1L Career Timeline
Office of Career & Professional Development
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Early Fall (August - September)

- **Before School Begins**: Read the Official Guide to Legal Specialties and check out online self-assessment tools to determine your core values and key strengths.
- **Get Involved**: Join student groups that personally interest you or are related to your career interests. Help plan events and take a leadership role.
- **Determine what fields interest you**: Do online research on potential areas of interest.
- **Get to know your peers**: Contact 2Ls and 3Ls who have done the kind of work you want to do.
- **Attend Career Office Programs** to learn about different legal fields and become familiar with the legal job search.
- **Join Career Office listservs** that may interest you (e.g., diversity, government and public interest, judicial clerkships).

Mid Fall (October - November)

- **Attend Career Office Student Success Hours** regarding resume and cover letter drafting and online search tools. Get to know the Career Office staff.
- **Draft a legal resume and cover letter** after reading the Resume and Cover Letter Handouts and meet with a career counselor to review them.
- **Review summer surveys** for the inside scoop on jobs. Surveys since 2006 are available on HastingsCareersOnline.com (HCO).
- **Familiarize yourself with HCO**.
- **Small and mid-sized firms**: be prepared to gather lists and directories from a variety of sources: the online Summer Surveys, martindale.com, PSJD.org, and the Private Public Interest and Plaintiff’s Firm Guide, as well as through organizations such as the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association. Now is the time to be crafting a target list and gathering recommendations for specific firms by speaking with attorneys.
- **Public interest jobs**: register on PSJD.org and explore other sites such as essential.org and idealist.org.
- **Judicial Externships**: see the Career Office for resume and cover letter reviews. Attend the workshop in November with Professor Nancy Stuart on judicial externships. She also has information on judges in her office. (Deadlines for applying for externships are December through February, depending on the court.)
- **Federal Internships**: review the Government Honors & Internship Handbook on HCO. Visit usdoj.gov and other government agency websites of interest.
- **District Attorneys/Public Defenders**: visit the Office of the Attorney General’s website and prosecutor.info. Look for hiring guides in the Career Office’s District Attorney (DA) and Public Defender (PD) binders.
• **Large law firms** do less 1L hiring these days, but you can research employers at [nalpdirectory.com](http://nalpdirectory.com). Mail letters beginning December 1. Remember that firms may not recruit you prior to December 1!

• **For alternative legal careers**, come see a counselor and attend panels to explore these career options.

• **Sign up for the Alumni Mentor Program** and meet with mentors. RSVP for one of the weekly orientations on [HCO](http://hco).

### Winter Break (December)

• **Create a Contact List**: Develop a list of networking contacts, including former employers, undergraduate mentors, parents of friends and friends of parents. Use the Alumni Office, [martindale.com](http://martindale.com) or Martindale on Lexis to find Hastings alumni in your field of interest.

• **Join Professional Associations**: Look into student memberships in professional associations or events focusing on fields of interest to you. Attend association events and network with attorneys there.

• **Schedule informational interviews**: Meet with one or two contacts during break.

• **Create a Summer Plan**: Map out your preferred 1L Summer Plan and a back-up Summer Plan.

• **Visit a Career Counselor** for help mapping out contacts and your preferred summer plan.

• **TIP**: Start keeping a notebook and record your contacts, employers of interest, applications and interviews with follow up dates and instructions (thank you notes, referrals to others for information interviews, etc.)

• Some judges start accepting applications on December 1 for **summer judicial externships**- get your application materials reviewed at the Career Office before submitting!

### Early Spring (January - March)

• **Check Job Postings**: Visit [HCO](http://hco) for announcements and apply for relevant job postings.

• **Follow up** by phone or e-mail with employers to whom you have sent applications.

• **For Federal Internships**: Send out applications. Deadlines run early January - February.

• **For Government and Public Interest** job openings: Attend the Public Interest/Public Sector Day in early February to interview and meet the employers.

• **For Smaller Firms**: Participate in Spring On-Campus Interviews (OCI) in February - April. Send out cover letters to firms of interest and follow up via phone a week later.

• **Watch for Funding Deadlines**: Calendar Financial Aid/FAFSA priority deadlines to qualify for summer work-study. The HPILF Fellowship deadline is mid-Spring.

• **Attend the Career Office presentations** and employer-sponsored programs to learn more about legal fields, professionalism, and what employers expect from you.

• **Talk to professors** about possible research assistant positions for summer and approach those that could serve as references.

• **Brainstorm with the Career Office** about 1L job opportunities and strategies you may not yet have considered.

• **Schedule interviews**- both informational and job interviews for Spring Break.
Spring Break

- Attend scheduled informational interviews and any job interviews you arranged.
- Continue to attend professional association events and network with attorneys there.
- Gather information about the legal practice in the market(s) where you’d like to practice law.
- Read local legal publications (such as The Recorder and the Daily Journal, available in the Career Office and the Library) to see how the legal market is in the geographic location you wish to work.

Late Spring (April - May)

- Check job postings on HCO and other sites and apply to any that are of interest.
- NB: Most 1Ls find their summer job between March and May. Some employers start advertising in May when many students have given up the search- keep looking!
- Attend the Fall Recruiting orientation.
- For IP Law: Look for announcements for the SF Intellectual Property Law Association Career Fair (event in August; application deadline late June/early July), and the Loyola Patent Interview program (deadline in late Spring).
- Look for the Bay Area Diversity Career Fair (event in August; application deadline late June/early July) and other career fairs that happen during summer.

Summer (June - August)

- Update your resume to include summer work experience and Spring semester grades.
- Map out your preferred 2L Summer Plan and a back-up Summer Plan.
- Research Early Interview Program (EIP) employers on HCO and apply for interviews. The bidding window will be in early July.
- Watch for the Career Office Workshops for resume and cover letter drafting and screening interview preparation during summer.
- TIP For a Long Distance Job Search: If you are out of town during the summer and wish to be back in the same area for your 2L summer, send letters to employers asking for interviews before you return to school.

See next page for a list of the most common 1L summer jobs.
MOST COMMON 1L SUMMER JOBS

**FEDERAL, STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERN** (generally unpaid)
Apply directly to government agencies, but also check out the Government Honors and Internship Handbook on HCO for a comprehensive list of federal internships and deadlines. Go to the Search Employers tab on HCO to run a search of state and/or local government employers. Narrow a Summer Survey search on HCO to identify which of these agencies have hired Hastings students in the past.
**Apply** January- March.
**Note:** Some agency deadlines (such as the FBI and CIA) are in September/October due to lengthy background checks.

**IN HOUSE LEGAL DEPARTMENT INTERN** (generally paid)
If you think you are interested in an in-house post graduate career, summer is the perfect time to investigate this option. Do a Summer Survey Search on HCO to identify companies that have hired Hastings students in the past.
**Apply:** Generally January-May. Some will come to Spring OCI in March – May. Others will never post, and you need to call yourself to ask if and when they will hire.

**JUDICIAL EXTERN** (unpaid)
Hone your research and writing skills and develop a relationship with a judge through an externship. Judges preside over all levels of courts (local, state, and federal; trial and appellate).
**Apply:** December - February for federal judges, December – March for state courts.

**PROFESSOR’S RESEARCH ASSISTANT** (paid, work-study preferred)
This is a good opportunity to develop substantive knowledge of a particular field of law, and to develop a close relationship with a professor who will then be able to write a strong recommendation for you. Generally, the work is research, writing, and citation-checking.
**Apply** at will after talking to your professors (usually 2nd semester). Some research opportunities will be posted in the Hastings Weekly.

**PUBLIC INTEREST OR PUBLIC SECTOR INTERN** (generally unpaid, but grants and fellowships possible)
If you are considering a public interest or government career, establish your community involvement record early. Seek out agencies that interest you and apply directly, but also check out PI/PS Day in February. While PI/PS Day has many local government employers and usually the military JAG, it does not have many federal agency positions.
**Apply** January and February.

**SOLO, SMALL OR MID-SIZE FIRM CLERK** (generally paid)
You can get a great variety of legal experience at smaller firms. These positions generally will not open until spring since smaller employers cannot forecast their hiring needs as early as larger employers. Many of these firms will not post job openings, so you should seek them out early and apply directly. Some will advertise on HCO or come to Spring OCI.
**Apply** Feb - May.