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Welcome to the Career Development Office (CDO). We look forward to working with you during your three years at Yale Law School as you develop and explore your career interests. Our name, the Career Development Office, is illustrative of the nature of our work with students—we are here to assist you in developing and executing a career plan, not to place you with a particular employer. We will support your career journey through one-on-one career counseling, connecting you with mentors, developing and sharing career resources, and coordinating career and interview programs.

CDO and the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), to which Yale Law School belongs, subscribe to the view that first-semester, first-year students should concentrate on their course work. In accordance with that view and NALP Principles and Standards, we commence our first-year programming in early October and our one-on-one counseling in mid-October.

CDO is committed to ensuring that all students receive fair treatment from employers who use our career services, and that the law school, its students, and employers act in good faith in the recruiting and hiring process. Please review NALP’s Principles and Standards and the Yale Law School Placement Policies and Regulations to understand your rights and responsibilities.

Expectation Setting

As you commence this phase of your professional career, we think it is important to lay out some expectations for our working relationship.

We expect you to take ownership of your job search. To do this, you will need to:
- read our student communication and proactively seek out information you need from our office;
- meet with your assigned CDO counselor, and as your career goals progress, meet with the counselor best suited to your interests;
- attend CDO programs relating to your goals and interests, particularly our first-year application materials and interviewing sessions;
- present your background and credentials accurately in all written and verbal communication;
- build and engage your network using tools we provide;
- be responsive to outreach from the office, including RSVPing when needed and responding to requests for updates on your job search;
- honor commitments you have made, including showing up on time for meetings, attending events for which you RSVP, and honoring commitments to employers;
- review and comply with NALP’s Principles and Standards.

In return, you can expect us to:
- guide you in developing an effective career plan;
- identify resources to support your career plan;
- respond to your emails or calls promptly (within two business days);
- be on time and prepared for our meetings;
- offer timely programming and information to support your job search;
- provide you with meaningful feedback on your résumé, cover letters, and other application materials;
- guide you through the application and interview process;
- connect you to students, faculty, and alumni who we believe may be useful to your career exploration;
- ensure that employers with whom you interact through CDO comport themselves with professionalism and in compliance with NALP’s Principles and Standards and YLS Placement Policies.
CHAPTER 1
CAREER SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

A. Services Offered by CDO

1. Individual Counseling

CDO has four attorney counselors who are available to discuss your career goals and aspirations; connect you to fellow students, alumni, and others who may be useful to your job search; direct you to relevant resources; provide application and interview advice; and discuss any issues you face during the job search process. Given the small student body, CDO counselors are able to meet individually with every student. Counseling is available to you not only as a student, but also as a graduate of the Law School.

As a first-year student, you will be assigned a CDO counselor who you will help you navigate the first summer job search. After that time, you are welcome to meet with a counselor of your choosing. Counseling appointments can be made by calling CDO or stopping by the office. During the busiest times of the year (September to November), advance appointments are recommended. At other times, the counselors have an open door policy and welcome your visits.

In addition to CDO’s attorney counselors, students also have the ability to obtain individual advice from the numerous alumni who visit the Law School throughout the year and serve as Mentors-in-Residence.

2. CDO Website, Publications, and Library Resources

CDO’s website provides information about career pathways, a toolkit for job seekers, and much more. CDO publishes 18 career guides on a wide range of legal career topics including law firm practice, public interest, government, law teaching, business careers, and judicial clerkships. To access the “CDO version” of an online resource (which contains information only for YLS students and alumni), use your Yale credentials.

CDO maintains a physical career library that contains resources regarding legal career paths on subjects ranging from general career planning to specific areas of practice.

3. Programs

CDO hosts many programs each year including skills workshops, practice area discussions, and professional development advice. CDO offers a series of programs specifically for 1Ls commencing in early October which provides an introduction to career choices, résumé and cover letter advice, and a discussion of useful resources and interviewing tips. Panelists for many CDO programs include practitioners from across the country and around the world. Examples of recent CDO programs include:

- Choosing a Law Practice: Litigation, Corporate or Something Else?
- Careers in Environmental Law
- Working for a Public Interest Law Firm
- Civil Rights, Class Actions and Complex Litigation
- A Career in International Arbitration
- Running for State or Local Government
- The Appeal of State Court Clerkships
- From YLS to Hollywood Agent
- Religious Observance and the Workplace
In addition to providing students with information about career paths, these programs are an excellent way to make connections with alumni who may be helpful in the future. To facilitate making those connections, many alumni visit the Law School each year to serve as Mentors-in-Residence and speak individually with students seeking career advice.

Information about CDO programs is made available in numerous ways. Programs are listed on the YLS online master calendar; they are announced in the CDO Weekly E-News that is sent to all students; they are listed under Events on the Career Management System (if you are unsure of your login, use the ‘forgot password’ link or contact CDO), and they are described on posters that line the hallways of the Law School in the week leading up to the event. A number of CDO programs are also recorded and available online in a password-protected section available only to the YLS community.

4. Recruiting Events

Yale Law School sponsors two interview programs during the school year. Over 100 employers register to interview approximately 200 upper-class students for summer and permanent positions at the Fall Interview Program. In the spring, typically 15-25 employers visit New Haven to interview first-year students for summer positions at the Spring Interview Program. In addition, YLS cosponsors the Overseas-Trained LL.M. Student Interview Program held every January in New York and the Public Interest Legal Career Fair in New York City in February. The Law School also participates as a member-school in the annual Equal Justice Works Conference and Career Fair in Washington, D.C. in October. See the Interview Programs section online for details including which fairs have student travel and registration fees subsidized by CDO.

5. YLS Career Connections

CDO, in conjunction with the Office of Alumni Affairs, maintains a network of YLS alumni who are interested in providing career advice and guidance to current students and fellow graduates. Over 1,600 alumni are currently enrolled in YLS Career Connections and represent a broad spectrum of legal and nonlegal employment. YLS students are welcome to search Career Connections by logging into the Career Management System (CMS). If you are unsure of your login, use the ‘forgot password’ link or contact CDO. We recommend that you change your password after logging in the first time. Chapter 3 provides advice on the effective use of Career Connections in your job search.

6. Employment Evaluations

CDO maintains two online systems through which students can learn about the employment experiences of their fellow students and recent graduates. One database contains student summer employment evaluations and the other contains comments from judicial clerks. These evaluations are available through CDO’s Career Management System. The summer employment evaluations are available for students starting their first year, while the confidential judicial clerkship comment surveys are available for students starting later in the spring semester of their first year.

7. CDO Online Job Posting System

Through the CDO Job Posting System, employers have the ability to announce job opportunities on the CDO website that are accessible only to YLS students and alumni. Although CDO does not recommend conducting a job search by relying solely on job announcements (because many employers simply don’t take the time to announce openings), our online job listings can be a useful addition to a job search. The
system includes an email feature through which students can indicate the types of positions of interest to them and receive email notification of job listings that match their criteria. The Career Management System also houses CDO’s Job Posting System.

B. Career Services Available on Yale University Campus

As a Yale Law student you may use many of the services available on the Yale campus. Although not an exhaustive list, these services include:

1. Yale Career Network

Similar to the Law School’s online YLS Career Connections, the University has an online database of alumni from all schools of the University who are willing to provide career advice to students. As a student, you can login using your Yale credentials.

2. Yale University Office of Career Strategy

The Yale Office of Career Strategy (OCS) is located at 55 Whitney Avenue, 3rd Floor. On the OCS website, you can access advice and resources relating to a variety of careers. As a student, you can login using your Yale credentials to view online career videos. If you apply for a university-administered fellowship, such as a Rhodes or a Marshall, you may obtain applications and deadline information from the Yale Fellowships and Funding section of the Yale Center for International and Professional Experience website.

3. Yale School of Management

The Yale School of Management (SOM) is located at 165 Whitney Avenue. SOM’s Career Development Office website contains some useful information about career paths and resources for students contemplating nonlegal careers. Before visiting SOM’s CDO, speak with Alison Hornstein in our CDO first. She can assist you in your business-related inquiries and direct you appropriately.

4. Office of International Students and Scholars

The Office of International Students and Scholars is located at 421 Temple Street. By visiting the office or its website, international students can obtain visa information and information about other international student organizations and programs.

5. Yale Health Center

The Yale Health Center is located at 55 Lock Street and provides a full slate of health care services, including primary care, specialty services, an inpatient care facility, and a 24-hour walk-in urgent care. Mental Health Counseling services are available to every Yale student enrolled in a degree program free of charge. If you find the job search process raises stressful or uncomfortable issues for you and your family, you may want to make use of these services. Call (203) 432-0290 to make an appointment.
Deciding to attend law school was a big decision and one that will serve you quite well as you embark on your career, but it was only one decision of many that you will make in the coming years. The information contained in this guide should serve as a starting point in your exploration into the enormous variety of paths available to you both within and outside the legal profession. As you read this information, keep in mind that whether you are trying to decide where to work for the summer, for your first job upon graduation, or 10 years from now, most lawyers change jobs and employment settings many times during the course of their careers. We encourage you to use your time in law school to explore a variety of employment settings and to think of each opportunity as a stepping stone in your life as a lawyer.

A. Employment Settings for Lawyers

Lawyers are engaged in work of all kinds: small town solo practice, 2,000-person law firms, running major corporations and nonprofit organizations, lobbying legislators, being legislators, being President of the United States, and every other occupation. According to the ABA, lawyers work in the following settings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Setting</th>
<th>Percentage of Lawyers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Practice</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole practitioners</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 2-5</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 6-10</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 11-20</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 21-50</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 51-100</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms of 101+</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Industry</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid/Public Defender,</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Associations</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Inactive</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are descriptions of the most popular employment settings for lawyers generally and for Yale Law graduates. Detailed information about these settings, including narratives written by alumni about their career paths and experiences, is contained in CDO’s other guides including Law Firm Practice, Public Interest Careers, Environmental Law, Criminal Prosecution, Criminal Defense, International Public Interest Law, Working on Capitol Hill, Lawyers in Business, and Entering the Law Teaching Market. Print and video alumni and student profiles are available online here.

1 Excerpted from Lawyer Demographics table at www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/marketresearch/PublicDocuments/lawyer_demographics_2013.authcheckdam.pdf, compiled by the ABA Market Research Department in 2012. Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
1. Law Firms

Law firms share numerous characteristics. They are for-profit associations of lawyers in the business of servicing the needs of their clients. They are typically organized as partnerships, with the partners receiving a share of the profits at the end of each fiscal year, and the associates receiving a salary. Most law firms utilize a pyramid structure, with a base of junior level associates, fewer senior associates, and a small number of partners at the top of the pyramid.

When referring to law firms, people often categorize them by size. However, the description of a law firm as large, mid-size, or small is directly tied to its location. In New York City for example, many law firms have more than 600 attorneys in the NYC office alone, and sometimes more than 2,000 attorneys in all offices combined. In Indianapolis, IN, on the other hand, the largest firms in the city have around 200 lawyers. As a result, it is impossible to characterize a firm’s size without also understanding its geographic location. Large firms tend to represent large corporations, many of which have an international presence. Mid-size firms typically represent regional clients, including corporations and individuals. Small firm practitioners sometimes maintain a general practice, handling a broad array of matters for small businesses and individuals, and other times, focus on a particular area of practice. Firms that are especially known for concentrating on one area of practice, such as intellectual property or litigation, are called boutique firms.

Many YLS students express interest in practicing international law in a law firm setting. This may mean working for a U.S. law firm in their U.S. or foreign office, an international law firm either in the U.S. or abroad, or a foreign law firm.

Some firms are known for their public interest work. The primary mission of a public interest firm is to assist underrepresented people or causes. Because their typical areas of practice—plaintiffs’ employment discrimination, civil rights, criminal defense, environmental law, and disability rights—are often not profitable, they typically take on other types of matters to pay the bills.

For detailed information about law firm practice, including narratives written by alumni, consult CDO’s Law Firm Practice guide and the Law Firms section of the CDO website.

2. Government

There are legal opportunities in government on the federal, state, and local level. The federal government employs attorneys in the Department of Justice, executive branch agencies (such as the Environmental Protection Agency), and in the legislature. Similar to the federal government, states hire attorneys to work in their attorney general’s offices, agencies, and legislatures. On the local level, there are District Attorney’s offices, also known as State Attorney’s offices or County Attorney’s offices. There may also be municipal legal departments, such as the New York City Law Department, with city attorneys who represent the city in litigation and provide legal advice to city leaders. In addition, attorneys may work for various city agencies. For additional information on government careers, visit the Public Interest section of the CDO website and consult the following CDO guides: Public Interest Careers, Criminal Prosecution, and Working on Capitol Hill.

3. Public Interest Organizations

Attorneys can work in many different public interest environments on a broad range of substantive issues including AIDS, arts, children’s rights, civil rights/civil liberties, consumer, death penalty/prisoner’s rights, disability, economic development, education, elderly, employment/union side labor,
environmental, family, First Amendment, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender rights, health, homelessness/housing, human rights, immigrants/refugees, international human rights, migrant/farmworker, multicultural rights, Native American, poverty, and women’s rights. Different types of public interest organizations address these areas in a variety of ways. There are impact litigation groups that are devoted to achieving widespread legal and social change, legal services organizations that provide direct assistance to clients, public defenders that provide criminal defense to individuals who cannot afford counsel, policy centers, community development groups, and international public interest organizations.

For additional information on public interest careers, visit the Public Interest section of the CDO website and consult CDO’s guides, Public Interest Careers, Criminal Defense, Criminal Prosecution, Environmental Law, and International Public Interest Law.

Although some public interest organizations have opportunities for entry-level attorneys, many others rely on public interest fellowships as the primary avenue for attracting new attorneys. Visit the YLS Public Interest Fellowships section of the CDO website to learn more about YLS fellowship offerings, and consult CDO’s guides Public Interest Fellowships: Vol 1 and Public Interest Fellowships: Sample Applications.

4. Academia

Yale Law School furthers the academic career interests of its students by offering counseling, résumé review, and programming.

It is extremely unusual for a student to become a law professor immediately after graduating from law school. On rare occasions, students have been able to obtain professorships after a federal judicial clerkship. More typically, law professors come from the ranks of attorneys who have practiced for a brief period, from PhD programs or from academic fellowships, have maintained a strong interest in law teaching, and have built the best foundation possible for making such a move by publishing and networking with academics. Some undergraduate institutions hire law graduates to teach courses such as legal history, or interdisciplinary courses that combine law with another field. Most of these positions require a PhD in addition to a JD.

Universities often employ law school graduates in a variety of administrative posts, within the law school and in the university at large. Law graduates commonly hold law school positions such as assistant deans or directors of admissions, student services, and career services. Administrative positions in law schools are often not regarded as faculty positions, unless the individual is also hired for a teaching post.

All universities employ attorneys to represent the university in a wide range of matters including contracts, labor relations, tax issues related to charitable contributions, and real estate. As with all in-house positions, university counsels’ offices tend to hire experienced attorneys. At the same time, some welcome summer clerks and/or offer short-term fellowships to recent law graduates.

Another option in academia is serving as a law librarian. Law librarians also administer law libraries serving courts, law firms, corporate legal departments, government agencies, and local and regional bar associations. Law librarians generally have a master’s in library science in addition to a JD.

For more information, read CDO’s guide, Entering the Law Teaching Market and visit the Law School’s Law Teaching Program site.
5. Judicial Clerkships

Over 40% of Yale Law School graduates clerk for a judge at some point after graduation. Judicial clerkships are available in federal and state courts, at the trial and appellate levels, and in specialized settings such as bankruptcy, tax, and family courts, and administrative tribunals. Clerkships are attractive to law students for several reasons; including the enormous opportunity they provide to learn firsthand about litigation and procedure, to develop a mentoring relationship with a distinguished jurist, and to be part of the judicial decision-making process. A clerkship is often a highly valued experience and a recognized credential for many future legal endeavors.

Students contemplating clerking after graduation should visit the Judicial Clerkships section of the CDO website and consult CDO’s guides Judicial Clerkships in the U.S., U.S. Supreme Court Clerkships, and Opportunities with International Tribunals and Foreign Courts.

6. In-House Practice

The fundamental difference between practicing in the legal department of a corporation and a law firm is that in-house counsel serves only one client—the corporation. To be successful and effective in providing legal advice, in-house lawyers must understand and address the business concerns of the corporation. Corporations typically hire experienced attorneys, rather than recruiting law school graduates, in part because corporations have fewer attorneys than their outside counsel and expect their attorneys to assume significant responsibility without the need for extensive training. Frequently, corporations hire an associate who has worked on their matters in a law firm. They have had the opportunity to evaluate the associate’s work, the associate already has significant knowledge of the company and its business, and the law firm strengthens its relationship with the corporation.

Students interested in in-house practice should visit the Business section of the CDO website and consult CDO’s guide, Lawyers in Business.

7. Nonlegal Business Opportunities

Of course, not all law school graduates work in legal settings. Although Yale Law graduates can be found in myriad nonlegal work environments, two common choices are management consulting and finance.

Management consultants are hired as advisors to corporations to address business problems in a variety of areas such as human resources, product development, health care, and information technology. Large consulting firms offer services in many areas, and smaller firms often focus on a particular area, such as financial services or market research. A consultant’s life typically involves a lot of hours and a tremendous amount of travel. Work for a particular client can last for many months, and consultants are usually expected to be on site at the client’s place of business during that time. In hiring, consulting firms seek candidates with strong analytical and quantitative skills, teamwork capability, leadership, interpersonal skills, and creativity.

In the area of finance, lawyers typically work for investment banks, hedge funds or in private equity/venture capital. These positions often involve researching investment opportunities, raising capital for businesses, advising companies on mergers and acquisitions, and other financial matters. Expertise in a particular sector, such as health care or technology, is often required. A career in finance is generally very demanding—weekly hours can often exceed 100, and the pace of the work and the amount of money being handled can be staggering. Finance companies are looking for students and law graduates who can handle that culture, who have knowledge and a strong interest in finance, and have good interpersonal skills.

Students interested in business opportunities should visit the Business section of the CDO website and consult CDO’s guide, Lawyers in Business.
B. Legal Specialty Areas

Within each of the legal employment settings described above, there are a multitude of legal areas of practice available to pursue. Visit the Law Firms section of CDO’s website for links to numerous resources about legal practice areas. One of the best resources, NALP’s Official Guide to Legal Specialties: An Insider’s Guide to Every Major Practice Area, is available only in print in the CDO library. Another option for learning about particular practice areas is attending CDO’s programs, especially the Law Firm Practice Area Forum, an event held in the spring, which brings in dozens of practicing attorneys to YLS to share career advice about their areas of work. Finally, many of the Centers at YLS focus on particular specialty areas, such as the Gruber Program for Global Justice and Women’s Rights, the Information Society Project, the Solomon Center for Health Law and Policy, the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, the Center for Global Legal Challenges, and the Center for the Study of Corporate Law just to name a few.

C. Employment of Yale Law Students and Graduates

1. Summer Employment

The summer after the first year of law school provides a wonderful opportunity to experiment and explore employment possibilities. Students typically use the first summer to gain some insight into what characteristics their ideal employer should possess. In addition, the summer is a good time to focus on obtaining a writing sample and references for future job searches. The vast majority of students (around 90%) spend all or part of their first summer working in the public sector, either with a government agency or public interest organization. Because most of these organizations do not pay, many students rely on SPIF funding (and for those working abroad, Kirby Simon travel grants) to support their summer public interest work. Only 10-15% of first-year students spend all or part of their summer working for a private firm. Law firms typically provide generous stipends to summer interns, usually based on their starting associate salary. Several firms offer diversity opportunities, often geared toward attracting first-year students. NALP’s website has a non-exhaustive list of law firm diversity initiatives. A few students conduct research for faculty, work for a corporation, or serve as a judicial extern in the first summer. The Employment Data section of CDO’s website provides 1L Summer Employment statistics over the past five years and a list of where our most recent class worked in the 1L Summer.

The majority of first-year students secure positions for the summer by emailing a cover letter and résumé to prospective employers. Some students accept jobs from employers participating in the Spring Interview Program (SIP) at Yale or the Yale co-sponsored Public Interest Legal Career Fair at NYU.

The second summer provides the opportunity to explore additional employment settings. In addition, many students obtain permanent employment offers from their second summer employers. The vast majority of students (around 80%) spend all or part of the summer working for a private law firm, while typically one quarter will use all or part of the second summer to explore government, public interest, academic, or corporate opportunities. The Employment Data section of CDO’s website provides 2L Summer Employment statistics over the past five years and a list of where our most recent class worked in the 2L Summer.

The majority of second-year students obtain summer positions through Yale’s Fall Interview Program (FIP), while others take advantage of the Yale co-sponsored Public Interest Legal Career Fair at NYU or apply directly to employers of interest to them.
Some students will work for more than one employer during the summer, typically spending between six to eight weeks with each employer. Less than 10% of first-year students and around 20% of second-year students split their summer between two employers. For additional information about splitting the summer, consult CDO’s advice To Split or Not to Split, That is the Question.

Some firms offer students the opportunity to work for the firm for part of the summer and a public interest organization for the other part, with the firm paying the student’s entire summer salary. See CDO’s Firms Sponsoring Split Public Interest Summers for additional information about this unique split summer option.

2. Post-Graduation Employment

Yale Law School graduates have tremendous success finding interesting positions after law school. Over 40% of the graduating class serves as judicial law clerks to federal or state court judges either immediately upon graduation or within a few years after graduating. Over 35% start their careers with law firms, typically larger law firms in New York, Washington, DC, and California. Yale Law graduates are often selected for prestigious public interest fellowships, including the Equal Justice Works, Skadden, and Liman fellowships. Other students are accepted into government or other public interest positions, including the Department of Justice Honors Program. When factoring in graduates’ first non-clerkship employment choices, approximately 60% commence their careers with law firms and approximately 25% with public interest organizations or in government. See CDO’s website for entry-level and first non-clerkship employment statistics and for a list of where our most recent class worked after graduation.

The Career Development Office seeks information from graduates five and ten years after their departure from Yale Law School through our 5th and 10th Year Career Development Surveys. Based on these survey responses, we know that just under half of our graduates are with law firms five years after graduation and around a third remain in law firm practice 10 years after graduation. Around one quarter are in public service five years after graduation and closer to one third are in public service 10 years after graduation. Smaller percentages of respondents are teaching and in business.

In addition to learning where our graduates are working, the 5th and 10th Year Surveys also provide insight about our graduates’ level of career satisfaction. On average, 85% of respondents to our 5th Year Survey are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current employment. Ten years after graduation, nearly 90% of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current employment.

CHAPTER 3
CAREER PATH ISSUES

As you contemplate the career options available to you, you will undoubtedly ponder myriad personal and professional issues. While these issues are best addressed in an individual counseling session, following are some of the more typical concerns we hear from students.

A. Debt Burden

Financial issues are important and real. Fortunately, YLS provides strong financial support for students interested in public service. Visit the Financial Support for Public Interest webpage for an overview of our support.
• **Summer Public Interest Fellowship Program** (SPIF) offers support to Yale students who need funding to work at government and non-profit organizations during the summer. The Law School provides fellowships of up to $7,500 over the summer ($625 per week for up to 12 weeks).

• **Kirby Simon Summer Fellowships** cover both travel costs and living expenses for students who undertake at least six weeks of human rights work during the summer.

• **Travel Reimbursement Interviews for Public Interest (TRI PI)** provide travel reimbursement (up to $800) for 2L, 3L and LLM students who need to travel to conduct public interest interviews.

• **The Career Options Assistance Program (COAP)** allows students to choose public service and other modest salaried positions after graduation by paying all of their academic loans if they earn less than a set income threshold and partial payment for those with adjusted incomes above that threshold.

• **YLS Post-Graduate Fellowships** provide generous funding (typically $47,000 for one year) to help students and recent alumni pursue public interest after graduation.

**B. Moving Between Employment Sectors**

Many YLS graduates work in multiple sectors during the course of their careers. It is not uncommon to find alumni whose career paths have included stints in law firms, nonprofits, government, and academia, to name a few settings. Having said that, there are some factors to take into consideration as you contemplate your career path and possible job changes.

• **Do you want to work for a public sector employer during your first summer and move to the private sector during your second summer?** Many students express concern about their ability to find a law firm position after working in the public sector during their first summer, especially if they already have engaged in a significant amount of public service work. Private sector employers realize that first year law students generally have more public sector opportunities and expect that students will work in that sector. Even when a résumé seems to indicate that a student has a predilection for public service, private sector employers will consider that student for employment. It is key for students to be prepared for questions about their experience and to be able to discuss why they are interested in working for the private sector employer.

• **Do you have a strong preference for a particular sector?** If you do, think about claiming it and pursuing your interest, rather than trying to hide it. Your strong preference will almost certainly be obvious to those who interview you, and they may reasonably question your commitment to their type of practice. There certainly are students and graduates who deal with this dilemma honestly and successfully, some of whom choose to postpone working in their most preferred setting for two or three years. But it is important to recognize this choice, so that you can anticipate and handle questions asked by prospective employers.

• **Do you have a demonstrable commitment to public interest work?** Whenever you apply to a public service organization you will be expected to demonstrate your commitment to public service work. If you are applying to such an organization from a private firm, you will need to show how you have maintained this interest while working in the firm. You could do this through pro bono work and/or through other volunteer work. Keep as current as possible about the issues and events that are shaping the public sector in which you are most interested.

• **Do you have a demonstrable interest in work done by private for-profit firms?** If you are working for a public interest organization and think you want to transfer to the private sector, maintain your contacts with classmates and others in private practice and find out how others have made this transfer. Read business publications as frequently as possible. Keep in mind not only the transferable skills you have, but also those you enjoy using. Describe your work experience in the public sector not in terms of the substantive issues (poverty law, civil rights, etc.) but in a way that emphasizes
skills necessary in the private sector, e.g., litigation, policy analysis, research and writing, grant-writing and fund raising (client development), effective client contact and counseling, project management, meticulous attention to detail, and ability to meet deadlines.

- **If you are working in a high-paying position, can you save some of your income?** If you adopt a lifestyle that is impossible to support on a lower salary, “golden handcuffs” may keep you from pursuing your preferred, but lower paying, type of employment. Remember the availability of loan repayment assistance through the COAP program.

### C. Work/Life Balance

It is true that many people, both lawyers and non-lawyers, find it difficult to achieve balance in their personal and professional lives. Figuring out what you mean by “successful” can help you make decisions. Many government agencies, public interest organizations, and mid-size to small law firms offer the opportunity to enjoy a life outside of work. On the other hand, these positions will not pay the high salaries and may not have the same level of name recognition offered by large law firms. When determining how to structure your career in the law, it is important not to lose sight of your priorities and to understand that there will be tradeoffs along the way. For more information, read the Work/Life Balance section of CDO’s Assessing Law Firms advice and peruse CDO’s print library resources, particular those in the work/life balance section.

### D. Whether to Work for a Large Law Firm

Many of our graduates commence their careers in larger law firms. They take this path for many reasons including the salaries, the ease of obtaining these positions through the Law School’s interview programs, the perception that this choice leaves the most doors open, and the subtle (or not-so-subtle) peer and family pressure to work for a well-known employer. However, large law firm practice is not for everyone and is not a necessary credential if you are committed to working for a smaller law firm or in the public sector. Before making a decision, you should weigh and evaluate many factors, including training, autonomy, interest in substantive legal work, control over type of work, pro bono opportunities, hours, travel, potential for advancement, and personal fulfillment. Do not fall into the trap of allowing an easy job search, a high summer or starting salary, or the expectations of others dictate your career choices.

### E. Whether to Serve as a Judicial Law Clerk

Over 40% of our graduates serve as a judicial clerk at some point in their careers. Students and graduates decide to clerk for many reasons, including to enhance their research and writing skills; to gain a mentor who can provide career advice, networking opportunities, and feedback on legal skills; and to get insight into the workings of the legal system, among other reasons. However, a clerkship is not necessarily the right choice for everyone. For example, for people who have interests in the law that are far removed from the courtroom, their time is likely better spent concentrating on developing more relevant skills. For some, delaying entry into a permanent legal position for financial and/or personal reasons does not make good sense. Although a clerkship is a useful credential for most legal jobs, but for a couple of narrow exceptions (U.S. Solicitor General’s Office being one), it is not a requirement. Even if a clerkship is preferred, it is almost always possible to substitute other relevant experience, such as a government honors program, or, for budding academics, a publication. Don’t let the frenzy and anxiety surrounding clerkship hiring compel you to apply without evaluating whether in fact a clerkship actually makes sense for you. Remember, the other side of the statistic – over 40% of our graduates clerk which means that over 50% of graduates do not!
F. The Impact of a Prior Career on a Legal Job Search

Although second career students have the easiest time if their former work settings relate to their current career goals, they are by no means limited to that approach. The records of previous graduates attest to the success of “second career” graduates of YLS. A few things to keep in mind:

- Be prepared to answer questions regarding your decision to change careers and attend law school, without being negative about your previous background and experience. For students with an academic background, be aware that employers may assume you intend to become a law professor. Enrolling in a clinical program or other volunteer activity to gain practical experience may be especially valuable for you. Such practical experience will demonstrate that you have an interest in actual law practice.

- Some of the prejudices against law students with lengthy prior careers include the assumptions that they will not be willing to start at the bottom in a new career or to take direction from “senior” lawyers who are nevertheless younger; that they may not be willing to “pay their dues” in another field after having done so once already; and that they may have more family and other obligations that will prevent them from being able to commit the same amount of effort as younger law students. To be sure, some of these prejudices are patently illegal and patently false. However, you need to understand that such assumptions exist and that you will have to decide how to deal with them. In a sense, you are lucky if an interviewer alerts you to his or her concerns, because you can address them. Most, however, will not even raise the usually permissible questions, such as, “whether you are willing to travel, work nights and weekends.” If they do not ask, you may wish to take the initiative and address possible concerns. Discuss these options with a CDO counselor before you decide.

- Give your résumé a fresh look. Think carefully about the words that you use to describe past experience and education. When considering whether to exceed the usual one page résumé, you must be especially careful not to devote excessive space to items that may not help you in the law job market.

G. Job Limitations for Non-U.S. Citizen JD Students

JD students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. face unique challenges in the job search process. To understand these challenges, review CDO’s Non-U.S. Citizen JD Students and the Job Search Process. Typically, non-U.S. citizen JD students are able to remain in the U.S. for their summers through Optional Practical Training and/or Curricular Practical Training. For employment after graduation, many large firms in large cities are willing to work with international JD graduates to secure longer term employment visas. At present, however, there are concerns about these employment visa programs and new travel restrictions that may negatively impact U.S. employment opportunities. International students should connect with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) early and often to discuss their individual situations.

CHAPTER 4
EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

When deciding where to work for a summer or after graduation, you must reflect on your own values, skills, interests, and career and life goals. Do not try to fit any particular mold or someone else’s idea of what a Yale law student or graduate should or should not do.
A. Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a useful first step of the career planning process. During a self-assessment you will gather information about yourself, including an analysis of your values, interests, and abilities that will enable you to make more informed career choices. This process will be valuable when considering both your short-term and long-term career goals. In addition, self-assessment can help you to identify what is most important to you in an employer and in a job, thereby increasing your chances of long-term employment satisfaction. Visit the self-assessment section of CDO’s website for links to assessment tools. Read CDO’s other guides which contain advice written by alumni about their career paths. Attend CDO career programs to learn from alumni in practice. Meet with alumni practitioners serving as Mentors-in-Residence. Speak with a counselor about your career goals and aspirations.

According to America’s Greatest Places to Work with a Law Degree, the following 19 qualities are consistently mentioned by law school graduates who are pleased with their employment situations:

1. Employer matches or beats expectations for what work would be like
2. Work is intellectually challenging
3. The hours are livable
4. Employer provides tokens of appreciation
5. Belief that work is meaningful
6. Belief that you are a significant part of the picture
7. The compensation system (lock-step or eat what you kill) suits you
8. There are no artificial deadlines
9. Belief that employer respects and cares about you personally
10. You know where you stand, all the time
11. Superiors (mentors) are available to answer questions
12. Supervisors readily share their expertise with you
13. You get a lot of responsibility early
14. You enjoy the company of the people with whom you work
15. Your employer is “family-friendly”
16. You get direct client contact
17. The support staff is happy
18. You feel that what you are doing now is setting you up for what you wish to do next
19. You have the opportunity to contribute to the community in a meaningful way

Surround yourself with varied ideas, people, and work. Try out Clinics, get involved with Centers, join Student Journals and Organizations, take on a Public Interest Volunteer Opportunity, all with an eye toward defining your interests, skills, and values. Use your summers as an opportunity to continue to define and refine your career needs.

B. Research Employers

Now that you have some notion of what qualities you want in an employer, the next step is to research the market. Conducting employer research can be a time-consuming process, but the networking and research skills that you gain will be invaluable in your career. A plan is critical. There are thousands of potential employers to whom you can apply for work. The sheer numbers can be quite overwhelming. To help narrow your focus, use the criteria you have developed based on your self-assessment to create categories of target employers.
After you have identified the general types of employers for which you would be interested in working, there are many resources available to learn about particular employers. Most employers have their own websites with plenty of information about their practices, clients, attorneys and more. The Employer Research section of the CDO website contains a list of resources students find most useful. Visit the Career Pathways section of the CDO website to learn about the resources most useful for each pathway.

C. Connect with Alumni

Yale Law School has over 12,000 alumni working in virtually every corner of the globe. When deciding where to work, be sure to tap into this resource for information. Start by reviewing the Networking section of the CDO website. Some of the methods for connecting with our alumni include:

- **YLS Career Connections.** YLS Career Connections is an online searchable database of over 1,600 YLS alumni who have offered to provide career advice to students and fellow graduates. Use this resource to locate graduates practicing in fields of interest to you and contact them for information and advice.

- **Yale University Career Network.** Many alumni from Yale University and its graduate programs have joined the University’s Career Network and offered to provide career advice to students and fellow graduates. Use this resource to supplement the contacts you develop through the Law School’s Career Connections. These resources can be especially useful for students seeking information about nonlegal career options. Log in using your Yale credentials.

- **CDO Mentors-in-Residence Program.** During the year, CDO invites many alumni to visit YLS to speak on career-related panels. While here, those alumni often agree to meet individually with students to provide advice about their job searches. Because these sessions typically take place during the weekday, students should feel free to wear casual attire.

- **CDO, YLS, and Yale University programs of interest.** Throughout the year, CDO, the Law School, and the university host numerous programs in which students have the opportunity to network with attorneys in the legal field.

- Narratives written by alumni in CDO guides, and the online Alumni Career Profiles.

When reaching out to alumni or others for career advice, the conventional starting point is to send an email stating your request, and asking whether there is a convenient time for the two of you to talk. If you have been referred to the person from a mutual acquaintance, be sure to mention that. Reassure your contacts that you are NOT seeking a job interview, only an opportunity to discuss your career ideas and obtain some professional feedback. For example, when sending an email to a member of YLS Career Connections, you may wish to say something like:

> “I am currently a 1L at Yale Law School, and I plan to pursue a career in entertainment law in Los Angeles. I found your profile on YLS Career Connections, and notice that you have had great success in the entertainment industry. I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you about your experiences at YLS and your career path. Please let me know if there is a convenient time for us to talk. Thanks in advance for your help.”

Prior to an informational interview or networking meeting, review CDO’s tips on Conducting an Informational Interview. Come prepared with a general knowledge of the subject you plan to discuss and some questions. Limit your discussion to 20 to 30 minutes, unless the attorney expresses an interest in extending the discussion. Attempt to get the names of two or three people for further networking. You
should bring your résumé for the individual to review and critique (or email it in advance), but do not attempt to solicit employment. At the meeting and in a subsequent email or letter, express your appreciation to the individual for taking the time to meet with you. Keep the people in your network periodically updated about your career.

CHAPTER 5
APPLICATION MATERIALS AND PROCESS

After you have determined where you wish to apply, you need to put together your application materials. This involves drafting a résumé and cover letters, and assembling a writing sample and list of references. When drafting these materials, keep in mind that every piece of writing you provide to an employer will be viewed as a writing sample and thus should be technically perfect and well-written. The Toolkit for Student Job Seekers section of the CDO website provides detailed advice on application materials.

A. Résumés

In most cases, your résumé is your first contact with a potential employer. It shows not only your experience thus far, but also your accomplishments. Résumés should be concise, accurate, error-free, well-organized, clear, easy to read, and visually pleasing. Use a standard font such as Times New Roman, and a font size of 11 point. Keep in mind that the reader of your résumé will probably spend no more than 30 seconds reviewing it. To be effective, it must be brief while still offering enough information to interest the employer. Most law student résumés should be one page in length.

Review the Résumé Advice section of the CDO website, including the Frequently Asked Résumé Questions, Sample Résumés, Sample Résumé Action Verbs, and video on Résumé Formatting in Microsoft Word. In addition, attend CDO’s 1L Application Preparation program. With all that advice in mind, reflect on your target audience. Find out as much as you can about the types of projects in which you would be involved if hired. Based on that information, determine which skills you should highlight. You may choose to have a few résumés geared toward different types of employers.

B. Cover Letters

Like the résumé, the cover letter is a sample of your written work and should be brief (preferably one page), persuasive, well-reasoned, and grammatically perfect. Before crafting your cover letters, review the Cover Letter Advice section of CDO’s website, including the Sample Cover Letters and Video on Cover Letter Formatting in Microsoft Word. In addition, attend CDO’s 1L Application Preparation program.

A good cover letter:

• Tells the employer who you are (e.g., a first-year student at YLS) and what you are seeking (e.g., a summer intern position);
• Shows that you know about the particular employer and the kind of work the employer does (e.g., civil or criminal work, direct client service, “impact” cases, antitrust litigation);
• Demonstrates your writing skills;
• Demonstrates your commitment to the work of that particular employer;
• Conveys that you have something to contribute to the employer;
• Shows that you and that employer are a good “fit”; and
• Tells the employer how to get in touch with you by email, telephone, and mail.
C. Writing Samples

In an initial application, include a writing sample only if specifically requested. Many employers will request writing samples later in the interview process. Nearly all judges require a writing sample with the initial clerkship application materials. The best approach is to have a writing sample ready at every stage of the interview process in case it is requested.

Legal employers typically seek legal analysis; therefore, a memorandum or brief is preferred over a research paper. In addition, less outside editing is better, which is why previously published pieces are not automatically at the top of the list. Although the topic of the writing sample is generally not much of a concern, if you have a sample that relates to the employer’s work, you may wish to use it. The ultimate criterion, however, is the quality of the writing. If you use a document prepared for a prior employer, obtain the employer’s permission and make sure you have made all necessary modifications and redactions to preserve client confidentiality.

Although there is no definitive ideal length for a writing sample, 5-10 pages typically serves the purpose of demonstrating your writing ability. If all of your potential writing samples are much longer, consider using an excerpt (e.g., one argument from a longer brief) and providing a brief explanatory note in the form of a cover sheet.

A cover sheet is useful to give any necessary background information about your writing sample. For example, if you use a writing project prepared for class, give the name of the class and a brief description of the assignment. If you are using a document prepared for a former employer, explain that you have obtained the employer’s permission and made all necessary modifications. Consult CDO’s Writing Sample Cover Sheet Examples.

D. References

In an initial application, include references only if specifically requested. Many employers will request a list of references at some point in the interview process. Students applying for public interest fellowships and judicial clerkships will most likely need to provide letters of recommendation with the initial application materials. Consult the Public Interest Fellowships and Judicial Clerkships in the U.S. CDO guides for advice on securing letters of recommendation.

A list of references should include the contact information for two or three individuals who can recommend you for employment based on their personal experience with you as a student (preferably as a law student) or as an employee. Employers are most interested in references who can discuss you in terms of those skills important for the position, such as legal writing and analysis, ability to assume responsibility, and interpersonal skills. If you ask law school faculty to serve as references, be sure that they know you from class participation, conversations outside of class, or research or other independent work that you performed for them.

Prior to listing someone as a reference, have a frank conversation to be sure that he/she is comfortable with providing you with a strong, positive recommendation. Take the time to talk with them about your career interests as they relate to the employers who may be contacting them. In addition, provide them with a copy of your résumé so they can become familiar with your background and experience. Consult CDO’s Sample List of References.
E. Transcripts

At some point in the recruiting process, employers will likely request your YLS transcript. Employers request transcripts to view both your grades and your course selections. First-year students who are asked to provide a transcript should explain to employers that grades are unlikely to be available before late January, and that, pursuant to the law school’s grading policy for first term, your transcript will show only credit or fail for each course. You can offer to send your transcript when grades are available, or to send an undergraduate transcript immediately if that would be helpful.

Courses are listed on your transcript as soon as you commence the course selection process. For first-year students, that means that spring courses will be listed on your transcripts starting the first week of December. If you think your course selections may be a selling point to employers, you may wish to hold off on sending transcripts until your spring courses have been selected.

Unless an employer specifically requests an official transcript, you can provide an unofficial transcript. On the back of an official YLS transcript is an explanation of the law school’s unique grading system; therefore, if you send an unofficial version, you may wish to obtain a photocopy of the grading explanation from the Registrar. Requests for either type must be made online. There is typically a 24-48 hour turnaround time. Unofficial transcripts can be photocopied; official transcripts cannot be copied and only 10 may be requested at one time.

For additional information about transcripts please consult the Registrar’s website.

F. Application Packet

In the absence of more specific information from an employer, at the initial application stage, submit a cover letter and résumé to express your interest in a position. Convert your documents into PDFs to avoid conversion problems. Before creating the PDFs, format your documents properly by using Word, a standard font such as Times New Roman, at least .5 margins, and tabs or justification instead of spaces for alignment purposes. Include the body of your cover letter in the email message and also include the cover letter as an attachment. Ideally you will attach only one PDF file that includes both your résumé and cover letter in one document. If you have questions on how to do this, contact CDO or IT services.

On the rare occasion when you are asked to send your application by mail, use good quality white bond paper with matching envelopes for printing your résumés and cover letters. YLS has a special paper printer designed for thicker stock located on L2 in the computer classroom. Students are welcome to use this printer but you must bring your own résumé paper. If you are including a writing sample, you can either fold the documents to fit a standard size envelope, or use larger envelopes. You do not need to use résumé quality paper for your writing sample.

G. Application Timing

1. Initial Contact with Employers

a. First-Year Students

The NALP Principles and Standards inform us that prospective employers and first-year law students cannot initiate contact with each other about summer positions until December 1. NALP further spells out that employers cannot interview or make offers to first-year students before December 1.
Most first-year students contact employers directly when seeking summer employment, although some obtain positions via the Spring Interview Program, which takes place in late January. Many larger law firms, national nonprofit organizations, and federal agencies typically wish to hear from students in December. Most other employers expect to hear from first-year students during the course of the winter and early spring. The Summer Employment Evaluations in CMS provide useful information about when students applied for, interviewed, and secured their summer offers. We suggest that you send a wave of applications to your five to 15 top choices in December. Prepare a second and third wave as needed, as you work down your list of desirable employers. Once you accept an offer, you must withdraw from consideration by other employers.

b. Upper-class Students

Most second-year students use the Fall Interview Program (FIP), which commences in early August, to secure summer employment. Some students (especially those seeking positions with employers in less popular geographic locations, smaller law firms, or public service employers) opt to supplement or replace FIP by sending résumés and cover letters directly to employers. Students typically commence this process in August prior to school and continue with waves throughout the fall and early spring as necessary. It is not unusual for upper-class students seeking public interest positions to be involved in the job search process well into the spring.

2. Follow Up

If you have not heard from an employer within two weeks of sending your cover letter and résumé, and you are still interested, call the employer to make sure that your letter was received and ask politely about the status of hiring plans. Smaller firms, public interest, government, and nonprofit organizations often are not well-equipped to handle the volume of applications they receive. Calling them demonstrates your interest and helps them remember you. Be mindful of the line between showing interest and being a pest. Do not be surprised if some employers do not respond to your inquiries until you contact them to check on the status of your application. Similarly, if you have interviewed with an employer and are awaiting news, feel free to follow up with a telephone call to reiterate your interest in the position and inquire about the timing of their hiring decisions.

Keep a record of your contact with employers: those who respond, the nature of their replies, your follow up, and the results. Your search may last a matter of weeks or months, and this record will be a valuable tool. It is a good habit for all job searches you undertake now and in the future. You are building your professional network, so touch base with contacts you encountered along the way and tell them about the work you ultimately select.

CHAPTER 6
INTERVIEWS AND FOLLOW UP

A. Interviews

During the interview process employers will learn about and assess your communication skills, your ability to present your experience and achievements in a precise manner, and your interest in their organization and its work. The key to a successful interview is preparation, including both research and practice.
You have two primary goals during the interview. First you need to determine whether this employer meets your career goals and objectives. Second, you need to make the interviewer aware of your unique qualities, interests, and skills. Employers prefer candidates who:

- Have thoroughly researched the employer and know why the employer and its work interest them
- Exhibit leadership
- Demonstrate good judgment and intellectual ability
- Are problem solvers
- Take an active part in the interview and are positive and enthusiastic

To accomplish these goals, visit the Interviewing section of the CDO website where you will find detailed interviewing advice, including information on employment sector differences, interview preparation, appropriate attire, dealing with inappropriate interview question, and navigating callback interviews. This site also provides links to Conducting an Informational Interview, Sample Interview Questions, and Sample Law Firm Interview Evaluation Forms.

Law firms most typically cover reasonable travel expenses incurred for interviews. Most public interest employers do not. To support public interest students, CDO has a Travel Reimbursement for Interviews in the Public Interest program. Under this program, CDO will reimburse the eligible and reasonable travel expenses up to $800 per year for second-year, third-year and LL.M. students.

Yale Law School is committed to ensuring that its students receive fair treatment from employers who use its placement services, and that the law school, its students and employers act in good faith in the recruiting and hiring process. Please review NALP’s Principles and Standards, the Yale Law School Placement Policies and Regulations, and CDO’s advice on Inappropriate Interview Questions and How to Handle Them prior to embarking on the interview process.

B. Saying Thank You

Advice on whether to send a brief email of thanks to attorneys with whom you have interviewed is varied. In some regions of the country (i.e. the Northeast), thank you emails are generally not expected. In other locales (i.e. the Southeast), they are more common. If you do decide to send one, make sure it is perfect, as it will be viewed as a sample of your writing.

All that said, you may decide to send a short follow up email to persons with whom you met if: (1) you are extremely interested in the employer and would like to reiterate that interest; (2) you thought that you really connected with the interviewer and would like to remind that interviewer of your similar interests; or (3) the interviewer went out of his/her way for you (e.g., treated you to a nice dinner or reception meal). If you decide to write a follow-up email, you should do so promptly.

C. Responding to Offers

At some point in the interview process you will begin receiving job offers, and likely some rejections as well. Employers typically provide responses to students within a couple weeks of their interviews, although some will act more quickly and others more slowly. If you haven’t heard within a couple of weeks, you should feel free to call or email and inquire about your status and the timing of decisions.

The amount of time you have to decide depends on whether the employer is a member of NALP. Employers who are not members of NALP have the right to require a response to an offer at any time. Upon receipt of an offer from a non-NALP employer, you should inquire as to when the employer expects a response. For NALP member employers (most larger law firms and some public interest organizations),
NALP provides standards for the timing of offers and decisions as reflected in Part V of NALP’s General Standards for the Timing of Offers and Decisions.

According to NALP guidelines, offers to 1Ls for summer employment should remain open for at least two weeks after the date of the offer letter. (NALP Principles and Standards Part V.D.3). The timing of offers from NALP employers to upper-class students is somewhat more complicated. Read carefully the Principles and Standards to determine the timing that applies to your employment situation. Offers to 2Ls who have not previously worked for the employer remain open for 28 days from the date of the offer letter. (NALP Principles and Standards Part V.C.1). Offers to 3Ls made by their summer employer on or before September 2 are to remain open until October 1. Offers made after September 2 shall remain open for 28 days from the date of the offer letter. (NALP Principles and Standards Part V.B.3).

If you have a deadline to respond to an employer, but you are not sure if you want to accept the position, speak with a counselor in CDO. Depending on your situation, it may make sense for you to ask for more time to decide. However, keep in mind that asking for more time may be a signal to the employer that they are not your first choice. Ultimately, it is significantly better to ask for more time than to accept and later renege on your offer. Reneging is unprofessional and reflects poorly on you and the Law School.

One alternative to seeking an extension is to accept with the employer for part of the summer, while still exploring other options for the other part. Refer to CDO’s To Split or Not to Split, That is the Question for additional advice about the pros and cons of splitting the summer. Another option, if it fits your situation, is to seek an extension from a law firm employer until as late at April 1 so that you may explore public interest and/or business opportunities. Consult NALP’s Principle and Standard Parts V.B.2 and V.C.2 and CDO’s Employer Recruiting Policies for more information about this option.

When you are ready to accept an offer, you can either call the person who extended the offer to you, or in the case of larger law firms, you can call the Recruiting Department with your good news. The employer typically follows up an acceptance with a letter confirming the acceptance and providing additional information about the position. With public interest employers, if you accept by phone, you should send a confirming email or letter.

You should decline an offer of employment as soon as you decide that the position is not right for you. Holding an employment offer when you have no intention of accepting it is inappropriate as it does a disservice to your classmates and to the employer. It is common to respond to an offer in the same manner that it was conveyed (i.e., respond to a telephone call with a telephone call), but it is not necessary. If you are nervous about calling with your news, keep in mind that employers get turned down regularly, and though they may not like it, they are typically quite gracious about it. It is acceptable to leave a voice mail message declining a job offer. If the thought of a phone conversation makes you very uncomfortable, just send a short, courteous email. If you decline an offer over the phone, it is a good idea to follow-up with an email (especially if you only leave a voice mail message) so you and the organization have a record.

D. End of Summer Offers

Most public interest employers are eager to hire law students for the summer, but are most often unable to make full-time offers for immediately after graduation. Public interest fellowships offer a great avenue for public interest students to commence their careers. On the other hand, students who intern with law firms during their first summer typically receive an offer to return for some part of the following summer and students who intern with firms in their second summer typically receive full-time offers for after graduation. As you consider your employment options upon completion of your internships, please reach out to your counselor in CDO to help you make informed decisions. Review Part V of NALP’s General Standards for the Timing of Offers and Decisions and CDO’s Employer Recruiting Policies for details about the timing of decision-making.

If you work for a law firm during the summer and do not receive an offer, start by consulting CDO’s advice for navigating a no-offer and then make an appointment to meet with your counselor in CDO.
## CHAPTER 7
### JOB SEARCH TIMELINES

**First Year**

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<th>Month</th>
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| September   | • Engage in self-assessment to evaluate your career interests, skills and values.  
• Attend lectures, programs and events about legal practice (while CDO does not provide programs specifically for 1Ls until October, 1Ls are invited and welcome to attend CDO-sponsored programs at any time).  
• Interested in Public Interest or Government? Read CDO’s Public Interest Careers, International Public Interest Law, Criminal Defense, Criminal Prosecution, and Working on Capitol Hill guides.  
• Interested in Business? Read CDO’s Lawyers in Business guide.  
• Interested in Academia? Read CDO’s Entering the Law Teaching Market guide.  
• Interested in Judicial Clerkships? Read CDO’s Judicial Clerkships in the U.S., Opportunities with International Tribunals and Foreign Courts, and U.S. Supreme Court Clerkships guides.  
• Join a student organization or journal that will enable you to explore your career interests.  
• Learn about the Centers at YLS and connect with those of interest to you.  
• If interested in international opportunities, connect with the Schell Center and keep their events on your radar.  
• If interested in law teaching, connect with the Law Teaching Program at YLS and keep their events on your radar.  
• If interested in corporate law, connect with the Center for the Study of Corporate Law and keep their events on your radar.  
• Consider attending the Equal Justice Works Career Fair and Conference in DC for panels and table talk only (per NALP guidelines, 1Ls may not apply for jobs until December 1). |
| October/November | • Attend CDO’s 1L Summer Job Search and Application Preparation programs. Read CDO’s advice on résumés and cover letters. Draft résumé and cover letter.  
• Meet with assigned CDO counselor to discuss career goals and review application materials.  
• Begin reading CDO’s weekly email to students and CDO’s Public Interest E-News.  
• Attend CDO’s 1L programs on business and alternative careers, public interest, and judicial clerkships.  
• Conduct research into potential summer opportunities. Use CDO career guides as starting points. Start habit of checking CDO’s Online Job Posting System in CMS to learn about employment opportunities.  
• If contemplating federal government internships, review CDO’s information about federal government security clearances.  
• Learn about summer public interest funding, including SPIF and Kirby Simon international travel grants.  
• Create your list of desired summer employers. |
| December | • Email cover letters and résumés on or after December 1 to employers who hire early (larger law firms, national nonprofits, some federal agencies like DOJ)  
• Attend CDO’s interviewing workshop, read CDO’s interviewing advice and conduct a mock interview.  
• Plan spring course selection to reflect and build on your employment interests. Consider enrolling in a clinic to develop practical skills.  
• Start to think about which Bar Exam you may take and learn about Bar Admission requirements.  
• During winter break network, attend employer receptions, and reach out to additional employers. |
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| January/February |  ► Consider attending the YLS Co-sponsored NYU Public Interest Career Fair.  
                     ► Consider interviewing with employers at CDO’s Spring Interview Program in New Haven.  
                     ► Consider joining PIVO (Public Interest Volunteer Opportunities) to conduct a short-term legal assignment and enhance your skills.  
                     ► Continue follow up with employers to whom you have applied.  
                     ► Apply to additional employers including smaller law firms, regional nonprofits, and state and local government. Continue checking CDO’s Online Job Posting System in CMS to learn about employment opportunities. |
| March       |  ► Continue to follow up and apply to additional employers. Talk to a CDO counselor if you have any career questions or concerns about your job search.  
                     ► Attend CDO events including the Law Firm Practice Area Forum.  
                     ► If you are keen on applying for clerkships, meet with CDO’s Clerkship Director to develop game plan and application materials.  
                     ► If interested in law firm practice, attend law firm spring receptions in New Haven in preparation for the Fall Interview Program. |
| April/May   |  ► Attend CDO program on having a successful summer experience.  
                     ► Tell CDO about your employment plans! |
| June/July   |  ► Read CDO’s summer emails containing important information about the Fall Interview Program and other career related events.  
                     ► Network with alumni in your location working in areas of interest to you. Consider setting up informational interviews. Attend summer law firm recruiting events.  
                     ► Update your résumé to reflect summer position and review with CDO counselor.  
                     ► Plan fall course selection to reflect and build on your employment interests. Consider clinical opportunities. |
## Second Year

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| **July/August**     | ► Complete a Student Summer Employment Evaluation in CMS.  
► If relevant, leave your summer with a writing sample and references.  
► Speak with a CDO counselor to discuss career goals.  
► If participating in FIP, view CDO’s FIP webinars, research FIP employers, bid, and interview.  
► Research non-FIP employers and email résumés and cover letters.  
► Consider applying for DOJ Summer Law Intern Program and other government summer honors programs. Review CDO’s information about federal government security clearances. |
| **September/October/November** | ► Attend law firm offer dinners.  
► Be aware of NALP guidelines, including that you should respond to offers from NALP firms within 28 days from the date of the offer letter. You can either accept, decline or seek April 1 public interest/business extension.  
► Continue researching and contacting non-FIP employers. Keep checking CDO’s Online Job Posting System in CMS to learn about opportunities.  
► Join a student organization or journal that will enable you to explore your career interests.  
► Consider attending the Equal Justice Works Career Fair and Conference in DC.  
► Read CDO’s weekly email to students and CDO’s Public Interest Newsletter.  
► Learn about the Centers at YLS and connect with those of interest to you.  
► Learn about summer public interest funding options, including SPIF and Kirby Simon international travel grants.  
► If interested, start to learn about post-graduate public interest fellowships by reading CDO’s fellowship guides, attending programs, and connecting with CDO’s Public Interest Director.  
► Consider Bar Exam options and confirm Bar Admission requirements. |
| **December**        | ► Plan spring course selection to reflect and build your employment interests. Consider clinical opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                |
| **January/February** | ► Consider attending the YLS Co-sponsored NYU Public Interest Career Fair.  
► Consider joining PIVO (Public Interest Volunteer Opportunities) to conduct a short-term legal assignment and enhance your skills.  
► If no job offer, talk to a CDO counselor about strategies, including using YLS Career Connections in CMS to reach out to alumni.                                                                                                  |
| **March**           | ► Attend CDO programs even AFTER you have obtained a job—no job is forever!                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| **April/May**       | ► Attend program on having a successful summer experience.  
► If you plan to pursue post-graduate public interest fellowships, connect with CDO’s Public Interest Director and go into summer experience with fellowship goals in mind.  
► Tell CDO about your employment plans!                                                                                                                                                                          |
| **June/July**       | ► Read CDO summer emails containing important information about career related events.  
► If relevant, leave your summer with a writing sample and references (and an offer!).  
► Network with alumni in your location working in areas of interest to you. Consider setting up informational interviews.  
► Update your résumé to reflect summer position and review with CDO counselor.  
► Plan fall course selection to reflect and build on your employment interests. Consider clinical opportunities.                                                                                           |
## Third Year

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| Fall  | ► Fill out the Student Summer Employment Evaluation in CMS.  
► If desired, confirm a post-graduate public interest fellowships plan for the year with CDO’s Public Interest Director and make sure to meet your application deadlines.  
► Consider applying to the DOJ Honors Program and other government honors programs. Review CDO’s information about federal government security clearances.  
► If you receive a permanent offer from your summer law firm, decide whether you wish to accept that offer. If you received the offer by September 2, you must respond to that offer by October 1. If the offer was provided after September 2, you have 28 days to respond. You can either accept, decline or seek April 1 public interest/business extension.  
► Read CDO’s weekly email to students and CDO’s Public Interest Newsletter.  
► Join a student organization or journal that will enable you to explore your career interests.  
► Learn about the Centers at YLS and connect with those of interest to you.  
► Consider attending the Equal Justice Works Career Fair and Conference in DC.  
► If you have not done so already, you must consider Bar Exam options and confirm Bar Admission requirements.  
► Plan spring course selection to reflect and build on your employment interests. Consider clinical opportunities. |
| Spring| ► If you are seeking employment for after graduation, be sure to connect with a counselor in CDO and tap into your network using tools at your disposal.  
► If you have secured employment for after graduation, inform CDO about your employment plans!  
► Read CDO’s advice about maximizing your time in a law firm if that is where you are headed.  
► Sign up for YLS Career Connections in CMS so that you can mentor the next generation of students.  
► Remember that CDO is available to you after graduation, so stay in touch if we can be of help to you as your career plans progress. |
Career Development Office

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CDO Publications:
  Criminal Defense
  Criminal Prosecution
  Entering the Law Teaching Market
  Environmental Law
  International LL.M. Career Planning Guide
  International Public Interest Law
  Introduction to Career Development
  Judicial Clerkships in the U.S.
  Law Firm Practice
  Lawyers in Business
  Opportunities with International Tribunals and Foreign Courts
  Public Interest Careers
  Public Interest Fellowships Vol. I
  Public Interest Fellowships: Sample Applications Vol. II
  The Fall Interview Program
  U.S. Supreme Court Clerkships
  Working on Capitol Hill

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