



# YOUR PUBLIC INTEREST ROADMAP:

## EXPLORING PUBLIC INTEREST/ PUBLIC SERVICE LAW AT COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

Prepared for the exclusive use of Columbia Law School students and graduates.

SOCIAL  
JUSTICE  
Initiatives

 Columbia Law School

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# INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING PUBLIC INTEREST & GOVERNMENT AT CLS

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Welcome to Columbia Law School (CLS)! We are dedicated to providing myriad opportunities, mentoring, and counseling for those students who are interested in exploring careers in public interest or government service, and for those who might engage in pro bono work wherever they practice. Public interest and government careers are exciting and satisfying, enabling you to use your lawyering skills to make an impact on issues you are passionate about and that are vital to the community. This guide will serve as a roadmap for your three years at CLS, providing knowledge about all that is offered as well as a general timeline for taking advantage of those opportunities.

Please read the entire guide for full information. Here is a quick snapshot to get you started:

## 1Ls: Jump right in!

- **Programming:** Attend public interest and government programs presented by Social Justice Initiatives (SJI), CLS Centers, or student organizations. Meet practitioners, learn about areas of practice, and begin to plan your own path. Attend sessions on Columbia's generous loan repayment assistance program (LRAP).
- **Student activities:** Build your community and your skills. Participate in student organizations or in activities like moot courts. In the spring, consider applying for a position on a journal.
- **Summer job exploration:** 1L summer is important to your public interest or government career path. Apply for Guaranteed Summer Funding (GSF) or the Human Rights Internship Program (HRIP). SJI's related mandatory programming will help you find a job. Attend the Public Interest Legal Career (PILC) Fair (February at NYU) to meet employers and even interview onsite.
- **Experiential learning:** In the spring, attend information sessions on 2L clinics and externships – applications are due in late spring. Experiential learning is key to developing as a public interest or government lawyer!

## 2Ls: Continue to do everything you did 1L year and more!

- **Programming:** Continue to take advantage of the wide array of programming available at CLS. Talk to the presenters afterwards.
- **Experiential learning, classes, and pro bono:** Take a clinic and/or externship, or do a term-time internship as an alternative. Take classes to build your knowledge and skills on an array of topics. Develop relationships with professors and practitioners along the way.
- **Student activities & pro bono:** Get involved! Help lead a student organization. Work on a journal. Publish an article or note on a public interest topic. Find interesting pro bono work and/or do a Spring Break Caravan.
- **Obtaining a summer position:** 2L summer is very important to obtaining a postgraduate job. Intern with a public interest or government employer in a field of interest. To find a job, attend fairs (like the Equal Justice Works, or EJW, Fair, October in Washington, DC and the PILC Fair) and apply for the On-Campus Interview (OCI) Program. If you decide to work

at a private firm, network with public interest practitioners over the summer, do pro bono in a field of interest, and/or consider splitting your summer.

- **Preparing for postgraduate employment:** Over 2L summer, start planning for postgraduate employment. Network. Explore fellowships and government honors programs. Let SJI know if you will be applying for fellowships or honors programs; we will work with you. Note: some applications are due at the end of 2L summer.
- **Clerkships:** Think about whether you want to clerk after graduation. Meet with the Clerkship Office to find out more. Note: under the new hiring plan, you should not apply for clerkships until after you have four semesters of grades unless you are in the Class of 2019.

**3Ls: Over the summer, fall, and winter of your 3L year, you should continue to do the above, as well as:**

- **Postgraduate fellowships & job search:** Start applying for fellowships (project- and/or organization-based) or government honors programs in late summer. In the fall, explore other opportunities on Symplicity, [psjd.org](http://psjd.org), and other sites. Conversations with SJI advisors, professors, clinic and externship directors, and CLS graduates and practitioners will be important throughout.
- **Financial planning:** Attend financial programming hosted by SJI, the Financial Aid Office, and SPIN. Meet with Financial Aid to learn more about LRAP. Apply for the Public Service Bridge Loan if helpful.
- **Pro bono:** Complete your hours in a timely fashion and submit them to SJI!

*See Timelines and other sections for more detailed information.*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **What are the advantages of exploring public interest or government opportunities as a student?**

There are several reasons to explore public interest and government work while at CLS. You will learn about areas you might be interested in pursuing during your summers or after graduation. You will also begin to make connections in the larger world – with fellow students, professors, CLS graduates, and other practitioners. Developing these relationships is crucial for charting your path, and for fellowship and job applications. You may have passion for a particular public interest subject area, and whether you pursue that passion as a full time lawyer or as part of your postgraduate pro bono work, developing knowledge of the practice while in law school will be useful and exciting. Finally, you will have fun learning about – and participating in – interesting, meaningful opportunities available to you both during law school and after you graduate.

## **Is experiential learning important?**

Yes! If you are considering a career in public interest or government – or if you are simply exploring your options – you should be sure to participate in an array of meaningful experiential learning opportunities while at CLS. Most successful applicants for public interest and government jobs will have had externship or clinical experiences, or will have participated in practicums. These opportunities enable you to develop knowledge and skills which are critically important for many public interest and government opportunities. They also enable you to get to know professors and practitioners well, and provide you with a source of mentorship. Finally, these experiences allow you to explore areas of interest, provide insights into real lawyering, and allow you to build your credentials for public interest or government careers or pro bono work.

Experiential learning is so important that the American Bar Association now requires every law school student to graduate with six experiential law credits.

In addition to or instead of enrolling in one of the CLS clinics, externships, or practicums, some students intern with a New York-based public interest or government organization during the term. This is an opportunity to develop your expertise and increase your contacts; and employers frequently hire individuals who have previously interned with them or with similar organizations. (See “Should I Do a Term-Time Internship?” below.)

## **What is the difference between a legal clinic and an externship, and how do I choose one or more?**

CLS offers students many opportunities to work with real clients, either through legal clinics or externships. Both clinics and externships provide opportunities to serve clients or organizations, in addition to having a classroom component. Each has its own benefits, and you can do both a clinic and externships while at CLS, but not in the same semester.

The clinics are on campus, and are taught for the most part by full-time CLS faculty who are also experienced practitioners in their fields. Externships are off campus. Students work onsite at an organization and are taught by adjunct faculty who are experts in the particular field – all of this under

the overall supervision of the CLS Director of Externships.

CLS has many options, so you need to think carefully. First, timing is an issue. Not all clinics and externships are offered every semester. Additionally, some are for only one semester, whereas others are a two-semester commitment. Secondly, you should think about the issues and skills that each clinic and externship focuses on. Try to choose ones that are the most interesting to you, and are geared to the skills you want to develop. Talk to students who have done them. Third, think about the time commitment. Clinics generally give students more responsibility for their cases and, therefore involve a greater time commitment and award more academic credits than externships.

Please remember that if at first you do not get into a clinic or externship, you should try again later. There are limited spots, and sometimes 3Ls and LL.M.s get preference, but this should not discourage anyone from applying.

*More information:*

Clinics at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/clinics](http://www.law.columbia.edu/clinics)

Externships at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/clinics/externships](http://www.law.columbia.edu/clinics/externships)

### **Should I do a term-time internship?**

Yes, you should definitely consider doing a term-time internship during your 2L or 3L year. Term-time internships are invaluable for building up skills, contacts and knowledge about “real jobs” in the public interest and government worlds. Many CLS students enjoy interning part-time at organizations as a balance to their class work, studying and other activities.

A term-time internship differs from a clinic or externship as it generally does not provide academic credit (more below) and does not have a seminar component. Term-time internships can provide more flexibility for students than clinics and externships, as they can be created according to a particular student’s schedule and interests, and require less of a time commitment. They are also a good opportunity for students who do not get into a clinic or externship, but desire experiential learning; or are interested in issues that are not covered by existing clinics or externships. Additionally, an internship might give a student an opportunity to gain more advanced skills in an area covered by one of the CLS offerings.

CLS students have a big advantage by being in New York City – there are a myriad of public interest opportunities at our doorstep. Many organizations are thrilled to have a CLS intern during the year, and often give interesting work and better supervision than in summer when there are more interns competing for attention. In addition, it is often easier to get a term-time position, so if you did not get your “dream job” during the summer, you should apply again for a term-time position with that organization and you will likely have better luck.

To find internships, students can research organizations and contact them directly or view internship postings on Symplicity or [psjd.org](http://psjd.org). Unlike externships, there is no academic credit – unless you apply for credit as an independent project under Supervised J.D. Experiential Study L6695 (and choose an academic advisor to supervise you), or you link your internship to a course offering. Note that some employers require that you get academic credit or pro bono credit to intern with them, in which case

you must explore with your advisor how to get that credit.

\* For CLS pro bono credit, an internship must be unpaid and not for academic credit. However, an internship that is paid or receives academic credit may count towards the New York State Bar pro bono admission requirements. Contact the CLS Pro Bono Director for more information.

### **Are there certain classes I should take?**

In addition to taking clinics, externships or practicums, which we strongly recommend, there are many other class offerings that can expand your knowledge or help hone skills, which would be useful in your public interest or government work. You should think carefully about which classes to take. There are no “mandatory” classes for getting a public interest or government job, although there are classes that could be helpful, depending on your career direction. For example, if you are interested in litigating, you should consider taking classes that will develop knowledge and skills; these might include classes like evidence, trial practice, federal courts and/or negotiation. If you are interested in certain substantive areas, you should be sure to take a few classes in those subjects and get to know the professors. It also is also important to take foundational classes (that may not, in themselves, be specifically public interest or public service-oriented but will be important for laying a foundation for your legal advocacy as a public interest or government lawyer). It is also important to take some demanding classes that develop your legal knowledge and demonstrate your intellectual ability. Clinics, externships, and practicums – even if not focused on your particular area of interest – often have broad benefits in providing skills and knowledge to be a public interest or government lawyer in a range of fields. Finally, you want to make sure you take a breadth of classes and not focus on just one thing – it is often helpful to have exposure to several areas of public interest law, since issues and advocacy approaches often overlap or are intersectional in nature.

Be aware that classes are not available every semester, as offerings change and professors take leaves, so plan your schedule accordingly. Additionally, think about taking advantage of new J-term offerings. Meet with an SJI advisor, Student Services advisor, or professors to get their advice as you choose your classes. If you plan to clerk, make sure to consider what would be helpful for that as well. (You can talk to the Clerkship Office or to professors for advice.)

*More information:*

Course selection at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/courses/search](http://www.law.columbia.edu/courses/search)

### **Should I do a journal?**

Journal work can be interesting and satisfying, especially if the journal focuses on a topic you are interested in. Public interest employers generally value public interest journals over business-related journals. However, some public interest employers – particularly those that do direct representation and trial work – do not value journals as much as clinics, externships, or internships. Organizations that do a lot of complex litigation, appellate work, or policy may view journals as good preparation. Judges, academic institutions, and some employers look particularly favorably on the *Columbia Law Review*. Publishing a note or other legal research and writing experiences are also of interest to them.

*More information:*

Journals at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/students/student-services/learning/student-journals](http://www.law.columbia.edu/students/student-services/learning/student-journals)

### **How much pro bono should I do as a 1L?**

Law school is a big adjustment, and everyone does it at their own pace. We generally advise 1Ls to take time to acclimate to law school (and focus on classes), and to take on pro bono projects if and when they feel ready. For those 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 overwhelming, SJI and student organizations have developed in-house projects with manageable and flexible time commitments. There also are off-campus opportunities suitable for some 1Ls. Finally, there are Spring Break Caravans that run in March during spring break – these are week-long pro bono projects that take place in New York City and other locations. For more information, see the SJI website or contact the Pro Bono Program coordinator. An important note: 1L pro bono hours do not count towards the CLS 40-hour pro bono graduation requirement, but will go on the transcript as voluntary pro bono work and may count for the New York State Bar pro bono admission requirement. Any student who completes 100+ hours of pro bono work (including voluntary pro bono hours completed during 1L year) will be honored at SJI’s annual Honors Dinner in the spring.

*More information:*

Pro bono at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/students/pro-bono](http://www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/students/pro-bono)

### **I’m thinking about a public interest career, but how will I get a job? How do I learn about fellowships?**

Although the public interest job market can be a challenge, there are things you can do so that you are well equipped to navigate it. First, make sure to take advantage of public interest opportunities that CLS has to offer, as outlined in this guide. Secondly, work closely with an SJI advisor during your three years at CLS to explore and prepare for postgraduate opportunities. Third, be prepared that you will not have a job when many of your CLS peers do; the private sector timeline is very different than public interest, and you should not feel badly about it! You will be rewarded for your diligence and patience by securing a career that is meaningful and satisfying to you.

We strongly urge you to consider applying for postgraduate fellowships and/or honors programs, as this is a direct path to public interest or government employment. Although the process can be time-consuming, it is well worth it, since it is a means of designing or obtaining your “dream” job, and is often the best entrée to public interest or government jobs. If you are interested in fellowships, SJI will assign you a fellowship advisor at the end of your 2L year to work with you, and provide you with resources like our *Fellowship Toolkit*. For project-based fellowships, you will need to begin working to secure a host organization and a project during the summer after 2L year. Applications for these fellowships, and for organization-based fellowships (which are more like standard job applications), are due starting early in 3L fall.

If you are interested in government fellowships or honors programs, you should work closely with SJI’s Director of Government Programs. Some government honors program applications are due at the end of 2L summer and early in 3L fall.

Make sure to set up an account on [psjd.org](http://psjd.org) to monitor fellowship opportunities and consult with SJI regularly.

### How will I pay my bills?

Many public interest and government salaries have risen in the past few years and, when combined with Columbia's generous Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) benefits, support a good standard of living (even if not the lavish lifestyle supported by Big Law salaries). Many CLS grads in public service report that they are able to live comfortably with the assistance of LRAP. CLS has just instituted a new public service bridge loan for recent grads, which will also provide further support.

Most government agencies and many large nonprofit organization salaries are available on their websites. SJI can provide information about other public interest employers – including with recent data from salary surveys of CLS grads and sample budgets. SJI can also provide advice regarding negotiating salaries. The SJI and Financial Aid Office websites contain information about LRAP (including FAQs and a detailed program guide) and other key financial information as well.

#### *More information:*

Financial Aid Office at CLS: [www.law.columbia.edu/financial-aid](http://www.law.columbia.edu/financial-aid)

SJI LRAP Information: [www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/students/careers-public-service/lrap](http://www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/students/careers-public-service/lrap)

SJI Salary Survey: [www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/alumni](http://www.law.columbia.edu/social-justice/alumni)

### *In closing...*

There are many opportunities to take advantage of at CLS. Don't forget to:

- Attend public interest programming to hear practitioners and professors talk about areas of practice, types of lawyering, and current issues. Talk to speakers after the event.
- Sign up for student organizations that appeal to you. Consider a leadership role.
- Attend public interest social events to find your community.
- Participate in Spring Break Caravans and other pro bono opportunities.
- Take clinics, externships and practicums.
- Take public interest and foundational classes.
- Get to know your professors.
- Think about doing term-time internships.
- Think about working on a journal.
- Meet with SJI advisors on a regular basis.
- Attend public interest job fairs (on and off campus).
- Pursue public interest opportunities for summer employment.
- Start thinking early about postgraduate fellowships.
- Network whenever you can.
- Explore and understand LRAP.

# TIMELINE: MAPPING YOUR PUBLIC INTEREST & GOVERNMENT CAREER AT CLS

*These timelines can be used to guide your three years at CLS. Contact an SJI advisor for additional information.*

## 1L Timeline

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER
✓ Check LawCal (daily) and the SJI Monday Newsletter for events (ongoing throughout year)
✓ Attend student organization block party, welcome events to learn about groups of interest
✓ Sign up with SPIN, and other student organizations that interest you
✓ Attend citywide Public Interest Employer Reception
✓ Attend SJI Welcome gathering
✓ Go to events, panels, and discussions on topics of interest, including SJI Mondays (ongoing)
✓ Attend Pro Bono Fair
✓ Keep a running list of speakers, issues and organizations that interest you (ongoing)
✓ Consider moot court opportunities
✓ Learn about Centers at CLS
✓ Start to develop relationships with your professors (ongoing throughout year)*
* Especially important for recommendations for fellowship, job, and clerkship applications (which may require three letters of recommendation)

OCTOBER
✓ Continue to attend programs to hear from public interest lawyers and learn about their work
✓ Attend programs on summer internships and funding and on crafting application materials
✓ Review SJI <i>Public Interest Toolkit</i> (ongoing)
✓ Hear from upper class students about their summer experiences
✓ Begin crafting your resume in public interest legal format
✓ Starting October 15, meet with SJI advisors for resume feedback and guidance on summer
✓ Create your account on psjd.org, begin browsing organizations; consider setting up alerts
✓ Set up systems to review postings on Symplicity
✓ Research summer opportunities
✓ Sign up for Guaranteed Summer Funding (GSF) (deadline is in November)
✓ Learn about Spring Break Caravans (and attend info sessions)
✓ Consult with SJI advisor as needed
✓ Continue to build relationships with professors

NOVEMBER
✓ Sign up for GSF if you haven't already (deadline is in November)
✓ Submit Statement of Interest for Human Rights Internship Program (HRIP)

✓ Attend SJI Job Search Workshops on international, government, and public interest jobs
✓ Register to attend the Public Interest Legal Career (PILC) Fair held in February at NYU
✓ Read LawNet reviews of summer internships, talk to students who have interned with employers of interest
✓ Finalize public interest resume
✓ Create a list of 10-15 organizations to apply to for summer jobs. Check application deadlines
✓ Begin to think about and draft cover letters
✓ Continue to attend programs on topics of interest
✓ Pre-register for spring semester elective

## DECEMBER

✓ December 1 is the first day you can apply for summer jobs (but you do not have to apply to all your organizations yet – see below).
✓ Send December applications. <i>There are three situations in which you should send applications in December: (1) to jobs with December or January deadlines; (2) to impact litigation organizations such as the ACLU, which are very competitive and tend to hire early; (3) to out-of-town organizations located in places you will visit over break (so you can offer to interview while there)</i>
✓ Review list of organizations coming to the PILC Fair and mark those of interest
✓ Focus on finals
✓ Enjoy holiday break

## JANUARY

✓ Begin (or continue) to send out summer job applications (including through PILC Fair)
✓ Consult with SJI advisor and review psjd.org, Symplicity, and LawNet as needed
✓ Participate in SJI's mock interview program
✓ Attend SJI sessions on planning and financing your public interest career
✓ Attend SJI sessions on interviewing and table talk in advance of PILC Fair
✓ Attend HRIP Training & Orientation (if you are doing HRIP)
✓ Review employers attending On-Campus Interview Program (OCI), apply to any of interest
✓ Reach out to SJI regional counselors if you want to learn about other markets
✓ Continue to attend programs of interest (including clerkship programming and SJI Mondays)
✓ Consider pro bono involvement

## FEBRUARY

✓ Prepare for and attend the PILC Fair at NYU
✓ Consult with SJI as needed for interview prep and questions such as whether to send out additional summer applications, how to navigate offers, etc.
✓ Attend SJI session on roadmapping your time at CLS and begin to think about 2L summer and 2L academic year
✓ Attend SJI Overview of Fellowships so you can start to plan your fellowship strategy

✓ Attend Financial Aid Office's sessions on LRAP and SPIN's "LRAP for Dummies"
✓ Continue to develop relationships with your professors
✓ Continue to attend programs of interest

### MARCH

✓ Meet with SJI advisor if you have not secured a summer internship yet
✓ Continue to think about 2L summer and 2L academic year
✓ Explore 2L activities such as serving on a student organization board, leading a pro bono project, joining a journal, etc.
✓ Learn about clinic and externship opportunities for the fall and attend info sessions
✓ Strongly consider applying for externships and/or clinics (Applications due in March)
✓ Consult with SJI for help choosing activities, classes, and experiential learning opportunities
✓ Attend information sessions on individual postgraduate fellowships (EJW, Skadden, etc.)
✓ Student organizations transition leadership takes place
✓ Attend clerkship programming, including Judicial Clerkships 101
✓ Review the <i>Clerkship Handbook</i> on the clerkship webpage
✓ Continue to build relationships with professors

### APRIL

✓ Attend summer payment session if you are participating in GSF or HRIP
✓ Learn about journals (and attend Journal Day)
✓ Talk to SJI advisor or Student Services advisor about journals if needed
✓ Make decisions about 2L activities
✓ Attend SJI's 1L summer programming
✓ Continue to build relationships with professors

### MAY - JULY

✓ Participate in journal writing competition
✓ Make the most of your summer internship
✓ Attend summer mixers with public interest grads
✓ Consult with SJI advisor about 2L course selection and 2L summer planning
✓ Consider doing informational interviews with some organizations

### AUGUST

✓ Reflect on your summer and complete summer evaluation form
✓ Consult with SJI about planning for 2L summer
✓ Be aware of early job deadlines; make list of all deadlines

✓ Update and refine resume and cover letters
✓ Work with SJI on application materials as needed
✓ Apply for positions with early application deadlines (e.g. government honors programs)

## 2L Timeline

SEPTEMBER
✓ Attend SJI events and programs (especially those geared toward 2Ls) (ongoing)
✓ Continue to consult with SJI about 2L summer, resumes, and crafting cover letters
✓ Consider participating in On-Campus Interviews (OCI) with public interest and government employers
✓ Check Symplicity and psjd.org for opportunities (ongoing)
✓ Apply for 2L summer internships (even if there is no job listing or no deadline in posting)
✓ Note deadlines for public interest law firm internships
✓ Consider pro bono opportunities
✓ Register for EJW Career Fair and review employers attending
✓ Consider participating in DC Externship for spring semester (or other externships/clinics)
✓ Consider working as TA/RA

OCTOBER
✓ Apply for any interviews at EJW Career Fair
✓ Continue to watch for OCI
✓ Attend EJW Career Fair if applicable
✓ Consult with SJI on summer applications, interview prep, and selection; send more applications if needed
✓ Watch for spring break caravan information session
✓ Register for GSF and HRIP for 2L summer (deadline is in November)
✓ Continue to build relationships with professors (ongoing)
✓ Start considering applying for clerkships after 2L year (and consult with Clerkship Office)
✓ Attend information sessions for spring clinics, externships, practicums; submit applications

NOVEMBER
✓ Register for GSF if you haven't already (deadline is in November)
✓ Submit Statement of Interest for HRIP (if appropriate)
✓ Consult with SJI on applications, interview prep, and selection
✓ Register for PILC Fair if appropriate.

DECEMBER
✓ If you have not secured a 2L summer position, meet with SJI advisor

- |                       |
|-----------------------|
| ✓ Focus on finals     |
| ✓ Enjoy holiday break |

### JANUARY

- |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Meet with SJI advisor if 2L summer not yet finalized.                             |
| ✓ Attend SJI Information sessions on financing a public interest career and LRAP    |
| ✓ Apply for clerkships, grades permitting, after consultation with Clerkship Office |

### FEBRUARY - MARCH

- |                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Consider attending SJI Session on roadmapping         |
| ✓ Attend SJI Information sessions on fellowships        |
| ✓ Attend LRAP Programs                                  |
| ✓ Submit clinic and externship applications for 3L year |

### APRIL

- |                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Attend a summer session payment session if you are participating in GSF or HRIP |
| ✓ Meet with SJI advisor to plan for fellowship applications                       |
| ✓ Consult SJI about course selection.                                             |

### MAY - AUGUST

- |                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Make the most out of your summer!!!!                                                                   |
| ✓ Pursue informational interviews with employers located in the city in which you are spending summer    |
| ✓ Create list of fellowships, with application requirements and due dates                                |
| ✓ Meet with your fellowship advisor                                                                      |
| ✓ Work on project-based fellowship development and applications                                          |
| ✓ Secure faculty and employer recommenders as needed                                                     |
| ✓ Update resume and cover letters                                                                        |
| ✓ Submit applications to government honors programs                                                      |
| ✓ Attend summer mixers with students and grads                                                           |
| ✓ Consider applying for clerkships once grades are released and after consultation with Clerkship Office |

## 3L Timeline

### SEPTEMBER

- |                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Update application list                                                                              |
| ✓ Complete applications to fellowships, government honors programs, and jobs with early fall deadlines |
| ✓ Attend fellowship information sessions (e.g. for CLS postgraduate fellowships)                       |

✓ Consider Fall OCI
✓ Consider working as TA/RA for faculty
✓ Continue to develop relationships with professors
✓ Complete your pro bono hours and submit documentation

### OCTOBER

✓ Continue to work on fellowship applications
✓ Participate in mock interviews
✓ Fellowship and job interviews begin
✓ Complete your pro bono hours and submit documentation
✓ Consider participating in spring break caravans
✓ Consider a clinic or externship or practicum, attend information sessions, and apply

### NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

✓ Continue doing applications, networking, interviewing
✓ Meet with SJI advisor as needed

### JANUARY - MARCH

✓ Continue with applications and interviews
✓ Check in with SJI advisor
✓ Attend series on financing your public interest careers
✓ Participate in Spring OCI
✓ Consider and apply for externships and clinics
✓ Consider working as TA/RA in spring
✓ Continue developing relationships with professors
✓ Apply for clerkships, as appropriate, in consultation with Clerkship Office
✓ Continue with applications and interviews

### APRIL - MAY

✓ Continue with applications and interviews
✓ Continue exploring fellowships (including CLS postgraduate options)
✓ Attend LRAP information sessions and meet individually with Financial Aid Office
✓ Deadline for completion of pro bono requirement

### JUNE - JULY

✓ Applications due for Enhanced LRAP
✓ Study for and take bar examination
✓ Apply for clerkships in consultation with Clerkship Office
✓ Continue to maintain relationships with faculty

# EXPLORING SUBSTANTIVE AREAS OF INTEREST AT CLS

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As you begin to explore your substantive interests, it is helpful to have an idea of the offerings available. For example, if you are interested in immigration, you might want to know about relevant clinics, externships, student groups, journals, and other options. This guide will help you get a sense of those options. Note that we are not recommending that you participate in every opportunity out there, but rather hope to provide a sense of the choices you might consider.

As you think about substantive areas of law, you should consider what foundational knowledge and skills would, once acquired, make you a better advocate in those areas. This might lead you to offerings not specifically related to public interest. Consider foundational courses (such as administrative law, federal courts, advanced constitutional law, legislation, tax, evidence) and offerings that will increase your lawyering and leadership skills more broadly, like clinics, externships, or practicums (even if they do not directly relate to your primary interest) or “hands-on” classes (such as trial practice, negotiation, transactional lawyering, or other skills-based classes). Talk to an advisor or faculty member about how to sequence your classes wisely.

Please note that the lists of opportunities provided in this section are not exhaustive, but merely provide a snapshot to help you get started. Seek advice from your SJI advisor, Student Services advisor, professors, or mentors when choosing opportunities to pursue.

We also suggest that you expose yourself to a variety of topics to better assess what interests you the most. Many areas are intersectional, so you will benefit from broader exposure.

Not all of the opportunities listed are available at all times. Consult the curriculum guide and other resources to determine current availability.

*Please see the following pages for information about how to explore your interest in:*

- Criminal Law
- Family Law
- Children & Youth/Education Rights
- Women’s Rights
- LGBTQI Rights
- Civil Rights & Racial Justice
- Poverty Law & Economic Justice
- Housing Rights & Homelessness
- Employment, Labor, & Work with Dignity
- Environmental Law
- First Amendment
- Civil Liberties/Constitutional Law
- Human Rights
- Immigration & Refugee Rights
- Government (Federal, State, Local)
- National Security
- Public Interest/Service Lawyering Skills

There are many other topics that you can explore at CLS – these are just a sampling of the interesting issues and skill-building opportunities that are available to you!

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## Developing Public Interest and Public Service Lawyering Skills\*

Here are some examples of opportunities at CLS to develop lawyering skills that might be useful in public interest or government practice.

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS (all):

Adolescent Representation Clinic • Challenging Consequences of Mass Incarceration Clinic • Community Advocacy Lab • Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic • Environmental Law Clinic • Health Equity & Social Justice Advocacy Clinic • Human Rights Clinic • Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Incarceration and the Family Clinic • Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic • Mediation Clinic • Securities Litigation and Arbitration Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

Also: Public Education Policy Seminar & Practicum

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS (all):

Arts & Entertainment Law Externship • Bronx Defenders Externship on Holistic Defense • Constitutional Rights Enforcement: Capital Punishment, Life Imprisonment, and Post-Conviction Relief • Copyright Dispute Resolution Externship • Criminal Appeals Externship • Domestic Violence Prosecutor Externship • Federal Appellate Court Externship • Federal Court Clerk Externship: Eastern District of New York • Federal Court Clerk Externship: Southern District of New York • Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York • Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York • Externship on the Federal Government – Semester in Washington, DC • Government Anti-Corruption Externship • Immigration Defense Externship • Immigration Law and the Family Court Act Externship • Knight First Amendment Institute Externship • Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship • Low-Wage Worker Externship • Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem Community Defense Externship • New York Attorney General's Office Social and Environmental Justice Externship • Pro Bono Practice and Access to Justice Externship • Representing New York City: New York City Law Department Externship • Trust, Wills and Estate Planning Externship • UN Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Advanced Legal Research Techniques  
 Advocacy in Theory and Practice  
 Law, Justice & Reflective Practice  
 Lawyer Leadership: Leading Self, Leading Others, Leading Change  
 Negotiation Workshop  
 Professional Responsibility Issues in Public Interest Practice  
 Supervised J.D. Experiential Study (6695)  
 Thinking Like a Litigator  
 Trial Practice/Advanced Trial Practice  
 Vision, Action and Social Change

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## Exploring Children & Youth/Education Rights\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Adolescent Representation Clinic • Community Advocacy Lab

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS/PRACTICUMS:

Representing New York City: New York City Law Department Externship [may do juvenile delinquency matters] • Immigration Law and the Family Court Act • Public Education Policy Seminar and Practicum

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Educational Equality: The Role of Law  
Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Justice  
Schools, Courts and Civic Participation  
Topics in Education Law  
Adolescence

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) • Mentoring Youth through Legal Education • Resilience Advocacy Project • High School Law Institute • Suspension Representation Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

High School Law Institute • Columbia Youth Justice Association • Mentoring Youth through Legal Education • Suspension Representation Project • Harlem Tutorial Project • Education Law and Policy Society

### CENTERS:

Center for Public Research and Leadership • Center for Institutional and Social Change

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## Exploring Civil Rights/Racial Justice/Voting Rights\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Challenging the Consequences of Mass Incarceration • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic • Community Advocacy Lab • Health Equity and Social Justice Advocacy Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

New York Attorney General's Office Social & Environmental Justice Externship • Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Civil Rights Lawyering in the Modern Era: Theory and Practice  
Racial Justice Advocacy Workshop  
Civil Rights  
Law of the Political Process  
Human Rights at Home: Advancing U.S. Social Justice  
Native American Law  
Native Peacemaking  
The Psychology of Racial Justice and Policing  
Public Health Law and Social Justice  
Vision, Action and Social Change

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

High School Law Institute

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Race and Law* • *Columbia Journal of Law & Social Problems* • Civil Rights Law Society • American Constitution Society (ACS) • American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) • Empowering Women of Color (EWOC) • Affinity Groups: BLSA, APALSA, LALSA, MELSA, NALSA, SALSA • First Generation Professionals

### CENTERS:

Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies • Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for the Study of Law and Culture

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## Exploring Constitutional Law (Including First Amendment/ Civil Liberties)\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Challenging the Consequences of Mass Incarceration Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Arts Law Externship • Constitutional Rights Enforcement: Capital Punishment, Life Imprisonment and Post-Conviction Relief • Knight First Amendment Institute Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Ideas of the First Amendment  
Law in the Internet Society  
Reading Group in the American Constitutional Tradition  
Constitutional Design in Post-Conflict Democracies  
Current Issues in Civil Liberties  
Law and Regulation of Social Media  
Political Theory and the First Amendment  
Religious Minorities in Supreme Court Litigation  
The First Amendment and the Press  
Global Constitutionalism

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Mentoring Youth through Legal Education [youth debates on constitutional law issues] • High School Law Institute

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) • American Constitution Society (ACS) • Federalist Society • High School Law Institute

### CENTERS:

Center for Constitutional Governance • Center for Law and Liberty • Kernochan Center for Law, Media and the Arts

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## Exploring Criminal Law (Defense, Prosecution, Death Penalty, Prisoner's Rights)\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Challenging the Consequences of Mass Incarceration Clinic • Incarceration and the Family Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Holistic Defense Externship, Bronx Defenders • Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem  
Community Defense Externship • Criminal Appeals Externship • Federal Prosecution Externship:  
U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York • Federal Prosecution Externship •  
U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York • Domestic Violence Prosecution  
Externship • Constitutional Rights Enforcement: Capital Punishment, Life Imprisonment and Post-  
Conviction Relief

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Advanced Criminal Law: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives  
International Criminal Law  
Comparative Criminal Procedure  
Professional Responsibility in Criminal Law  
Advanced Federal Prison Litigation  
Black Letter Law/White Collar Crime  
International Criminal Courts: Progress, Problems and Prospects  
Internet and Computer Crimes  
Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Justice  
Mental Illness and Criminal Defense

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

The Jailhouse Lawyers Manual • Columbia Bail Fund Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Law & Social Problems* • Criminal Justice Action Network • Public Defender Students of Columbia Law School • High School Law Institute • Columbia Mock Trial Team

### CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Societal Change

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## Exploring Employment Law/Labor Law/Work with Dignity\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Human Rights Clinic • Mediation Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship • Low-Wage Worker Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Labor Law

Labor Law, Advocacy and Client Counseling: Uncertainties in NLRB Jurisprudence

Labor Rights in a Global Economy

Transnational Business and Human Rights

Vision Action and Social Change

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Workers' Rights Student Coalition

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Workers' Rights Student Coalition

### CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change

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## Exploring Environmental Law\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Environmental Law Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

New York Attorney General's Office Social & Environmental Justice Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Climate Change Law and Policy

Energy Regulation

Environmental Law

International Environmental Law

Advanced Climate Change Law

Energy Industry Restructuring

Natural Resources Law

Extractive Industries and Sustainable Development

Animal Law

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Student Animal Legal Defense Fund

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Environmental Law* • Environmental Law Society

### CENTERS:

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law • Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment • Columbia Earth Institute

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## Exploring Family Law\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Incarceration and the Family Clinic • Adolescent Representation Clinic • Immigration Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Holistic Defense Externship, Bronx Defenders • Domestic Violence Prosecution Externship • Immigration Law and the Family Court Act

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Family Law

Domestic Violence and the Law

Advanced Family Law: Pre-Nups, Property Distribution, and Alimony in Divorce

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Uncontested Divorce Workshop • Courtroom Advocates Project • New York State Court Uncontested Divorce Program • Kids In Need of Defense (KIND)

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

Domestic Violence Project

### CENTERS:

Center for Gender and Sexuality Law

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## Exploring Government (Federal, State & Local)\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Many clinics explore the role of government indirectly

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Externship on the Federal Government – Semester in Washington, DC • Government Anti-Corruption Externship • Representing New York City: New York City Law Department Externship • Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York • Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York • New York Attorney General’s Office Social & Environmental Justice Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Legislation  
Legislation and Regulation  
Rebuilding Government  
Regulation of Financial Institutions  
Securities Regulation  
State and Local Government Law  
Antitrust and Trade Regulation  
Financial Crises, Regulating Responses  
Law of the Political Process  
Law of the W.T.O.

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Veterans Legal Assistance Project • Individual Research Projects for Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity (CAPI) (as needed)

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Tax Law* • *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* • Education Law and Policy Society • Columbia Health Law Association • District of Columbia Law Students

### CENTERS:

Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity (CAPI) • Center for Constitutional Governance • Richard Paul Richman Center for Business, Law, and Public Policy

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## Exploring Housing Rights/Homelessness/Foreclosure \*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Mediation Clinic • Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Law and Policy of Homelessness

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Legal Clinic for the Homeless • SRO Law Project and NMIC Legal Services • Manhattan Legal Services Housing Intake Clinic • Bankruptcy Assistance Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • Tenants' Rights Project

### CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change

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## Exploring Human Rights\*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Human Rights Clinic • Mediation Clinic [work with UN and other transnational organizations] • Immigrant's Rights Clinic • Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

UN Externship • Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship • Immigration Defense Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Human Rights  
Advanced Human Rights Practicum  
Human Rights at Home: Advancing U.S. Social Justice  
Human Rights, Law and Development  
International Humanitarian Law  
Transnational Business and Human Rights  
The Law of Genocide  
International Human Rights Advocacy  
Transitional Justice  
Socio-Economic Rights: Theory and Practice

### PRO BONO/OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:

1L Advocates Program

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Human Rights Law Review* • Human Rights Internship Program • Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights • Columbia Society of International Law • Rightslink • Columbia League of Nations

### CENTERS:

Human Rights Institute • Center for Institutional and Social Change

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## Exploring Immigration & Refugee Rights \*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS;

Immigrants' Rights Clinic • Human Rights Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Immigration Defense Externship • Immigration Law and the Family Court Act Externship • Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship • Holistic Defense Externship: The Bronx Defenders

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Immigration Law  
Global Refugee Regimes  
September 11 and the Rights of Non-Citizens

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

U-Visa Project • Human Trafficking Intervention Court Project • Rightslink • International Refugee Assistance Project • Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) • Immigration Equality • Church World Service • Asylum Seekers Advocacy Project • Davis Polk Asylum Workshop

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Law Human Rights Review* • Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights • Public Defender Students of Columbia Law School

### CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • International Migration Program: Economics, Ethics and Law

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## Exploring LGBTQI Rights \*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic • Immigrants' Rights

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Several externships may touch on these issues, depending on the current caseload

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Gender Justice

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Transgender Name Change Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* • *Columbia Journal of Law & Social Problems* • Outlaws • Queer and Trans People of Color

### CENTERS:

Center for Gender & Sexuality Law

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## Exploring National Security Law \*

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York • Federal Prosecution Externship: U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

National Security Law and Policy: Case Studies  
 Nuremberg Trials and War Crimes Law  
 September 11 and the Rights of Non-Citizens  
 Terror and Consent  
 Global Constitutionalism  
 Jurisprudence of War  
 Military Law and the Constitution  
 Cybersecurity: Policy, Legal and Technical Aspects  
 Intelligence Law

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Veterans Legal Assistance Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* • National Security and Law Society • Columbia Law Military Association

### CENTERS:

Center on Global Governance • Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity (CAPI) • Center for Law and Liberty • Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies • Center for Constitutional Governance

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## Exploring Poverty Law/Economic Justice \*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Community Advocacy Lab • Human Rights Clinic • Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic • Incarceration and the Family Clinic • Health Equity & Social Justice Advocacy Clinic • Securities Litigation and Arbitration Clinic • Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Low-Wage Worker Externship • Law and Organizing for Social Change Externship • Pro Bono Practice and Access to Justice Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Public Health Law and Social Justice  
Socio-Economic Rights: Theory and Practice  
Human Rights at Home: Advancing U.S. Social Justice  
Access to Justice: Current Issues and Challenges

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

Bankruptcy Assistance Project • Columbia Bail Fund • Workers' Rights Student Coalition • SRO Law Project and NMIC Legal Services • Manhattan Legal Services Housing Intake Clinic

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems* • First Generation Professionals

### CENTERS:

Center for Institutional and Social Change • Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies

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## Exploring Women's Rights (Incl. Reproductive Rights and Domestic Violence) \*

### EXAMPLES OF CLINICS:

Sexuality and Gender Law Clinic • Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic

### EXAMPLES OF EXTERNSHIPS:

Domestic Violence Prosecution Externship • Pro Bono Practice and Access to Justice Externship

### EXAMPLES OF CLASSES:

Gender Justice  
Domestic Violence and the Law  
Family Law  
Reproductive Rights and Practices

### PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES:

If/When/How Lawyering for Reproductive Justice • Courtroom Advocates Project • Uncontested Divorce Workshop • Human Trafficking Intervention Court Project • U-Visa Project

### JOURNALS AND STUDENT GROUPS:

*Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* • Columbia Law Women's Association (CLWA) • Domestic Violence Project • If/When/How Lawyering for Reproductive Justice • Empowering Women of Color • Feminist Law Students

### CENTERS:

Center for Gender & Sexuality Law

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