PUBLIC INTEREST CAREER PLANNING
INTRODUCTION

Public Service is a very broad term – it encompasses a variety of practice areas and practice settings. In general, the practice settings include government and non-profit. The practice areas span civil and criminal law, representing clients as well as policy advocacy. The work focuses on representing underserved populations (e.g. domestic violence victims, immigrants, the elderly, disabled clients, children, and the poor) and inadequately protected legal rights (civil rights, environment, education, criminal, and consumer law). Government work is also public service and opportunities exist at the federal, state, county, and city levels. Examples include criminal defense and prosecution, working for government agencies, and legislative/policy work.

Public Service is a wonderful way to gain experience, use your legal education, and help others for the common good. There are a variety of ways to incorporate Public Service into your legal career, and it is never too soon to start! We hope the following tips and resources serve as a starting point. Feel free to follow up with our office for more information.

PART I: 1L JOB SEARCH TIPS

Just as in successful legal advocacy, preparation is the key to obtaining a satisfactory public service position. Although academic achievement is always important, good grades are not enough. Public service employers nearly always expect evidence of commitment to their kind of work, particularly evidence of community service and hands-on exposure to the kinds of clients, issues, and day-to-day activities their practice encompasses.

Fortunately, Loyola offers a wealth of resources to help you prepare for and conduct a successful public service job search. Here are some tips/ideas in planning for a public interest career:

- Don’t reject unpaid internship opportunities, especially for your first summer. It’s extremely important to show some relevant legal experience as you enter your second year. Whether the work is paid or unpaid is not important to employers. You can combine unpaid work on a part-time basis with any kind of non-legal paying job you can find. If you cannot volunteer at a legal organization, consider volunteering for non-legal organizations that serve the population of interest (e.g. a domestic violence shelter or a school setting). But even unpaid work needs to be lined up well before the summer begins, as the best positions usually fill early. The counselors in the Office of Career Services can help you.

- Keep in mind that for some popular Chicago area government offices, like the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, an internship (volunteer) or externship (for academic credit) with them is essential to getting an interview for a postgraduate position.

- Choose co-curricular activities that enhance your resume to public service employers, such as work on relevant journals and publications, other substantive writing and community service activities, and intensive leadership-level activities in relevant organizations.

- Consider organizing your own funding for a school year or summer position via: Federal
work study, PILI grants, or PILS grants. More information on these opportunities and additional funding sources are available on our website: http://www.luc.edu/law/career/publicinterest/funds_pub_int_opps.html. Keep in mind that PILS also considers your involvement when awarding funds.

- Many offices will not post openings – they rely upon students to do the research and apply if they are interested. You can find out about hiring practices via the organizations’ websites, speaking with students who have worked there or speaking with your counselor.

## PART II: RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

### KEY JOB REFERENCE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The handbooks and directories listed in this section provide a sampling of the resources available for public service. Additionally, numerous helpful links can be found on the Public Interest Job Search page of the CSO website: http://www.luc.edu/law/career/Public_Interest_Job_Search_Resources.html.

### ONLINE DIRECTORIES

**Directories of Public Interest Fellowships**
Available: [https://www.psjd.org/Postgraduate_Public_Interest_Fellowships:_Application_Deadline_Calendar](https://www.psjd.org/Postgraduate_Public_Interest_Fellowships:_Application_Deadline_Calendar) (You’ll need to log into PSJD in order to view their fellowship listings. Students register individually on their website and create their own username and password.)

  *The PSJD Fellowship Corner lists fellowships for which law school graduates are eligible, including relevant non-legal fellowships. It also includes the full text of Yale’s Fellowship Application Tips, fellowship resources, and an application deadline calendar.*

**Federal Legal Employment Opportunities Guide**

  *Information on available employment opportunities with numerous federal agencies and departments, listing extensive hiring program and contact information.*

**The University of Arizona Government Honors & Internship Handbook**
Available: [http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm](http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm)
Username: ranger | Password: cookies

  *Published by the University of Arizona Law School, this handbook contains opportunities with federal agencies and some state agencies. Detailed descriptions, application processes, and deadlines are provided.*

**The University of Arizona Government Public Policy Handbook**
Available: [https://www.law.arizona.edu/career/PublicPolicy10-11/LoginForm.cfm](https://www.law.arizona.edu/career/PublicPolicy10-11/LoginForm.cfm)
Username: social | Password: justice
Opportunities in Public Affairs
Available: www.opajobs.com
An excellent source of public affairs job openings in the Washington, D.C. area.

USA Internships
Available: http://www.internships-usa.com
Username: LoyolaLaw | Password: Loy201213

KEY WEBSITES

The internet is a key resource for information about public interest law and job opportunities in public service. The Office of Career Services’s website has numerous public interest and government links on the following pages: http://www.luc.edu/law/career/Government_Job_Search_Resources.html (Government) and http://www.luc.edu/law/career/Public_Interest_Job_Search_Resources.html (Public Interest).

Career Services Job Postings
http://law-luc-csm.symplicity.com/students
IL students will be sent a Symplicity username and password on November 1st.
This website lists job announcements received by the Office of Career Services. New postings are added nearly everyday. All job postings, including those in public service, are listed here.

Equal Justice Works
www.equaljusticeworks.org
A good starting point for general information on public interest law from a student perspective, information on Equal Justice Works’ summer internship and postgraduate fellowship programs, and links to a number of other useful sites.

Public Service Jobs Directory (PSJD)
www.psjd.org
This is a searchable nationwide database of public service opportunities including paid and unpaid student internships, postgraduate fellowships, and postgraduate jobs. Select the Job Seeker link near the top of the page and follow the prompts for registering to obtain a username and password.

Illinois Pro Bono
www.illinoisprobono.org
This statewide website gives information on Illinois legal aid agencies, their personnel, what they do, who they serve, their training schedules, and job and volunteer opportunities.

United States Department of Justice (DOJ)
www.usdoj.gov
A good starting point for federal government opportunities, this website offers links to
other federal government agencies and describes the DOJ’s own hiring programs for lawyers and law students.

**United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM)**  
[www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)  
Basic information on federal government employment, plus a searchable database of federal job listings. You may want to check both the legal and administrative job categories. You can also access these postings through [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov).

**State of Illinois**  
[www.state.il.us](http://www.state.il.us)  
The website of the Illinois state government which links to a number of state agencies, many of which post job listings on their websites.

**City of Chicago**  
[www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org)  
Provides information on internships and job opportunities with the City of Chicago as well as links to related organizations.

**Harvard Law School**  
[www.law.harvard.edu/students/opia](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/opia)  
The Office of Public Interest Advising at Harvard University offers specialty guides about several types of public service career paths on its website.

**Alliance for Justice**  
[www.afj.org](http://www.afj.org)  
A national association of environmental, civil rights, mental health, women’s, children’s, and consumer advocacy organizations.

**Government Sites**  
[www.washlaw.edu](http://www.washlaw.edu)  
A free service of Washburn University School of Law, this website offers links to state, federal, and international government websites as well as directories of law firms, legal associations, law schools, and bar associations.

**USA Jobs**  
[www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)  
The federal government’s official job posting website.

**Non-Profit Positions**  
[www.idealista.org](http://www.idealista.org)  
This site lists job/internship opportunities in non-profit organizations worldwide. Note that the listings include both legal and alternative legal positions.
**BOOKS AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES & THE LAW LIBRARY**

**Lawful Pursuit: Careers in Public Interest Law**
By Ronald Fox
Available: Law Library Main Stacks

*An American Bar Association publication that offers a good initial perspective for career planning.*

**Pro Bono: Volunteer Opportunities for Attorneys in the Chicago Area**
Published by The Chicago Bar Foundation
Available: Office of Career Services

*A guide of the many public interest organizations in the Chicagoland area that are in need of pro bono attorneys and a great place to find organizations that might be in need of law student interns, volunteers, or law clerks.*

**The Comprehensive Fellowship Guide: the Ultimate Resource for Law Students and Lawyers**
Published by PSLawNet
Available: Office of Career Services

*A print resource that includes hundreds of fellowship listings culled from the PSLawNet website, along with application tips and a deadline calendar.*

**Public Service and International Law: A Guide to Professional Opportunities in the United States and Abroad**
A joint project of Yale Law School and Harvard Law School
Available: Office of Career Services

*A guide that explores international public service opportunities in both the United States and abroad.*

**Jobs and Careers with Non-Profit Organizations**
By Ron & Caryl Kirannich, Ph.D.s
Available: Office of Career Services

*A guide to job searching in the public sector, this book includes many examples of the types of organizations you may encounter in a public interest job search. The listings in this book are not exhaustive, but it is a great place to start!*

**The Directory of Legal Aid and Defender Offices in the United States**
Published by NLADA
Available: Law Library Main Stacks

*Lists National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) member organizations by state, including legal aid offices, public defender offices, and specialized programs.*

**Sullivan’s Law Directory**
Available: Office of Career Services and Law Library Reference Section

*A state directory of Illinois lawyers, legal organizations, courts, and government law*
KEY SUMMER PROGRAMS

Although these are by no means the only sources of summer jobs and internships in public service, the following are important organized programs for obtaining summer positions and funding for summer public interest work, which we urge Loyola students to pursue. Summer public service work after the first year of law school is an appropriate way for all students to gain resume-enhancing legal experience through meaningful service. For students seeking postgraduate careers in public service, appropriate community experience is essential, and it is even more important to take advantage of the vital opportunity presented after two years of law school (specifically, 51 credit hours) when eligible for a student practice license under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711 and comparable provisions in many other states.

Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)
The PILI Summer Internship program places students in designated Chicago area public interest organizations selected by the PILI board. A PILI Intern (1L or 2L) receives a $5,000 stipend for ten weeks of full time summer work and participates in weekly educational programs. Application materials are available on their website, www.pili-law.org. 2L and 3L students should apply in mid-October and 1L students should apply in December to assure consideration, although the final deadline is early March. Limited school year internships are also available.

PILI also has a Fellows program for law graduates who accepted offers with law firms that allow them to work at a PILI approved agency while studying for the bar.

Public Interest Law Society (PILS) Summer Fellowships
The PILS Fellowships program is Loyola’s own, funded through the PILS Auction and other fundraising activities of the Public Interest Law Society. Any interested student may apply for a grant after obtaining a position at a sponsoring organization. Applications are reviewed and recipients selected by a committee consisting of faculty members, students, and administrators. In recent years, PILS fundraising has supported 10-12 grants to first and second year students who have worked in nonprofit and governmental law offices nationwide and even internationally. Applications are available in the early spring.

Equal Justice Works Summer Corps
This nationwide program, co-sponsored by Equal Justice Works and Americorps, places law students in summer positions throughout the country, primarily in civil legal assistance organizations with an emphasis on non-metropolitan settings. It pays a loan reduction award of $1,000. Details can be found online at www.equaljusticeworks.org.

Equal Justice America
This program provides fellowships to students working in organizations providing direct civil legal services to the poor. Information is available on their website for spring, summer, and fall fellowships. They sponsor fellowships at the Chicago Legal Clinic, AIDS Legal Council,
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago, and Lifespan Center for Legal Services. For further information, see their website at www.equaljusticeamerica.org.

### KEY ANNUAL EVENTS

Below is a summary of the main annual events in which Loyola law students interested in public service careers should participate as appropriate.

#### Public Service Convocation

*Early Fall*

Hosted by the Dean of the School of Law, the Convocation honors an exemplary public service law practitioner, presents a distinguished keynote speaker from the private bar who discusses *pro bono* service, and introduces public service opportunities at Loyola. Mandatory for 1Ls.

#### Explore the Possibilities: Pro Bono and Public Interest Law Placements

*Late September*

Held annually at Chicago – Kent School of Law, this program is for Chicago area law students and recent graduates interested in learning more about placements as volunteers, interns or externs, or fellows at public interest law organizations.

#### Equal Justice Works Career Fair & Conference – Washington, DC

*Late October*

#### Pro Bono Week

*Late October*

The ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service sponsors Pro Bono Week each year near the end of October. The Celebration is a coordinated national effort to meet the ever-growing needs of this country's most vulnerable citizens by encouraging and supporting local efforts to expand the delivery of pro bono legal services, and by showcasing the great difference that pro bono lawyers make to the nation, its system of justice, its communities and, most of all, to the clients they serve.

#### Meet the Public Service Organizations Reception

*Early November*

Sponsored by the Chicago Area Law School Consortium, this reception gathers attorneys from Chicago area nonprofit and government law offices to meet informally with law students.

#### Practice Tracks

*January*

This table talk event offers the opportunity to meet several dozen Chicago area attorneys who practice in a wide variety of legal subject areas and settings. Excellent for exploring both private sector and public service career options.

#### Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference (MPILCC)

*http://mpilcc.uchicago.edu*

*Early February*
Nonprofit and government employers from primarily Midwest states gather to interview students for both summer and postgraduate opportunities. This career fair offers the opportunity to submit resumes for scheduled interviews at the conference and to seek unclaimed interview slots on the day of the event. Additional informal networking opportunities are also available.

**PILS Auction**  
*Mid-February*  
A fundraiser for the Public Interest Law Society, the proceeds of this event go to support PILS Summer Fellowships for Loyola students.

**Judicial Externship Info Sessions**  
*Mid-February*  
If you’re interested in working for a judge during your first summer, be sure to attend one of the judicial externship information sessions in the spring semester.

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**PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CERTIFICATE**  
In response to student demand, Loyola created a Public Interest Law Certificate. Students who participate in 30 hours of volunteer/pro bono work, complete a qualifying externship or clinic, enroll in four of the required courses and receive a minimum of a 3.0 in those courses, and enroll in the Public Interest Law Seminar are eligible for a Public Interest Law Certificate upon graduation.

**LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LRAP)**  
For our alumni working in public interest, Loyola offers a loan repayment assistance program. To learn more about Loyola’s LRAP program, please visit [http://www.luc.edu/law/admission/financial_aid/lrap.html](http://www.luc.edu/law/admission/financial_aid/lrap.html).

**IN CONCLUSION**  
Working in public service is a great privilege and opportunity as a member of the legal profession, whether performed as a full-time career or as a supplemental professional activity. The Office of Career Services is here to help you realize your public service goals. Please use this guide as a starting point and take advantage of the wealth of resources available to you through Loyola and the Chicago community. We wish you every success in your efforts.