

Lewis & Clark Law School

Quick Reference Sheet on:

Finding and Funding a Public Interest Law Clerk Job

Finding a Public Interest Law Clerk Job:

Although many public interest employers do post job opportunities with our student job postings, most do not and prefer that interested students pro-actively contact them about potential law clerk opportunities with their organization. Here are some ideas for locating a public interest law clerk position:

- Pick up a copy of the "Green Book" from Career Services, which contains listings and descriptions of public interest non-profit legal employers in Oregon and Washington.
- Check out PSLawNet, a national database of public service employers: www.pslawnet.org
- Review the employer listings in *Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, Vol. 1 - USA* - A Harvard Law School publication listing public interest employers and potential funding sources (available for check out from the Career Services Resource Library). This is a particularly good resource for looking for opportunities outside of Oregon.
- Talk with the Career Services counselors about your areas of interest. They may be able to suggest particular organizations or alums working in your areas of interest. In particular, consider making an appointment with the Public Interest Law Coordinator.
- Do some pro bono volunteer work through the Pro Bono Program. Often, volunteering for an organization can lead to an ongoing law clerk position. Contact the Public Interest Law Coordinator for more information: wcpenn@lclark.edu.
- Consult the "Student Employment Evaluation" forms in the Career Services Resource Library for employer ideas. These are feedback forms completed by students about their law clerk experiences.
- Review state or local Bar Association websites to see if they list pro bono opportunities for attorneys. For example, the Oregon State Bar website (www.osbar.org) lists pro bono opportunities for attorneys on its website and many of those organizations may also accept law student volunteers or clerks.
- Talk to other students - ask around to find out what public interest organizations students have clerked for.
- Get involved in PILP, the Lewis & Clark Public Interest Law Project. PILP fundraises to award summer public interest stipends for students to work at organizations that would not otherwise be able to afford a law clerk. PILP's website contains a list of public interest organizations where students have clerked using their PILP stipend: <http://law.lclark.edu/org/pilp/>.

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- Review the Externship page of the Career Services website: <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/lscs/externships.html>. Employers who have taken unpaid externs may

be willing to employ a law clerk.

- Attend Career Services panels and programs that include public interest attorneys. Introduce yourself to the attorneys and ask them about any clerking opportunities, with their organization or with other employers in the same field.

Funding a Public Interest Law Clerk Job:

Although many public interest employers welcome law student involvement, many cannot afford to pay for a law clerk and will expect you to “bring your own funding”.* There are several funding options to explore, including:

- Work Study Funding - federal Work Study provides partial “matching” funds for eligible government and non-profit legal employers, enabling them to employ paid law clerks. Student hourly wages typically average \$10-12/hour. To receive Work Study funding, students must financially qualify. Read Chapter 8 in the Career Services Handbook for more information.
- PILP Stipends - Each spring, PILP hosts an annual auction to raise funds and award 10-15 summer stipends. These stipends fund students to work in public interest organizations that would otherwise be unable to pay for a law clerk. The deadline to apply for a PILP stipend is usually in late February or early March. For more information, see the PILP website: http://law.lclark.edu/org/pilp/summer_stip.html
- Equal Justice Works Summer Corps - Equal Justice Works awards several \$1,000 education awards for students working in the public interest, in a paid or unpaid position. A Summer Corps award can be in addition to other sources of funding. For more information, see www.equaljusticeworks.org.
- PSLawNet - A national clearinghouse listing public interest organizations and potential national funding resources: www.pslawnet.org.
- Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) - Provides summer funding for law students working in public interest agencies in Chicago: www.pili-law.org/.
- Peggy Browning Fund - Provides summer funding for students interested in working on workers’ rights issues. (Lewis & Clark is a member school): www.peggybrowningfund.org/.
- *Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide, Vol. 1 - USA* - A Harvard Law School publication listing public interest employers and potential funding sources. (Available for check out from the Career Services Resource Library.)

*Although many of the listed stipends and fellowships are not awarded until late spring, they may have late fall or early spring deadlines. Check resources early (and often) to make sure you do not miss a good opportunity!