



1L SURVIVAL GUIDE

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BODY and MIND

SEX

Reproductive Health Clinics:

These clinics provide annual exams, birth control prescriptions and information, pregnancy tests, prenatal care, abortion services, and STD testing and treatment. Contact each clinic for more information on their specific services.

- **Whole Woman's Health of Alexandria**
2839 Duke St, Alexandria, VA 22314
- **American University Health Promotion and Advocacy Center (HPAC):**
Provides information on sexual health, consent, and access to free or low-cost contraceptives.
- **Planned Parenthood of DC:**
Nearby location for sexual health services like STI testing and counseling.
- **American University Student Health Center:**
Offers sexual health appointments, including access to contraceptives and information on safe practices.
- **Local LGBTQ+ Centers (e.g., Whitman-Walker Health):**
Offers inclusive sexual health services and counseling.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Kazarian, MD:**
One of the few physicians that administer pain killers, including local anesthesia, for IUD insertion. She has Clarendon and Falls Church office locations and, as of August 2025, is accepting new patients.
Learn more: <https://www.myprivia.com/mypmahealth/providers/elizabeth-kazarian>.
Instagram: @drkazarian

PREGNANCY

- **American University Student Health Center:**
Provides pregnancy testing and referrals.
- **Mama Toto Village (nearby):**
A DC-based organization supporting pregnant people with education and resources.
- **AU Counseling Center:**
Can provide support or referrals for students navigating pregnancy-related issues.
- **Local Doula Services:**
Consider including recommendations for doula support for pregnant students.

MIND

Mental Health

- **American University Counseling Center:**
Offers therapy sessions, crisis intervention, and support groups for students.
- **Lawyer Assistance Programs:**
Highlight programs like the D.C. Bar Lawyer Assistance Program for law student-specific support.
- **Local Wellness Studios:**
Yoga and meditation spaces such as Past Tense Yoga or Yoga District can help students manage stress.
- **Headspace or Calm App Partnerships:**
Suggest apps that might be subsidized by the university for mindfulness and relaxation.
- **WCL On-Campus Wellness:**
 - **WCL Wellness Room:**
This peaceful room has dark lighting and comfy bean bags for students 24 hours a day.
Location: YT13 (behind Grossman Hall)
 - **WCL Community Garden:**
Take a walk to the WCL Community Garden to breathe and collect your thoughts. You can also join the Engage group, which is a volunteer-based community dedicated to preserving and improving the WCL Garden. Membership is low-pressure and a great way to give back while benefiting your mental health!
Learn more: <https://american.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/wclcg>

Crisis Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:**
Dial 988
- **Crisis Text Line:**
Text HOME to 741741
- **AUProtoCall Services:**
202-885-7979
- **CPEP (Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program):**
202-673-9319, 1905 E Street SE (a place to go for a 16-24hr stay rather than a hospital)
- **AU CIT (Crisis Intervention Team):**
202-885-3636, a police officer on campus trained in mental health interventions
- **Trans Lifeline:**
877-565-8860

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

SUPPORT

Confidential Support:

- **Victim Advocacy Services** (offered through the AU Wellness Center)
- **Counseling Center** (confidential mental health services)
- **Student Health Center** (medical care, including forensic exams)

Reporting Options:

- **Title IX Office** – handles complaints of sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination
- **AU Public Safety** – for immediate safety concerns of criminal reporting



Legal and Advocacy Support:

- **Program on Gender, Theory, Law & Practice**
- **National Women's Law Center**
- **Network for Victim Recovery of DC** – legal and advocacy services for survivors
- **House of Ruth D.C.** – Provides shelter and legal support for survivors of domestic violence
- **RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)** – Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- **DC Rape Crisis Center – Hotline:** 202-333-RAPE (7273)
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- **LGBT National Help Center Hotline:** 888-843-4564

Reading and Learning Opportunities:

- Catharine A. MacKinnon, Sexual Harassment of Working Women
- Kimberle Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color
- Aya Gruber, The Feminist War on Crime
- Bystander Intervention Training by Green Dot

ACTIVISM

POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES:

D.C. elects thirteen council members. Five of those are elected at-large, meaning that they represent the city as a whole. Eight members are elected from each ward of the city to represent that specific area of D.C.

- Find your ward here: <https://planning.dc.gov/whatsmyward>.
- Find your D.C. City Councilmember here: <https://dccouncil.gov/councilmembers>.

Because it is not a state, D.C. does not have full representation in Congress. The District elects a non-voting member to the House of Representatives only. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton has represented D.C. since 1991: <https://norton.house.gov>.

Your local Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) represents your immediate neighborhood. In D.C., there are 46 ANCs, and ANC commissioners are elected for two-year terms. ANC Commissioners bring your neighborhood's voice to D.C. government and federal agencies. Learn more about ANCs here: <https://anc.dc.gov/page/about-ancs>.

Interested in advocacy? Learn more about D.C. statehood at <https://statehood.dc.gov/page/about-dc-statehood> and explore ways to get involved through the ACLU of D.C. at <https://dcstatehoodnow.org>.

ACTIVISM & VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS:

- **ACLU of D.C.** (<https://www.acludc.org/en>):
Protects and advances civil liberties and civil rights by using the tools of public education, political advocacy, organizing, and litigation.
- **Bread for the City** (<https://breadforthecity.org/>):
Helping D.C. residents by providing food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services to reduce the burden of poverty.
- **D.C. Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network** (<https://www.dcmigrantmutualaid.org/>):
A coalition of community organizations and individual volunteers committed to supporting migrants arriving in D.C.
- **D.C. Abortion Fund** (<https://dcabortionfund.org/>):
Supports abortion seekers from D.C. and across the country, making abortion access happen for thousands every year.
- **DMV Mutual Aid Hub** (<https://dmvmutualaid.carrrd.co/>):
A hub to collect and share mutual aid resources, initiatives, and groups in the DMV.
- **Harriet's Wildest Dreams** (<https://www.harrietsdreams.org/>):
Black-led, abolitionist community defense hub centering Black lives at risk for state-sanctioned and inter-community violence in the D.C. area.
- **HIPS** (<https://www.hips.org/>):
Advancing the health rights and dignity of people and communities impacted by sex work and drug use
- by providing non-judgmental harm reduction services, advocacy, and community engagement led by
- those with lived experience.

- **Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs** (<https://www.washlaw.org/>): Creates and advocates for legal, economic, and social equity through litigation, client and community education, and public policy advocacy.
- **Whitman-Walker Collective** (<https://www.whitman-walker.org/>): Founded to support the needs of the LGBTQ community, Whitman-Walker provides healthcare for those living with HIV; leads policy advocacy; conducts research to discover breakthroughs in HIV treatment and prevention science.

CULTURE



Legal and Professional Culture:

- **Courthouse Visits & Oral Arguments** – The Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals, U.S. District Court, and D.C. Circuit Court are all located in D.C. and frequently hold public hearings.
- **Thank Tanks and Policy Discussions** – Institutions like the Brookings Institution, Cato Institute, and the Center for American Progress often host free events on legal and policy topics.
- **Bar Associations & Student Networks** – The D.C. Bar and various affinity groups provide mentorship and networking opportunities tailored to law students.

- **Law School Mixers & Receptions** – Keep an eye on events hosted by GW, Georgetown, American, Howard, and Catholic University Law Schools for inter-school networking opportunities.

Museum & Historical Landmarks:

- **The National Archives** – Home to the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence.
- **The Smithsonian Museums** – Free access to museums such as the National Museum of American History, African American History and Culture Museum, and the National Portrait Gallery.
- **The Library of Congress** – A space for quiet study and research.

Sports & Entertainment:

- **Professional Sports** – Catch a game at Capitol One Arena, Nationals Park, or Audi Field.
- **College Sports** – Support local teams like the Georgetown Hoyas or G.W. Colonias for a more intimate game-day experience.
- **Recreational Leagues** – Join an intramural league through D.C. Fray or ZogSports for kickball, softball, and more.

Theater & Performing Arts:

- **The Kennedy Center** – A premier destination for world-class theater, dance, music, and special events. <https://www.kennedy-center.org/>
- **Ford's Theatre** – A historic landmark where Abraham Lincoln's legacy meets powerful stage productions. <https://www.fords.org/>
- **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** – Known for innovative, thought-provoking plays that push creative boundaries. <https://www.woollymammoth.net/>
- **Shakespeare Theatre Company** – Experience both classic Shakespeare and modern reimaginations. <https://www.shakespearetheatre.org/>
- **GALA Hispanic Theatre** – Celebrating Latinx arts and culture through vibrant, multilingual performances. <https://www.galatheatre.org/>

Activism & Community Engagement:

- **Legal Aid Organizations** – pro bono opportunities with organizations like Legal Aid D.C. and the ACLU.
- **Advocacy & Policy Groups** – Volunteer or Intern with nonprofits and advocacy organizations shaping policy and legal reform.
- **Community Service** – Engage with D.C.'s community through food banks, tutoring programs, or housing justice initiatives.
- **Cultural Festivals & Events** – The D.C. Caribbean Carnival, H Street Festival, Fiesta D.C., and World Pride celebrate the city's diverse communities.

SERVICES

WCL Office Guide:

If you need assistance but aren't quite sure where to go, take a look below to find the right office! If you still aren't sure, reach out to OSA.

- **Office of Student Affairs (OSA):**
OSA helps with managing life events—both inside and outside school—and a listening ear. They connect students directly to the AU Center for Wellbeing. They can also answer questions on the Character and Fitness Section of the Bar Application.
Contact: studentaffairs@wcl.american.edu
Location: C101
- **Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE):**
OIE oversees initiatives, policy changes, and the creation of opportunities for students of all communities to feel welcome. They can talk with you about any ideas you have about how to improve or create equal access to all WCL communities.
Contact: diversity@wcl.american.edu
Location: C303

- **Office of Academic Excellence (OAE):**

OAE helps you with course planning, study skills, time management, and Bar prep. They can work with you to ensure that you are utilizing the tools and skills for law school that work best for you.

Contact: oea@wcl.american.edu

Location: C100

- **Disability Support Office:**

This office assists qualified individuals with disabilities in receiving accommodations. They also provide information on the process to apply for accommodations for the MPRE and the Bar Exam.

Contact: disability@wcl.american.edu

Location: C108

- **Registrar's Office:**

The Registrar's Office answers all questions related to class registration, midterm and final exams, and exam deferrals. They can assist you with completing your application to graduate and receiving academic records.

Contact: registrationservices@wcl.american.edu

Location: C107

- **Financial Aid Office:**

The Financial Aid Office helps you develop your law school financial plan. They can also assist in determining how to receive financial aid, how financial aid can be affected by course needs, different scholarship opportunities, and plans for loan repayment.

Contact: finaid@wcl.american.edu

Location: C305

- **Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD):**

OCPD provides support with creating resumes and cover letters, in addition to other job application materials. They can help you look for internships and externships and provide support during your job search.

Contact: jobs@wcl.american.edu

Location: C115



Timeline, Your First Year at WCL

Believe it or not, your first year is going to go by so fast! It starts not with a syllabus but with an emotion: the anticipation before every class, the anxiety that comes as the professor makes another cold call. Those early weeks are a blur of foreign jargon (*stare decisis, mens rea, res ipsa loquitur*) and the constant but worthwhile struggle to understand. You'll form your first study group in the library, commiserating over the inevitable confusion of Civ Pro, and before you've even had the time to fully commit the names of your professors to memory, you blink, and Fall Break is here.

Right before your final exams, you'll learn the true meaning of what is called a *reading period* (a strange, silent week between classes and finals where the library becomes a second home and the highlight of your day is grabbing yet another cup of coffee!). Surviving your first finals period is a rite of passage. You will leave your last exam in December exhausted and exhilarated, and Winter Break will be the most well-earned academic break of your life (*so far*)!

In January, you will return to school a different person. A bit wiser and a whole lot more tired, but with a new sense of confidence. You know the rhythm a little better now. You even get a flavor of freedom with your sole elective, a taste that there's a whole world of law beyond LRW and doctrinal classes. Around Spring Break, discussion turns to journal and law reviews (and the sleepless, frantic sprint of the Write-On competition) and to tryouts for moot court, ADR, mock trial, and more.

The rush to May is a sprint. You're balancing wrapping up your first-year classes with the adrenaline of competition teams, the expectation of applying for jobs next summer and beyond, and the looming task of registering for next year's classes (your first *real* opportunity into shaping your own path at WCL). The end comes not with a bang, but with a final, exhausting sigh after your very last final. And when it's over, you will be standing there, on the far side of all this, stunned that you finally completed what felt like the never-ending first year of law school, and truly understanding what we all mean when we tell you: you *will* survive!