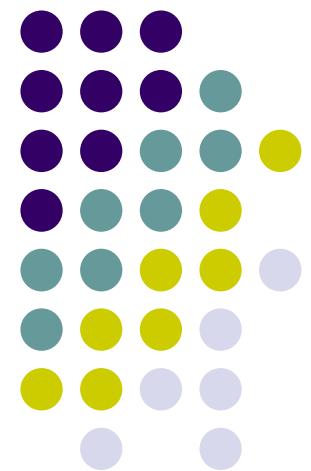


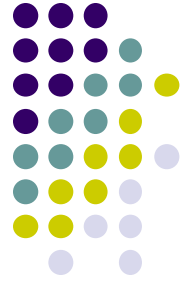
# How to Successfully Advise Students Seeking Public Interest / Government Opportunities

NALP Newer Professionals Section

January 20, 2016

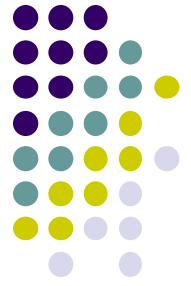
Michelle Vodenik, Senior Director,  
Public Sector/Diversity  
IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law





# Overview

1. Establish a relationship
2. Public Interest Resume
3. Cover letter
4. Interview
5. Advising as to opportunities available
6. Money!: Finding funding / Externship Credit / Public Interest Salaries / Paying off debt (LRAP)
7. Preparing student for Public Interest Job Fairs
8. Questions?



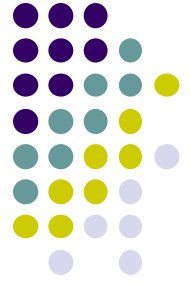
# 1. Establish a relationship:

- Why did you decide to go to law school?
- Why did you pick Chicago-Kent?
- Share relevant information about yourself that connects to the students reasons for coming to law school and reasons for picking your law school
- Start to discuss the opportunities and programs at your school that meet the students needs
- Establish yourself as a knowledgeable source of information
- Before they come in: use a student survey to understand students interests/needs and review draft resume

**What type of law are you interested in?**

- Admiralty / maritime
- Antitrust/trade regulation
- Banking /finance
- Bankruptcy
- Civil Rights/Constitutional
- Commercial
- Communications
- Construction
- Consumer
- Copyright/Trademark
- Corporate
- Criminal – Defense
- Criminal – Prosecution
- Disability
- Employee Benefits/pension
- Energy
- Entertainment
- Environmental
- Family/Domestic
- Govt. Contracts
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property/Patent
- International
- Judiciary
- Judicial Clerkship
- Labor/Employment – Labor

- Labor/Employment – Mgmt
- Land Use/Zoning
- Legislative
- Litigation – civil
- Litigation – criminal
- Mediation
- Medical Malpractice
- Military
- Municipal/School
- Personal Injury/Product Liability
- Poverty
- Privacy
- Public Interest
- Public Utility
- Real Estate
- Securities
- Solo Practitioner
- Sports
- Tax
- Telecommunications
- Torts
- Transportation
- Trusts/Estates
- Worker’s Compensation
- Other (please specify)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**What type of employer  
would you like to work for:**

Law firm

- \_\_\_ very large (501+)
- \_\_\_ large (101 - 500)
- \_\_\_ medium (26-100)
- \_\_\_ small (11-25)
- \_\_\_ very small (2-10)
- \_\_\_ solo

Corporation

- \_\_\_ in-house legal dept
- \_\_\_ non-legal

\_\_\_ Accounting Firm

Bank

- \_\_\_ in-house legal dept.
- \_\_\_ non-legal

Public interest

- \_\_\_ legal services org.
- \_\_\_ public defender

Government

- \_\_\_ federal
- \_\_\_ local
- \_\_\_ state
- \_\_\_ Judicial clerkship

Military

- \_\_\_ JAG Corps
- \_\_\_ civilian attorney

Academic

- \_\_\_ law school faculty
- \_\_\_ law librarian
- \_\_\_ legal writing instructor
- \_\_\_ other

(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

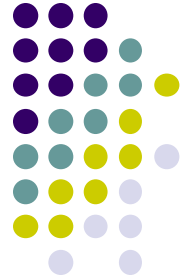
Alternative Career/Other Setting

(please specify)

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## **Are you interested in any of our Certificate Programs at Chicago-Kent?**

- Business Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- Litigation & Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Criminal Litigation
- International & Comparative Law
- Public Interest Law
- Environmental & Energy Law
- Labor & Employment Law
- Praxis



## Where would you like to live?

### Illinois:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Chicago
- \_\_\_\_\_ North suburbs
- \_\_\_\_\_ West suburbs
- \_\_\_\_\_ South suburbs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downstate (specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

### Out of State:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Boston
- \_\_\_\_\_ DC
- \_\_\_\_\_ LA/San Diego
- \_\_\_\_\_ Miami/Other FL
- \_\_\_\_\_ New York
- \_\_\_\_\_ San Francisco/Bay Area/Silicon Valley

### Out of State (continued):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Atlanta
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seattle
- \_\_\_\_\_ Texas (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### International (list country or city):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

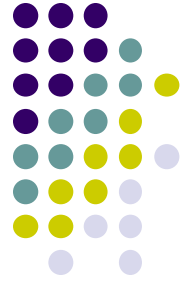


## 2. Public interest resume:

Think about what the public interest employer is looking for:

- Interest and/or commitment to public interest work demonstrated by work experience, leadership, service, volunteer work
- Research and writing skills
- Client communication skills
- Language Skills

**How do we get at these?**



# Ask questions / listening

- Tell me about this leadership experience in student government
- Tell me about your undergrad thesis or any big research paper you did
- Tell me about this volunteer experience
- Did you research, draft, communicate with people (what type of people?), analyze, manage, supervise, negotiate?
- What language did you study in college? / Do you speak any languages?

# Think creatively about the sections on the resume



- Professional Experience
- Policy Experience
- Legal Experience
- Law-Related Experience
- Research Experience
- Non-Profit Experience
- Government Experience
- International Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Community Service

# When should the public interest resume be longer than 1 page?



- Government Resume for use on USA Jobs website
- Applying as a rising 3L for fellowship positions
- Acceptable when applying for non-profit and policy positions that are non-legal

# Government Multi-page Resumes



- Student can use USAJobs Resume Builder as a starting point or provide students a sample
- Direct students to the USAJobs walk through, [www.psjd.org/USAJobs\\_Walkthrough](http://www.psjd.org/USAJobs_Walkthrough)
- PSJD: Resources/Public Sector Career Paths/Government/2015-2016 Federal Legal Employment Guide

# Example Federal Resume



Jane Q. Public  
123 Main Street  
Chicago, IL 60600  
Day: (123) 456-7890  
Evening: (123) 789-0123  
Email: [janesmith@emailaddress.com](mailto:janesmith@emailaddress.com)

## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

Compliance professional with comprehensive legal experience including conducting investigations, audits, solution oriented mediations and corporate training. Proven experience collaborating with senior management to conduct strategic planning in order to support and further corporate goals. Broad knowledge of policy development, analysis and litigation. Proven written and oral communication skills with the ability to negotiate and mediate favorable resolutions.

## BAR MEMBERSHIP:

Illinois State Bar, January 2005

## LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

City of Chicago  
1 North Smith Street, Chicago, IL 60000  
Supervisor: John Doe, Deputy (may not contact supervisor)  
Phone: (123) 123-4567

Corporation Counsel  
April 2008-Present  
Hours Worked: 40+ / week  
Salary: \$75,000/year

Litigated complex civil rights claims; defended the City and employees acting within the scope of their employment against federal claims of discrimination based on race, sex, gender, national origin, sexual harassment, retaliation and unconstitutional conduct, including but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1981, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Fourth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment violations. Engaged in extensive research, motion practice, discovery and settlement negotiations. Managed average case load as primary attorney, often with two or more individually named defendants.

## Competencies:

- **Communication & Oral Advocacy:** Aggressively defended clients by arguing discovery disputes, motions to dismiss, and motions for summary judgment at hearings before the federal courts. Deposed plaintiffs, experts and witnesses. Negotiated favorable settlements in hard to win cases.
- **Team-Oriented:** Chosen by division head to serve as a member of a special litigation team with a mandate to zealously litigate lawsuits filed by attorneys who frequently initiate litigation against the City and its employees in order to decrease settlement amounts and the volume of litigation. Actively participated in team meetings to discuss goals and parameters for success, share information about the development of new case law, and track case progress.
- **Policy Analysis & Litigation:** Investigated and litigated claims involving the City's policies on Sexual Harassment and Violence and the Workplace as well as police procedures. Interviewed and met with high ranking City officials, aldermen, policy specialist, community representatives and other parties involved in City policy making to determine the policy's mission, history and enforcement. Deposed and interviewed City investigators and senior management regarding the development and enforcement of various City policies. Successfully defended various city policies in federal district court. Chosen by division head to serve as member of a special policy litigation team that would litigate and try Smith-Jones claims in federal court.
- **Leadership:** Supervised legal interns and summer law clerks assisting with cases; coordinated support staff and other legal professionals to achieve a successful resolution for cases.

## Key Accomplishments:

- Obtained not liable verdicts for three Defendants, including the City.
- Obtained summary judgment in ABC v. City, a high profile death case and DEF v. HGI, a case that challenged the City's towing and impoundment policies. Won a motion to dismiss that dismissed 20 defendants and barred Plaintiff from claiming damages.

- Negotiated numerous settlement agreements, in and out of court, which resulted in saving the City millions in liability in litigation costs.

City of Chicago  
123 South Jones Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60000  
Supervisor: Jane Doe, former Sexual Harassment Officer  
Phone: (123) 567-8901

Assistant Compliance Officer  
Sept. 2006-April 2008  
Hours Worked: 40+ / week  
Salary: \$65,000/year

Investigated sexual harassment, violence in the workplace and EEO complaints; interviewed employees and senior management; audited the department to identify trends and non-compliant processes; wrote detailed summary reports with recommendations; monitored the implementation of resolutions and recommendations; trained employees; and made disciplinary or punitive recommendations, when appropriate.

Developed and conducted training sessions for City employees and contractors. Counseled City departments and individual agents regarding various personnel matters including compliance with federal and state civil rights laws; researched recent employment discrimination case law, federal legislation and various EEOC regulations, Executive Orders and best practices.

## Competencies:

- **Management & Leadership:** Supervised compliance personnel and summer law clerks; trained new investigators. Reviewed and edited summary reports for peers. Provided one-on-one training to senior management regarding policies, procedures and legal requirements.
- **Training & Employee Development:** Conducted training sessions throughout the workforce; developed specialized and personal training regarding the law, policies and procedures, ethical management and leadership and building a compliant workplace.
- **Legal Knowledge Base:** Developed expertise with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), 42 U.S.C. § 1983, 42 U.S.C. § 1981 and the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA).
- **Team Oriented:** Served on Risk Assessment, Workforce Compliance, and Compliance Hotline committees and served as the departmental liaison to the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. As member of the Risk Assessment team, met with Deputy and Senior Compliance Officers regularly to discuss and plan audits of "at risk" departments and attended meetings with contractors to determine best practices for departmental audits. Led the implementation of the Compliance Hotline with a Senior Compliance Officer, as a member of the Compliance Hotline committee.

Independent Contractor  
Various locations in Chicago, IL & Baltimore, MD

Compliance and Trial Attorney  
Jan. 2006-Sept. 2006  
Hours Worked: 40+ / week  
Salary: \$60,000/year

Provided legal services for law firms and corporate entities. Litigated cases that involved constitutional violations, contracts and torts in state court. Provided general legal guidance regarding the development and implementation of policy, procedures and training programs for supervisors and employees addressing EEO compliance.

Law Offices of Top Lawyers  
987 North Any Street, Chicago, Illinois 60000  
Supervisor: John Public  
Supervisor's Phone: (789) 012-3456

Law Research Clerk  
Sept. 2005-Dec. 2005  
Hours Worked: 40+ hr / week  
Salary: \$50,000/year

Researched legal issues involving contracts, tort liability and employment discrimination under state and federal laws. Assisted attorneys with deposition preparation; drafted written discovery; prepared medical and legal documents. Assisted attorneys with trial.

# Example Federal Resume

## Continued



Chief of Public Affairs, Japan 2002 to 2005  
 Chief of Public Affairs Joint Special Operations Task Force, Philippines Jan to Apr 2003

Excellent College Academic Achievement Scholar

Promoted and served as communications officer for Asia-Pacific HQs and international region with 7 geographically-dispersed locations. Responsible for significant internal communications, multinational relations, politically sensitive issues, and media/public information programs; concurrently served as the senior advisor, spokesperson and official speechwriter for the Commanding General.

- Supervised 14-member joint military, U.S. civilian and Japanese workforce in a high-stress and high-demand environment.
- Promoted collaboration with government branches, embassies and public affairs groups across Indonesia, Japan, Korea and the Philippines. Earned Commander/Ambassador commendations for speed and decisiveness in diplomatic affairs.
- Created strategic communications plan, aligned organizational structure and changed communications actions for Japan.
- Hosted information exchanges and training programs with public affairs groups and local national media in multiple Asia-Pacific countries and as an official representative at regional social and community events.
- Earned a commendation for mastery in host nation engagement and bilateral and unilateral affairs, forging positive multinational, multicultural relationships between the US and local government officials, communities and the public.
- Created a dynamic media outreach plan resulting in 15,000 articles across over 130 local, international and U.S. media outlets, becoming the catalyst for turning around misconceptions and mitigating negative publicity which resulted in gaining balanced coverage.

### JOB-RELATED TRAINING/CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION:

Department of Human Resources Training 2006-07:  
 How to Investigate Allegations of Sexual Harassment  
 Investigating EEO Complaints  
 Conducting Workforce Compliance Training  
 Conducting Interviews and writing reports  
 Compliance Training 2008:  
 Ethics for Governmental Employees  
 Conducting Risk Assessments (KPMG)  
 Law Department Training Programs 2008-2010:  
 Section 1983 Civil Rights Litigation Conference, Top School College of Law 2008  
 Seminar: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Reasonable Accommodation  
 Seminar: Litigating Claims  
 Seminar: Legal Ethics  
 Seminar: Constitution Law for Defense Attorneys  
 Aggressive Negotiation  
 Medicare Guidelines and Procedures

Battalion Assistant Operations Officer / Logistics Officer – 82nd Field Artillery, U.S. & Kuwait 1994 to 1995  
 Platoon Leader – 5th Field Artillery, Saudi Arabia & Germany 1989 to 1991

Progressive domestic and international leadership of over 650 personnel and \$250M of equipment. Honed planning, team building and communication skills while effecting change and operating in crisis/sensitive environments.

- Transformed team into a best in class, high-performance organization.
- Outlined training platform for over 550 personnel test advanced digital technologies rolled out to units across the globe.
- Converged U.S. Forest Service -Army logistical support into cohesive 500-person team to fight forest fires in Montana.
- Received outstanding leadership award for performance in deploying several military units including one of the largest people/ equipment movements in preparation for Desert Storm and deployment of over 250 soldiers to Kuwait with no previous notification.

### EDUCATION:

University of Top School of Law  
 Iowa City, IA  
 Juris Doctor, Dec. 2005

Honors/Activities:  
*Top School Law Review*, Vol. 90  
 Legal Freshman Fellow  
 Legal Foundation Fellow

West Point U.S. Military Academy, New York  
 BS, Leadership Studies  
 Study Abroad:  
 Domo Arigato University, Tokyo, Japan 2002

Honors/Activities:  
 Dean's List  
 Japan Honor's Exchange Program  
 Academic Community Enrichment Scholar  
 Etta Parsons Academic Achievement Scholar



### 3. Cover Letter

- Focus on interest in the “Mission” of the agency and/or the client population served
- Can include a personal story about connection to the mission/client population
- Body paragraph topics built around qualities public interest employers look for

**Think of drafting a well-thought out cover letter as the foundation for the interview...topic sentences with support.**



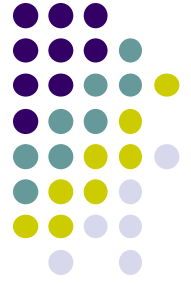
## 4. Interview

- Research employer, connect to their mission
- Research interviewers, make a connection
- Be ready for: why are you interested in working at our agency/organization?
- What contributions would you bring to our agency/organization?

### **More ideas/examples at:**

- [www.psjd.org/Applying\\_&\\_Interviewing](http://www.psjd.org/Applying_&_Interviewing)

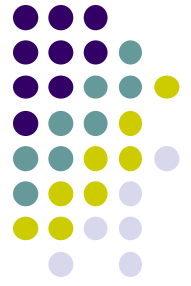
## 5. Advising as to opportunities available



Best strategy: Employer Outreach Visits and knowing the organizations where your students typically go

- Create a list of government orgs
- Create a list of legal aid orgs
- Know their mission, if they have students summer/fall/spring, and timing of application
- Use PSJD.org to expand your knowledge

## 6. Money!: Finding funding / Externship Credit Options / Public Interest Salaries / Paying off debt (LRAP)



- You must prepare your students to discuss funding/externship credit during interviews, as public interest employers will frequently ask, “are you going to work with us for school credit or do you have a source of funding?”
  - Provide a list of the most popular funding resources for students at your school
- + Find more at [www.psjd.org/funding\\_sources](http://www.psjd.org/funding_sources)

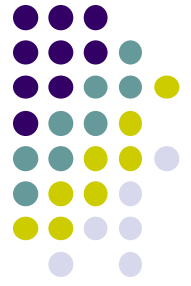
# Example of funding page



### Funding Sources for Public Interest/Government Internships

- **Kent Justice Foundation (KJF)** raises money for summer internships in public interest law. The group typically funds 10-20 students in amounts that range from \$1,000-\$5,000 for ten weeks of work at a government or public interest organization. Students apply for funding during the spring semester and must have secured a summer position prior to applying for funding. Students must assist with KJF fundraising activities or participate in other public interest/pro bono/volunteer opportunities to receive money. To be added to the KJF email list, send a message to [kjf@kentlaw.iit.edu](mailto:kjf@kentlaw.iit.edu).
- **Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)** provides funding of \$5,000 for 400 hours of summer work and \$2500 for 200 hours of fall/spring work at a legal aid organization in the Chicago area. First year law students apply beginning on December 1; second year students apply beginning on October 15th. Watch the PILI website for application timelines for fall/spring. See [www.pili.org](http://www.pili.org) for more information.
- **Equal Justice Works (EJW) Summer Corps 2015** is a program that provides law students with the opportunity to earn a \$1,212 education award voucher for dedicating their summer (fall or spring) to a qualifying legal project at a nonprofit public interest organization or government agency. The application deadline for summer 2015 is April 15, 5pm EDT. For more information, please visit <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/law-school/summercorps>.
- **PSJD** ([www.psjd.org](http://www.psjd.org)) maintains a comprehensive list of public interest funding sources in its respective online "Summer Funding Resources" guides.
  - For funding opportunities available in any geographic location, see [http://www.psjd.org/Summer\\_Funding\\_Resources\\_Available\\_for\\_Work\\_in\\_Any\\_Geographic\\_Location](http://www.psjd.org/Summer_Funding_Resources_Available_for_Work_in_Any_Geographic_Location)
  - For funding opportunities in specific geographic locations, see [http://www.psjd.org/Summer\\_Funding\\_Resources\\_for\\_Work\\_in\\_Specific\\_Geographical\\_Regions](http://www.psjd.org/Summer_Funding_Resources_for_Work_in_Specific_Geographical_Regions)
- **Equal Justice America** offers up to \$4,000 fellowships to students who work full-time for organizations providing direct civil legal assistance to the poor (no government agencies). The 2015 summer application deadline is March 23, 2015. EJA also now funds post-graduation fellowships for recent law school graduates. For more information, please visit: [www.equaljusticeamerica.org](http://www.equaljusticeamerica.org).
- **Justice John Paul Stevens Public Interest Summer Fellowship** awards \$5000 every year to two Chicago-Kent students who have secured unpaid public interest or government work for the summer. Application is typically due in early April.
- **Chicago-Kent's Federal Work Study (FWS) Program** provides funding to students who are federal work study eligible and working at approved government and public interest organizations in the Chicago-area. FWS funds are made available at the discretion of IIT; if funds are available, students with federal work study awards may apply for funding each semester. Please visit <http://www.kentlaw.iit.edu/career-preparation/public-interest-careers/federal-work-study> for further explanation.
- **Public interest law firms** may pay \$10-\$20 per hour to law clerks. Use the "2014-2015 Chicago Law Firm List" (4 or More List) under the Resources tab in Symplicity to find local firms with public interest practice areas.

If you have any questions regarding any of these funding sources, please contact your career advisor!



# What Public Interest Lawyers Earn

- **NALP Public Sector & Public Interest Salary Report 2014**  
<http://www.nalp.org/july14research>

## **Civil Legal Service**

- Entry-Level Median = \$44,600

## **Public Defenders**

- Entry-level Median = \$50,400

## **Local Prosecuting Attorneys**

- Entry-level Median = \$50,400

## **Know your market: Chicago, Illinois**

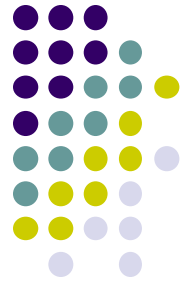
- State's Attorney = ~ \$59,000
- Public Defender = ~ \$50,000
- Assistant Corporation Counsel (City Law Dept.) = ~ \$57,000
- Assistant Illinois Attorney General = ~ \$57,000

# Paying off debt/LRAP/Federal Loan Forgiveness programs



- Equal Justice Works webinars, offered regularly, “Drowning in Debt! What Law Students & Lawyers Need to Know about Managing Student Loans & Earning Public Service Loan Forgiveness”
- Heather Jarvis, student loan expert  
askheatherjarvis.com
- [http://www.psjd.org/Student\\_Loan\\_Repayme](http://www.psjd.org/Student_Loan_Repayme)  
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# 7. Preparing Students for Public Interest Job Fairs



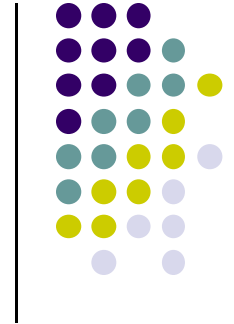
- 14 held regionally and a big one, the Equal Justice Works Conference & Career Fair in Washington DC
- [www.psjd.org/Public\\_Interest\\_Career\\_Fair\\_and\\_Events\\_Calendar](http://www.psjd.org/Public_Interest_Career_Fair_and_Events_Calendar)
- Hold informational program about the dates, deadline, job fair style (table talk, interviewing or a combination), and the types of employers that typically attend

# More on Public Interest Job Fairs:



- NALP Bulletin October 2015, Counseling Students for Success: Public Interest Job Fairs, Michelle Mohr Vodenik

# Questions?



- Michelle Vodenik, [mvodenik@kentlaw.iit.edu](mailto:mvodenik@kentlaw.iit.edu)