

APPLYING DIRECTLY TO LARGE LAW FIRMS

There are many large law firms that do not participate in recruiting programs through SULLS. If you are interested in working at a large law firm, you should consider expanding your job search to such firms, whether in Boston or outside of the state or region, and contacting those firms directly. Hiring at these large law firms is very competitive and a heavy emphasis is placed on grades/class rank and honor board membership.

Below is some general information to get you started with such a job search, and you may also want to set up a meeting with a staff member of the Career Development Office to discuss your particular interests in more depth.

Some Basics

- **Timing:** Many large firms start interviewing on law school campuses in early to mid-August and continue through the month of September. Because decisions are made on a rolling basis, we recommend that you contact firms directly from mid-August through early September. You should not wait to see whether you get a job through the fall recruitment process first. Rather, perform job searches with a wider range of employers in several geographic locations, if possible, simultaneously— but be realistic about your time and your genuine interest in these employers and their geographic location.
- **Types of initial interviews:** Employers often opt to screen you through an initial interview in their office. Alternatively, they may request a telephone interview before deciding to pursue your candidacy further. Telephone interviews can offer challenges since you do not have the advantage of in-person interaction. If you have questions about how to prepare for such an interview, speak with a CDO Counselor.
- **Cost:** Remember, the first trip to a firm's office is "on your dime." While a firm will typically cover the costs of visiting them for a callback interview, you will be responsible for travel and accommodation costs for an initial interview in another city/region. For callback interviews, you will be required to complete a reimbursement form such as the NALP Travel Expense Reimbursement Form available at www.nalp.org.
- **Schedule:** Recruiting out of the Boston area may require a great deal of travel. It is imperative that you keep your own schedule (classes, interviews, law review commitments) updated so that you can refer to it when making arrangements to visit firms. If possible, consider trying to schedule initial interviews in other locations before the start of classes or grouped together on the same trip.

Research Firms

Compile a list of law firms in a particular geographic area that meet your qualifications as to firm size, practice areas, summer associate program structure, etc. Apply directly to those firms that do not recruit at SULLS, either on-campus, at an off-campus job fair or through a resume collection. While researching the firms, note the names of SULLS alumni working there.

Helpful websites include: <https://law-suffolk-csm.symplicity.com/students>
(see the 'Symplicity Employer Searches' handout available on the CDO website)

www.martindale.com

www.nalpdirectory.com

www.vault.com (CDO has the password)

Of course, also review the firm's website for additional information.

Use Contacts and Network

Although hiring at large firms is structured and most hiring decisions are made by a relatively small hiring committee, having a personal contact within a firm may still prove helpful. Consider contacting SULLS Alumni (or undergraduate alumni, family friends, or other connections) at firms and having a 15-minute chat with them about the firm and how they found their jobs. You might initiate contact through an email and follow-up a few days later by phone.

Your questions might include:

How long have you been with the firm?

Were you a summer associate at the firm?

Did the firm recruit you through a SULLS recruiting program, or did you contact the firm directly?

May I keep in touch with you for advice as my job search continues?

Speaking with someone at a firm also provides you with the opportunity to mention your interest in the firm, that you will be applying directly for their summer associate program, and to confirm that you have the correct contact information for the recruitment coordinator and/or hiring partner. When you send your resume and cover letter to the recruiting coordinator, you should also "cc" the contact you have established at the firm. If your contact is favorably impressed with you, he or she might put in a good word for you. Be sure to keep in touch and send a thank you note to any helpful contacts.

Write Compelling Cover Letters

It is important to have a well-written cover letter to include with your resume. Some firms will take the time to read your cover letter, and others will not. It is best to keep your cover letter relatively short. Focus on your interest in that particular firm (e.g., ties to the geographic area, practice areas) and on why the firm should be interested in you (e.g., your experience or coursework in a relevant practice area). Point out your academic achievements. Also, you might state that you can be (or will be) in town a particular week and available to interview at that time. If appropriate, mention your contact's name in the cover letter. Call the recruiting coordinator about two weeks after you send your mailing to follow-up on your application.