

JUMPSTART your *Government* Job Search!

WHY A JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT?

Beginning your legal career in the government provides many advantages and can serve as an excellent training ground in a particular subject matter regardless of where you ultimately end up practicing. Advantages to government service generally include freedom from client development and billable hour requirements, diversity of practice, better working hours (although exceptions exist), and most importantly, the opportunity to serve the public.

WHERE CAN I GET A JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT?

In the Washington, DC area, federal, state and local governments are the largest employers of attorneys. Nationally, state and local governments employ millions of people, many of whom work in a legal capacity. As a result, opportunities to work in government are numerous. In addition, U.S. Attorney's Offices, Offices of the Attorney General and Public Defender Offices often hire law students for permanent positions and internships in large numbers. Moreover, at each level of government there are also attorneys who work as legislative assistants on individual legislator's personal staffs or as staff attorneys for committees.

HOW DO I GET EXPERIENCE WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

Academic-year and summer internships/externships are the perfect way to gain experience working for the government. To increase your chances of obtaining a post-graduate position in the government, you are encouraged to take advantage of summer and academic-year positions with federal, state and/or local government while you are in law school. The print and online resources listed below will assist you in identifying government agencies and organizations that hire students. Although many government internships are unpaid, a variety of funding sources and/or academic credit may be available. You should consider participating in two very important events: The Greater DC/Baltimore Public Service Career Fair and the WCL Externship Fair. Both occur in January and bring representatives from government sector employers in contact with students. Students also should strongly consider joining the ABA's Government & Public Sector Lawyers Division for great networking opportunities and access to job-search resources (<http://www.abanet.org/govpub/lawstudent.html>). You also should familiarize yourself with OCPD's CareerLink (<http://www/wcl.american.edu/career/>) to learn of job opportunities in the government.

WHEN DO I APPLY FOR A JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT?

Given that many government employers hire on a rolling basis, it is best to apply as soon as the employer begins accepting applications. Government agencies typically have summer application deadlines throughout the fall semester and into the spring semester. Several government employers participate in our on-campus interviewing during the Fall Recruitment cycle. To discuss options for gaining legal experience within federal, state, or local government organizations, schedule an appointment with an OCPD counselor.

KEY RESOURCES

Government Honors & Internship Handbook (link and access information found on this OCPD webpage:

<http://www.wcl.american.edu/career/searchskills.cfm>)

Contains hiring information about federal agencies as well as some state and local government agencies. Provides alphabetical listing of organizations with detailed information about summer and entry-level hiring. A hard copy is available in the OCPD Library.

USA JOBS, Office of Personnel Management (www.usajobs.gov)

Lists government jobs in all agencies, according to criteria you select. Click on “Search Jobs” to search for attorney or law clerk positions. You can also search by specific agency of interest.

CareerLink (<https://law-american-csm.symplicity.com/>)

WCL’s database includes government and public sector job postings for summer employment and the academic year. Be sure to indicate your areas of interest and select the “Government Listserv” in your CareerLink profile.

PSLawNet Government Careers

(<http://www.pslawnet.org/governmentcareers>)

Guide to federal government employment. Provides information that will assist in exploration of federal government careers, including advice on applying for a federal position, where to start your search, terms and definitions unique to federal employment applications, agency-specific material, and salary and benefits advice.

Department of Justice (www.usdoj.gov)

The employment link leads to job vacancies for law students and vacancies for experienced attorneys in various subdivisions of DOJ. The DOJ website also provides updated information on the Attorney General’s Honors Program and the Summer Law Intern Program. In addition, the site provides links to other federal agency websites, including U.S. Attorney’s Offices across the country.

Opportunities in Public Affairs (www.opajobs.com)

This online job search guide is a top resource for Capitol Hill, Public Relations, and Public Affairs jobs in the Washington, DC area. The guide is available on the CareerLink homepage and in hardcopy in the OCPD library.

National District Attorneys Association (www.ndaa.org)

Provides links to individual attorneys general and district attorneys' websites nationwide. Click on “Links” and then “Prosecutors Websites.” See also www.naag.org specifically for state attorneys general.

National Legal Aid and Defender Association (www.nlada.org)

The NLADA site provides legislative updates, information on defender-related legislation and NLADA conferences. Job listings can be found by clicking on “Jobs,” are organized by region, and are posted by civil legal services or defender organizations, public interest organizations and academic institutions.

Washington Information Directory (www.wcl.american.edu/ocs/searchskills.cfm)

A guide to national organizations and government agencies. View searchable listings of Congressional staff, government, and non-government organizations and contacts. Access by going to the career services portion of the WCL website and clicking on “Job Search Skills and Resources.” A hard copy is available in the OCPD Library.

Vault Guide to Capitol Hill Careers and Vault Guide to Government and Non-Profit Legal Employers

(www.vault.com)

Vault provides a wide variety of information, such as descriptions of government agencies, tips on getting hired, details about careers on Capitol Hill/Government, opportunities for law students, and networking insights. The online system is available on the CareerLink homepage. Hard copies are available in the OCPD Library.

Leadership Directories (Yellow Books) for Federal, State, Municipal, Congressional;

The Washington Information Directory (www.wcl.american.edu/ocs/searchskills.cfm)

Resources that provide contact information for individuals, committees, and agencies within all levels of government. View searchable listings of Congressional staff, government, and non-government organizations and contacts. Access both resources by going to the career services portion of the WCL website and clicking on “Job Search Skills and Resources.” Hard copies are also available in the OCPD Library.