

MEMORANDUM

To: Nicole Netkin-Collins, NALP Board Liaison, Public Service Section
From: Christopher Gerlica and Amy Hsieh, Public Service Section Co-Chairs
CC: NALP Office-Fred Thrasher (reports@nalp.org)
Date: January 29, 2026

Re: Public Service Section – Third Quarter Report

1. 2025-26 Public Service Section Leadership

Section Chairs	Christopher Gerlica, Roger Williams University School of Law, cgerlica@rwu.edu Amy Hsieh, Brooklyn Law School, amy.hsieh@brooklaw.edu
Annual Education Conference + Webinar Planning	Deborah K. Baker, Esq. Howard University School of Law, deborah.baker@law.howard.edu Rachel Kronick Rothbart, USC Gould School of Law, rrthbart@law.usc.edu
PSJD Resource Development Work Group	Marisa Gold, Brooklyn Law School, Marisa.Gold@brooklaw.edu Erin Kelly, George Washington University School of Law, erin.kelly1@law.gwu.edu
LRAP Initiatives/CCRAA Developments	Vacant
Career Fairs Work Group	Mary Murphy, University of Texas School of Law, mary.murphy@law.utexas.edu Seth Mills, New York Law School, seth.mills@nyls.edu
Public Interest Fellowship Developments	Lauren Hartley, Equal Justice Works, lhartley@equaljusticeworks.org Jennie Netburn, Georgetown Law, jrn35@law.georgetown.edu
DEI Liaison	Carmia Caesar, George Washington University School of Law, ccaesar@law.gwu.edu
Amelioration and Best Practices Guide	Christopher Gerlica, Roger Williams University School of Law, cgerlica@rwu.edu

1. THIRD QUARTER SECTION MEETING

The third quarterly section meeting was held on January 14, 2026, under the leadership of Co-Chairs Christopher Gerlica and Amy Hsieh. Over 30 members attended.

The meeting began with employer spotlights from two different Public Defender offices so members could learn about their hiring needs and timelines. We are grateful that the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS, in Massachusetts) and King County

Department of Public Defense (DPD, in Washington) were able to join. Both offices shared that they are increasing their entry level classes by manifolds due to increased funding and/or caseload caps.

DPD noted that they begin accepting applications for postgrad entry level class in the August before 3L year, conduct interviews in September/October, extend offers in November, and seek to conclude their hiring for their post-grad entry level class by December. It seems that their postgrad recruitment timeline is a bit more sped up as compared to other public defender organizations.

After the employer spotlights, Work Groups updated us regarding their progress on plans for the year.

2. PSS WORK GROUP UPDATE

a. Fellowship Work Group

The Fellowship Work Group met on January 8th and discussed the following:

- Upcoming AEC panel with Charlie Gillig from Skadden Foundation
- Virtual informational sessions with key fellowship programs to follow AEC (late spring/early summer)
- Updating resources such as:
 - Fellowships handbook
 - List of available fellowships - WG to set a time for shared work session in late spring/early summer

The group will hold their next meeting on March 19, 2026.

b. Annual Education Conference + Webinar Planning

Rachel Kronick Rothbart, Work Group Co-chairs, informed the section about which conference proposals covering the following public interest/service topics were chosen:

- Expanding Capacity & Supporting Graduates: LRAPs in the New Policy Landscape
- Hot Topics in Public Service
- Public Interest Under Pressure: Post-Grad Fellowships, Funding, and Support for Students and Host Organizations
- Public Service and Pro Bono Wrap-up Extravaganza!
- See You in the Fall? The Case for and against Public Service Fall OCI Programs

The PSS Co-Chairs are working with section members to further develop webinars for the proposals that were not selected for this year's AEC but remain a topic of interest for the section. For example, Zachary Dugan, Alexia McCaskill, and Sam Halpert are continuing to

work with the Co-Chairs on a webinar with a working title, “Caught.in.the.Middle; Strikes? Students?and.the.Future.of.Work;”

c. PSJD Resource Development

The PSJD Resource Development Work group were not able to meet this past quarter but will be regrouping to focus on high priority areas.

d. LRAP Initiatives/CCRAA Developments

This work group has not been able to meet as intended this year. The PSS chairs have continued to promote the following resources for folks interested in this topic:

- PSLF Coalition - <https://pslfcoalition.org/>
- AccessLex Financial Education - [https://www.accesslex.org/education-and-financial-capability?areas_of_focus_tools\[18\]=18&f=1](https://www.accesslex.org/education-and-financial-capability?areas_of_focus_tools[18]=18&f=1)

e. Career Fairs Work Group

The work group met on January 14, 2026. They decided to gather information from PSJD about existing career fairs and use that as the first step to determine which events are still happening. After that review, the Work Group aims to develop a document that includes public interest career fairs and contact information to be shared with the section.

f. DEI Liaison

No report from the DEI Liaison.

g. Well-Being Champion

At this point, no one has volunteered.

3. New Amelioration Best Practices Guide Charge

We received a new charge to review the old Amelioration Best Practices Guide. At our October meeting, we solicited volunteers to review. Our goal will be to meet and review the guide by the end of our time as Co-Chairs.

4. Public Interest Section Huddle

Public Interest “Huddles” have continued to meet on an approximately bi-weekly Monday’s at 1:00 pm, excluding the weeks when a section meeting was held. These sessions, led by

Sam Halpert, offer an opportunity to share market developments, experiences and information. The sessions continue to be attended by twenty or more members at every session.

5. 2025-26 SECTION MEETINGS

The next section meetings will be held on March 11, 2026 (Weds), 2PM ET

The section will also meet during AEC2026 on April 15, 2026 (Weds), 11:45AM – 1:00PM, which will follow the Hot Topics in Public Service session.