

## JUMPSTART Your *Large Law Firm* Job Search!

### WHAT IS A LARGE LAW FIRM AND WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER WORKING FOR ONE?

Large firms are generally categorized as those that employ more than 100 attorneys firm-wide. Most large firms are located in urban areas, specialize in a variety of practice areas, and offer stellar compensation packages. A large firm can offer you access to high-profile clients, extensive training programs, and innumerable resources.

### HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO APPLY?

- **Research firms.** Become familiar with the universe of large law firms through the **VAULT Guides** and **NALP Directory**. After conducting your initial research, pinpoint the law firms that match your geographic and practice area preferences.
- **Attend networking events.** Many large firms host informational sessions, professional development programs, and networking receptions where you can learn about the firm and also meet the firm's attorneys and recruiters. Many of these events are posted on the "Events" tab of **CareerLink**.
- **Conduct informational interviews.** Set up informational interviews with attorneys to learn more about a particular firm and its culture, different practice areas, and life as an associate. A good place to start is by interviewing AUWCL alumni who you can find through the **Mentor Database**, **Westlaw Profiler**, and law firms' websites. Be sure to also utilize any personal contacts you may have at a particular firm.

### WHAT FACTORS DO LAW FIRMS CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING THEIR ASSOCIATES?

Most large law firms hire entry-level associates directly from their summer associate programs. In selecting their summer associate class, firms may look for competitive GPAs, membership on law review, and participation in moot court. Firms also consider applicants' geographic connection to the office, leadership activities, and work experience. Securing positions with small/medium-size firms and judicial internships during your 1L summer can also increase your chances of obtaining a summer associate position at a large firm during your 2L summer.

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

**1Ls:** There are only a handful of summer associate positions available to first-year students, but 1Ls may apply for these positions **on or after December 1**. Some large firms offer unpaid pro bono positions or paid positions for diverse 1Ls in the summer. Nevertheless, due to the limited number of 1L positions, students interested in large firms should generally secure positions outside of big law for their 1L summer job and concentrate on earning the credentials to be competitive in AUWCL's **Fall Recruitment Program** when they return as 2Ls.

**2Ls/3L Evening:** Because large law firms participate in Fall Recruitment, it is important that you take advantage of the program if you are interested in working for a large firm. However, the firms that participate represent only a fraction of the total number of large firms in the country, and so Fall Recruitment should only be a *part* of your search strategy. You should meet with an OCPD Career Counselor for assistance with developing a proactive job search strategy to locate employers outside of Fall Recruitment. The large firm application and selection process takes place in summer through early fall, and most summer positions are filled by October.

## **KEY RESOURCES**

### ***For Researching Firms***

- **VAULT Guides** ([www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)): Vault interviews thousands of associates in large law firms to compile a list of the top 100 law firms based on prestige and also to rank firms based on practice areas, geographic location, diversity, and best summer programs. Vault provides the “inside scoop” on each firm, tips on getting hired, quotes from survey respondents and information about quality of life factors.
- **National Association for Law Placement (NALP)**: Use the **NALP Directory** ([www.nalpdirectory.com](http://www.nalpdirectory.com)) to search for employers that hire first-year students for summer associate positions, research the firms that participate in AUWCL’s Fall Recruitment Program, and find recruiter contact information. NALP’s general website ([www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)) contains information on employers, job searching, placement statistics, starting salaries, and career planning.
- **Chambers Associate: The Student’s Guide to Law Firms** (<http://www.chambers-associate.com/>): This guide contains information about major law firms gathered through anonymous interviews with junior associates. Topics include compensation, pro bono, diversity, social life, associates’ day-to-day work, and practice area information in a nutshell.

### ***For Finding Alumni***

- **Mentor Database** ([http://www.wcl.american.edu/career/mentor/?r=/mntr\\_mentors](http://www.wcl.american.edu/career/mentor/?r=/mntr_mentors)): Find AUWCL alumni practitioners in a variety of practice areas who have volunteered to be informational resources for students. The database is searchable by practice area, geographic location, and type of employer.
- **Westlaw** ([www.lawschool.westlaw.com](http://www.lawschool.westlaw.com)): Westlaw’s **Profiler** is a good resource to search for AUWCL alumni or other attorneys at specific firms or in specific practice areas. When researching practitioners, you can also review cases they have worked on and secondary materials they have published. Search the **News database** to find news articles related to a firm. Westlaw is free to students.

### ***For Job Postings***

- **CareerLink** (<https://law-american-csm.symplicity.com/>): Employers and faculty frequently contact OCPD directly about vacancies and specific hiring needs that may not be publicized elsewhere. Access these up-to-date job postings through the “Jobs & Internships” tab on your CareerLink account.
- **Externship Database** ([http://www.wcl.american.edu/externship/place\\_search.cfm](http://www.wcl.american.edu/externship/place_search.cfm)): Use this internal database to find firms with pro bono summer associate positions.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

- **FindLaw's Law Career Center** ([careers.findlaw.com](http://careers.findlaw.com)): FindLaw contains career information including career resources and access to the Greedy Associates Legal Lifestyle & Career Blog.
- **Heiros Gamos** ([www.hg.org](http://www.hg.org)): Click on the “Lawyers” tab to access information about law firms in the U.S. and abroad. This resource is particularly useful for students seeking international positions.