

Advice for Landing a Public Interest Job this Summer

By Susan DeCostanza

So, you want a public interest summer job, and you don't know where to start? Let the Law Career Services Office help. The first thing you should do is decide what types of jobs you are interested in. To narrow your focus you can pick up a "Public Interest Employer Directory" in the LCS Office, and have a look at all the not-for-profit, governmental, and private public interest firms that are in the Chicago area. There are also many other employer research resources available to you both in the LCS Office and on the internet. Have a look at EaseLaw (www.law.depaul.edu/jobs), sign up for a free account at PSLawNet (www.pslawnet.org), or browse the Public Interest Law Initiative website (www.pili-law.org), all of which are great starting points for researching organizations.

Next, touch up your résumé, and head over to O'Malley 960 for an appointment with your career counselor. Your résumé is the foundation of the basic "tool kit" that you will need for your job search, and you want it to be in the best condition possible for the job you are after (the other tools in your kit will include: cover letters, a list of references,

and writing samples). Law Career Services Counselors are experts in reorganizing, spotting résumé pitfalls, and polishing and an already impeccable résumé so that it is well-tailored to the position you are after.

After your first appointment with your career counselor be sure to pick up the "Guide to a Public Interest Job Search" for extra tips that you may need along the way. Law Career Services also sponsors events to help you fine-tune the practice skills set involved in obtaining the job you want. Make sure to check the LCS message board outside of Lewis 901 to keep up to date on events such as mock interview opportunities, local career fairs, and networking events that will allow you to continue meeting people in the fields you are interested in, as well as keep your interviewing skills sharp.

Flexibility is the key in locating your public interest summer job. If you think you want a full-time job, also be open to a part-time position. Widening your targeted geographic area of interest will increase your opportunities; finding an underserved area may be the key to getting the most experience out of your

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summer employment. Be open to volunteering at an organization a few times a week, this very well may lead to a future job. If the perfect position for you is also an unpaid position, take the job anyway, and be creative about summer funding.

Yes, I said it... money. Public interest work does not always pay well. But there is money out there for you to live off of, whether you look for it in conventional or unconventional places. Equal Justice America provides fellowships for up to \$4,000 a year for students who work full time during the summer providing legal assistance to the poor. (www.equaljusticeamerica.org).

Keep your eyes open for the Mansfield fellowship and other fellowships that fund students at summer positions at public interest organizations (check in Law Career Services to keep yourself updated). DePaul's very own student-run Public Interest Law Association runs an amazing auction in the spring to raise money that students can then apply for in order to maintain their unpaid summer internships. The religious establishment you attend may want to donate funds so that you can serve others. There may also be businesses that have interests that coincide with the interests of the organization you want to work for, and those businesses may therefore be willing to give money towards a salary for your work.

For more information, contact Susan DeCostanza, the Public Interest Coordinator, at 312-362-8374 or slepeau@students.depaul.edu

National Legal Aid and Defense Organization

(www.nlada.org) - positions in civil legal services, defender organizations, public interest organizations and law firms.

There are a number of public interest law funding opportunities to take advantage of as a DePaul Law student:

PILA/CPIL Summer Stipend: Applications will be available in mid-March, 2007 at the PILA office, Room 707. Deadline will be end of March.

Mansfield Fellowships: Two DePaul-only summer fellowships at Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. For more information and to pick up an application go to Law Career Services (Lewis 901). Deadline should be in early February 2007.

Family Law Institute Summer Funding: For more information contact Professor Barbara Hausman at bhausman@depaul.edu.

Human Rights Practicum in Chiapas, Mexico: For more information contact Professor Len Cavise at lcavise@depaul.edu. Applications will be available in January 2007.

IRHLI Sullivan Fellowships: IHRLI on the Eighth Floor of Lewis or at ihrli@depaul.edu for more information and application details and deadlines. Additional funding opportunities beyond DePaul to consider include:

Equal Justice America: Apply online at www.equaljusticeamerica.org. Deadline is March 20, 2007.

Equal Justice Works Summer Corps: Apply online at www.equaljusticeworks.org. Application should be available in early March so check often for posting.

Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) Summer Internship Program: Go to <http://pili-law.org/> and click on Student Internships for full application details.

Robert Masur Civil Liberties Fellowship: More information and application details available at <http://www.nationinstitute.org/awards/masur/>. Deadline is May 31, 2007.

National Lawyer Guild Haywood Burns Summer Fellowships: Go to <http://nlg.org/> for brochure describing possible agencies, self-designed projects and additional application details. Deadline is February 10, 2007.

Finding Summer Jobs and Funding

By Eleni Wolfe-Roubatis

Securing a public interest summer job or internship largely depends on demonstrating a dedication to public service. The most effective way to work towards a job is by taking advantage of opportunities to meet with potential public interest employers, connecting with alumni in the field and volunteering at organizations working with communities or issues that interest you.

Here are a couple resources to facilitate your job search:

Illinois Pro Bono (<http://www.illinoisprobono.org/>)- click on "Directory" tab for a comprehensive listing of all Illinois legal aid and policy organizations.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Foundation
(www.cvls.org)

Public Service Law Network (www.pslawnet.org) - info on a wide variety of public interest positions, including volunteer opportunities, paid summer positions, and post-graduate positions and fellowships. The first time you access the site you will need to register as DePaul student (DePaul is a member school).

abanet.org, Law Student Division Corner - volunteer opportunities, internships, and job postings.

Idealist.org, job listings and internships with non-profits and community organizations throughout the world.

Q&A with DePaul Alumnus Jeff Gold



Jeff Gold, a DePaul Law alumnus (2003), is a staff attorney at Indiana Legal Services (Bloomington) and Adjunct Clinical Professor at Indiana University School of Law

Can you describe what your job entails?

I provide direct legal services to low-income people. I began at Indiana Legal Services (ILS) with a 2-year Equal Justice Works fellowship focusing on rural subsidized rental housing. My fellowship is over; I now do a wider range of poverty law, including family law, housing, consumer, and public benefits.

Did you initially want to pursue a career in public interest law when you entered DePaul University College of Law? If not, what led you down the public interest path?

I came to DePaul Law to pursue a career in public interest law and was very pleased with the plethora of activities (PILA, the clinics, the practicum, externships, jobs) that allowed me to obtain lots of practical experience.

What DePaul University College of Law organizations or activities were most helpful in advancing your public interest career?

PILA – Having a community of like-minded law students was essential.

During your time at DePaul University College of Law, what type of volunteer activities did you participate in?

I was the PILA co-president. I also served as the PILA auction co-chair. In addition, I ushered at local theaters to

get away from law school.

What motivates you to continue working in public interest?

Every day I help people and I know that my work has an impact. I can't imagine myself doing legal work that would be corporate. Helping low-income people fight for justice is an amazing responsibility and a wonderful feeling.

Did you have any mentors at DePaul that helped you in pursuing a career in public interest law?

Professor Len Cavise. One of Professor Cavise's memorable pieces of advice that I now tell the law students I work with is the need to focus your energies out of law school by the time you are a 2L and certainly as a 3L. He wanted us focused on the real world. He also advised, though obsessed, about student loans to not pay student loans at the amount demanded by the financial institution but rather to negotiate with them for terms that you want.

What courses at DePaul most prepared you to enter a career in public interest?

Professor Audra Wilson's Poverty Law class.

What advice would you give to students interested in pursuing a career in public interest?

Take advantage of the opportunities offered by DePaul Law and by living in Chicago. Get involved in PILA, take a few clinics, do a practicum, and work at some of the terrific public interest law organizations around Chicago.

What is the greatest obstacle that future public interest lawyers can expect from a public interest career?

The lack of public interest jobs for new attorneys and the glut of Baby Boomers who have been in their jobs for years and don't seem to be leaving any time soon. This may leave little room for career advancement for new public interest attorneys. It also creates strata of long-time employees in organizations and newcomers who seem to come and go.

For more information, Mr. Gold can be contacted at jeffgold2@yahoo.com.

DePaul's PI Certificate Program Offers Students Unique Opportunity

By Jeff Oudsema

The Public Interest Certificate is a way for DePaul University College of Law students to gain practical experience in a field that provides legal representation to under privileged citizens in need. The PI Certificate is awarded to students who complete the requisite 15 credit hours of required material set forth in the Public Interest Certificate curriculum.

The Public Interest law curriculum was selectively chosen by faculty members to provide a well-rounded insight as to the public interest challenges a young attorney can expect to face when entering the public interest law sector. The core curriculum of the PI certificate offers classes on Sexual Orientation, Juvenile Justice, Feminist Jurisprudence, Housing & Urban Development, Race & Racism, Civil Rights, Poverty Law, and Disability Law. Often overlooked, these classes allow students to polish their legal skills in specific areas that are in need of zealous advocacy for the underrepresented. These classes provide the legal framework in which to address specific economic and social issues which plague many citizens of the United States. Completing the certificate program ensures that DePaul University College of Law students will have the needed training and experience that the public interest sector demands.

In addition to the core curriculum, the Public Interest Certificate also has an experimental and writing component. The experimental component is designed to

provide students with the clinical training of their choice. The clinics include Asylum & Immigration, Community Development, Criminal Appeals, Death Penalty, Disability Rights and Technical & Intellectual Property. These clinics focus on community-based learning. The clinics are the best way for DePaul law students to stand out from the competition because the experience is commensurate that of a young practicing attorney.

The writing component of the PI certificate is designed to provide a medium for students to display their legal analysis to vital social issues facing our community. The writing component allows students to articulate the legal positions of many underprivileged citizens. The writing component, combined with the experimental component, provide the best opportunity for students to practice their advocacy skills while still enrolled at school.

Students interested in practicing in the public interest law sector are strongly encouraged to seek PI certification. The Certificate allows DePaul law students to stand out amongst a vast number of applicants for competitive positions through their proven commitment to public interest law. Many employers will seek out students with the PI certificate because of the demonstrated practical knowledge and advocacy gained while still enrolled at DePaul University College of Law. Students interested in attaining the certificate are encouraged to contact their enrollment advisor and course catalog to learn more about which courses tailor to their specific interest.

What is Public Interest Law?

Public interest law serves individuals, groups, and social interests that are traditionally underserved by our law and government. It seeks to empower subordinated persons and communities, redress the imbalance of power between individuals and government, and promote social justice. It encompasses working to end discrimination and inequality based on class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability; lawyering on behalf of significant issues, such as the environment, healthcare, consumer protection, free speech, and voting rights; and representing people who cannot afford or do not have access to adequate legal representation, including children, the poor, criminal defendants, and institutionalized individuals.

What is the Center for Public Interest Law?

DePaul's Public Interest Law Program, now the Center for Public Interest Law, was initiated in 2004 by four students, determined to see the College of Law formalize its commitment to public interest law. Their efforts led to the creation of the Program, broader public interest law course offerings and institution-wide support for public interest endeavors. Today, the program has expanded beyond expectations.

DePaul Graduates Extol Benefits of Earning PI Certificate

By Jennifer Keys

Members of DePaul University College of Law's Center for Public Interest often tout the benefits of receiving the Public Interest Certificate and encourage students to take on the opportunity. Numerous DePaul students who have received the certificate in the last two years have discovered that the certificate has been useful in securing jobs and in demonstrating their commitment to a career in public interest.

Beth Johnson, a May 2005 graduate of DePaul University College of Law, said having the Public Interest Certificate listed on her resume was a definite talking point during her interview with the Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic. Johnson currently serves as director of criminal records for the clinic.

"During the interview I was asked about it and I was able to say that DePaul was the only law school that had it at the time and how I focused on certain classes," she said. "It was a segue to show that not only did I say I want to do public interest and demonstrate it through my experience, but also through my education."

Because Johnson interned with Cabrini Green Legal Aid throughout her law school career, she had already shown her dedication to public interest. However, she said, the required classes she took as part of the certificate program have assisted her in her job.

In addition to taking the Community Development Clinic and the Community Development seminar, Johnson also completed Poverty Law, Race and Racism and Feminist Jurisprudence.

"Poverty law was a very good class to take because it exposed you to different areas of practicing in legal aid," she said. "I found Professor Cho's Race and Racism class particularly helpful in dealing with the inherent racism in laws."

Jessica Covell, also a 2005 DePaul graduate, agreed that all of the public interest classes she took were helpful to her. The public interest-

oriented classes helped Covell refine her world view and reinforced her dedication to the field. She currently serves as a judicial clerk, researching and writing draft opinions for federal district Judge James B. Moran in the Northern District of Illinois. Eventually she hopes to work at a public defender's office or for the U.S. Attorney in the Civil Rights Division Criminal Prosecution section, which handles cases of police brutality, human trafficking and hate crimes.

"Once the word gets around about the program, it is going to give students a leg up in a world where public interest jobs are as scarce as any other."

Covell's best experience in law school occurred during her three semesters with the Death Penalty Clinic. She said it was one of the most helpful things she did in law school.

"I can't say enough about my clinic experience," she said. "Doing real work for real clients completely outshined anything I learned in the classroom."

Because Covell received her job prior to graduation, she does not yet know what effect having the certificate will have on her employment opportunities. However, she still recommends the Public Interest Certificate to future DePaul graduates.

"While it is a new thing and we can't be sure how it will help students in the long run, from looking at how similar certificates and scholarship opportunities have helped students (at other schools), I feel that once the word gets around about the program, it is going to give students a leg up in a world where public interest jobs are as scarce as any other," she said.

Calendar of Events

Fall 2006 Final Exams begin.	December 7
Final exam period ends.....	December 21
Degree conferral date.....	December 21
Winter Service Immersion Trip.	Early January, TBA
Start of classes Spring 2007.....	January 13
Martin Luther King Day Program.....	January 15
LRAP application available.....	February, TBA
Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference	Feb. 3
PILA Auction.....	March 9
LRAP application deadline.....	April 15
Hang-out lunches for DePaul law students	Mondays
interested in Public Interest work	throughout
	the semester

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The Center for Public Interest Law Committee

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Newsletter and sources available on the web!

Go to www.law.depaul.edu/programs and click on PI

