

JUMPSTART your *Large Law Firm* Job Search!

WHAT IS A LARGE LAW FIRM AND WHY SHOULD I WORK FOR ONE?

Large law firms are generally identified as those that employ 100 or more attorneys. Most large law firms are located in urban areas, specialize in a variety of practice areas and offer stellar compensation packages. A large law firm is an excellent place to launch a legal career. A large law firm can offer you access to high-profile clients, extensive training programs and innumerable resources.

WHERE CAN I GET A JOB WITH A LARGE LAW FIRM?

Large law firms are based all over the United States and abroad. After some research, you should be able to pinpoint law firms that match your geographic and practice area preferences. A number of large law firms participate in WCL's Fall Recruitment Program. Some of those firms conduct on-campus interviews at WCL, or participate in our regional interview programs (New York, Boston, Atlanta, California), or in our resume collection or direct application programs. For more information on our Fall Recruitment Program, please visit the Document Library on the OCPD website (www.wcl.american.edu/career) and locate the 2007 Fall Recruitment Guide under the "Fall Recruitment" section. It is important to remember that the number of large firms that participate in our recruitment programs represent only a fraction of the total number of large firms in the country. You may find some of the resources below helpful in your search for potential employers outside of the Fall Recruitment Program. Please also consider utilizing any personal contacts that you may have inside of a particular firm.

HOW DO I GET EXPERIENCE WORKING FOR A LARGE LAW FIRM?

Most large law firms hire students directly from their summer associate programs, but securing summer associate positions with other firms (both large and small/medium) and/or law clerk positions, paralegal positions and relevant internships can also increase your chances of obtaining a summer associate position. You may also increase your chances of obtaining a summer position by maintaining a competitive GPA, securing law review membership, perfecting your legal research and writing skills, gaining practical experience through a clinical program, participating in moot court competitions and becoming involved in other relevant extracurricular activities. If you are interested in working for a large law firm, it is imperative that you participate in the Fall Recruitment process. WCL's Fall Recruitment Program, is one avenue for reaching a number of legal employers at once. But remember that Fall Recruitment is only a *small part* of the job search process. You should meet with an OCPD Career Counselor for assistance with developing a proactive job search strategy to locate employers outside of WCL's Fall Recruitment Program.

WHEN DO I APPLY FOR A JOB WITH A LARGE LAW FIRM?

Most students do not find employment at large firms during their first year summer. Students interested in large firms should generally seek other employers for their first year summer job, and concentrate on earning the credentials necessary for a second year summer associate position at a larger firm. (There are a handful of summer associate positions available to first year students. First year students are able to apply for these positions after December 1.) Because firms meet with law students from schools across the country to fill these slots during the Fall Recruitment season, most summer positions with large law firms are filled by the preceding November or December (i.e., positions for Summer 2008 would be filled by November or December 2007). The hiring timeline for large firms means that students who interview during the Fall Recruitment season will learn whether they are employed for the summer (or after graduation) relatively early in the semester. Students should realize that approximately 25% of any given class ends up in large firms and that many employment opportunities are available outside of the Fall Recruitment process.

To discuss options for gaining legal experience with a large law firm, schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor in OCPD.

KEY RESOURCES

Law Student Jobs Online (www.lawschool.westlaw.com): Provides access to a database that focuses on positions for current law students, plus special programs for new grads such as fellowships, honors programs, and judicial clerkships. This website, which generally requires a subscription, is available to WCL students without charge through Westlaw.

National Association for Law Placement (www.nalp.org): NALP's website contains information on employers, job searching, placement statistics, starting salaries and career planning resources. Students can also use the NALP Directory (www.nalpdirectory.com) to locate potential employers and firm recruiter contact information. Using the "Advanced Search" function, this directory is searchable by practice area, geographic location, firm size and you can also locate employers that may be interested in hiring first year students for summer associate positions.

Lexis (www.lexis-nexis.com): Lexis enables you to research background information on any employer. Use the case files and search by employer name or by the names of individual lawyers to see what kinds of cases they have worked on recently. Look in the Legal News file to find out what publications, such as *The American Lawyer*, *The Legal Times*, or *The National Law Journal*, may have said about the employer or any of its lawyers. Search other files for periodicals and publications. Lexis is available to all WCL law students.

Westlaw (www.lawschool.westlaw.com): Westlaw provides access to numerous directories, including the West Legal Directory, which contains information about both individual attorneys and organizations and is searchable by firm size, location, areas of practice, law school attended and more. *Westlaw's Employer Directory* contains more detailed information about larger law firms based on survey responses. Search caselaw and news articles through the Westnews directory. Use the U.S. State Material directory to review cases involving a particular attorney or firm. Search the Congressional Record database to learn about recently nominated and confirmed judges. Westlaw is free to students.

FindLaw's Information (careers.findlaw.com): Click "Students" from main page to access career information including an employer directory, salary charts and access to the Greedy Associates boards, where associates chime in with their views on employers. Be aware that some information on the site is outdated.

Heiros Gamos (www.hg.org): Under Legal Directories, click on "Law Firms" to access information about law firms in the U.S. and abroad. Provides lists of the largest firms in each city, which is particularly useful for those seeking positions abroad.

Law.com (www.law.com): Provides news and features, along with classified listings separated by states in the Career Center. The sections for California, Pennsylvania, DC and New York provide related information from legal magazines. Provides links to many law firms from the Law Firm Central section. Can use law firm finder to conduct advanced searches.

VAULT Guides (www.vault.com or link to Vault through CareerLink): Vault interviews thousands of associates in large law firms and uses the information to compile a list of the top 100 law firms based on prestige. Provides the "inside scoop" on each firm, tips on getting hired, quotes from survey respondents and information about quality of life factors. *WCL has purchased access for all students and the password is available on CareerLink.*

LawCrossing (www.lawcrossing.com): This site lists active job postings for internships, law clerk positions, judicial clerkships, entry-level attorney positions and law firm support staff positions. The database is searchable by employer type, candidate experience level, geographic location, and keyword. WCL Students may utilize this subscription-based service for free by registering with a "@wcl.american.edu" email address.