

OPIA AT A GLANCE:

PUBLIC INTEREST RESOURCES FOR HLS STUDENTS

Welcome to the Bernard Koteen Office of Public Interest Advising (OPIA)!

We are a career services office at Harvard Law School specializing in **public interest law**. Our primary goal is to encourage students and lawyers to embrace a career that incorporates an ongoing commitment to public service work. To achieve this goal, we offer **advising appointments, print and Internet resources, and speaker events and workshops**.

WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST LAW?

We define public interest law as any work conducted on behalf of individuals and causes not often served by the for-profit bar. It is pursued on the basis of individual or group concepts of justice, equity and advancement of the public good, rather than for purposes of commercial or personal gain. Public interest work covers a wide range of:

- *Issue areas*, from AIDS/HIV rights to voting access:
www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/issue-areas.html
- *Practice settings*, which include nonprofits, government, legal services, public defenders, prosecuting attorneys, and private public interest firms: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-exploration/practice-settings.html
- *Types of advocacy*, such as direct client services and policy work:
www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/work-types.html

HOW CAN I GAIN PUBLIC INTEREST EXPERIENCE?

- **Extracurricular activities:** Student Practice Organizations (SPOs) provide legal services to low-income communities, while Service Organizations carry out public interest work more generally. For more on these organizations, see: www.law.harvard.edu/current/orgs/index.html
- **Pro Bono work** is any legal service offered without payment for the public good. All HLS students are required to complete at least 40 hours of *pro bono* before graduating. Find more information about *pro bono* work at: www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical/probono/index.html
- **Academic work:** Harvard's Research Programs and Centers such as the Berkman Center and the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute promote scholarly discourse on a wide range of legal fields and disciplines and provide research opportunities. For more info, see: www.law.harvard.edu/programs. Students can also tailor their curriculum to fit specific public interest issue and practice areas. For program details, visit: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-preparation/public-interest-course-recommendations.html
- **Law Reviews/Journals** can be an excellent way to build strong legal research, writing, and editing skills. HLS has 14 student journals devoted to different substantive areas of law and legal approaches. See: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/orgs/journals/index.html>
- **Summer employment:** Public interest summer jobs can help you gain valuable legal experience and demonstrate your commitment to public service. Most positions satisfy the pro bono requirement, and many supplemental funding sources are also available. For listings and evaluations of summer positions, visit: <https://ldap.law.harvard.edu/jobdb/>
- **Research work for faculty:** Many HLS faculty produce scholarly works on public interest topics and are often in need of research assistants to assist them in this work. Some faculty members are also involved in *pro bono* projects. For details, consult OPIA's directory of public interest faculty at: <https://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/secure/appendix-c---faculty-directory.pdf>
- **Clinical practice** allows you to gain direct legal experience starting in your 2L year under the supervision of mentoring attorneys along with companion classroom instruction. Opportunities include Harvard's "in-house" clinics, externship placements, and independent/winter term clinical work. For more information, visit the Office of Clinical and *Pro Bono* Programs (Austin 102) or www.law.harvard.edu/academics/clinical

HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT PUBLIC INTEREST WORK?

1. Attend events and read OPIA's weekly events emails. OPIA organizes events that explore different issue areas, practice settings, and types of public interest legal work. They can help you gain a broad understanding of the many different public interest opportunities available.

Legal Landscapes Panels feature attorneys from diverse legal fields – both public and private – who share their professional experiences and answer student questions:

www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/events/practice/index.html

Lunch Speaker Series and Faculty Brown Bags offer the chance to meet and interact with lawyers and HLS professors involved in public interest work. For more information on OPIA events and an up-to-date calendar, visit: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/calendar/opiaevents/>

2. Do your research. These resources can help you learn more about public interest work and discover where your interests lie:

- *Read OPIA's weekly jobs bulletins (sent via email starting Nov. 1) featuring postings for new summer job opportunities.*
- *Serving the Public: A Job Search Guide*, a two volume series (USA and International), is a comprehensive guide to public interest law. In addition to listings of employers, fellowships, and funding sources, the *Guide* provides information on practice settings, networking tips, job search and resume writing strategies, salary trends, and narratives by HLS alum in public interest work. Available at the OPIA office.
- *Specialty Career Guides* provide in-depth information, narratives, and resources about specific practice areas. Along with the 21 guides listed on our website, OPIA also publishes two *Insider's Guides* on the Department of Justice and Fellowships that are only available to HLS students in password protected form. For information on other OPIA publications or to download Specialty Career Guides, visit: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-resources/publications.html
- The *OPIA Resource Library* in our office (Pound 329) contains many print resources.
- *OPIA Public Interest Links* include a large annotated list of informational and job posting sites, separated by issue area and geographic location. Available at: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-resources/public-interest-links.html#1>

WHO CAN I TALK TO FOR ADVICE?

1. Advisors

- *OPIA's Attorney Advisors* are always available for individual career counseling and advice. Bios are available at: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/about/staff/index.html. You can also sign up for an appointment on the OPIA website.
- *Wasserstein Fellows* are outstanding public interest attorneys selected each year to offer one-on-one advising to HLS students. For bios of current and past Fellows, see: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/events/wasserstein-fellows-program/index.html#CurrentWassersteinFellows

2. Alumni

- *Alumni Advising Network* is an online database of HLS alums who have offered to serve as career mentors for current students: <https://hlsalumni.publishingconcepts.com/>

3. Peers

- *Connect with 2Ls and 3Ls on Sidebar.* Many public-interest-minded 2Ls and 3Ls have made themselves available to serve as contacts and mentors to members of the 1L class. Search and view their profiles on Sidebar (<http://sidebar.law.harvard.edu/>), Harvard Law School's social networking site. Become a member of the OPIA Mentoring Community group on Sidebar to reach out to other group members and receive relevant announcements. If you have any questions, contact Kirsten at kbermingham@law.harvard.edu.
- *Student to Student Public Service Job Fair* features 2L/3L students who are available to speak about their summer employers. This year's fair will be held on Monday, November 2. Check the OPIA website for details.

- *Who Worked Where* lists where students have worked in public interest summer jobs. Available in the OPIA office.

4. Faculty

- Faculty are available to discuss your public service interests. To access information about HLS faculty's research and public interest work, go to:

<https://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/secure/appendix-c---faculty-directory.pdf>

WHAT IF I'M ALSO INTERESTED IN PRIVATE SECTOR WORK?

Many public interest-minded students spend anywhere from a split summer to several years working in the private sector before moving into public service. Others spend their entire careers in the private sector but contribute a great deal in terms of *pro bono* work, board membership, and other forms of community service. For more on *pro bono*, split summers, holding private firm offers, and moving from the private sector to public service, see: www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-preparation/public-service-in-the-private-sector.html

HOW DO I FIND A PUBLIC INTEREST JOB?

Once you have determined what kinds of public interest work you would like to pursue, you are ready to begin your job search. The following resources can help you find a public interest job that is right for you.

- *HLS Public Service Job Database* is an excellent resource that is only available to HLS students and alumni. Separate from the OCS listings, this database is devoted exclusively to public interest work and includes summer internships, *pro bono* opportunities, and post-graduate positions. It also provides online evaluations from HLS students who have recently worked in public service positions. Log on at: <https://ldap.law.harvard.edu/jobdb/>
- Read OPIA's weekly jobs bulletins (sent via email starting Nov. 1) featuring postings for new summer job opportunities.
- *Public Service Law Network Worldwide (PSLawNet)* is a nation-wide database of law-related public service opportunities available by subscription only. HLS students have access privileges and can register themselves online at: www.pslawnet.org/
- *OPIA Links* include many public interest job posting sites: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/planning/career-resources/public-interest-links.html#1>
- *Job fairs, Employer Informational Meetings, and other OPIA Events*. See the OPIA website, and save the following dates:
 - Massachusetts Law Consortium's Government/Public Interest Recruitment Program: 10/15/09 -10/16/09 (for 2Ls and 3Ls) and 1/21/10 – 1/21/10 (for 1Ls)
 - Equal Justice Works Career Fair, 10/24/09-10/25/09 (2Ls and 3Ls)
 Many public interest job seekers also find work through friends, alumni/ae, former employers, faculty and professional contacts. For advice on networking, see <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/landing-your-job/networking/index.html> and Ch. 5 of the *Job Search Guide*.
- *Arizona Guide: Government and Honors Internship Handbook* covers Federal employment and summer programs. To see these opportunities, follow the link: <http://www.law.arizona.edu/career/honorshandbook.cfm> (*HLS students have access privileges; e-mail OPIA for the username and password*)

HOW DO I LAND A PUBLIC INTEREST JOB?

- **Job Search Series for 1Ls** covers the nuts and bolts of the job search process for 1Ls. Dates and details on the OPIA website.
- **OPIA offers resume/cover letter review on an individualized basis.** It is strongly suggested that students follow the tips and templates in the *Job Search Guide* and online at:

- www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/landing-your-job/index.html. Once students have used our tips and templates, OPIA advisors will review your resume. OPIA advisors will also review cover letters.
- During the Early Interview Program (EIP) and Fall Interview Program (FIP), employers come to HLS to recruit 2Ls & 3Ls for summer and full-time positions. Employers also come to interview 1Ls during spring semester. You must register with OCS and bid for interviews. For more info on the bidding process and an updated list of public interest/government employers participating in FIP, visit: <https://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/landing-your-job/secure/index.html>
 - **Interviewing, Negotiating Offers, & Security Clearances:** As part of our **Mock Interview Program**, 1Ls will have the opportunity to participate in thirty-minute interviews with HLS alumni and friends of HLS representing both the public and private sectors. Dates and details are available on the OPIA website. For additional tips, see the *Job Search Guide* or visit: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/landing-your-job/index.html>.

HOW CAN I AFFORD A PUBLIC INTEREST JOB?

1. Summer Fellowships & Funding

- *Summer Public Interest Funding (SPIF)* guarantees funding for all HLS students who take public interest summer jobs. The funds are awarded through Summer Stipends or Federal Work Study grants. For eligibility, requirements, and more information, see: www.law.harvard.edu/current/sfs/spif/index.html
- *HLS Summer Fellowships* are available to support a wide variety of summer public interest work, from international human rights to Federal government. See: www.law.harvard.edu/academics/fellowships/index.html
- *Outside Funding Sources* can also be used to supplement summer earnings and include “split-summer” opportunities sponsored by law firms. See Ch. 8 of the *Job Search Guide* for more information on split-summers, visit: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/landing-your-job/resumes/pi-summers.pdf>

2. Post-Graduate Fellowships & Funding

- *Low Income Protection Plan (LIPP)* helps HLS graduates who have taken public interest jobs repay their student debt. LIPP participants pay a limited portion of their annual income towards their loan repayment obligations, and LIPP covers the remainder. For eligibility, requirements, and more info, see: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/sfs/lipp/index.html>
 - *Public Service Initiative (PSI)* will pay the third year tuition for students who satisfy summer job, public interest clinic and community involvement requirements and pledge to work 5 years in public service after graduation. Students graduating before 2011 are eligible for smaller third year tuition grants. See: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/sfs/psi/index.html>
 - *HLS Fellowships* are awarded on a competitive basis and support a variety of public service work after graduation. See: www.law.harvard.edu/academics/fellowships
 - *Harvard-wide Fellowships* are open to all Harvard students, and many are awarded to HLS students each year. For a full list, visit: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/fellowships/hls-specific-fellowship-opportunities/harvard-university-fellowships.html>
 - *External Fellowships and Federal Honors Programs* support graduating law students seeking entry-level public service opportunities within existing offices or agencies. Other grants also support public interest entrepreneurs who launch new projects or organizations. For more information, see: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/fellowships/external-fellowship-opportunities/index.html>
- **General Fellowships Resources**
 - *Fellowships Database:* login online at <https://www.law.harvard.edu/current/careers/opia/fellowships/secure/fellowshipsdatabase.html> and also see Ch. 9 of the *Job Search Guide*.
 - *Fellowships Calendar:* Fellowship deadlines can be found on the OPIA website.
 - *Fellowships Advising:* OPIA’s Fellowships Director, Judy Murciano, is an excellent resource for those interested in applying for fellowships. She helps 2Ls & 3Ls select fellowships, craft application materials, and prepare for interviews.