### Q: How much pro bono should I do as a 1L?
A: Law school is a big adjustment, and everyone does it at their own pace. So we generally advise 1Ls to take time to acclimate to law school (and focus on classes), and to wait to do any pro bono work until spring semester or 2L year. For those of you who are interested in exploring pro bono options during 1L year, and feel that having some interaction with the “real” world outside of CLS will be a motivation and not be overwhelming, SJI has developed some projects with manageable and flexible time commitments. For more information, see our website or contact our pro bono program coordinator.

### Q: Where geographically should I look for a job?
A: We always encourage students to think beyond NYC, Washington D.C., San Francisco and LA, and to consider working in a market that is less saturated with CLS students. It is often easier for CLS students to find jobs in these smaller markets. Plus, once there, you have the advantage of being a “big fish in a small pond”, and often can get to know the public interest community much more quickly. 1L summer is a great time to explore a new area of the country or consider working abroad; whereas 2L summer should be more targeted to places you would consider moving after graduation.

### Q: Will employers care about my online profile?
A: *Your online profile* could send “red flags” to employers and hurt your application – so make sure to actively monitor your profile and delete anything inappropriate!! Employers may “google” prospective employees, and/or check Facebook and other online sites to gain information. Employers will be wary of candidates with inappropriate or revealing profiles, pictures or information.
Q: Will a public interest employer still consider hiring me if I go to a firm for a summer internship?

A: Most will -- if you have also done (at other points) substantive public interest work such as internships, externships, clinics, or other positions that have given you some substantive experience in the issues or relevant skills. Additionally, if you do pro bono work while at the firm, or develop relevant skills, the firm experience is less likely to deter public interest employers. That being said, public interest is very competitive and some employers view a summer at a firm (especially the 2L summer) as a strong negative. In some fields (e.g., labor and environmental law), working for the “other side” on relevant matters may close doors to a public interest job. As always, consult with a SJI counselor when considering this option.

Q: Should I split a summer between a firm and public interest organization?

A: We generally advise against splitting a summer. First, spending a shortened amount of time in each position means you get less of an opportunity to really explore the work, or get to know the staff and culture. Second, you also get less of a chance to prove yourself -- which can hurt your chances at getting a good reference from the public interest organization or an offer from the firm. Third, you will probably be given work that is less interesting because you will be there a shorter time (or because you are not there when they give out initial assignments). Fourth, finding an organization that is even willing to let you split the summer is hard -- so you may have limited options for where to spend half of the summer. Fifth, you are less likely to develop quality relationships with supervisors or other potential mentors. However, there are situations where splitting a summer makes sense. You can meet with an SJI advisor to discuss your particular situation and whether a split summer makes sense for you.

Q: What if I get multiple offers for the summer? Or my second choice job gives me an offer before my first choice job?

A: If you get an offer from a public interest organization, you should be very appreciative, and then ask the organization for one or two weeks to give them your answer. (They do not have to give you this amount of time, but they might be willing to). Then contact the other organization that you are interested in ASAP, explain that you have another offer but that their organization is your first choice, and ask them whether they can make a decision within the timeframe you’ve been given by the first organization. Remember to get back to the first organization within the timeframe they have allotted -- do not ask for additional time!
2L TIMELINE

2L Summer/Fall

- Update and revise your resume. Craft new and updated cover letters. 2L advisors can assist you.
- Consider participating in the Early Interview Program (EIP) in the late summer if there are government agencies or other employers that interest you, and in On-Campus Interviewing (OCI) in the fall to meet with other government agencies, public interest law firms, and public interest employers. (Most employers attending these events are private firms). More information is provided via email.
- Reflect on 2L summer internship opportunities and consider whether you want to explore new areas in 2L summer or continue in the same field you assessed in the first year. Consider how your 2L summer will relate to your graduate goals. For example, will you need to cultivate potential fellowship sponsors?
- Review deadlines for 2L summer internship opportunities, including deadlines for organizations that have deadlines in the spring. Submit your applications even if a deadline is listed. Applications should generally be sent in early fall. Send 2-3 applications initially.
- Register for GSF for 2L summer.
- Consider applying for the Law Student Internship Program (LSIP) for 2L summer.
- Meet with 2L advisor as needed (2Ls do not have to wait until November).
- Consider attending the JIP Fair in October in Washington D.C. in late fall to follow-up on summer internship applications, and send additional applications as necessary.
- If you applied to corporate law firms for summer positions, you are likely to hear back before you hear from public interest employers. If you receive an offer, you may need to ask for an extension to finish your public interest job search. The firm is not obligated to grant an extension, but it is likely to. (Choose one offer only, and do not ask for an extension beyond April 1st). See an OCB advisor and 2L advisor for further guidance.

2L Late Fall/Winter

- Follow-up on applications. (Remember that many public interest employers do not make hiring decisions until the spring.)
- Send additional applications as needed. Consult with 2L advisor as needed.
2L Spring

- Continue with pro bono work.
- Attend programming on fellowships, clerkships, and other post-graduate opportunities.
- Attend information sessions on loan repayment (LRAP) and debt management.
- Attend "Public Interest Moving Forward" for rising 3L's to learn how to continue to prepare to be a public interest, human rights, or government lawyer.
- Consider coursework, clinics, externships, and other public interest opportunities for 3L year, and attend relevant information sessions. Meet with an SJI advisor to plan your 3L year.
- Consider attending the PUC fair held at NYU in February as backup.
- Review Fellowship Guide (http://www.law.columbia.edu/programs/social-justice/sji-at-clsls/fellowships/fellowships-current) and begin to think about whether you are interested in applying for fellowships. If you are, begin thinking about potential sponsors and projects; and plan to work on fellowship applications during the summer. Make sure you are matched with a CLS fellowship advisor. For questions, contact Maddie Kurtz, Director of Public Interest Professional and Pro Bono Programs, at Madeleine.Kurtz@law.columbia.edu.

2L Ongoing

- Attend public interest programming.
- Build public interest credentials through participation in pro bono opportunities, internships, externships, clinics, coursework, journals and student organizations.
- Continue networking.
- Continue meeting with SJI advisor.
- Read SJI Monday Newsletters and SJI Friday Emails.
3L Timeline

3L Summer/Fall

- If applicable, work on and complete fellowship applications. These are due in the fall (deadlines vary, depending on funder).
- Meet with SJI advisor to plan job search strategy.
- Review job announcements and deadlines for other post-graduate opportunities.
- Prepare for interviews. SJI advisors are available for mock interviews.

3L Winter/Spring

- Apply for fellowships with later deadlines.
- Continue to apply for jobs.
- Continue to network.

3L Ongoing

- Attend public interest programming.
- Continue to build public interest credentials through participation in pro bono opportunities, internships, externships, clinics, coursework, journals and student organizations.
- Continue networking. Think about contacting attorneys at organizations to "shadow for a day" (especially at public defender and prosecution jobs).
- Sign up for job announcement emails from PSJD@naldc.org and other sites.
- Read SJI Monday Newsletters and SJI Friday emails.