

Legal Job Search Process

To one degree or another, your job search will probably resemble the process depicted below. It outlines a series of exercises that will help you explore and focus on career opportunities. Combining resources from the Office of Career and Professional Development with a meaningful self-evaluation and sensible organization can significantly improve your chances of accomplishing a successful job search.

1. Complete Self-Assessment

What are my interests, skills, personality, and values? What strengths and qualifications do I possess that would interest prospective employers?

2. Research and Identify Legal Careers

Where are the career opportunities that fit my qualifications and goals? Research legal occupations & practice areas, industries, and specific employers.

3. Develop Job Goals

How do my skills, personality, interests, and values relate to employment opportunities? What's important to me in my first legal job? What skills do I want to acquire?

4. Build Your Contact Base

Who do I know? Who do they know? How can we share information? (Join professional associations, volunteer w/MJF, etc.)

5. Target Specific Opportunities and Organizations

For which positions do I most qualify and possess a distinct advantage in acquiring? Combine your employer research with self-assessment results to help visualize a good "fit".

6. Refine Job Goals

What have I learned in my job search so far that might change my goals or approach to prospective employers? Thorough records will help you evaluate options and opportunities.

7. Prepare Resume, Cover Letter, Writing Sample, & Transcripts

How can I best present an accurate, appealing picture of myself in writing?

8. Identify References

Identify contacts who can verbally attest to your skills and abilities as they relate to positions for which you are applying.

9. Prepare for Interviews

How should I prepare and practice to best convey my strengths and qualifications for the position? Anticipate questions that might be asked and areas of concern.

10. Conduct First Interviews

How should I present myself in each interview? How should I analyze each interview and identify areas for improvement? Write thank-you letters after each interview stage.

11. Site Visits and Second Interviews

Should I make any adjustments based on my initial interviews? How can I build on the success of my initial interviews?

12. Interview Follow-up

How should I track and follow through on interview activity?

13. Evaluate Job Offers/Negotiate

How does each offer compare with and meet my goals? What “trade-offs” can I accept? Negotiate salary and benefits, as appropriate.

14. Accept a Job Offer. Congratulations!

Notify the Office of Career & Professional Development, other employers, and references.

Format modified from The Career Path Job Search Organizing System, Frostburg State University, p. 20

Contact: careers@mitchellhamline.edu (651) 290-6326