



# **Boston College Law School Office of Career Services**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO PRIVATE PRACTICE**

Lawyers in private practice deliver legal services to a client for a fee. Referring to lawyers in private practice as a homogeneous group however is very misleading since the term can include anything from the solo practitioner to an international law firm, from transactional to litigation work, and from specific specialty boutiques to general practice firms. For the BC Law Class of 2006, nine months after graduation, 65% were working in a law firm.

Once you have made the decision to pursue a career in private practice, how do you decide between large, medium and small firms and how do you go about your job search?

### **THE LARGE LAW FIRM**

Large law firms are typically classed as those firms with 100 or more attorneys. Firms of this size are typically located in or around larger cities. Many have offices in more than one city and the mega large firms have offices in more than one country and employ more than five hundred attorneys. Large firms tend to provide the highest initial starting salaries. NALP statistics for the Class of 2007 show that the median starting salary for law firms in Massachusetts with over 100 attorneys was \$145,000. Most recently law firms have hiked the starting salaries for new associates so that the largest firms in Boston are now paying \$160,000 per year. Higher salaries will translate into increased demands on associates and their billable hours.

Large law firms tend to also provide the greatest opportunities for specialization within practice areas, a steady client base, and a chance to practice law with attorneys who can provide the benefit of valuable legal experience. As these firms work with a sophisticated client base, the nature of the legal work in these firms is complex. The workload is demanding both intellectually and with respect to the 'lack of control' associates have over the hours they work. Most large firms are departmentalized by practice area and have a tight hierarchical structure. The partnership usually includes one-quarter to one-half of the lawyers in the firm. The remainder of the lawyers are salaried associates or more senior attorneys called Counsel or Of Counsel.

Partnership decisions are usually made after seven to ten years. In terms of achieving partnership within a large firm, unlike in the past, large firms now need to hire many more associates than there will ultimately be opportunities for partnership. While this is important to bear in mind, it is also worth noting that large firm attorneys are generally highly marketable even if they do not attain partnership. Many attorneys begin their careers at a large firm and later become in-house counsel for corporate clients or join

smaller sized firms, or embark upon public sector positions, such as the U.S. Attorney's Office. Thus, while working in a large firm may not always ensure long-term job security and satisfaction, it can be an excellent steppingstone to other practice settings.

While appearing at times to be indestructible, larger law firms do face some challenges in the market place. For example, the firms are competing for business at fair prices yet managing the demands and resources of global expansion. In addition, with the recent pattern of firms merging (which is discussed in more detail below), the legal market and the firms within it may also be very different in five years time which makes it challenging for the larger firms to accurately assess their competition.

Among the benefits of working in a large firm are outstanding compensation, training (often in the form of organized programs) and "prestige." For those who want freedom and flexibility in the hours they work and in the types of clients they represent however, the large law firm may not be the best choice. Large firm practice often requires a large number of billable hours annually to support an infrastructure that includes the training and management required of such an enterprise. Associates have little control over their schedule, or the types of assignments, cases and clients handled. Additionally, the atmosphere in a large firm may be highly competitive due to the focus on billable hours and advancement within the firm, particularly when the economy is slow and work becomes more difficult to find.

### **THE MEDIUM LAW FIRM**

Medium law firms may employ anywhere between 25 and 100 attorneys. The size and definition of a medium sized law firm will vary depending on their geographic location. For example, a medium sized firm in NYC could well be called a large firm in most other U.S. cities. Organizationally, the medium-size firm falls somewhere between the looser structure of the small law firm and the more formally structured and departmentalized larger law firm.

Depending on the nature of the practice and the backgrounds of the lawyers, the qualifications required and the salaries for new associates can vary significantly. 3% of the BC Law Class of 2006 were employed in medium sized law firms nine months after graduation. The NALP survey for the Class of 2007 showed that the median salary in Massachusetts for law firms employing 26 to 50 attorneys was \$90,000 and those for law firms employing between 51 and 100 attorneys was \$85,000.

Generally, the structure of a medium law firm is more flexible than a larger law firm and departments and sections (and thereby cross-over of work between departments) are less formal. Some medium sized firms tend to be highly specialized while others are general practice firms. While some medium firms may be divided into departments, others may be "boutiques" focusing on a specific practice area such as patent and trademark law or bankruptcy. Boutique firms tend to manage themselves in a similar way to larger firms. Some, because of their client base and practice, compete directly with large law firms for

clients. The breadth and depth of the client base may also vary significantly but is likely to be smaller than in a larger law firm.

For associates, working in a medium-sized firm may provide more flexibility in hours and a greater amount of responsibility with respect to client contact and case work. Specific characteristics, such as partnership track and required billable hours, will vary among medium-sized firms, depending upon the firm's size, geographic location, and practice areas. Length of time to partnership will vary, but in general, most hiring is done with the expectation that an associate who develops their potential, will become a partner. Although large firms have had a long tarnished reputation as "sweat shops," the client demands, and hence the billable hours for both the medium and the large firms are actually quite similar. In addition, the number of attorneys available to train a new associate may be fewer and training practices may vary from casual mentor systems to sophisticated training programs.

The merger trend once affecting only corporations has moved to the law firm arena within the last ten years. It is therefore important to get a sense of where a medium sized firm is going. Is the firm content to remain at its present size or does it envision expansion or merger to become a larger firm? Firms actively seek merger partners in order to move into new geographic markets and practice areas. These firms want to increase their platform to attract more sophisticated and high-profile clients and ultimately to increase the combined firm's profitability. As the large firms grow even larger, the distinction between medium and large firms becomes hazy. Many medium sized firms and some large firms are becoming targets for larger firms with even larger aspirations. As thriving local medium sized firms watch their clients consolidate and become more national and international in scope, many firms are following suit which is leaving mid-sized regional firms more marginalized. Geographic diversity is seen as providing much more stability these days.

Students should therefore always enquire as to a firm's long-term expansion plans. Does the firm have any current plans to merge? Would the firm consider a merger in the future? What factors would the firm rely on in deciding whether or not to merge? If no merger is intended, how does it intend to maintain a niche in the market? What are the firm's expectations for growth? In which practice areas? What new practice areas does the firm want to move into? What are the firm's priorities for the next 5 years? A merger will affect a firm's culture and often its partnership and administrative structure. A merger will also affect benefits, training programs and partnership progression, particularly for associates who work at the target firm. It is therefore important to take this into account if a firm says it would consider a merger in the future.

### **Hiring Practices for Medium and Large Law Firms**

Large firms recruit second- and third-year students almost exclusively in the Fall. Although some medium sized firms may participate in fall recruiting, many wait until the spring to hire when they can better ascertain their needs. Most of the firms that hire in the spring will request that students apply directly to them. Notices for any of these

openings are posted on our open job posting website on Symplicity (<https://law-bc-csm.symplicity.com/students>). Most medium sized firms limit their recruiting to schools regionally and locally. Students seeking positions outside of their immediate region will need to contact firms on their own and normally plan a trip to the area for interview.

Most larger law firms recruit aggressively through the OCI process. The Fall OCI recruitment program is the largest and most visible recruiting program on-campus. Most of the large and medium firms participating in this program are hiring second-year students to participate as summer associates in a structured “Summer Program.” A significant percentage of second and third year students will accept positions as a result of Fall recruiting. Typically, the hiring process for summer programs begins with an on-campus interview, although students may also interview with firms that do not participate in the on-campus program by traveling to their offices. The initial interview is followed with a “callback” visit to the firm, which generally includes four interviews with a combination of associates and partners, and either breakfast or lunch with two attorneys. For more in depth discussion of OCI and the interview process please consult your Job Search Handbook or speak with a Career Services Counselor.

The best route to a large law firm is most definitely through participating in a summer program. Firms use their summer programs as a vehicle for hiring permanent first-year associates - it is often considered the most important aspect of their hiring efforts. Therefore, at the conclusion of the summer, they will give most, if not all, of their summer associates offers to return as first year associates after graduation. When making hiring decisions, important criteria include a strong academic record, prior work experience, a willingness to assume responsibility, strong interpersonal skills, excellent research and writing skills, good judgment, and self-confidence. Firms also take note of students’ participation in journals, moot court, mock trial, clinical programs and other extracurricular activities. 52% of the BC Law Class of 2006 were working in a large law firm 9 months after graduation, although this does not include that percentage of the class who start their careers in judicial internships.

Few large firms hire students for the summer after their first-year of law school, although we have seen a slight increase over the past few years. Those firms that do hire, prefer to hire students who attend law schools with which the firms want to establish or improve a recruiting relationship. Large firms in smaller cities sometimes hire first-year students who come from that particular geographic area or who demonstrate a commitment to return there upon graduation. These firms try to maintain a relationship with the students, hoping that they will accept permanent positions after graduation. Medium firms are slightly more flexible and will often hire a first-year student with strong credentials. There has been an increase in 1L access to law firms over the past few years due to some of the larger firms offering diversity programs. These programs can offer an academic scholarship and can also include mentoring by a member of the firm and a likely paid summer associate position. Applications are usually considered from December 1<sup>st</sup>. Further information can be found on the BC Law and NALP websites.

## **Summer Programs for Medium and Large Law Firms**

Most firms intend for their Summer Programs to provide law students with a realistic view of law firm life through interesting work, training and the opportunity to interact with firm members and clients. Summer associates may be assigned to one department, or may rotate through several departments. Litigation assignments may include legal research and drafting memoranda, complaints, briefs and client correspondence. Transactional assignments may include assisting at closings, drafting ancillary deal documents, performing due diligence, and compiling closing binders. Summer associates also have opportunities to accompany attorneys to court hearings, trials, witness and expert interviews, depositions, negotiation sessions, transaction closings and client meetings. Feedback is often provided through formal mid-summer and end-of-summer reviews, as well as informally from assigning attorneys as projects are completed.

In addition to work assignments, most firms provide an array of weekly training programs to summer associates. Examples include writing programs, mock trials, motion sessions, deposition workshops, drafting exercises and mock negotiations, as well as lectures on more substantive topics. Summer associates are also encouraged to participate in a variety of social activities intended for students and people at the firm to get to know one another and the firm's city. Social events may include dinners at partners' homes, harbor cruises, baseball games, theater performances, museum events, bonding events such as scavenger hunts or cooking classes, and lunches at some of the city's best restaurants.

Although most firms hire the majority of their first year associates through their Summer Program, occasionally they will consider third year law students. Firms will interview third year students when they have underestimated their need for first year associates or when several summer associates have not accepted their offers.

## **THE SMALL LAW FIRM**

10% of the BC Law Class of 2006 were employed in small firms nine months after graduation. Small firms, typically defined as those with under 25 attorneys, vary widely in terms of size, location and scope of practice. Some are general practice businesses, handling legal work in a variety of practice areas, while others are "boutique" practices, specializing in one or two specific areas for example, labor law, bankruptcy, real estate or tax law (some of which have been formed by experienced practitioners leaving a larger, more established law firm).

Small firms are located in both large cities and in small towns, which often influences the nature of the clients served. By comparison to a large firm, a smaller firm will have the greater number of individual and small business clients. The small firm is also likely to be involved with the client in all phases of their business (or personal) dealings. The ability to generate business and develop is extremely important. Compensation is generally lower at small firms than at large firms, particularly for new attorneys (the NALP statistics for the Class for 2007 show that the median salary for entry level

associates at law firms in Massachusetts with 2-10 attorneys was \$50,500 and with 11-25 attorneys was \$61,250).

A strong employment market however does not mean that every new graduate starts work in a large law firm - attorneys are attracted to small firm practice for numerous reasons. Small firms generally offer attorneys high levels of responsibility (hands-on experience), the ability to appear in court at an earlier stage, autonomy and client contact at a very early stage. In addition, the work schedule is often more flexible and less demanding than at larger firms. In most cases, there will be little formal training available to a new associate in a small firm (although of course, advice will nearly always be available from other more experienced attorneys). Moreover, many attorneys are attracted to small firms due to the potential to develop desired practice areas- many are attracted by the range and variety of subject areas available to practice in so that they have a diverse legal training career. It may also be possible to attain partnership at an earlier point in a legal career – in an established firm, the offer at partnership could come within the first five years and at a growing firm, even sooner. In addition, while this is not always the case, smaller law firms can be more adept at adjusting to changing business conditions. They can respond more quickly to refocus their emphasis on more profitable practice areas in times of economic downturn. They also hire more judiciously and are less likely to have invested heavily in practice areas that get hit hard by recession (for example mergers and acquisitions or financing internet start-ups).

### **Hiring Practices and Job Search Strategies for Small Law Firms**

The job search for a smaller firm can be a frustrating experience. A successful small firm job search requires in-depth research, initiative and a focus on geography. Since small firms typically hire on an “as needed basis”, small firm hiring is not as predictable as large law firm hiring. As such, they tend to hire for 2L summer positions between February and May, and for permanent positions in the Spring, Summer or Fall following admission to the bar. As small firms generally grow slowly and are rarely overstaffed, changes in the economy usually do not affect their hiring needs.

The strategy for obtaining a small firm position is more complex than for large firms because the vast majority of small firms *do not participate* in campus interview programs. In addition, they are less likely to advertise their positions widely. They are most likely to rely on the referrals or recommendations of colleagues. While occasionally a small law firm in this area will come on campus to interview or participate in spring job fairs, more often interested firms that are hiring will require that students apply directly to them. Apply directly notices can be found on Symplicity and students should regularly check for current job postings. The vast majority of the time, the burden lies with students to contact these employers through their own individual research and targeted mailings.

Students should also be prepared to thoroughly research geographical areas of interest and to proactively contact small firms. Learn about specific towns by reading local

newspapers and speaking with residents, if possible. Is the area's population growing? Have any businesses recently moved into the area, or have any left the town? Are certain law firms mentioned regularly? Then use a targeted approach to contact small firms.

Small firm employers are particularly impressed by cover letters that are individualized and not just part of a "mass mailing." When possible, contact attorneys with whom you share a similar background, such as having attended the same college or law school. Expressing a familiarity and interest in their legal practice and community, and defining what you have to offer that is *relevant to the firm*, will help set your letter apart and demonstrate that you are prepared to assume responsibility quickly. For example, if a firm specializes in taxation, your letter and resume should include details about any courses, internships, or work experiences you have had that specifically relate to tax. Simply providing a general statement about your background is much less persuasive. Similarly, small firm practitioners often become involved in their communities as a way to develop a client base. 'Choosing Small Choosing Smart' by Donna Gerson is a good guide to the small law firm job search. It suggests making a positive impression by communicating the fact that you understand the importance of business development. If you are able to emphasize any local connections and possible networking opportunities, do so. This will demonstrate a commitment to building a presence in the community.

Thus, emphasizing your regional ties, community activities, and commitment to the area, is advisable. Small firms focus much more on experience, motivation, enthusiasm and business savvy, with less emphasis on grades. By emphasizing these skills, students project confidence in their abilities and stand out from other applications. They want to know you can hit the ground running – demonstrating real-life drafting, research, time recording skills (real practical legal skills) through summer employment, part-time legal jobs, clinics or internships will help. Tailor your resume and cover letter accordingly by emphasizing your prior experience in as much detail as possible and by tailoring your resume to the specific practice areas that you are interested in. If you have a specific connection to the area, make sure you state this. Within a few weeks of mailing your resume and cover letter, follow-up with a phone call inquiring whether the materials were received and whether they need additional information from you.

### **Resources for the Small Law Firm Job Search**

To gather information on small firms, utilize both *written* resources as listed on page 12 below and *human* resources. It is important to note that at least 80% of all jobs are not advertised, but filled by "word of mouth." Networking and informational interviewing are the means by which most people find jobs, and are especially effective tools for researching and identifying small firms. Gathering information and advice from family, friends, former employers, college classmates, law school faculty and alumni can help you define your interests and learn specifics about different areas of practice and firms working in those areas. The *Alumni Career Network* is a computerized database containing the names and contact information for over 1,200 BC Law alumni who have offered to speak to students and alumni on career-related matters. These individuals have

volunteered to become part of your network and constitute an invaluable resource both locally and throughout the United States. Notably, over 100 of these alumni work in small/solo practices. Establishing a strong network of contacts will prove beneficial, not only as you continue your job search, but also as you begin your career as a small firm attorney. Thus, keep a record of your contacts and relationships, and always remember to send thank you notes to those who have given you their time.

Continuing Legal Education programs and the Young Lawyers Division of state bar associations present informative programs on specialty areas and general practice. These events provide opportunities for you to meet attorneys in your areas of interest and to network. Students can become members of these Bar Associations at a greatly reduced rate.

Finally, if you have time during the academic year, consider working part-time for a small firm or solo practitioner. While these jobs do not always lead to a permanent full-time position at graduation, the possibility is there if the firm knows the quality of your work product. This also applies to graduates -- consider doing part-time, contract, and/or temporary work as you are looking for a permanent position. Interim work can allow you to "get your foot in the door" with an employer. Working for a solo practitioner who shares space or resources with other attorneys can also lead to employment opportunities and develop a wider professional network. Each semester the law school provides an array of clinical programs that provide terrific opportunities to explore different practice areas and get hand on experience. Students can act as legal interns for private sector employers under the guidance of BC Law instructors. The clinics also provide another outstanding opportunity to explore legal practice settings.

A successful small firm job search requires patience, persistence and follow-up. Even if you have no luck with a firm in January or February, keeping in touch can result in a job offer in April or May. Please make an appointment with one of the Career Services Counselors to develop a strategy for your small firm job search.

### **THE SOLO PRACTITIONER**

Most solo practitioners are located in suburban or rural areas. Solo practice has many advantages: complete independence and flexibility allowing you to be your own boss and dictate your own working schedules. However it also has its disadvantages: inability to rely on others when you have a heavy caseload; your income is dependent on your client base; and lack of support system. For these reasons, solo practice tends to attract people who are self-starters – those who are self-motivated, enjoy marketing and business and who enjoy controlling their own destiny. The large start-up expenses and the need for a client base to generate income, means that most lawyers wait until they have some legal experience and contacts before venturing out on their own. High overhead costs in a city usually necessitates that attorneys practice together in order to share expenses. For the recent graduate, affiliation with lawyers in a space sharing arrangement would definitely be the recommended way to go. While solo practitioners still represent the largest number of private law firms (approximately 45%), only about 3% of law graduates

nationally chose to 'go solo' immediately upon graduation. Please make an appointment with one of the Career Services Counselors to develop a strategy for setting up as a solo practitioner.

A successful private practice job search requires patience, persistence and follow-up notwithstanding whether you are applying to a small, medium or large law firm. Please make an appointment with one of the Career Services Counselors to develop a strategy for your private practice job search.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES FOR LARGE AND MEDIUM LAW FIRMS

### **Best Resources:**

- **National Association for Law Placement Directory of Legal Employers:** at [www.nalpdirectory.com](http://www.nalpdirectory.com).
- **Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory:** at [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com) and on LEXIS.
- **Individual Firm Websites:** are a very good resource for learning more about potential employers. Most large law firms have comprehensive websites detailing their practice areas, their attorney biographies and providing information on how to apply for jobs. On some of the firm website, you can find BC Alums by searching on the attorney pages by law school.
- **Vault Guides:** these guides, available in hard copy in the Career Services Resource Room, provide a useful starting point for research. You should not rely on them completely, however, as the ratings of the firms can be based on a few skewed responses, either positive or negative and catchy sound-bytes. See particularly the Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms.
- **WetFeet Press,** at [www.wetfeet.com/Content/Industries/Law.aspx](http://www.wetfeet.com/Content/Industries/Law.aspx). WetFeet's 'Careers for Lawyers' section includes articles and advice on researching firms and attorney profiles.
- **FindLaw.com,** [www.careers.findlaw.com](http://www.careers.findlaw.com). The career center provides helpful resources such as a job search directory, salary charts and newsletters.
- **Insider publications and websites:**
  - **[www.americanlawyer.com](http://www.americanlawyer.com)** and in particular the mid-level and summer surveys. These surveys are worth considering, but the popularity of a firm can vary dramatically from year to year depending on that year's respondents.
  - **[www.nylawyer.com](http://www.nylawyer.com)** which includes daily news articles which are pulled from legal publications nationwide.
- **Boston College Law School Alumni Career Network.** This Network is composed of BC Law graduates who have volunteered to offer career guidance to students through informational interviewing. The information is available on the Career Services Office website. It includes the names, addresses, phone numbers of participating alumni as well as their employers and areas of expertise. *Please remember Network members are to be contacted for information only, not for the purposes of obtaining a job.* Contact the Career Services Office for the password and username for the database.
- **1L Job Search Job Handbook:** contains useful information generally about the job search *and also contains a list of recent employers.*
- **Summer Questionnaires.** Read evaluations by BC Law students about their summer employment experiences. The questionnaires are found in black binders in the Career Resource Library and are an invaluable source of information.
- **Career Services Resource Room:** which contains books, directories, periodicals and videotapes on a wide range of legal employment areas and issues. Background information about employers is located in the black filing cabinets.

*Also try:*

- **WESTLAW:** This contains information about attorneys and law firms, lists legal periodicals and newspapers for cities throughout the United States. It also has excellent search capabilities.
- **LEXIS-NEXIS.** The NEXIS General News and Business Library ([www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com)) contains full text articles from several hundred leading news and business sources and trade publications, including The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. It also has a vast wealth of information and excellent search capabilities.

## RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHING SMALL LAW FIRMS

### **Best Resources:**

- **Boston College Law School Alumni Career Network.** This Network is composed of BC Law graduates who have volunteered to offer career guidance to students through informational interviewing. The information is available on the Career Services Office website. It includes the names, addresses, phone numbers of participating alumni as well as their employers and areas of expertise. *Please remember Network members are to be contacted for information only, not for the purposes of obtaining a job.* Contact the Career Services Office for the password and username for the database.
- **Symplicity:** Career Services manages its recruitment programs through a web based program designed by Symplicity. The Jobs/Resume Collection section consists of approximately 1,000 employers who cannot interview on campus but will request that students forward their resumes with a cover letter directly to them. Listing are updated regularly and contain notices for summer, permanent and part-time positions.
- **WESTLAW:** This contains information about attorneys and law firms, lists legal periodicals and newspapers for cities throughout the United States. It also has excellent search capabilities. Specialized databases include:
  - *West's Legal Directory-Individual States.* Lists attorneys in particular states.
  - *West's Legal Directory-Topical Legal Directories.* Lists attorneys who practice in particular areas of law.
  - *West's Legal Directory-Private Practice.* Lists attorneys nationwide.
- **Specialized Directories:** For example:
  - *Directory of Environmental Attorneys*
  - *Association of Trial Lawyers of America*
  - *Law and Business Directory of Litigation Attorneys/IP attorneys/Bankruptcy Attorneys/Sports and Entertainment Attorneys*
- **Martindale Hubbell Law Directory:** [www.martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com)
- **1L Job Search Job Handbook:** contains useful information generally about the job search and also contains a list of recent employers.
- **Summer Questionnaires.** Read evaluations by BC Law students about their summer employment experiences. The questionnaires are found in binders in the Career Resource Library and are an invaluable source of information.
- **Career Services Resource Room:** which contains books, directories, periodicals and videotapes on a wide range of legal employment areas and issues. Background information about employers is located in the black filing cabinets.

### ***Also try:***

***Choosing Small Choosing Smart: Job Search Strategies for Lawyers in the Small Firm Market,*** by Donna Gerson, Esq., published by NALP. Available in the Career Resource Library.

***Guide to Small Firm Employment,*** NALP

***Negotiating with Small Firms,*** NALP

**Local Lawyer Newspapers and Local Bar Associations** (see the 'Long Distance Job Search Manual' and the 'Career Jumpstarts' for further information)



## COMPARING THE SMALL, MEDIUM & LARGE FIRMS

Type	Pay Scale	Training	Hiring Cycle	How to Apply	Hiring Criteria
<p><b>Small</b> (Under 25 Attorneys)</p>	<p>May be salaried or offer creative financing options, combining a guaranteed base salary with a draw on profits.</p> <p>See NALP's '<i>Jobs &amp; J.D.'s: Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates – Class of 2007</i>' for further information.</p>	<p>Firms likely train new attorneys through informal means, such as one-on-one mentoring and supervision and hands-on experience. They also encourage participation in continuing education classes. Formal training programs are not likely to be available in-house.</p>	<p>Firms hire on an as-needed basis. Consider applying at several different times throughout the year. Also, many small firms will not hire graduates until they have passed a bar exam.</p> <p>Target these firms at the end of October and throughout the Spring Semester.</p>	<p>Send a resume and cover letter directly to the firm. They will not always have a legal recruiter, so call first to get a contact name. You may send your application to a hiring partner, office manager, first year associate or BC Law graduate. Call to follow-up about two weeks after sending your application.</p> <p>Jobs advertisements may be posted on Symplicity or in local legal publications.</p> <p>Many positions will be filled through "word-of-mouth" without being advertised, so networking is extremely important.</p>	<p>While academic performance is important, small firms may place less of an emphasis on grades than the larger firms. Small firms will also be interested in your prior experiences, including clinical programs, moot court participation and legal jobs. They will also focus on personal qualities, such as demonstration of a hard work ethic, a student's ties to the community, and "fit" within the firm.</p>
<p><b>Medium</b> (25 – 100 Attorneys)</p>	<p>Salaries among medium sized firm may vary greatly depending upon the firm's specific size and geographic location (big city v. suburb). The larger, city-based firms will offer more competitive salaries.</p> <p>Refer to <a href="http://www.nalp.org">www.nalp.org</a> for additional salary information.</p>	<p>Firms likely encourage participation in continuing education classes and may offer in-house training programs as well. The larger firms may have a "Summer Program."</p>	<p>The smaller firms hire on an as-needed basis, and are more likely to advertise in the winter or spring for summer interns or permanent positions. Target them in late September and throughout Spring Semester</p> <p>Some of the larger firms may have a Summer Program and might hire through OCI.</p>	<p>Some firms with a "Summer Program" will recruit through OCI, either on campus, through off campus programs, or through a resume collection.</p> <p>Some firms may post positions on Symplicity and ask that students apply directly, usually requesting a resume, cover letter, and transcript.</p> <p>Networking is also extremely important, as there are many firms who will never post a job, but will fill the position through "word-of-mouth."</p>	<p>Firms with formal "Summer Programs" and who hire through OCI are likely to place a strong emphasis on academic performance. They will also consider law review membership, moot court participation and prior work experience.</p> <p>Smaller firms may place less of an emphasis on academic success and more emphasis on prior work experience and the strength of your writing, researching and interpersonal skills.</p>
<p><b>Large</b> (100 – 500+ Attorneys)</p>	<p>Large firms offer competitive salaries at the highest range for that city. In a strong economy, associates may also receive substantial bonuses based on merit.</p> <p>Refer to <a href="http://www.nalp.org">www.nalp.org</a> for additional salary information.</p>	<p>Firms of this size have formal in-house "Summer Programs," as well as formal in-house training for their first-year associates. They also encourage participation in continuing education classes and local and national seminars in specific practice areas.</p>	<p>Large firms primarily hire 2L students for their Summer Programs through the on-campus program in the fall.</p> <p>As they hire the majority of their first-year associates out of their summer associates, they usually hire only a handful of 3L</p>	<p>Apply through OCI and Symplicity. Firms may interview on campus, at off campus programs or participate in a resume collection.</p> <p>For firms not participating in the BC Law recruiting programs, apply directly to the Recruiting Director by sending a resume and cover letter.</p>	<p>These firms place a strong emphasis on GPA, law review membership, and other demonstrations of academic success.</p> <p>They also consider prior work experience and undergraduate educational performance (strength of school &amp; performance).</p>

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