THE 1L SUMMER GOVERNMENT AGENCY JOB SEARCH

OVERVIEW
Many federal, state, and local government agencies hire first-year students as volunteers or as paid interns for the summer on either a full-time or part-time basis. Examples include volunteer positions with the Department of Justice in Washington, DC and throughout the country, independent agencies, the White House and various cabinet departments, district attorneys’ and public defenders’ offices, state attorneys general offices, civil rights commissions, and administrative law judges. In addition to legal positions, students should consider quasi-legal positions as legislative interns at the federal or state level, positions with government relations, legislative or public affairs offices of non-profit organizations or corporations, or positions with lobbying firms. Think broadly!

BENEFITS OF WORKING FOR A GOVERNMENT AGENCY
Government agencies rely on their summer interns to assist with substantive legal work and tend to involve them in interesting and innovative issues. If you think that you might be interested in working for the government upon graduation, a summer spent making contacts within government while working in a field that interests you is a win-win proposition. It may also give you an advantage in landing a position with the government after your second year of law school and upon graduation.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU MAY BE ENGAGED
The specific activities in which you will be engaged will vary depending upon the organization for which you work. In many instances, you will have an opportunity to work on confidential and high-profile matters and on investigations of issues such as organized crime, fraud, consumer protection and unfair competition. You may also have an opportunity to participate in public policy debates.

WHEN TO APPLY
Deadlines vary by agency. They may be as early as December 1, 2009. For some agencies (i.e., Department of Justice, US Attorneys’ Offices), hiring is contingent upon a background check* for security clearance purposes. Information on application deadlines may be found on specific agency websites, PSLAWNET (www.pslawnet.org), and in the 2009. Government and Honors Program Handbook (the Handbook)** available online at http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm; User Name: cookie, Password: dough, and PSLAWNET (www.pslawnet.org).

*Part of the background check process includes a credit report which will reveal delinquent, unpaid, or charged-off accounts. Government agencies have told us that a pattern of delinquent payments and/or overall poor credit history could prevent a student from receiving the required approval needed to participate in their program. Table 8 in the Handbook provides an excellent overview of what to expect in the security clearance process.
**Please note that Table 2 in the Handbook lists Federal Government and State Attorneys’ General Honors programs that hire 1Ls in order of application deadline and further indicates whether positions are paid or unpaid.**

**N.B. The Handbook is an excellent resource to which we subscribe on your behalf. Please don’t jeopardize our access to this resource by sharing passwords with non-WULAW students. Most CSOs subscribe; encourage your friends to check with their CSO for access.**

**FOR ALL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS**
On or after November 1, 2009

Step 1: Determine the range of opportunities that you would consider, your economic needs and resources (i.e., salary, work-study funding, summer public interest stipend funding, or volunteer work), and identify personal interests and career goals that will serve as the parameters for your search. A few questions to consider include:

- Do you want to perform civil or criminal work?
- Do you want to litigate? If so, in which courts? Are you more interested in transactional work? Are you interested in regulatory work?
- Are you interested in exploring opportunities with federal agencies? State agencies? Local agencies?
- Do your current interests and background lead you to any particular area of the law?

Step 2: Begin to explore funding sources, as funding for 1L summer government positions is limited.

- Learn about the WULAW Summer Public Interest Stipend Program by attending the upcoming informational session, date TBD. Please Note: summer judicial internships and political internships do not qualify for this program.


Step 3: On or after December 1, 2009, create your profile in Symplicity and begin to apply for position announcements that may be listed there. Continue to check this site, as position announcements are regularly posted.

Step 4: Plan to attend the Midwest Public Interest Career Conference, which takes place in early February. Information about participating employers and applicable deadlines will be available in late November.
Step 5: Plan to attend the WULAW Government and Public Interest Career Fair held in late February. Local and regional employers, including public defenders, legal services providers, local prosecutors, public interest organizations, and federal, state and municipal agencies will be available to speak with WULAW students.

Step 6: Network, Network, Network! If you will be seeking a position in your hometown or a non-St. Louis location, try to arrange informational meetings and/or interviews for a time you will be in that location, or during school breaks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Step 7: ■ A complete, alphabetical listing of federal agencies is available at [http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml)


Students may also wish to consider programs such as the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), which, though rarely used by law students, offers the advantages of pay and accelerated non-competitive status for future government jobs: [http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/employmentprograms.shtml](http://www.makingthedifference.org/federalinternships/employmentprograms.shtml).

■ *The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* is an annual federal employee satisfaction survey, which provides interesting feedback from federal employees. The survey results are reported for Federal Agencies and sub-agencies. The 2007 survey results are available online at: [http://bestplacetowork.org/BPTW/analysis/](http://bestplacetowork.org/BPTW/analysis/).

Step 8 If you do not find what you are looking for online, the Partnership for Public Service recommends that you “…pick up the phone and call the agency you are interested in. Ask to speak with someone in charge of the internship program and ask about available positions and a description of intern duties.”
OR FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Step 9: Begin researching organizations. Note that many state and local government summer positions are not advertised and that each agency/locality typically will have its own hiring procedures. A few resources to consult include:

- PSLAWNET - [http://www.plawnet.org](http://www.plawnet.org)
- Missouri Employment Opportunities - [http://www.missouri.gov/mo/stjobs.htm](http://www.missouri.gov/mo/stjobs.htm)
- Prosecutor.Info - [http://www.prosecutor.info](http://www.prosecutor.info)
- CSO *Out of Town Research Guides* for selected cities/states (23 total guides) – available in the CSO