

7. If I do public service work during my first summer, will that “pigeon-hole” me if I interview with private sector employers for my second summer?

Most 1Ls do public service work (such as summer internships/externships with government agencies, not-for-profit organizations or the judiciary) during their first summer and firms are accustomed to reviewing resumes of students who did public service work their first summer. Your 1L summer experiences will not pigeon-hole you. Any employer you interview with for your 2L summer, whether private or public sector, wants to hire students with skills that will be valuable to them and will ask about your work and experience during your 1L summer. This is the more important issue. A public service job may provide you (depending upon your placement) with an opportunity for client contact and to gain interview skills, legal research, writing, document drafting, and courtroom observation. It’s also important to continue to build your resume beyond your 1L summer position. Externships and clinics during the school year, participation in a student edited journal or competitions (e.g. moot court, trial advocacy, dispute resolution), work with a professor as a research assistant, and volunteering with student organizations are all valuable experiences and help enhance your resume.

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**Public Interest Resource Center
1L Orientation for Public Service
Summer 2009 Job Search
Thursday, November 5, 2009**



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What resources are available for me to conduct my public service job search?

The Public Service Job Search Guide (Tab 7) and Government Job Search Guides (Tab 9), part of the Professional Development Handbook, are excellent places to start.

2. When do most 1Ls looking for public service summer work get their jobs?

The “time-line” for hiring for public service summer jobs is very long. It’s rare that 1Ls receive offers in December, or even January. Offers during those months tend to be from a small number of organizations with a national reputation which draw applications from law students across the country. Examples include: the national offices of the ACLU (based in NYC), the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Brennan Center for Justice, and some federal judges (e.g. Southern District of NY.) A majority of public service employers will not be interviewing or making offers until mid- February through mid- to late-spring. The Public Interest Legal

Career Fair, co-sponsored by Fordham, and held at NYU Law School on February 4th and 5th is a great opportunity to explore summer employment. Sign-up via now: <http://law.nyu.edu/careerfair> It's not uncommon for 1L's to receive great offers for positions in March and April.

3. Am I required to accept the first position that I'm offered?

As a general rule, no. There may be specific exceptions for certain federal judges (*please consult the Externship Office or the Career Planning Center*). Most 1Ls are so concerned about receiving ANY summer offer, that the first offer often comes as a surprise. The first offer extended to you may not be **your** first choice. If so, you are NOT obligated to accept the position on the spot, even if the employer is pressuring you to say "yes". It is perfectly appropriate to say that you are very pleased to receive the offer and that you would appreciate some time to respond to their offer. It is totally acceptable to then call other employers with whom you have interviewed. You should contact your first choice employer, let them know they are your first choice, inform them you have received another offer but would prefer to work for them, and ask them if they can make a decision on your application. PIRC counselors are available to meet with you to help you sort through your options.

4. If I'm interested in doing public service work abroad- is it really hard to get such a position?

Fordham's 1Ls who pursue international summer work

generally find opportunities. Such internships usually take considerably longer to arrange than domestic positions, even via e-mail. We advise you start now to research possible positions, and apply as early as possible. The guide by the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice is very helpful. <http://www.leitnercenter.org/internshipguide/>

5. How long are summer public interest internships, even unpaid ones?

As a general rule, employers will expect you to work for 10 weeks during the summer, even if you are a volunteer. The organization or agency will invest a considerable amount of staff time to train and supervise you so they will want a substantial commitment from you in return. The start and completion date of your position may be negotiable.

6. How can I get funding for my summer position?

The largest source of summer funding for public service work for Fordham Law students is the Fordham Student Sponsored Fellowship (FSSF) (fssf.org). Every summer, FSSF raises money to fund 1L's and 2L's to work in not-for-profit organizations and government agencies (FSSF does not fund summer judicial clerkships.) Typically between 30 and 50 students are funded every summer. Contact FSSF@law.fordham.edu for more information. Other fellowships/stipends are described in PIRC's Public Service Job Search Guide (Tab 7 at pages 30-35) and on the PIRC website under Funding Your Public Interest Work, Public Interest Summer Funding.