



FIRST YEAR HANDBOOK

A SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES



PREPARED BY

THE MORTIMER CAPLIN PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER

FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2012

INTRODUCTION

THE MORTIMER CAPLIN PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER was created in 1996 to recognize the specialized counseling needs of students interested in pursuing careers in public service. Since then, the Center has served as Virginia Law's focal point for public service career counseling, programming, and outreach.

THE CENTER'S STAFF MEMBERS offer individual and group counseling to students and alumni considering internship and permanent opportunities in public service, it invites speakers to the Law School to introduce students to the various aspects of public service lawyering, coordinates with student organizations to facilitate programming, and runs the Winter Public Service Interview Week.¹

THE CENTER'S STAFF

YARED GETACHEW: Assistant Dean for Public Service and Director of the Center

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COUNSELING

BETWEEN NOVEMBER 9 THROUGH NOVEMBER 23: once completing the 1L Survey on [Simplicity](#), students will e-mail their short statements to the Public Service Center prior to November 4 with a request for an appointment (these instructions are also given in the Survey itself).

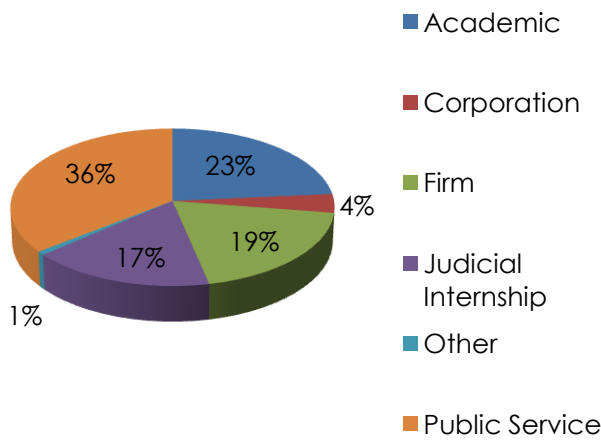
BEGINNING ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2009: students may request appointments with Yared Getachew or Amanda Yale by using the Simplicity scheduler. The Public Service Center will also schedule "drop in" hours for short questions.

¹ In early February, the Public Service Center invites to the Law School many public service employers to recruit first, second, and third year students for internship and permanent positions. The Center will provide information about Interview Week and how to sign up for interviews on Simplicity in early January 2010.

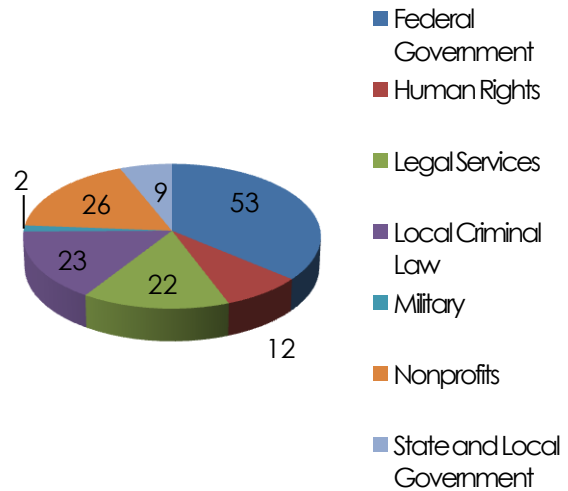
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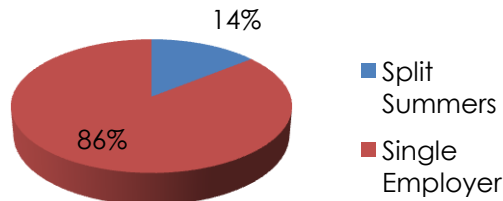
1L EMPLOYMENT SUMMER 2009



1L PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT SUMMER 2009



1L SUMMER 2009 SPLIT SUMMERS



I. PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICES (STATE AND FEDERAL)

Public Defender Offices (PDOs) represent indigent persons who are accused of a crime. Public defender interns often have the opportunity to assist with and observe trial work and have significant client contact. Applicants who show a strong interest in litigation, criminal law, and a passion to defend the criminally accused are most competitive.

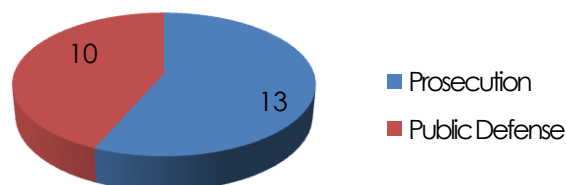
There are public defender offices in most large cities throughout the country and many states have developed statewide systems of defender offices. Some jurisdictions, New York City for example, have several different offices in the city that represent indigent clients. The application process varies by state and by office.

Federal public defender offices are the counterparts of U.S. Attorney's Offices and have jurisdiction over cases in federal court. Federal Defender summer positions can be extremely valuable given the high level of skill of federal public defenders and the complexity of the legal issues involved.

RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) The Public Service Center's [How to get a job in a Public Defender Office](#) is available on the Law School's Public Service webpage, under Employment Resources. This manual offers helpful advice on how to choose a PDO, how to develop a public defender resume, and how to approach interviews with PDOs.
- 2) [Public Works](#): see "Public Defender Resources."
- 3) *Directory of Legal Aid and Defender Offices in the United States and Territories*. Available for check out at the Public Service Center, the Directory lists every public defender organization in the country.
- 4) [The Public Defender page](#) on PSLawNet.org can be found either on the Public Service page, under Employment Resources, or on Public Works. PSLawNet.org regularly posts internship opportunities.
- 5) [The National Legal Aid and Defender website](#), the [Office of the Federal Defender website](#), and individual federal PDOs will provide information on specific summer internships.
- 6) [The Public Service Summer Employment Evaluation System](#). Listed alphabetically, hundreds of evaluation forms were completed by Virginia Law students assessing their summer experiences at public service organizations, including PDOs. The evaluations are available on LawWeb in the public service directory.

1L SUMMER INTERNSHIPS WITH PUBLIC DEFENDER AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICES



II. PROSECUTOR OFFICES (STATE AND FEDERAL)

District Attorney (DA) offices investigate and prosecute state criminal cases. In many states, criminal prosecution is bifurcated into two administrative entities—DA and Attorney General (AG) offices. In some states, AG offices do not prosecute criminal cases and only enforce state civil laws. The local DA's will handle all "routine" criminal cases while AG offices typically handle cases with broader or "statewide" impact. In Virginia, state and local prosecutors are called Commonwealth's Attorneys, while in most other jurisdictions they are called DAs or state attorneys.

United States Attorneys are federal prosecutors who represent the federal government in federal trial and appellate courts (up to U.S. courts of appeal). There are a total of ninety-three U.S. Attorney Offices (USAOs) assigned throughout the country. Most USAOs have volunteer summer intern programs, although some do not accept interns for the summer after a student's first year. Applicants interested in litigation, criminal law, oral advocacy, and law enforcement are attractive candidates to DA, AG, and USAOs. In the past, some USAOs have offered volunteer positions to 1Ls based on the strength of their credentials, without undergoing an interview process.

RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) The Public Service Center's [How to Obtain a Job in a Prosecutor's Office](#) is available on the Public Service page under Employment Resources. This manual provides important advice on how to select a DA's office that is right for you, how to develop a prosecution-oriented resume, and how to approach your job interview.
- 2) [Public Works](#): see "Prosecution Resources."
- 3) The City/County Attorney Internship Book (2008) is available in the Public Service Center. Also available is [PROSECUTOR.INFO](#), an online compendium of state and local prosecutor offices around the country assembled by the Eaton County Prosecutor's Office. Both resources will help you to identify state and local prosecutor offices.
- 4) [The Public Service Summer Employment Evaluation System](#) is available on LawWeb. These forms were completed by hundreds of Virginia Law students, assessing their summer experience in public service organizations, including with DA and AG offices.
- 5) [Internships for Law Students](#) (Internships USA) is available on the Public Service page and provides a listing of prosecutor and attorney general offices together with information about internships. LawWeb password is required.
- 6) Once you select DA/AG/USAO offices that interest you, consider applying directly to the office and early enough to be able to secure interviews during the winter recess.

III. PUBLIC INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS

There are numerous types of public interest organizations that fit under the public interest umbrella. It is helpful to conceptualize these organizations under two categories: organizations that provide direct client services, and organizations that focus primarily on impact litigation, policy, and advocacy.

A. DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES

Civil legal services organizations represent indigent clients on a variety of civil issues, including poverty law, public benefits, domestic relations, bankruptcy, consumer law, and landlord/tenant law. Much like public defenders and prosecutors, legal services attorneys are in court on a regular basis. These attorneys also have unparalleled client contact. An important skill for all legal services attorneys to possess is the ability to feel comfortable with a wide variety of people from a range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Given the wide range of substantive areas of the law involved, you need to find the right practice area and office which best fits your interests.

B. IMPACT LITIGATION, POLICY, AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

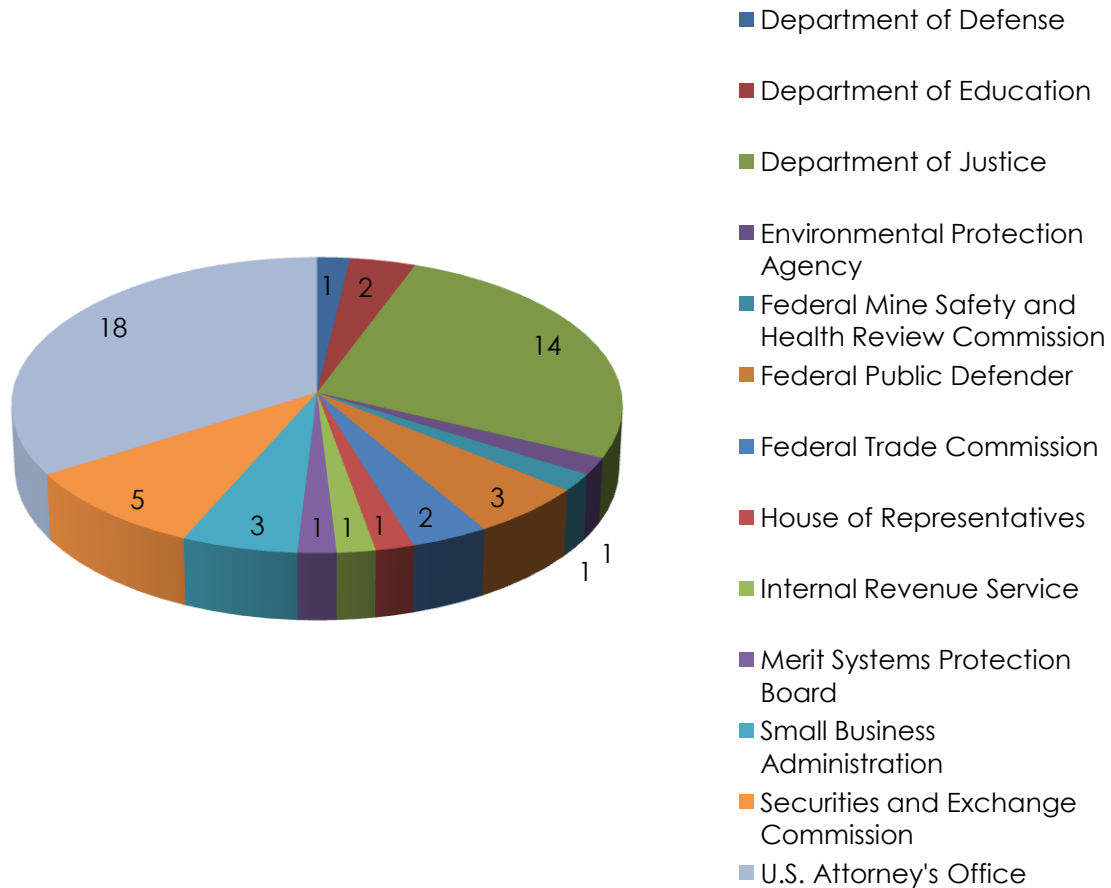
Some legal organizations focus on impact litigation—matters that affect a group of people with a particular issue in common. Often times, these organizations will search for plaintiffs in order to “make law” in a specific legal area. These organizations litigate a few cases at a time, usually from the trial court up through the appeals process. Examples of these types of organizations include the [American Civil Liberties Union](#), the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](#) (LDF), [Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) (MALDEF), the [Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights](#), and the [Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#). There are virtually hundreds of these types of organizations.

C. RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) PSLawNet.org's [Nonprofits Public Interest Careers page](#). Also search for public interest organizations in the jurisdiction(s) where you are interested in securing an internship. PSLawNet offers information for thousands of such organizations.
- 2) [Idealist.org](#) is available on Public Works and lists most of the current summer internships for public interest organizations.
- 3) [Internships for Law Students](#) (Internships USA) is available on the Public Service page and offers numerous opportunities in these sectors (see Legal Services Internships, Women's Right's Internships, Education Law, Green Law, Washington Internships in Law & Policy, Internships in International Affairs, and Human Rights Internships). *Washington Internships in Law & Policy* is also available in hardcopy at the Public Service Center.
- 4) Harvard Law School's *Serving the Public: A Search Guide*, Volumes I-II, 2006 is a guide that may be checked out of the Public Service Center.
- 5) [Public Works](#): see “Civil Services.”

IV. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1L FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIPS SUMMER 2009



The Executive Branch of the federal government includes numerous agencies, many of which accept 1L volunteers for the summer. Operated by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), USAJOBS.gov is the federal government's one-stop clearinghouse for civil service job opportunities with federal agencies. Internships are posted in USAJobs **and** OPM's student internship site: StudentJobs.gov. We strongly recommend 1Ls to sign up with both portals to receive e-mail updates about internship opportunities.

A. OTHER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) The [Government Honors and Internship Handbook](#) provides information on specific internship programs offered by almost all state and federal government agencies. LawWeb password required to access the handbook.
- 2) StudentJobs.gov (click on "Agency Info"), the Public Service Center's [website](#), and [Public Works](#) provide links to federal agencies.
- 3) The National Association of Law Placement's (NALP) [Federal Legal Employment Opportunity Guide](#) is available on the Employment Resources page. The NALP Guide provides helpful descriptions of many federal agencies and their departments. The Guide also includes profiles and testimonials of government attorneys, offering a significant amount of information to assist you in exploring the federal government as a potential employer.

B. EXAMPLES OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR 1LS

- 1) Department of Justice (DOJ): the nation's largest legal employer runs the [Volunteer Law Internship Program \(VLIP\)](#), an unpaid internship primarily available to 1Ls. Students interested in the VLIP apply individually to each component of the DOJ. We do not believe that the VLIP list is comprehensive; students have secured internship positions with components that were not listed on the list. We encourage students to call DOJ divisions that interest them to inquire about volunteer opportunities. Please consider attending presentations by the DOJ on November 13 and 16, 2009.
- 2) Department of Commerce: hires 1Ls for its [summer legal internship](#). Internships may be volunteer or paid (depending on funding availability) and are available in several offices within the Office of the General Counsel. Applications are accepted from January 3 through March 15.
- 3) U.S. Department of Defense: accepts 1Ls for its paid [Honors Legal Intern Program](#). The application deadline for 1Ls is December 7.
- 4) Department of Energy: the [Law Student Intern Program](#) in the Office of the General Counsel offers students the opportunity to work on legal research and writing projects in several areas in energy law. Application deadline: February 1.
- 5) Environmental Protection Agency: The Office of Enforcement & Compliance Assurance hires 1Ls for its [Summer Intern Program](#). Applications are accepted until February but we encourage you to apply as early as December 1.
- 6) Department of Labor: the Office of the Solicitor hires about 15 interns per summer for its unpaid [summer internships](#). Internships are available in the nine divisions in Washington, D.C. and with the fourteen branch offices in Atlanta, Nashville, Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Denver, New York City, Philadelphia, Arlington, VA, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but apply early for best consideration.
- 7) Securities & Exchange Commission: [The Summer Honors Law Program](#) intends to hire 25-30 1Ls to work in its Washington, DC headquarters or one of its regional offices in New York, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. Selections are made on a rolling basis and the 1L application will be available online in December.

V. STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

State and city agencies offer volunteer positions for 1Ls. Most states maintain a website of their agencies and is a good place to start searching for places of interest. City and county attorneys, sometimes called corporation counsel in major cities like New York, represent city and county agencies and elected officials on civil matters including zoning, land use, employment, contracts, and welfare. Local attorneys primarily negotiate settlements and defend lawsuits brought against the city or county. In general, they do not prosecute criminal cases.

RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) The [Government Honors and Internship Handbook](#) lists several state agency internship programs.
- 2) [Public Works](#): see "State Government."
- 3) [Statelocalgov.net](#), State and Local Government on the Net, offers a frequently updated official list of state, county, and city government websites, as well as links to agency websites in every state.
- 4) Visit the website of the individual agency or city or county attorney's office to gather information and determine whether 1L summer positions are available. Then apply directly.

VI. NGOS/NPOS AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC INTEREST LAW

AN NGO IS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION that attempt to fill gaps between the government and the needs of a community. NGOs work on a variety of projects including but not limited to: improving the state of the natural environment, human rights issues, improving the welfare of the disadvantaged, and representing a corporate agenda. There are both national and international NGOs working all over the world. NGOs usually have a core of paid staff and many volunteers. UNICEF and Oxfam are two examples of NGOs.

NPOs are non-profit organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and are similar to NGOs. However, they tend to have larger staffs than NGOs and easier access to funds.

Students interested in pursuing INTERNSHIPS AND CAREERS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW are able to receive counseling from the Virginia Law Human Rights Program. The program is the hub for human rights activities at the Law School and among other things, offers mentorship and counseling to students. Through a Human Rights Listserv, the program provides information about human rights internships, fellowships, and job opportunities. The director of the program is [Professor Deena Hurwitz](#).

RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) [PSLawnet.org](#) is the best place to begin searching for summer internships at NGOs. A link to which can be found on the Public Service webpage under Employment Resources.
- 2) Virginia Law Human Rights Listserv available by contacting [Cindy Derrick](#).
- 3) Yale Law School's Guide, [International Public Interest Law](#), provides descriptions of several NGO internship opportunities and contact information. The Guide can be viewed online at the Center's blog under Public International Law.
- 4) [Idealist.org](#) is available on Public Works and posts opportunities with NGOs, NPOs, and human rights organizations.
- 5) [Human Rights Internet](#) provides information about NGOs, many based in developing countries.

VII. CAPITOL HILL

Attorneys on Capitol Hill can serve in four different capacities. They can work in the personal office of a Senator or Member of the House of Representatives; for a particular committee or subcommittee; in leadership, such as the office of the majority whip; or as legislative counsel, a separate entity providing legal counsel to members of Congress and committees.

RESOURCES AND HELPFUL TIPS

- 1) [Internships for Law Students](#) (Internships USA) is available on the Public Service page under Employment Resources, as is [Hillzoo.com](#), a comprehensive homepage of Capitol Hill that includes job postings.
- 2) Blog postings on Public Works, [here](#).
- 3) Applications for internships with members of Congress or Committees, including the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, are considered through Members' official web pages.
- 4) Contact [Virginia Law alumni](#). A comprehensive list of alumni is available at the Center.