



Office of Public Interest and  
Community Service

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GUIDE**

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Networking in the Public Sector

# OPICS QUICK GUIDE

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## **Networking in the Public Sector**

There are a variety of paths to a public sector career. As the legal market and profession as a whole is rapidly changing, the same is even more true for the public sector. Networking is an important component to learning, in real time, what opportunities are available and which will be the best fit for you.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you network:

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### **LinkedIn and Hoya Gateway are great places to start (for now).**

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Many public sector employers (especially attorneys working in government positions) may not have their names or their contact information listed on their organizational/agency websites. LinkedIn is one of the best ways to search and reach out to folks who do the work you may be interested in exploring. Also consider signing up for [Hoya Gateway](#), a new networking site where students and alumni can connect with one another. It's best to search after having already done research to determine which employers you are interested in. OPICS counselors and career guides are a great way to get you started and point you in the right direction. You can refer to our [Communications Quick Guide](#) for guidance on how to initiate these connections.

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### **Don't limit yourself to alumni connections.**

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The Georgetown alumni network is vast, but because public sector careers may be fairly niche, you should not limit yourself to networking with only alumni connections. Leverage any connection you may have and do not be afraid to network with someone you do not have an obvious connection with. Consider who might be connected to attorneys with whom you'd like to talk. Is there anyone from your undergraduate studies, internships, or extracurricular activities? Do you have any second or third degree contacts available in LinkedIn? Most attorneys who love what they do, especially those who are recently out of law school, also enjoy talking about what they love to do with students like you. It never hurts to ask.

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### **Working with someone is one of the best ways to build your network.**

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Do not underestimate the power of leveraging the contacts you already have, whether that is from work experience prior to law school or work experience you gain during your time at the Law Center. Your summer internship supervisor may not only be someone who can provide you

with a reference for subsequent jobs, they may give you ideas for job leads and continue to provide advice and guidance as your career progresses. Build and maintain strong professional relationships.

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**Pay attention to who you connect well with and who you *don't* connect so well with.**

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When you first begin networking, you may find yourself making many cold connections: conversations with people who you may not have any contacts in common with. It's important to keep in mind that sometimes, you may not have helpful or engaging conversations through no fault of your own. It could be as simple as personality differences. However, those misconnections may be a clue that the type of work or environment that person works in may be a good fit for them, but not a good fit for you. So it's always important to talk to multiple people from various backgrounds who work in the areas you're interested in. From the conversations that flow easiest and feel the most engaging, feel free to ask them to suggest more contacts for you to talk to. This will help your network grow organically.

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**Networking is like making friends.**

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Go with the flow of networking and allow it to unfold organically. In the beginning, you will need to do an initial push to be proactive about reaching out to people and picking organizations that resonate with your interests and passions. Consider asking networking partners that have been helpful to suggest another two or three people who they think you should reach out to - thus expanding your web. At some point, you will find that your network will grow naturally.

Keep in mind that beginning your law school journey is also beginning your legal career. You may pursue doing public sector work full-time or decide to do public sector in conjunction with a private practice. You may pursue private practice but may also want to stay connected to social justice issues that you are passionate about through pro bono work or becoming a non-profit board member. The twists and turns of your career, no matter which path you choose, will likely be navigated through the connections you've made. Make sure those connections are strong, authentic, and kept alive through continued engagement and nourishment - just as you would do so for your friendships. And perhaps, many colleagues and networking contacts may also become your friends. With that said, it is okay to reopen lines of communications with individuals you haven't communicated with in a while. We understand that it can feel awkward, but it doesn't reflect poorly on you just because time has passed.

***A word on networking in the time of COVID (and any other time of crisis or transition)...***

There will be times in your life where you will question your path and wonder what the next step will be. Sometimes the next step will be clear and other times, it will not. It's important to remember, especially when your life and your world seems uncertain, that you are stronger when you rely on community and trust the connections in your life. There will always be someone who will be willing to lend a helping hand - through advice, words of encouragement, or even a job lead. And one day, someone will call you for the same. The public sector community is broad and deep, don't be afraid to discover what it has to offer you - whichever path you choose.

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## Video Demonstrations

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### [LinkedIn Search Video](#)

1. Go to [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com)
2. In the upper left search box, type the organization you are interested in. Click Enter.
3. A list of organizations should appear. Click the one you are looking for.
4. On the left hand side, click People.
5. In the search box in the middle of the page, type Georgetown Law (or another institution you want to narrow your search by)

### [Hoya Gateway Search Video](#)

1. Go to <https://hoyagateway.georgetown.edu/>
2. In the upper left, select Browse Alumni.
3. A list of active users should appear.
4. At the top of the page, click Georgetown Degree Types.
5. Filter for Law or Juris Doctor (J.D.), click Apply.
6. Use the search box and other filters near the top of the page to narrow your search.