

15 Quick Tips for Law Students Interested in Public Service

Application

- 1) Draft your applications for your reader – easy to read, targeted, balance text and white space, active voice, categorize activities, and place relevant information up front.
- 2) Be specific in your job descriptions, instead of stating: “Researched issues and drafted memoranda,” describe what you researched, what you drafted, and how your work was used.
- 3) Reflect public interest work and/or service to the community in your application materials.
- 4) Highlight relevant experience and make the connection between what you have to offer and what the employer seeks.
- 5) Express your demonstrated interest for the work of the public sector employer and their mission in your targeted cover letter.

Interview

- 1) Research the employer, review your application materials, speak with alumni or former interns who work or have worked for the employer, draft a few questions for the interviewers, and do one or more mock interviews practicing behavioral questions.
- 2) Be prepared to explain why you want to practice in a particular area, e.g. public defense, prosecution, direct legal services, and why you want to work for this particular employer.
- 3) Come to the interview with examples of assignments, contributions, initiatives, and weave them in throughout the conversation to show you can do the work and contribute to the organization.
- 4) Practice answering hypotheticals on rules of ethics and evidence and demonstrating your trial skills, including opening and closing arguments, as you may be asked to do so in an interview.
- 5) Communicate your enthusiasm and energy for the position and employer and show a demonstrated interest in the opportunity through your preparation and answers.

Internship

- 1) Produce high quality work in a timely manner and be the first to volunteer for all opportunities. Utilize strong prioritization and time management skills – ALWAYS have a contributory attitude!
- 2) Value and take advantage of the opportunity to build relationships with your supervisors and colleagues who will be a part of your network for years to come.
- 3) Take a genuine interest in the work. Ask questions, but be considerate of an attorney’s time – schedule meetings to ask all of your questions at once – always have paper and pen with you.
- 4) Be engaged. Avoid sitting on the sidelines. In court, stay on your feet and offer to assist in any way that will help your supervisors: help clients fill out forms, make copies, pull case law, make a call, and obtain contact information from people. Make yourself indispensable – no task is too small.
- 5) Work to develop a good reputation that extends beyond your direct supervisor. Offer to help other attorneys if time permits.