office

Kim Bart, Asst. Dean for Public Interest and Pro Bono
Stella Boswell, Senior Career Counselor and Public Interest Advisor
What is the timing of a public interest job search?

- Varies widely
- Some early fall deadlines: fellowships, government honors programs, large prosecutor and defender programs
- Some hiring is into the spring or even after you take and pass the bar (particularly for public interest non-profits)
Government and Public Interest Credentials: Your resume and more

- Are there things you should add back in on your resume?
- What can you do during your 3L year to strengthen your resume?
- In most cases for government and public interest jobs, your resume can be longer than 1 page.
Things to add back in ...

- Employment in the public interest prior to law school
  - Americorps?
  - Teach for America?
  - Other?
- Community service in college
  - Mentoring/Big Brothers, Big Sisters?
Strengthen Your Resume: 3L

- Pro Bono
- Clinic
- Externship
- Trial Practice
- Volunteering

Build your public interest credentials!
Cover Letters Are KEY!

- In cover letters, and in interviews, it is CRITICAL that you demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to what the organization does/it’s mission.
- Discuss the skills or traits you have that apply to the work of the organization.
Networking COUNTS!

- Find alums or others who do the type of work you are interested in, and talk to them.
- For government jobs, seek out people within the organization to contact about your interest.
- Develop networking opportunities from past experiences (pro bono supervisors, Americorps contacts, family friends, etc.).
- Ask us for additional contacts.
Where do you find these jobs?
Fellowships

- Subscribe to Duke Law’s Post Graduate Fellowship Listserv (subscribe at: https://mailman.law.duke.edu/mailman/listinfo/postgraduatefellowships)
- See the comprehensive listing of fellowships on http://www.pslawnet.org/postgraduatefellowships
- Presidential Management Fellowships: https://www.pmf.opm.gov/
Equal Justice Works Conference

- Oct. 22\textsuperscript{nd} – 23\textsuperscript{rd}, Bethesda, MD
- [www.equaljusticeworks.org](http://www.equaljusticeworks.org) under Events tab
- Duke Reception the night of the 22\textsuperscript{nd}, location TBA
- **Must** register for their Symplicity site and upload a resume and **must** apply in early September to be *preselected* for interviews
Government Honors Programs

- The best resource for these is the Government Honors and Internship Handbook (the Arizona Guide) http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm
  user: cookie   password: dough  (There will be a new user name and password released in August 2010.)
- See the APPENDIX for deadlines and 3L positions
- ALWAYS also go to the agency website
- Also, search state law websites for state programs
Entry level government jobs.

- Federal jobs: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) is good to get a basic sense of who is hiring BUT attorney jobs are exempted from the posting requirement. You should always go directly to the various agency websites. See Government Jobs powerpoint.

- State jobs are typically posted on state websites (this includes AG’s office, ADA and PD positions, among others). Cities and counties also hire lawyers directly. See [www.PSLawnet.org](http://www.PSLawnet.org) for links to many state websites.

- For both state and federal jobs, finding personal contacts within agencies is important. Do NOT wait for job postings (as the positions may already be filled).

- Make sure you complete all the requisite forms.
Current and Projected Federal Hiring for Legal Jobs

- The Partnership for Public Service, a government agency, released a study in fall of 2009 that showed critical needs for government hiring within the next two years.

http://data.wherethejobsare.org/wtja/field/1489

- See the Top Ten Federal Agencies for Hiring Handout that includes agency information and Duke Law alumni.
PSLawNet.org

- This site is one of the most comprehensive resources for government and public interest jobs.
- Based on Duke’s membership, it is free to all Duke students and alumni.
- It includes job postings and well as contact information for all kinds of organizations for your outreach efforts.
- The Career Central section has phenomenal resources for many types of positions (including a must read Federal Government Employment section)
Idealist.org

- This is one of the best sites for non-profit job postings. You can set it to email all new legal job postings to you on a daily basis.
Don’t forget SYMPLICITY!

- Government and non-profit employers contact Duke Law directly to notify us of positions and let us know that they are interested in having Duke students apply. These positions are posted on Symplicity as they come in to the office.
Handouts

- See handout on Post Graduation Jobs in Government and Public Interest that includes a few others of the MANY MANY resources out there.
Many of these jobs are UNPOSTED positions!

Thus, you must: (1) develop and use a network; (2) write and apply even without job postings; and (3) keep up the effort.
LOAN Repayment

- Duke has a Loan Repayment Assistance Program
- The new CCRAA (College Cost Reduction and Access Act) provides income based loan repayment (whether you are doing government and public interest work or not). The Equal Justice Works website has a lot of overview information on the program.
- John Ahlers in Duke’s Financial Aid Office is an important resource for both of the above—go see him
- Some jobs have loan repayment (including some JAG programs, some federal agencies and some non-profits)
THE BAR EXAM!!!

- One of the things to watch out for while you are conducting what could be a lengthy search is the deadlines to sign up for each state’s bar exam.
- If you are uncertain what to do while still searching, please consult with us.
- Note that the applications are lengthy and cannot be done at the last minute.