

application

requirements

DESTINATION LAW SCHOOL

A DIVERSITY PIPELINE PROGRAM OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Complete Applicant/**Pre-Law Tool Kit**
for the Diverse Undergraduate Student
2ND EDITION

Be Present for Your Future



resources

internships

financial aid

process

Be Present for Your Future

THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO

Destination Law School: Pre-Law Tool Kit*

The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) has built partnerships with local colleges, law schools and the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO), and will provide information and resources that will help simplify the law school preparation and application process, and help interested, diverse, undergraduate students in both two- and four-year colleges located in the San Francisco Bay Area, better understand the legal profession.

BASF Supporters, Support You

Destination Law School has been made possible through the generosity and foresight of law firms, corporations, community groups, schools, and countless individuals, who support BASF and our commitment to diversity in the San Francisco Bay Area legal community.

Kaplan Test Prep has provided special LSAT preparation opportunities for Destination Law School students since the inception of this program and has continuously given students access to excellent pre-law guidance. **Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP** is a committed supporter of BASF's diversity pipeline programs, including Destination Law School, as part of its Diversity & Inclusion initiatives.

BASF thanks Kaplan Test Prep and Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP for their contributions to the publication of the 2nd Edition of the Destination Law School Tool Kit. BASF is extremely grateful for their commitment to students such as you and their efforts to increase diversity within the legal profession.

Our Mission

The Bar Association of San Francisco champions equal access to justice and promotes humanity, excellence, and diversity in the legal profession.

We provide legal services to disadvantaged and underserved individuals in San Francisco. We create opportunities for legal service in the community and encourage participation by our members.

We advance professional growth and education, and elevate the standards of integrity, honor, and respect in the practice of law.

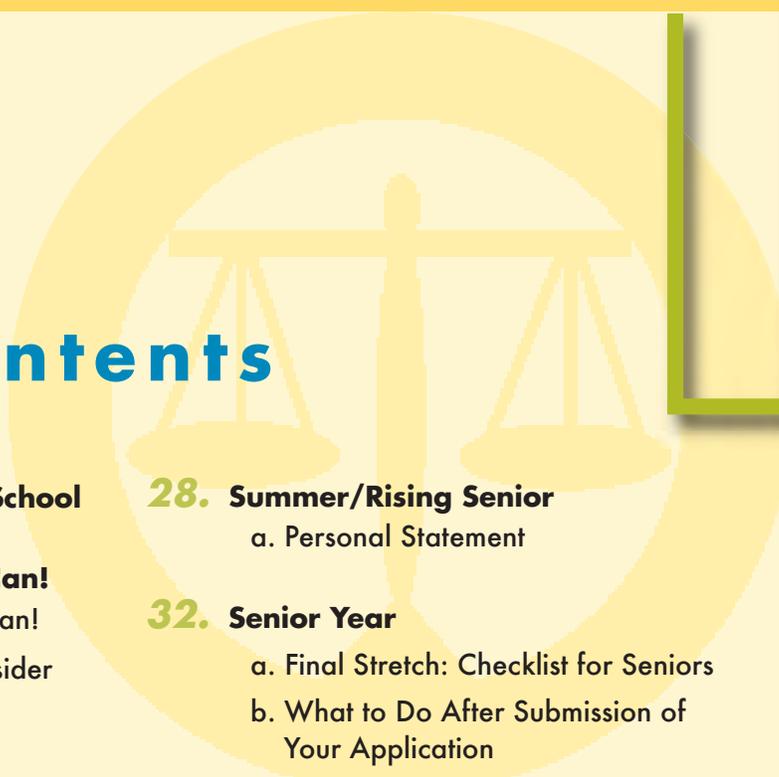
We cultivate diversity and equality in the legal profession, provide a collective voice for public advocacy, and pioneer constructive change in society.

* This is only a guide and you are strongly encouraged to conduct your own independent research and verification of the undergraduate and law school requirements and processes, and on all related subjects, including, but not limited to those referenced in this tool kit. BASF is not liable or responsible for any reliance on information in this tool kit, including information that is incorrect, outdated or missing.



THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF
SAN FRANCISCO

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Introduction



DESTINATION LAW SCHOOL (DLS)

DLS is a diversity pipeline program of The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF). DLS provides information and resources about law schools and the legal profession to diverse undergraduate students in colleges located in the Bay Area. The purpose of this program is to increase the number of diverse law students, and ultimately lawyers in the Bay Area.

DLS provides concrete information about suggested undergraduate courses and volunteer opportunities, the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) testing process, law school application process, the experience of law school and possible legal career options.

Through panel presentations, workshops, and this Pre-Law Tool Kit, undergraduate students will be better able to explore their interest in law and learn how best to navigate the process of applying to law school.

BASF has won numerous awards for and serves as a national leader in efforts to achieve equal opportunity in the legal profession for:

- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgender attorneys
- Lawyers with disabilities
- Women

COLLEGE BASF'S DIVERSITY PIPELINE

To help increase and enhance diversity among students, lawyers and judges, BASF has developed a robust diversity pipeline which includes programs and resources that create a conduit which begins in elementary school and flows through to the judiciary.



THE LEGAL PROFESSION – YES YOU CAN!

A law degree, also known as a Juris Doctor degree, is the degree one receives when completing graduate studies in the law. A law degree affords you many opportunities that you would not otherwise have with an undergraduate degree. A law degree, in conjunction with a law license, might provide you with the following career options:

- Attorney
- Law professor
- Head of a nonprofit organization
- Lobbyist, legislator, politician
- Activist
- Judge
- Corporate counsel or other legal executive
- Legal analyst for TV or radio

You might consider a career where you defend those who need and deserve a defense; help fight crime; work in the video gaming industry; work in the music, sports and entertainment industry; work toward fairness in immigration; help fight for civil rights or children's rights; become an advocate for the injured, sick or victim; or become a corporate lawyer.

the legal profession needs you!

As a college student, we strongly encourage you to think about how a career in law might enhance your life, expand your options, play into your dreams, help you accomplish your goals or help you to leave your mark on the world. Even if you have never thought about a legal career before, we want you to stop and take a moment to do so now.

We want you to know that a law degree is **not** out of your reach, it is completely achievable, and once again...it provides you with options.

There may be a host of reasons you believe law school is not for you. We want to highlight that there are an equal number of reasons why **you** should consider law school.

WHY YOU, YES YOU, SHOULD CONSIDER LAW SCHOOL

- **The legal profession needs you!**
- **Education, education, education – you can't get enough!**
- **You can succeed in law school and become a lawyer**
- **The legal profession must reflect the population it serves**

We understand that navigating through the law school application process can be overwhelming and often intimidating. Just know that many before you, and just like you, have survived! This Pre-law Tool Kit will provide you with a roadmap of how to apply to law school and a guide of resources that will assist your decision making throughout the process.

direct your own destination

DISABILITY SERVICES FOR LAW SCHOOL APPLICANTS

Law school is a challenging and rigorous environment for every student regardless of background and experience. Due to law school's driven and fast paced nature, it is often critical that every student has the opportunity to perform at his or her potential. For this reason, the decision of where students with disabilities attend law school may be weighed by the quality of reasonable accommodations provided.

The following are resources for an accommodating and successful law school experience:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA guarantees reasonable accommodations will be provided for people with disabilities by private and public institutions to ensure that they have equal access to learning environments.

<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>.

Unruh Civil Rights Act

The Unruh Civil Rights Act protects students with disabilities from discrimination from both public and private law schools within the state of California.

www.disabilityaccessinfo.ca.gov

Disability Services in Law School

To research different accommodations procedures of law schools, contact a Disability Services Coordinator or ADA Compliance Officer. Upon enrollment, a law student may decide to request disability services. The school will ask for verification and notify the student of their privacy rights under the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

National Association of Law Students with Disabilities (NALSWD)

NALSWD is a growing student organization group that focuses on disability rights and activism and has student representatives from law schools across the nation.

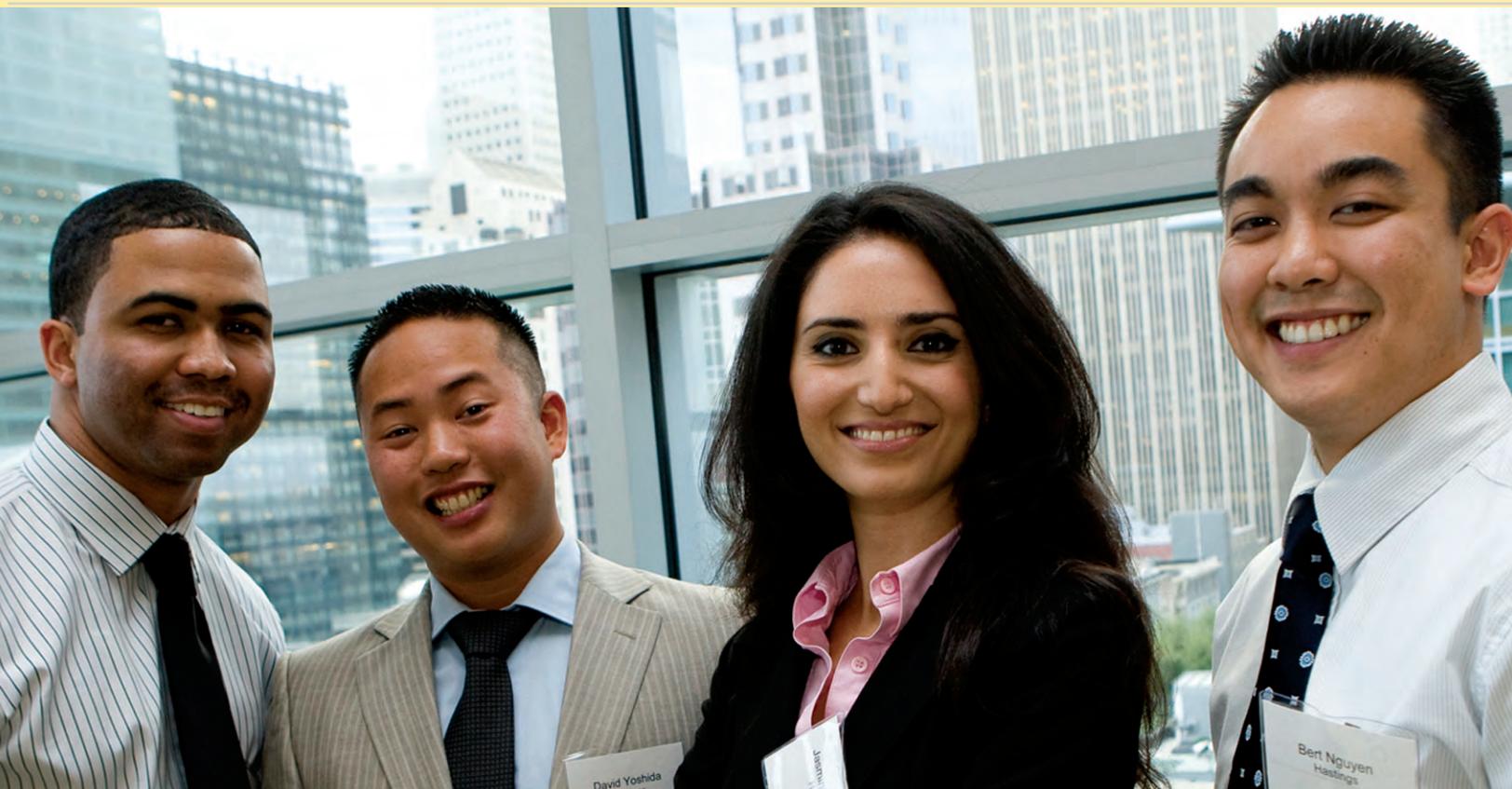
<http://www.nalswd.org>

Law School Application

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

WHAT DO LAW SCHOOLS LOOK FOR IN EVALUATING LAW SCHOOL APPLICANTS?

1. Academic achievement and GPA
2. LSAT score
3. Analytical writing, critical reading, and logical reasoning skills
4. Personal statement
5. Letters of recommendation
6. Well rounded individuals who add to a diverse student body
7. Character and leadership
8. Community and extracurricular activities
9. A complete, well-written application packet



Law School Application

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE

- ✎ Get to know professors who might later write letters of recommendation
- ✎ Seek out the pre-law advisor at your school
- ✎ Begin to take courses that can help you on the LSAT and in law school
- ✎ Research what it takes to get started towards law school
- ✎ Concentrate on getting good grades
- ✎ Register for the College Scholars Program at www.cleoscholars.com
- ✎ Register at For People of Color at www.forpeopleofcolor.org
- ✎ Work or volunteer as an intern during the summer

JUNIOR

- ✎ Research the LSAT preparation and exam; take practice exams
- ✎ Review your financial situation and develop a financial aid plan
- ✎ Begin to solicit and compile letters of recommendation
- ✎ Research law schools and application requirements
- ✎ Tour/visit law schools
- ✎ Attend law school forums/fairs
- ✎ Take the June LSAT (apply well in advance for fee waivers and testing accommodations)
- ✎ Begin to draft your personal statement

SENIOR

- ✎ Create a timeline of when your selected law schools' applications are due
- ✎ Collect and compile your letters of recommendation
- ✎ Complete your personal statement
- ✎ Submit your law school applications
- ✎ Research scholarship and financial aid options
- ✎ When accepted, select the best law school for you
- ✎ Notify the school you choose and pay any required deposits in advance of any deadlines

COLLEGE



K-12

LAW PRACTICE



LAW SCHOOL



THE BENCH

It is important to start early to ensure you are the **complete applicant** for law school. Law schools consider many factors in the admission process including Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores, diversity of undergraduate classes, letters of recommendation, work experience, personal statements, extracurricular and civic activities. There is no single path or legal “major” in undergraduate school required by law schools. Remember: Law is a very broad field. **Any undergraduate major is acceptable to law school.**

During your freshman and sophomore years, get to know professors and seek out those who will take the time to not only grade an exam, but also critique it. Consider every one of your professors as a potential writer of one of your letters of recommendation.

Seek out advice and information from a pre-law advisor, professor, or dean who has attended law school.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Undergraduate Major

The first thing to remember when considering your major: The word “law” does not have to dominate your transcript. There is no single avenue to pursue and there are no specific pre-law major requirements. There are a wealth of topics available to you to explore in undergraduate school and the more diverse your studies, the more attractive this will look to law school admissions officers.

It is recommended that you choose a major that personally appeals to and challenges you. And excel at it! You can choose to study the more traditional pre-law majors which include history, English or political science, or you may conclude that a more appealing path for you might be art, science, computer science or mathematics.

Your undergraduate experience should be an interdisciplinary one. Focus on building upon the talents and skills you already enjoy. This is your foundation for a successful career in law.



**think of law school as a planned destination,
not as an after-thought**

To get started planning for law school, visit:

- **American Bar Association: Preparing for Law School (ABA)**

The ABA is the largest voluntary professional association in the world. The mission of the ABA is to be the national representative of the legal profession, serving the public and the profession by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the law.

www.abanet.org/legaled/prelaw/prep.html

- **Council on Legal Opportunity Education (CLEO)**

CLEO is a nonprofit project of the ABA Fund for Justice and Education with the mission to expand opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school.

www.cleoscholars.com

- **For People of Color**

For People of Color, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower people of color who want to enter the legal profession by providing knowledge and expertise.

www.forpeopleofcolor.org

- **National LGBT Bar Association**

The National LGBT Bar Association is a national association of lawyers, judges and other legal professionals, law students, activists, and affiliated lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender legal organizations. The LGBT Bar promotes justice in and through the legal profession for the LGBT community in all its diversity.

<http://www.lgbtbar.org/>

- **The National Association of Law Students with Disabilities**

The NALSWD is a coalition of law students dedicated to disability advocacy and the achievement of equal access, inclusion, diversity and non-discrimination in legal education and in the legal profession. NALSWD supports the growing number of law students with disabilities by providing mentors, studying and survival tips for law school, and career advice for the legal profession.

<http://www.nalswd.org/>

- **Prelaw Advisor**

Prelaw Advisor is a law school admissions consulting firm that provides personal comprehensive law school admission planning.

www.prelawadvisor.com

- **The State Bar of California – How Do I Become a Lawyer?**

Created by the state legislature in 1927, the State Bar is a public corporation within the judicial branch of government, serving as an arm of the California Supreme Court. All state bar members are officers of the court.

<http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Pamphlets/BecomingALawyer.aspx>

- **Virtually Advising**

The primary mission of Virtually Advising is to assist college students, college hopefuls and those close to them with their academic questions and/or concerns.

www.virtuallyadvising.com

Recommended Course Work

There are core skills that you should acquire and sharpen while an undergraduate student in preparation for the study and practice of law. Law schools will look for evidence that you have studied and developed a command in these critical areas:

- Logical thinking
- Reading comprehension
- General research skills
- Critical analysis
- Oral communication/listening skills
- Task organization
- Problem solving
- Interpretation
- Public service

The above skills will also help to prepare you for success on the LSAT. A logic course is strongly recommended toward preparation for the LSAT.

There may be courses in your major that address these skills, but there are also elective courses you can take, or choose in a minor, that will compliment your major studies and the overall effort of getting into law school.

Here are some course examples:

- Logic
- Literature, Prose or Poetry
- Foreign Language
- Political Science
- Economics
- Philosophy
- History
- Feminist and Ethnic Cultural Studies
- Biology
- Music
- Engineering
- Art History
- Natural Sciences
- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Psychology
- Business
- Public Speaking
- Rhetoric
- Governmental Process
- Study Skills

These courses require that you learn the meaning of words and challenge you to analyze text, as well as develop the ability to read critically.

Be persistent. If you believe that you are being discouraged by counselors or advisors, do not give up, do not take “no” for an answer.

Pre-Law Advisor

As a student preparing for law school, every class, assignment, internship, and volunteer opportunity you choose in your undergraduate experience should prepare you for law school. You will be making these choices every day of your college career. In order to know what the best choices are and to develop an academic plan for your pre-law success, meet with a pre-law advisor or a professor or dean who has attended law school.

Pre-law advisors are assigned by undergraduate institutions to guide current and former students who are interested in pursuing a legal education. Pre-law advisors are often located at your university advising center, career center, or within an academic department, for example Political Science or Philosophy.

Pre-law advisors can suggest majors, help in selecting courses, and connect you with campus, local, and national resources such as the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), pre-law forums, and the Council on Legal Education (CLEO). Pre-law programs will vary in structure and depth.

Be persistent. If you believe that you are being discouraged by counselors or advisors, do not give up, do not take “no” for an answer. Reach out to the organizations listed in this tool kit for guidance.

It is your responsibility to not only ask for specific advice, but also to ask your pre-law advisor to fill you in on what you don't know, or to point you in the right direction.

Pre-Law Programs

- • **California State University – East Bay**
Pre-law Program in Political Science Department:
<http://class.csueastbay.edu/politicalscience>
- **Dominican University of California**
Pre-Law Advising:
<http://www.dominican.edu/academics/ahss/polisci1.html>
- **National Hispanic University**
Pre-Law Academic Advising:
http://www.nhu.edu/student_services/saac.htm
- **Notre Dame de Namur**
Career Center, Pre-Law Services:
<http://www.ndnu.edu/academics/academic-resources.aspx>
- **Mills College**
Pre-Law Preparation Program:
<http://www.mills.edu/academics/undergraduate/law/index.php>
- **St. Mary's College of California**
Career Center, Pre-Law Services:
<http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/student-life/career-services/>
- **Sacramento State University**
Pre-Law Advising:
<http://webpages.csus.edu/~kubicek/>
- **San Francisco State University**
 - Pre-Law Advising Center:
<http://bss.sfsu.edu/prelaw/advisingcenter.html>
 - SF State Philosophy Pre-Law Program:
http://www.sfsu.edu/~phlsphr/?page=ba_law
 - Pre-Law Society:
<http://bss.sfsu.edu/prelaw/advisingcenter.html>
- **San Jose State University**
 - Pre-Law Justice Studies Program:
http://www.sjsu.edu/justicestudies/advising/pre-law_advising/
 - Pre-Law Advising, Philosophy Department:
<http://www.sjsu.edu/philosophy/resources/Pre-Law/Advising>
- **Santa Clara University**
Pre-Law Advising:
<http://www.scu.edu/prelawnew/>
- **Stanford University**
Pre-Law Advising:
www.stanford.edu/group/SPLS/
- **University of California – Berkeley**
Career Center, Law School Advising Program:
<http://career.berkeley.edu/Law/Law.stm>
- **University of California – Davis**
Pre-Law Advising Services:
<http://advisingservices.ucdavis.edu/advising/law/>

Pre-law Programs (continued):

- **University of California – Los Angeles**

Career Center:

<http://career.ucla.edu>

- **University of the Pacific**

Pacific Legal Scholars Program:

<http://web.pacific.edu/x13999.xml>

- **University of San Francisco**

Legal Studies Program:

<http://www.usfca.edu/catalog/enrichments/prelaw>

Academic Reputation

The process of creating your academic reputation should begin early. You are your best advocate. Whether you are attending a University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), community college (CC) or private school, you will need to establish a presence with professors, graduate student instructors and teacher's assistants.

Build a positive image of yourself. Be conscious of everything from speaking up in class to knowing whether your email address – hotmama91@earthlink.net – really provides the best impression.

Begin the process of networking with your professors, college staff and employers, so you can collect letters of recommendation from them. It is better to collect letters now, while the experience is still fresh, than years later as a senior.

For additional details regarding letters of recommendation, see the Junior/Senior section of this tool kit starting on page 19.

Professors will consider the quality of class participation and your display of judgment and leadership, as well as grades when evaluating students.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Your involvement in activities outside the classroom is as critical as your course work in becoming the complete applicant. To set yourself apart from other students, begin developing strong leadership skills by participating in activities that reflect a commitment to something other than your GPA. Do not attempt to accomplish this by joining dozens of groups. It is more important to join a choice few and make your best impression by ascending within the group, accomplishing projects, and taking on leadership roles like board member, chair or president.

However, do not do this at the cost of your grades. Law schools will want to see that you can balance your time successfully. Put yourself in a position to learn lessons in time management and delegation of authority that you would not necessarily learn in a classroom.

During the school year and summer, look to:

- Volunteer with community service organizations, like your local bar association
- Join the college newspaper or contribute opinion editorials
- Take advantage of pre-law programs
- Study abroad
- Work as an intern in a law firm, public interest organization or government entity
- Work as a paralegal or legal assistant
- Participate in college clubs or organizations

Volunteer and Internship Opportunities

• American Bar Foundation, Diversity Fellowship in Law and Social Science

The American Bar Foundation sponsors a program of summer research fellowships for undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds. The summer program is designed to introduce students to the rewards and demands of a research-orientated career in the field of law and social science.

www.americanbarfoundation.org/fellowships/index.html

• American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Northern California

The ACLU-NC works to preserve and guarantee the protections of the Constitution's Bill of Rights. Fellowships, internships, and volunteer opportunities are available for undergraduate, graduate and law students.

http://www.aclunc.org/about/job_opportunities/index.shtml

• Bay Area Legal Aid

Bay Area Legal Aid is an organization committed to providing meaningful access to the civil justice system through quality legal assistance regardless of a client's location, language or disability.

www.baylegal.org

• Bay Area Volunteer Information Center

This website provides information about volunteer opportunities in the greater Bay Area. Time commitment may be one time or over an extended period.

www.volunteerinfo.org

• The Bar Association of San Francisco, Diversity Pipeline Programs

The Bar Association of San Francisco is committed to increasing and retaining diversity in the legal profession and has established numerous diversity programs within the organization, including School-To-College and Law Academy which offer volunteer opportunities.

www.sfbar.org/diversity

• Black Collegian

Provides free career development advice, job search information and resume tools.

www.black-collegian.com

• California State Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General

Internships and student positions within the California justice system are available year-round.

<http://ag.ca.gov/careers/students.php>

• Career Center - Students with Disabilities

Listing prepared by University of California at Berkeley Career Center of specialized programs and resources.

<http://career.berkeley.edu/Disab/Disab.stm>

• Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ)

CJCJ provides direct services, technical assistance and policy research in the criminal justice field. Internships and volunteer opportunities are available.

<http://cjcj.org>

- **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Internship Program**

Apply to participate in one of the outstanding student work programs at the CIA, including undergraduate student internships or undergraduate co-ops.

www.cia.gov/careers/student-opportunities/index.html

- **Centro Legal de la Raza**

Centro Legal de la Raza is a comprehensive legal services and community development agency whose mission is to protect and advance the rights of immigrant, low-income and Latino communities through bilingual legal representation, education, community organizing and advocacy.

www.centrolegal.org

- **California Minority Counsel Program (CMCP)**

CMCP's mission is to promote diversity among the state's attorney population, and thereby advance a more inclusive and just legal profession.

www.cmcp.org

- **Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF)**

CBCF is a non-partisan, nonprofit, public policy research and educational institute. CBCF works to broaden and elevate influence of African Americans in the political, legislative and public policy arenas.

<http://www.cbcfinc.org/internshipsandfellowships.html>

- **Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)**

CHCI is a nonprofit, non-partisan educational organization dedicated to developing the next generation of Latino leaders.

<http://www.chci.org/internships/>

- **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**

CASA is a nonprofit organization that trains volunteers as officers of the court to advocate for abused and neglected children in court.

www.nationalcasa.org

- **Drum Major Institute for Public Policy Internship**

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan, nonprofit think tank generating the ideas that fuel the progressive movement. The institute seeks people with a passion for civil rights and social justice and an interest in policy research.

<http://www.drummajorinstitute.org/intern.html>

- **Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund**

Earthjustice is a nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to protecting natural resources and wildlife, while defending the right of all people to a healthy environment. Internships and volunteer opportunities are available.

www.earthjustice.org

- **East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC)**

EBCLC is one of the largest providers of free legal services in the East Bay and is a nationally recognized poverty law clinic. EBCLC offers a variety of volunteer opportunities.

<http://www.ebclc.org/volunteer.php>

- **East Bay Sanctuary Covenant**

This organization provides support, protection, legal services and advocacy for refugees and immigrants.

www.eastbaysanctuary.org

- **Feminist Majority Foundation**

Job and internship opportunities with a focus on women's rights and progressive issues.

http://www.feminist.org/911/jobs/jobs_fmf.asp

- **FBI Honors Internship Program**

This internship opportunity offers undergraduate and graduate school students an exciting insider's view of FBI operations and provides an opportunity to explore the many career opportunities within the Bureau.

<http://www.fbijobs.gov/231.asp>

- **Greenlining Institute Internship Program**

The Greenlining Institute is a multi-ethnic public policy research and advocacy organization. Greenlining offers a number of internships to expose students to policy work.

<http://greenlining.org/academy/internships.php>

- **Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities**

National internship program for Latino college students at top companies and organizations in the private and public sectors.

<http://www.hacu.net>

- **Human Rights First**

Human Rights First believes that building respect for human rights and the rule of law will help ensure the dignity to which every individual is entitled. Human Rights First welcomes a number of interns throughout the year and engages in a variety of substantive ongoing projects.

- **Idealist**

A clearinghouse of nonprofit internship and volunteer resources.

www.idealists.org

- **Investigative Internship Program, Georgetown School of Law**

This internship program is designed for anyone interested in a career in law or criminal justice. Interns are provided an excellent opportunity for hands-on learning and experience in the field by being involved in all aspects of the legal practice.

<http://www.law.georgetown.edu/clinics/cjc/iip.html>

- **La Raza Centro Legal**

Located in San Francisco, La Raza Centro Legal is a legal service and community development agency that relies on over 100 volunteers each year to conduct legal clinics, co-counsel on large cases, conduct community education and outreach, and assist with daily operations.

www.lrcl.org

- **UC Berkeleycareercenter.internships**

Listing of resources prepared by University of California at Berkeley Career Center.

<https://career.berkeley.edu/internships/internships.stm>

- **Maven Foundation**

Maven Foundation offers young adults of multiracial and multiethnic backgrounds challenging internships in various areas including community organizing, nonprofit management and the legal field.

<http://mavinfoundation.org/projects/index.html>

- **Mine Your Own Internship**

Haven't found the perfect internship? You also have the option of creating your own internship by going directly to the organization that is of interest to you, rather than waiting for a position to be posted and then competing with others for that position.

These university Web sites provide approaches to this unique internship experience:

- John Hopkins University, Making Your Own Internship

<http://www.jhu.edu/careers/internships/makeyourown.html>

- University of California, Berkeley, How To Develop Your Own Internship

<https://career.berkeley.edu/internships/internships.stm>

- **Mixed Heritage Center**

Clearinghouse of information and resources relevant to the lives of people who are multiracial, multiethnic, transracially adopted, or otherwise impacted by the intersections of race and culture.

<http://www.mixedheritagecenter.org/>

- **Native Web**

Employment, volunteer listings and other resources for Native Americans.

www.nativeweb.org

- **Northern California Service League (NCSL)**

NCSL is a nonprofit organization and works inside and outside of San Francisco jails and California state prisons. NCSL's mission is to reduce crime by helping offenders and ex-offenders become responsible and productive citizens. Various internship and volunteer opportunities are available.

<http://www.norcal-service-league.org/interns.htm>

- **Opportunity Knocks**

A resource for non-profit internships and employment opportunities.

www.opportunityknocks.org

- **Supreme Court of the United States, Judicial Internship**

The Judicial Internship Program at the Supreme Court offers advanced undergraduate and graduating seniors who have interests in law, management, and social sciences, a unique opportunity to gain exposure to the field of judicial administration through work in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice.

<http://www.supremecourt.gov/jobs/jobs.aspx>

- **Volunteer Match**

Online network that lists one day or long term volunteer opportunities.

www.volunteermatch.org

- **Youth Nonprofit Professionals Network**

An online resource that posts jobs with Bay Area nonprofit organizations.

www.ynnpn.org

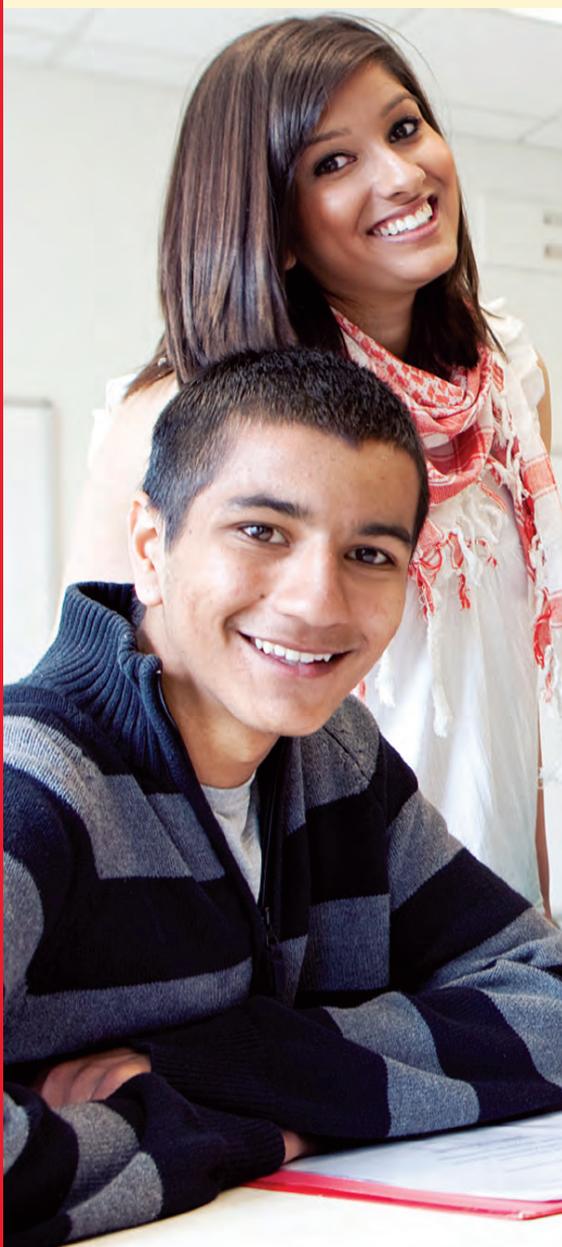
- **Young People for Fellowship Program**

This leadership development organization identifies, engages, and empowers the newest generation of progressive leaders to create lasting change in their communities. The yearlong fellowship program for college students provides organizational and financial support for executing meaningful social justice work.

<http://www.youngpeoplefor.org/>

By the conclusion of your sophomore year, you should have made the decision that law school is right for you. Therefore, begin to familiarize yourself with what will be expected in the remaining two years of undergraduate school.

In an effort to start prepping for the LSAT exam, if you have not already done so, be sure to register for a formal logic course at your college. Also, look to take advantage of pre-law programs designed to prepare you for the law school application process.



For recommendations in early preparation for the LSAT, please visit:

- **Sophomore Super Saturdays**

These pre-law seminars are designed for sophomore college students. Juniors may be admitted, if space is available. The seminars aim to help students further develop logical reasoning, reading comprehension and writing skills: The skills needed to become a competitive law school applicant. To learn more visit www.cleoscholars.com.

- **CLEO Sophomore Summer Institute**

The institute is a four-week residential program available at no cost to the participants. The purpose of the institute is to bring together students from diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and geographic backgrounds and provide the training necessary to successfully prepare for and navigate the road to law school. To learn more visit www.cleoscholars.com.

- **BASF-CLEO Connections**

The Bar Association of San Francisco holds courses at their office during the school year that provide information and resources about law school and the legal profession. There are also opportunities to meet law school admissions staff, lawyers, law students and judges. To learn more visit www.sfbar.org/DLS.

Financial Aid/Debt Management

Now is the time to be very mindful of the amount of student loans you are accruing and avoid credit card debt because law schools may check your credit report. Complete an assessment of your financial situation. For more details on financial aid and debt management, see page 38 of this tool kit.

By junior year, you should be well on your way to fulfilling your major and graduation requirements. Continue your volunteer efforts, check in with your pre-law advisor on a regular basis and solicit letters of recommendation. Your junior year is also the optimum time to start conducting research into the law school application process, including:

- Research LSAT preparation courses, review sample questions and take practice exams
- Develop a financial plan
- Take the June LSAT test
- Review law school application requirements
- Visit law schools and create a list of potential law schools
- Attend law school fairs/forums
- Solicit and compile your letters of recommendation
- Begin to draft your personal statement

Letters of Recommendation

Much like the personal statement, letters of recommendation provide a perspective of who you are that is not found in any other part of the application process. Academic and professional letters are acceptable. Every school will weigh the letters differently, but in most cases letters carry considerable weight, so be strategic in whom you approach to write a letter.

Individuals who know you and your work well should provide your letters of recommendation. Do not seek out letters from individuals who will offer only a cursory impression. Provide the individual writing the letter with as much information as possible. Give the letter writer a minimum of two months notice.

According to the University of Indiana at Bloomington, Pre-Law Center: "Keep in mind that you should apply to law schools by Thanksgiving of your senior year. **Thus, you must start accumulating letters when a junior at the latest**, and preferably when you are a sophomore. Ask for a letter when your performance is fresh in the mind of the recommender."

Ask your professor or teacher's assistant for a letter of recommendation immediately after the class is done. Most universities have a letter of recommendation file service, usually in the Career and Advising Center, where you can house your letters of recommendation until you are ready to send them to the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC).



Process of obtaining letters of recommendation

- Letters should come from former or current professors, employers, or supervisors who are familiar with your work and performance.
- Provide the individual writing the letter with as much notice as possible – a minimum of two months.
- Provide the individual writing the letter with a resume or other factual information about you, your interests or activities that you want them to use in their letter.
- Streamline the process of soliciting and receiving the letter by providing the topic you would like emphasized.
- Make your request in person during a scheduled appointment.
- Request that the writer comment on your overall academic record.
- Avoid a repetitive theme in each letter.
- Letters should also reflect your initiative in undertaking special projects.
- Provide the writer a copy of your transcript.
- Provide professors with copies of the papers previously submitted in the class.
- Letters should reflect your suitability for the legal profession.
- Letters should avoid generalities.
- Provide clear instructions on the deadline and where the letter is to be directed.



K-12

COLLEGE



LAW SCHOOL

LAW PRACTICE



THE BENCH

Sample Letter of Recommendation

FIRST UNIVERSITY

Eval Uator
Dean of Admissions
ABC Law School
1234 Litigation Boulevard
San Francisco, CA 11111

December 6, 2008

Re: John Smith

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter on behalf of John Smith. I have known John for two and one-half years and have had the opportunity to observe and evaluate him in a number of different contexts and situations.

As an attorney, professor and law school advisor, I have interacted with many students over the past fourteen years. John is an exceptional individual. He is not only bright, but he also possesses strong communication and interpersonal skills. He is an excellent writer and recently authored an article that was published in First University's newspaper. John also enjoys engaging in discussions and debates on a broad range of topics, using creativity and flexibility in his reasoning.

An open and friendly person, John is easy to talk to and a born leader. These skills enabled him to successfully establish and organize the first ACLU chapter at First University. Last year, he received a special award from the ACLU recognizing his generous contribution to their organization.

For all these reasons, I believe that John Smith would be an asset to your institution. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (206) 555-1212.

Very truly yours,



Professor Mary Jones
First University

For additional guidance in letters of recommendation visit:

- **Top Law Schools**

This article provides a general overview of the process of securing letters of recommendation and contains instructions and advice on how to make the most of your letters of recommendation and how to overcome any obstacles.

<http://www.top-law-schools.com/letters-of-recommendation.html>

- **A2zColleges**

A2zColleges.com is an Internet resource designed to provide the highest quality service to students and campus communities globally.

<http://www.a2zcolleges.com/adm/lawrec.htm>

- **Indiana University of Bloomington Pre-Law Center**

Guidelines for writing a personal statement.

<http://www.hpplc.indiana.edu/law/law-psguide.shtml>

- **Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)**

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) is a non-profit corporation founded to coordinate, facilitate, and enhance the law school admission process. The organization also provides programs and services related to legal education.

www.lsac.org

- **The Pre-law Handbook**

This website enables college students to decide whether they want to become lawyers and provides guides to law school for those who do.

http://www.prelawhandbook.com/letters_of_recommendations

- **University of California, Berkeley Career Center**

FAQs on letters of reference.

<http://career.berkeley.edu/Law/LawLetter.stm>

- **University of Chicago Pre-Law Advising Program**

This website provides resources on obtaining letters of recommendation.

<http://www.law.uchicago.edu/>

- **University of Massachusetts, Amherst Pre-Law Advising Office**

Advice on obtaining letters of recommendation.

<http://www.umass.edu/prelaw/application.htm#letters>

- **University of Oregon, School of Law Information for Prospective Law Students**

This website provides helpful suggestions on letters of recommendation.

<http://www.law.uoregon.edu>

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST (LSAT) – WHAT IS IT?

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a half-day, standardized test administered four times each year at designated testing centers internationally. LSAT results carry significant weight and most law schools in the United States and Canada use LSAT results as part of their admission process. All American Bar Association – approved law schools require applicants to take the LSAT.

The LSAT is designed to measure skills considered necessary for success in law school. Successful law students must be able to read and comprehend complex texts with accuracy and insight; be able to organize and manage information while drawing reasonable inferences from it; and analyze and evaluate the reasoning and arguments of others. In addition to taking an LSAT preparation course, it is strongly recommended you take a logic course at your college.

The test consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions. Four of the five sections contribute to the test taker's score. These sections can appear in any order and include:

- **Two sections of Logical Reasoning**
 - These sections, preceded by a short paragraph, will contain 24-26 questions.
 - Questions will ask you to strengthen or weaken an argument given in the paragraph, identify the main point, or an assumption of the paragraph, or draw an inference from the information given.
- **One section of Analytical Reasoning (i.e., logic games)**
 - This section is composed of four "games" each consists of an initial scenario accompanied by several rules that govern the scenario. Five to seven questions accompany each game, 23-24 questions total.
 - These questions will ask you to draw inferences from the rules given and will ask you to assess the impact the rules would have on the scenario.
- **One section of Reading Comprehension**
 - This section will consist of reading four passages, each accompanied by five to eight questions.
 - These questions test your ability to recognize the main point of a passage and your ability to draw reasonable inferences from the passage.
 - This section will contain a total of 26-28 questions.
- **One unscored section**
 - This section is typically used by the test writers to test future questions and to scale future tests.
 - This section contains reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, or logical reasoning.
 - Your answers in this section will not count toward your score.
 - You will not know which section is experimental while you are taking the test.

The LSAT is scored on a scale from 120 to 180, with 180 the highest possible score. There is no "pass" or "fail" score on the LSAT.

A 35-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the test. LSAC does not score the writing sample, but copies are sent to all law schools to which a candidate applies.

LSAT ADMINISTRATION

Law School Admission Council (LSAC)

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) is a nonprofit corporation whose members are more than 200 law schools in the United States and Canada. LSAC provides many services for its member schools to facilitate the law school application process. The LSAC prepares and administers the LSAT.

The most efficient way to register for the test is to go to www.lsac.org and establish your online account. This will enable you to print out your LSAT admission test and you will be able to get your LSAT score early via email. You can complete all of your LSAC transactions online once you set up an account, and you will be able to keep track of your entire file online. A valid credit card is required to register for the test or other LSAC services online.

Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) for U.S. Law Schools

The LSDAS centralizes and standardizes the undergraduate academic records of law school applicants to simplify the U.S. law school admission process. Nearly all American Bar Association–approved law schools (and some non-approved schools) require that applicants use the Law School Data Assembly Service. The registration fee for LSDAS includes law school report preparation, letter of recommendation and transcript processing, and access to electronic applications for all ABA – approved law schools.

FEE WAIVERS

Fee waivers for the LSAT and LSDAS

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) established the fee waiver program in 1968 to assure that no person is denied access to law school because of the inability to pay for LSAT and other essential applicant services. Fee waivers are available for the following LSAC services only:

- Two LSATs, valid test dates within the two-year LSAC fee waiver period
- An LSDAS registration (U.S. only), including a total of four LSDAS Law School Reports, the letter of recommendation service, and access to electronic applications for all ABA–approved law schools.

You must be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national or permanent resident alien of the United States with an Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151 or I-551) to be considered for a fee waiver. LSAC does not accept fee waiver applications from foreign candidates. The basic criterion for granting a waiver is the absolute inability to pay for the service. Your inability to pay will be validated via the LSAC Fee Waiver Application Form and supported by tax forms and other documentation as requested by LSAC or the law school.

LSAC recommends that you submit your fee waiver application at least four weeks prior to the regular registration deadline for a particular test date. For more information, visit <http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/fee-waivers.asp>.

ACCOMMODATED TESTING

Students with documented disabilities who are registered for an LSAT exam may request testing accommodations. You and your evaluator must obtain and submit an appropriate Accommodation Request Packet well in advance of the registration deadlines. For more information, resources and links to the Accommodation Request Packet, visit <http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/accommodated-testing.asp>.

LSAT: WHEN DO I TAKE IT?

By your junior year you should be in a position to take the June LSAT exam. Many pre-law advisors recommend this, however you should note that this exam might come just after your final exams. The following are the months of the LSAT exam:

- February
- June (ideal)
- October (latest for timely application)
- December

You may take the LSAT multiple times if necessary. To register for the LSAT exam and for more information, please visit Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) at www.lsac.org.

For recommendations in LSAT preparation and requirements visit:

- **Council on Legal Opportunity Education (CLEO)**

CLEO is a nonprofit project of the ABA Fund for Justice and Education with a mission to expand opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school.

- **Juniors Jumpstart the LSAT** seminars are primarily designed for college students in their junior year. The seminars aim to help participants understand the importance of systematic and timely preparation for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).
- **Achieving Success in the Application Process (ASAP)** provides historically underrepresented students an opportunity to get a head start on preparing for law school admissions. Open to juniors and seniors, ASAP provides counseling, mentorship and test preparation techniques.

www.cleoscholars.com

- **Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions**

Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions offers LSAT prep, guidance on applying to law schools, and financial aid information for prospective law school students.

www.kaptest.com/lsat

- **Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)**

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) is a nonprofit corporation founded to coordinate, facilitate, and enhance the law school admission process.

- **Minorities Interested in Legal Education (MILEMarkers)** is designed to bring information about law school, admission, and the legal profession to ethnic minority students and is a product of the Office of Diversity Initiatives at LSAC.

www.lsac.org

For recommendations in LSAT preparation and requirements visit (continued):

- **LSAT Books**

LSAT Books website relies on college students, pre-law advisors, online discussion groups and students who have taken the LSAT test, to determine which LSAT books would be the most useful to students.

www.lsatbooks.com

- **Power Score Test Preparation**

Power Score Test Preparation offers full length, virtual and weekend LSAT prep courses.

<http://powerscore.com/>

- **Prelaw Advisor**

Prelaw Advisor gives tips for preparing for the LSAT, courses to take and how to learn from mistakes.

<http://www.prelawadvisor.com/top-15-lsat-tips/>

- **TestMasters**

TestMasters is a LSAT prep company and offers full-length 80-hour LSAT courses in locations across the United States.

www.testmasters180.com

- **The Princeton Review**

The Princeton Review helps students, parents and educators achieve the best results at every stage of their educational careers. By focusing on preparation and practice, they help students improve their performance in the classroom and on standardized tests.

www.princetonreview.com

- **Pre-Law Handbook**

Pre-Law Handbook gives step-by-step instructions on how to navigate through the LSAT process. The website also has special resources for LGBT students and students with disabilities.

www.prelawhandbook.com

The LSAT carries significant weight in law school applications. It is critical to study and prepare for the LSAT before you take it!



Fellowships and Internships

As a junior you should also be researching the different fellowship and internship opportunities available as both an undergraduate and post graduate. Be mindful of the deadlines and apply early.

For recommendations in fellowships and internships, please visit:

- **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)**

The National Office of the American Civil Liberties Union implements litigation to maintain and expand civil liberties throughout the country and involves interns to help further that goal. Internship programs are designed to expose interns to legal aspects of public interest work.

<http://www.aclu.org/careers>

- **Public Policy Institute of California**

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to informing and improving public policy through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

www.ppic.org/main/about.asp

- **Coro**

Coro trains ethical, diverse civic leaders nationwide. Coro leaders develop skills; master tools needed to engage and empower communities; gain experience in government, business, labor and not-for-profit community organizations; and participate in special community and political problem solving processes.

www.coro.org

- **Equal Justice Society**

The Equal Justice Society is a national organization of scholars, advocates and concerned individuals advancing creative legal strategies and public policy for enduring social change.

www.equaljusticesociety.org

- **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization. The committee's major objective is to use the skills and resources of the bar to obtain equal opportunity for minorities by addressing factors that contribute to racial justice and economic opportunity.

www.lawyerscommittee.org

- **Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA)**

The Public Policy and International Affairs Program (PPIA) is a national program that prepares young adults for an advanced degree and ultimately for careers and influential roles serving the public good.

www.ppiaprogram.org/about

- **The Haas Center for Public Service**

The Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University connects academic study with community and public service to strengthen communities and develop effective public leaders. The center aspires to develop aware, engaged and thoughtful citizens who contribute to the realization of a more just and humane world.

<http://studentsaffairs.stanford.edu/haas>

- **United States Department of Justice**

The department's management offices, litigating divisions and offices, legal and policy offices, and investigatory and law enforcement offices offer internship opportunities to undergraduates, graduates and law students.

<http://usdoj.gov/06employment/06-3.html>

Your law school application package should provide every influential detail of your life, including your personal, professional and educational experiences. As someone who represents diversity, you likely have a rich background with unique experiences to detail. Use this to your advantage in your personal statement. Therefore, the summer before your senior year is the ideal time to begin drafting and organizing your personal statement and letters of recommendations. In addition, continue to consider which law schools you will be applying to in the fall of your senior year.

Create a timeline of when law school applications are due for each of your selected law schools.



Personal Statement

The personal statement may possibly be the most important piece of your application packet.

The effort you put into writing your personal statement is of great importance. This is your chance to stand out and convince the admissions committee that you will be successful. This is also the admissions committee's opportunity to get to know you. Do not be shy about expressing yourself, but do keep to one theme. A strong beginning and ending will not only garner the reader's attention but also leave them with a strong (and positive) impression. View the composition of your personal statement as your first and only job interview with the admissions committee.

A well-crafted personal statement will separate you from the other applicants. Be sure to introduce your attributes, accomplishments and unique experiences. Convince the reader that you are a successful person. Diverse students usually have a lot to talk about in their backgrounds, experiences and circumstances that have influenced their lives. Your final product will let the committee know what kind of law student you will be and what assets you will bring to the school and classroom.

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Proof read, proof read and when you are done: **PROOF READ** your personal statement.
- Be concise and clear when writing your personal statement.
- Keep your narrative to one central topic or story line.
- Take calculated risks when writing your personal statement: Distinguish yourself through your story.
- Use discretion when referencing potentially controversial subjects.
- Talk about how you will make changes in the world and make a positive difference. Avoid clichés: Don't write that you have always wanted to be a lawyer to save the world.
- Stay away from often-repeated or tired statements.
- Use an active voice.
- Let the reader know why you are unique and different and why you would be an asset to their institution.
- Utilize your school's career center, English professor or teacher's aid to help in composition of your personal statement.

Don't

- Wait until the last minute to write your personal statement.
- Recite your resume in your personal statement.
- Ignore the directions for the personal statement requirements (2-3 pages means just that).
- Omit why an event in your statement was important to you.
- Start your personal statement with a quote.
- Write your entire life story; highlight only the defining moments.
- Tell a story you think the reader wants to hear; tell the truth.

Remember the personal statement is the only component of the application that allows you to champion yourself.

Sample Personal Statement as provided by Accepted.com:

CHANGE

Change has been the one constant in my life. While staring out at the bleak Wisconsin winter, I think back to my beginnings on a warm tropical island. The biggest change was probably the first – moving from that buzzing Spanish-speaking isle to the sleepy sea-side town that was Tampa in 1978. It took me some time to realize that the other pre-schoolers could not understand my native tongue. Before long, I too was speaking their language.

Five years later I, an excited eight-year-old girl, boarded a school bus in New Jersey. The excitement quickly turned to fear as I heard rampant swearing in the back of the bus. I was truly shocked when the bus driver did nothing to stop the vulgarity. In my schools in Florida such behavior would have met with a bar of soap and a visit to the principal's office. A year later, I had a "Jersey" accent, and had started swearing too.

After nine years my family then moved to a place called "a whole 'nother country": Texas. I discovered that everything is bigger in Texas, from the size of a glass of ice tea to the distances on the road. My mother added barbecued brisket to the regular menu of turkey and Idaho potatoes on Monday and arroz con pollo on Tuesday. The incredibly friendly Texans, wearing cowboy boots and going to high school football games on Friday nights, seemed a totally different breed from my friends in New Jersey. A slight drawl entered my speech.

In two years time, I found myself in the mountains of rural Bolivia. As part of a team of doctors and students researching hypertension on a group of African-Bolivian villagers, I quickly learned a new vocabulary that included medical and anthropological terms. The greatest test of my linguistic abilities came when a villager accused me of drinking blood samples in some kind of vampire-like witchcraft ritual. I had to bridge a vast cultural gulf to explain a DNA isolation and analysis protocol in Spanish to someone who had never heard of a gene much less a double helix.

A year later I stood in a line at a McDonalds outside Buenos Aires asking for a sorbeto with a Puerto Rican accent and receiving a blank stare in return. I did not realize that in Argentina the word for straw was papote. Working at the U.S. embassy, I could clearly see the obvious differences between the U.S. and Argentina, but being out among the people and actually experiencing the culture helped me begin to understand and appreciate the subtle differences which, when taken together, make up a people.

Each place I have lived has its differences, from the obvious distinctions of Wisconsin and Texas weather, to the regional variations of the Spanish language. I bring with me wherever I go a part of those places and the impact they have had on my life, most evident to others by the variations in my speech. Beneath all the accents, however, lies something more significant, for I believe who you are is immeasurably more important than where you were. When I was younger, I could not clearly discern between situations where I should or should not adopt the ways of those around me. With maturity however I have come to understand the crucial difference between adaptation and assimilation. I have chosen to reject the vulgarity of the New Jersey school bus; I have also adopted the Texans' warm and friendly manner. Having experienced frequent moves to very different surroundings, I can adapt without compromising what is important to me while learning from each new setting.

A sign hung in my garage for many years that said, "Home is where you can scratch where it itches." To me this means that home is wherever you are comfortable and secure with yourself and your surroundings. I will be at home and prepared to meet new challenges wherever I am. Starting over so many times has taught me not to fear failure, but rather to embrace opportunities for change.

Accepted.com

Accepted.com is an editing service that assists applicants with the writing associated with applying to college, graduate and professional schools, and professional positions.

www.accepted.com

For additional guidance in personal statements, please visit:

- **2011 Top Law Schools**

Advice intended to help the law school applicant understand the audience, teach how to craft a persuasive statement, suggest topics, and tell the inside secrets. This advice is supplemented by personal statement samples with commentary at the end.

<http://www.top-law-schools.com/rankings.html>

- **Boston College**

Provides numerous resources on how to write a personal statement.

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/lawstatement.html>

- **For People of Color**

For People of Color, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower people of color who want to enter the legal profession by providing knowledge and expertise.

www.forpeopleofcolor.org

- **Indiana University of Bloomington, Pre-Law Center**

Guidelines for writing a personal statement.

<http://www.hpplc.indiana.edu/law/law-psguide.shtml>

- **Pre-Law Advising Center, The Personal Statement**

Tips on how to get the admissions committee to get to know you through your personal statement.

<http://trinity.duke.edu/prelaw-advising>

- **Prelaw Handbook**

Prelaw Handbook enables college students to decide whether they want to become lawyers and guides to law school for those who do.

www.prelawhandbook.com/law_school_personal_statement

- **University of California, Berkeley**

Tips on writing a personal statement.

<https://career.berkeley.edu/Law/LawStatement.stm>

- **University of California, Davis, Pre-Law Advising Center**

Tips on writing a personal statement.

http://advisingservices.ucdavis.edu/advising/law/handouts/tips_writing_your_law_school_personal_statement.html

- **University of California, Los Angeles, Career Center**

The UCLA Career Center, Graduate School and Pre-Professional Services provide important information to help with personal statements.

- **University of New Mexico, Pre-Law Advising Department**

Article by UNM Professor Elizabeth Archuleta, "How to Write a Personal Statement."

<http://www.unm.edu/~pre/law/>

Now it is time to begin submitting your applications. Refer back to the application process timeline on page 8. You may want to consider applying to no fewer than five law schools. Every school has a different submission cycle, but you should plan on sending the application beginning in October and no later than Thanksgiving.

One of the best resources on American Bar Association–accredited law schools is the “ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools.” It contains all the official ABA data on law schools, such as student demographics, tuition and fees, living expenses, curriculum, employment, and bar passage rates. Best of all, it includes a chart of the applicant profiles based on the LSAT and GPA.

In the fall of your senior year, begin researching financial aid options. For additional details see the Financial Aid and Debt Management section of this tool kit on page 38.

For additional guidance in application submissions, please visit:

- **Duke University, Pre-Law Advising Center**

Information on the law school application process for all law schools.

<http://trinity.duke.edu/prelaw-advising>

- **Prelaw Advisor**

How to persuade the admissions decision makers in your application.

www.prelawadvisor.com/questions10.htm

- **Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)**

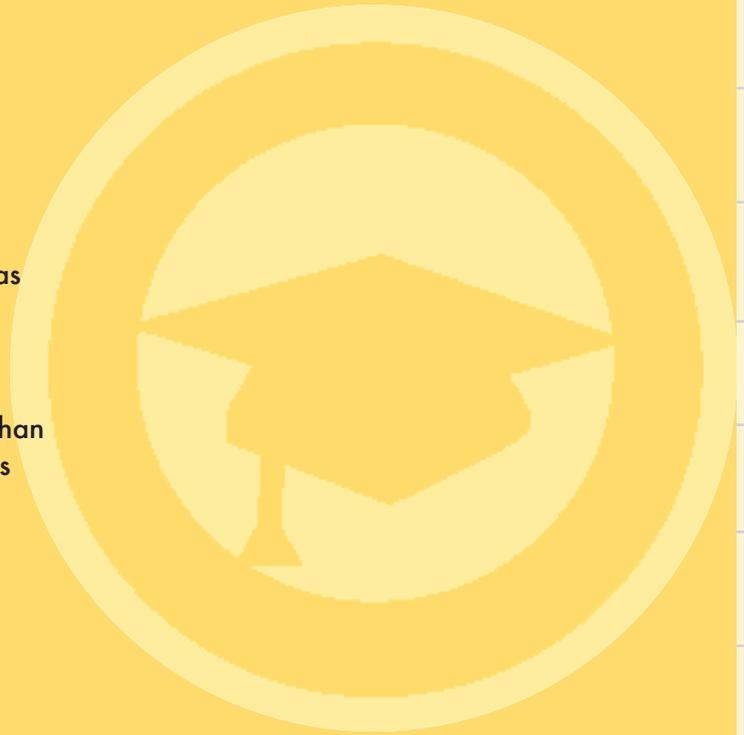
The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) is a nonprofit corporation founded to coordinate, facilitate, and enhance the law school admission process. The organization also provides programs and services related to legal education. LSAC will send three letters to schools you request.

www.lsac.org



The Final Stretch Checklist for Seniors

- **August**
 - Obtain applications from schools to which you plan to apply
- **September**
 - Attend law school forums
- **October**
 - Register for the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) six weeks before sending in law school applications
 - Begin completing law school applications
 - Continue to work on your personal statement
 - If necessary, take LSAT
 - Submit your applications as early as October for early review process
- **November**
 - Submit your applications no later than November for early review process
 - Submit application for CLEO for Six Week Summer Institute for early acceptance
- **December**
 - Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) to begin the financial aid process
- **January**
 - Send transcripts with fall semester grades to LSDAS in January
 - Submit applications to law schools in January (this is **not** early review process)
 - Submit application for CLEO Six Week Summer Institute



be present for your future

WHAT TO DO AFTER SUBMISSION OF YOUR APPLICATION

You have submitted your complete application packet which included all of the required components. In time you will learn if you have been accepted, rejected or waitlisted. If you are accepted, notify each school in writing with your decision to enroll or not as soon as possible. Doing so will allow others being waitlisted the opportunity to accept an offer of admission. If you are intending to enroll, and if required, submit a deposit by the stated deadline.

If you are waitlisted, respond right away. The aim of your response should be two-fold: To confirm your interest in attending the school and to gather information such as:

- How many people have been waitlisted?
- Have the students on this list been ranked?
- What is the cut-off date?
- How does this list compare to previous years?

Also, update the school(s) with any new activities you have been involved in that may be relevant to their decision. If the schools request more information, act quickly and enthusiastically to provide the detail. If the school presents questions about your application, be forthcoming and precise.

Beginning June 15 of each year, law schools may share information with each other about their enrollment commitments. Therefore, schools are not required to maintain an offer of admission to an applicant if the applicant has accepted an offer at another institution.

Be sure you read and fully understand the policies on the possible reimbursement of deposits. Some law schools have multiple commitment deposit rules of which you should be aware.

Rejection of your application must be met with the same standard of determination that motivated you throughout your undergraduate school career. In other words: **appeal** immediately with a letter that is no more than one to one and one-half pages, respectfully asking the institution to reconsider their decision. Inquire if perhaps there may have been a mistake, and then state in bullet point format the reasons you believe you are a strong candidate. Base these points on your strongest attributes and do so with conviction. Arrange an on-site tour/visit through the admissions office to establish a “face behind the application.”

With many law schools, there is not a standard appeal process for you to follow. Therefore it is up to you to 1) decide if you want to appeal and 2) submit a timely appeal. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain with an appeal.

When accepted, how to select the best law school for you.

When accepted, follow these guidelines to help you select the best law school for you:

- Don't rely solely on the law school rankings
- Consider these factors in determining the best fit
 - Location
 - School demographics
 - Diversity of students, faculty and alumni
 - Internal support systems, e.g., academic support, student groups, etc.
 - Areas of interest, e.g., course offerings, special programs, clinics, etc.
 - Proximity to where you intend to practice
 - School bar passage rate
 - Finance, e.g., costs to attend, scholarships offered, etc.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE: TRANSFERRING OUT

Community college (CC) students planning to go law school need to remember that a seamless transfer to a four-year college is necessary to becoming the **complete applicant**. Outlined below is a simplified three step transfer process, which should be used as a gateway resource to augment applicable tips and resources already noted in the freshman/sophomore categories of this tool kit.

These tips are also applicable to non-traditional re-entry (25-years and older) students who are interested in the legal profession. Whether you are a traditional or a non-traditional law applicant, have confidence that law school is within your reach.

It is imperative that you both maximize your time through strategic course selection and find a way to highlight your capacity for leadership, which may include participating in student clubs, work experience, community service, or being a caregiver for an elder family member or younger sibling.

The three step transfer process should start immediately after the first semester of your freshman year.

The Three Step Transfer Process

Step 1:

Transfer Agreements: Begin researching possible transfer schools and their admission requirements, such as the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) for University of California (UC) schools, CSU Mentor for California State Universities (CSU), and the minimum requirements for private colleges. Look to make the most of your time at your CC by taking courses that “double dip” (courses that fulfill the requirements of at least two, if not all three college systems).

You should also look to secure one or two Transfer Articulation Agreements (TAA). TAAs guarantee admissions to select public and private universities if a student meets the minimum requirement, which helps eliminate the inherent admissions uncertainty and allows students to apply broadly without reluctance. Learn to advocate for yourself: Visit these schools and take a campus tour, sit in on a lecture, talk to alumni, talk to an admissions counselor and meet with a professor who teaches in your intended major.

Step 2:

Recruitment and Retention Centers: The summer between your freshman and sophomore year you should get in touch with either an on-or off-campus “recruitment and retention” resource center affiliated with your target transfer schools. For example, the Experience Berkeley Transfer Program at Stiles Hall, located right across the street from UC Berkeley is a nonprofit private agency that offers excellent application mentoring and personal statement support. Likewise, if University of San Francisco is on your transfer radar, contact their Multicultural Recruitment and Retention Center.

After completing the transfer process, if you do not get accepted to the college of your choice and you believe that they have made a mistake: **Appeal**. Talk to people at the recruitment and retention center about your options.

Step 3:

Financial Aid: Once you've been accepted to a four-year institution, the reality of paying for college starts to kick in. The first thing you must do is make sure that you check the box which releases your application information to outside scholarship programs and foundations that are just waiting to give away free money. If you do not, you will pass up the opportunity to receive additional funding. Once you get your offer letter, do not get discouraged if you do not receive the most favorable financial aid package, because you can always appeal it. Check with the college's financial aid website for more information. Each school is different. In most cases, however, even the slightest change in your or your family's financial circumstances can be enough to increase your offer. If you are still in need of funds, do your research and consider taking out a government subsidized student loan.

Remember, your education is the best investment you will ever make.

Recruitment & Retention Programs

UC Berkeley Stiles Hall, Experience Berkeley

2400 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA 94704
510.841.6010

Web: www.stileshall.org

Email: info@stileshall.org

UC Davis Recruitment and Retention Center

One Shields Avenue
16 South Hall
Davis, CA 95616
530.754.6836

Web: <http://thecenter.ucdavis.edu/index.html>

Email: srrc@ucdavis.edu

Bridges Multicultural Resource Center

516A Eshleman Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720
510.642.3913

Web: <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~bridges/>

Email: bridgesinfo@berkeley.edu

University of San Francisco (USF) Multicultural Resource Center

Multicultural Recruitment and Retention
Office of Undergraduate Admission
415.422.2684

Web: <http://www.usfca.edu/admission/undergraduate/freshman/multicultural/-recruitment>

Email: degrange@usfca.edu

Cal State East Bay Office of Undergraduate Admissions

25800 Carlos Bee Boulevard
Hayward, CA 94542
510.885.3000

Web: <http://www20.csueastbay.edu/prospective/>

Email: admissions@csueastbay.edu

**Dominican University of California
Office of Admissions**

50 Acacia Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
415.457.4440

Web: <http://www.dominican.edu/admissions/undergrad/transferring.html>

Email: chilly@dominican.edu

**Mills College
Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

5000 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, CA 94613
510.430.2125

Web: <http://www.mills.edu/admission/undergraduate>

Email: admissions@mills.edu

**Saint Mary's College of California
Office of Admissions**

1928 Saint Mary's Road
Moraga, CA 94556
800.800.4SMC

Web: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/admissions-and-aid/undergraduate-admissions/transfer-students/index.html>

Email: smcadmit@stmarys-ca.edu

**San Francisco State University
Office of Student Programs and
Leadership Development**

1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132
415-338-1111

http://www.sfsu.edu/~lead/about.html

**San Jose State University
Undergraduate Studies**

One Washington Square
Located in: ADM 159
San Jose, CA 95192
408.924.1000

http://www.sjsu.edu/

**Santa Clara University
Office of Undergraduate Admissions**

500 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95053
408.554.4000

http://www.scu.edu/ugrad/

**Stanford University
Office of Undergraduate Admission**

355 Galvez Street, Montag Hall
Stanford, CA 94305-6106
650.723.2091

http://www.stanford.edu/



FINANCIAL AID AND DEBT MANAGEMENT

Law school can be expensive, but money is available to finance your legal education in the form of scholarships, grants, work-study and loans. Financial aid awards, including loans and grants, are based on the "Cost of Attendance" (COA). Each law school establishes a COA that includes tuition and fees, books, room and board, transportation, insurance, personal items and miscellaneous.

Individual law schools determine the amount of financial aid you receive, thus your primary source of information should be the law schools to which you are applying. Financial aid rules and regulations are constantly changing and vary from law school to law school. This tool kit is designed to give you a basic overview of identifying primary sources of aid, basic facts about eligibility and Web site links to more information.

It is your responsibility to stay up to date and research financial aid in the same strategic, timely way that you are applying to law schools.

Types of Financial Aid Available to Law School Students

There are three general options in financing your legal education: Grants and scholarships, federal work-study and loans.

Grants and scholarships

These are funds you do not have to repay. Availability of these funds is limited. There are three principal sources of grants and scholarships:

- **Government**
- **School you attend**
- **Private/civic sources**

There is very little grant and scholarship assistance from federal and state government sources for law students. Unlike Federal Pell Grant funding for undergraduates, there is no specific federal grant program for law students. Also, few states offer grant/scholarship assistance to law students.

You should contact the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend to inquire about the availability of any federal or state grant aid, and what the application process is for the available funding.

The law school you attend may award scholarship and grant assistance to students who meet their eligibility requirements: Strong undergraduate academic record, demonstrated financial need, special career objectives, or a combination of these and/or other factors.

In some cases, all students are considered for funding. In other cases, you may need to submit a specific application by a deadline. You should research and contact the schools you are considering for more information.

Some individual organizations also have scholarships to offer. Among them are local bar associations, law firms, social clubs, non-profits, religious or business organizations and civic organizations. It is worthwhile to

research law school scholarships online. Also, check out the Web sites listed on page 40 of this tool kit, your local public library or bookstore for other sources of information on scholarships and grants.

Federal Work-Study

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program provides employment opportunities for law students who have demonstrated financial need. FWS funding, however, depends on the availability of work-study funds at the school you are attending and not all law schools have work-study funding available.

First-year students are expected to concentrate fully on schoolwork.

Loans

Education loans represent the largest component of financial assistance for law students. There are four general types of education loans:

- **Federally guaranteed loans (Federal Stafford Loan)**
- **State-sponsored loans**
- **Institutionally funded loans**
- **Privately guaranteed supplemental loans by private lenders**

It is highly recommended that you first borrow what you need from the federal loans programs before you consider applying for a private student loan. Federal Stafford Loans are low-cost loans that are guaranteed by the federal government. The subsidized Federal Stafford Loan is a need based loan; interest is paid by the government while you are in school. The law schools to which you apply will determine your eligibility for federal financial aid. The amount offered by each law school will vary, and each student's financial need will be assessed individually as costs differ from school to school.

Unsubsidized loans are not need-based and interest begins accruing as soon as the money is disbursed.

Applying for Financial Aid Step by Step

- Your financial aid process should start in January to be well in advance of the school's particular filing deadline. Do not wait until after you receive admission offers to begin the planning and application process.
- Obtain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or on paper from your college or university financial aid office or law school to which you are applying. FAFSA, developed by the U.S. Department of Education, assesses financial need. There is no charge for the collection and process of data or delivery of financial aid through this form.
- In addition to the FAFSA, you may be asked to complete an institutional financial aid application or an additional form from another agency such as a Need Access or CSS Profile. It is important to know which schools require additional information and which schools have early filing deadlines.
- Prepare your federal income tax returns as early as possible after the first of the year. Most schools will want to see a copy of your actual tax return so be sure to keep photocopies on file. The FAFSA requires information that is requested directly from your tax return. The FAFSA can be filed any time after the first of the year—the earlier, the better!

Debt Management

The average law student graduates with \$88,000 in debt from undergraduate and graduate school loans. Plan to reduce or eliminate any debt you already have before you begin law school and save as much money as you can to reduce the amount you will borrow. Credit card debt and monthly payments are not factored into law school budgets, so it is important to minimize this type of debt.

The Federal Stafford Loan, detailed on the previous page, is NOT credit-based. The Federal Stafford Loan provides \$18,500 which is not enough to cover costs for law school. Many students may need to turn to private companies that lend money based on a student's credit history.

If you have not established a good credit history, start building that now. Do not jeopardize your credit by forgetting to pay a bill, paying late, or by moving and not updating your address. Bad credit history could keep you from getting the loans you need to finance your legal education.

Once you have been awarded financial aid, keep accurate records of all awards (especially loans) you receive during your enrollment in law schools; this will help you manage your repayment when you complete your education.

If you have an interest in working in the public sector (government, academics, non-profit organizations, legal aid, or other organizations) Loan Repayment Assistance Programs (LRAP) may help you pay back your student loans after law school.

Debt management tips:

- Develop a budget and stick to it
- Develop good spending habits
- Consult an individual school's Student Expense Budget for estimates of living expenses, and budget accordingly
- Plan ahead by tracking your current spending habits and comparing them to the budget at schools of your choice and make adjustments

For additional guidance in financial aid and debt management, please visit:

- **The SmartStudent™ Guide to Financial Aid**
www.finaid.org
- **Equal Justice Works**
www.equaljusticeworks.com
- **FastWeb**
www.fastweb.com
- **Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA)**
www.fafsa.gov
- **Access Group: The non-profit graduate loan specialist**
www.accessgroup.org
- **Minority Corporate Council Association**
www.mcca.com
- **Council on Legal Opportunity Education (CLEO)**
www.cleoscholars.org
- **The Bar Association of San Francisco (scholarships)**
www.sfbar.org/scholarships

OBTAINING A LICENSE TO PRACTICE LAW IN CALIFORNIA:

In order to be licensed to practice law in California, several requirements must be met. In general, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Complete two years of undergraduate college work or pass certain equivalency tests
- Graduate from a State Bar accredited or American Bar Association approved law school, complete four years of study at an unaccredited or correspondence law school, spend four years studying law in a law office/judge's chambers program, or complete a study program that combines these various methods
- Register with the State Bar within 90 days of beginning your law studies
- Pass the First-Year Law Students' Examination (Law students who successfully complete their first year at certain law schools are generally exempt from this requirement)
- Receive a positive "moral character" determination
- Pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination and the California Bar Examination
- Provide a Social Security Number, unless you are exempt
- Comply with any California court-ordered child or family support payments

For more information, visit http://www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10115

Recommended Reading:

Books

- ***A Life in the Law***, American Bar Association
- ***The African American Pre-Law School Advice Guide***, by Evangeline M. Mitchell, JD
- ***An Introduction to Legal Reasoning***, by Edward H. Levi
- ***And Still We Rise***, by Miles Corwin
- ***The Law School Admissions Guide: How to Increase Your Chances of Getting Admitted to Law School Despite Your LSAT Score and GPA***, by Law School Admissions.org Inc. and Robert DeV. Bunn
- ***Law 101***, by Jay M. Feinman
- ***Law School Confidential***, by Robert H. Miller
- ***Preparing for a Career in Law in the 21st Century***, by Professor Bryan K. Fair
<http://www.law.ua.edu/bfair/prepare.html>
- ***Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience***, by Angelo N. Ancheta

Web sites

- **American Bar Association: Programs to advance racial and ethnic diversity in the legal profession**
<http://www.abanet.org/leadership/recmenu.html>
<http://www.abanet.org/minorities/publications/home.html>
- **Lawbooks.com: Law Books for Everyone**
<http://www.lawbooks.com/>
- **Law School Admission Council: Diversity in Law School**
<http://www.lsac.org/jd/diversity/minorities-in-legal-education.asp>
- **Online Academic Support Program for Law Students**
<http://www.onlineasp.org>

Bay Area Law Schools:

- **Empire College of Law**
<http://www.empire-school-of-law.com>
- **Golden Gate University School of Law***
http://www.ggu.edu/school_of_law/
- **John F. Kennedy University School of Law**
<http://www.jfku.edu/schools/law/>
- **Lincoln Law School**
<http://www.lincolnlawsj.edu/>
- **Santa Clara University School of Law ***
<http://law.scu.edu>
- **Stanford University Law School ***
<http://www.law.stanford.edu/>
- **UC Berkeley School of Law ***
<http://www.law.berkeley.edu/>
- **UC Davis School of Law ***
<http://www.law.ucdavis.edu>
- **UC Hastings College of the Law ***
<http://www.uchastings.edu/>
- **University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law ***
<http://www.mcgeorge.edu>
- **University San Francisco School of Law ***
<http://www.usfca.edu/>

* Accredited by the American Bar Association

Bay Area Bar Associations:

- **Alameda County Bar Association**
<http://www.acbanet.org/>
- **Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area**
<http://www.aaba-bay.com>
- **Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Silicon Valley**
<http://www.apabasv.org>
- **The Bar Association of San Francisco**
<http://www.sfbar.org>
- **Bay Area Association of Muslim Lawyers**
<http://www.baaml.net/>
- **Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom**
<http://www.balif.org/>
- **Charles Houston Bar Association**
<http://www.charleshoustonbar.org/>
- **Contra Costa County Bar Association**
<http://www.cccba.org/>
- **East Bay Association La Raza Lawyers**
<http://www.eblrla.org>
- **Filipino Bar Association of Northern California**
<http://www.fbanc.org/>
- **Korean American Bar Association of Northern California**
<http://www.kabanc.org/>
- **Santa Clara County Bar Association**
<http://www.sccba.com/>
- **San Mateo County Bar Association**
<http://www.smcba.org/>
- **San Francisco La Raza Lawyers Association**
<http://www.larazalawyers.org/>
- **South Asian Bar Association of Northern California**
<http://www.southasianbar.org/>
- **Queen's Bench Bar Association**
<http://www.queensbench.org>

THE COMPLETE APPLICANT CHECKLIST ✓

Freshman: Direct your own destination

- Get to know professors who might later write letters of recommendations.
- Choose a major.
- Visit www.cleoscholars.com and register for the College Scholars Program.
- Visit www.forpeopleofcolor.org and register.
- Visit www.sfbar.org/DLS for more information on pre-law opportunities.

Sophomore: Seek out courses that will engage you

- Seek out a pre-law advisor.
- Enroll in core courses that will prepare you for the study and practice of law (consider a logic course).
- Research what it takes to get started towards law school.
- Volunteer and/or work as an intern during the summer.
- Identify professors and others for letters of recommendation.

Junior: Jump-start the law school application process

- Meet with a pre-law advisor and discuss the law school application process and develop a personal plan of action.
- Research LSAT preparation courses and the exam. Take practice exams.
- Review your financial situation and develop a financial aid plan.
- Begin to solicit and compile letters of recommendation.
- Research law schools and application requirements.
- Tour/visit law schools.
- Attend law school forums/fairs.
- Take the June LSAT.
- Begin to draft your personal statement.

Senior: Time to submit applications

- Take the October LSAT if necessary.
- Create a timeline of when your selected law schools' applications are due.
- Collect and compile your letters of recommendation.
- Complete your personal statement.
- Request law school applications.
- Submit law school applications for early review process.
- Register for Law School Data Assembly Service six weeks before sending in applications.
- Research scholarship and financial aid options.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Submit application for early acceptance for CLEO Six-Week Summer Institute (www.cleoscholars.com).
- Send transcripts with fall semester grades to Law School Data Assembly Service.
- Submit applications to law school.
- When accepted, select the best law school for you and pay the necessary deposits.





Be Present for Your Future

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