

Ten Suggestions for Building a Relationship with a Public Interest and Government Employers

1. **Introduce yourself.** Set up an in-person or a phone meeting to get to know us. Before you meet with us follow the same advice you give your students - look at our website to know what we do and what we say publicly about how we hire. You need to know us and who will thrive with us before you can recommend our office to your students.
2. **Ask us:**
 - a. How we hire. Do we only hire our interns who we've seen in action already? Do we hire sporadically or on a specific schedule? May we need you to gather resumes at the drop of a hat?
 - b. Who we hire. Do we want people with work experience pre-law school? People with certain language skills? People who are ready to take a case file and run to court? People with certain clinic experiences?
3. **Understand that public sector hiring is different than the private sector hiring.** Our hiring cycles will be different than the law firms. We may not have all of the answers about how or when we will hire. And our answers may depend on our budget.
4. **Get your students in in our offices, but make us feel like you are just trying to help us.** Former interns have a big advantage when we are making permanent offers because we already know them. So check in with us before each semester to see if we want interns. If you are from out of town, tell us if your school offers off-campus externships.
5. **Offer to put us in touch with student groups, relevant clinics, affinity groups, etc.** Encourage small group interactions with our office by putting us in touch with student groups who we may want to interact with. And encourage your student groups to keep one consistent email address for the group so we can contact them easily each year (and not to use the student leader's personal email address each year).
6. **After the meeting, figure out a way to see us again.** Invite us to be on a panel at your law school and let your interested students know we are coming. Or drop by our table at a table talk event and bring your students over to meet us. No upcoming in-person events? Write an email.
7. **Recommend students to us.** If you know that a student applied to our office and would be a perfect fit, let us know. But remember that each student you recommend to us is part of building a relationship of trust with us.
8. **If we give you negative feedback on a student...**Advocating for the student at that point will not help. Just hear us out and take what you can to help the student.
9. **Never be afraid to reach out to us.** If you know that a student is very interested in us, applied or even interviewed with us, but hasn't heard back from us, call and check in on that person's application. But don't be coy, tell us what you really want to know, that a specific student is waiting and not a generalized question of when we will get back to candidates. If you want to recommend someone, please reach out. If one of your students had a bad interview experience with us, we may need to hear about that too.
10. **Use the alumni network, but use us as your primary contact.** Your alumni at our office should be a great resource to you. But please don't treat them as the primary source of information or your initial contact for job fairs; please come to us first or include us on emails to them. They may not have the latest information about our hiring needs, or be the person that we want to send to that recruiting event for whatever reason, and they may not be as responsive as we are.

Hypothetical Scenarios– What Would You Do As A Career Counselor?

1. Adam, a 2L student whose dream job is to be an attorney at Legal Services USA (“LSUSA”), said he had a terrific on campus summer internship interview with LSUSA. Two weeks later, Adam is heartbroken because he received a rejection email from LSUSA and has no idea what went wrong in his interview. You have met Barbara, the recruiting manager at LSUSA, but you do not know her well. Should you reach out to her to find out what happened with Adam? If so, what would you say?
2. Ingrid, an attorney at the Poughkeepsie City Attorney’s office, calls you because John, a 3L doing a spring externship in her office, is not working out. Ingrid explains that John is not completing the hours that he agreed to complete each week, and he seems disinterested. Ingrid says that she would like to “terminate” John’s internship and post an ad for a new spring extern with your office. What do you say to Ingrid? Does it make any difference that you know that John will have to get an affidavit from Ingrid when he applies for admission to the Bar?
3. Evelyn, the director of human resources of the Legal Aid Society of Troy calls you because Franklin, one of the 2L students that you work with, is interning in their office for the summer and has made odd and unnerving comments to some attorneys at the Legal Aid Society. What, if anything, would you want Evelyn to tell you? Who should speak with Franklin about this issue?
4. Gerald, an attorney at a small legal services organization who you know very well, calls because he wants to hire an entry level attorney and asks you to gather resumes of 3L students you think would be a “good fit” with his organization. You reach out to students who you know to still be in the market and 12 students respond. You think 4 of the students would be a good fit for Gerald’s organization. 7 would be ok fits. However, 1 student, Henrietta, you know from your own experience and have heard from her previous employers, gives a good first impression, but is actually very unpleasant and difficult to work with. You know Gerald, like Gerald, and want him to hire someone who is going to be a “good fit” but also represent your school well. What do you do?
5. Kari, who interned at Kingston Defenders for her 2L summer, comes to you distraught because she did not receive a permanent offer from Kingston Defenders. You know Laurie, the HR director at Kingston Defenders, and you know that she likes to make offers to all of their summer interns. When you have called about students who did not get offers in the past, Laurie has been somewhat defensive and vague, saying that the student wasn’t a good “fit”, etc. How should you approach Laurie about Kari?