



## Episode 120: Preparing for the 1L Job Hunt (with Ex-BigLaw Recruiter Sadie Jones)

Alison Monahan: Welcome to the Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today, we're talking with ex-big law recruiter, Sadie Jones, about preparing for the 1L job hunt. We'll also talk about the impact your 1L job might or might not have on your future job prospects. Your Law School Toolbox host today is Alison Monahan, and typically I'm here with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career website, [CareerDicta](#). I also run the Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy this show, please leave a [review](#) on iTunes or your favorite app, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form on lawschooltoolbox.com](#), and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back. Today, we're talking with ex-recruiter, Sadie Jones about preparing for the 1L job hunt. We'll also talk a bit about what impact this job might have, or might not have, on your future job prospects. Actually, first off, how critical is this 1L summer job, and if you don't get the exact job that you're aiming for, is your legal career over?

Sadie Jones: First of all, thank you for having me back.

Alison Monahan: Thanks.

Sadie Jones: And I would say no. Your legal career is certainly not over if you don't get the exact job you are looking for.

Alison Monahan: Because I'm kind of thinking maybe I'm at 1L, I might want to work for Cravath.

Sadie Jones: Right.

Alison Monahan: Which is possible. My law school roommate did it, but it's very rare.

Sadie Jones: Well, I think there are the occasional law firm jobs, and I think there are lots of great opportunities for 1Ls. Basically, my advice would be you want to get something where you're getting some legal experience, where you're learning to work in that environment, where you're going to have people who are going to be able to give you a recommendation for the next year, where you're going to meet people. Really, just get some experience under your belt.

Alison Monahan: Right. That's what I've always heard about the 1L job, is that it's really important to do something that's legally related, but it's really not all that important what it is. If you think eventually you might want a firm job, you don't have to get a firm job now. If you think you're going to do public interest, it can be useful to do a public interest option, but if you want to go in-house, obviously you're probably not going to get an in-house job as a 1L. That's just not going to happen, and people don't expect that.

I think that's a key take-away, too, is no one really expects that you're going to be working for this incredibly impressive organization and getting paid tons of money after your first year of law school. A few people do that, but that's rare. But they want to see something, and also you need to have something to talk about in these later interviews.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And I think that even if you want a firm job down the road, there's nothing wrong with doing a public interest job your 1L summer, working for a judge, doing something where maybe you're not going to get paid very much. I think it's more important to focus on what the experience is going to be and what's the best experience you can have for that summer.

Alison Monahan: Yeah-

Sadie Jones: And I think firms don't really expect that you're probably going to get a firm job 1L summer, so you really don't have anything to lose there.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think, honestly, even if you do think that's the pathway you're going to go down, I think it can be beneficial to do something else your first summer because the reality is, most people don't really stay at law firms that long. You're probably going to be looking for another job at some point, say, three to five years after graduating from law school. At that point, you might consider going back to the idea of the things that brought you to law school to begin with, which frankly, was probably not big law work.

I think that can be a good way to show, "Oh, you know, this is something I've been interested in, and this is an area I'm passionate about. When I had the opportunities at 1L, I went and did a summer of low pay or no paid work for this organization."

Sadie Jones: I agree, and I would do something that you're interested in if you can.

Alison Monahan: For sure. The money thing is actually a key point. It's important to know a lot of schools actually provide a lot of public interest stipend. And you want to understand at your school how that works. I know when I was in 1L, some of the funding actually was handed out very, very early. So people who didn't realize that missed their shot. I think it's a little easier now. I think a lot of the top schools just give you the money. At that time, you had to more of apply for it. But you want to understand what your options are, and if your school doesn't

have any public interest funding, are there outside organizations that might? Are there campus groups that might? These are the things that you want to be looking at, and if not, you've got to figure out how you're going to pay your rent and eat.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and I agree that I would look early. I think it can be overwhelming starting law school and getting used to classes. Then you feel like you're right into the job search, because these job searches in law school tend to start early, but if you can get a handle on it and start thinking about it in your first semester, I think that you're going to be better off than other people who maybe haven't given it that much thought.

Alison Monahan: I think that's right, because the reality ... Let's talk about some of the basics here. The reality here is [1Ls can actually start applying for summer jobs at the latest by December 1st](#), which I was shocked about. You're getting ready to take your exams your first semester, and suddenly, there's this deadline of, oh my gosh, oh, you think you might want to work for an organization that's hiring for the summer. It's time for you to start applying. I was like, what are you talking about? How is this possible? And then-

Sadie Jones: The reality is that a lot of firms are looking at you before you even have all your grades in.

Alison Monahan: Oh, sure.

Sadie Jones: They're making lots of decisions, so actually, that's a real opportunity to sell yourself without that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think in my case ... Basically, just to give people a really basic background, there's this organization called NALP. Do you remember what that stands for?

Sadie Jones: National Association of Legal Professionals, I-

Alison Monahan: Right, okay, that's what I thought too. I figured you had more expertise. NALP is the overarching organization that has essentially best practices and standards that they kind of enforce about job hiring for certain types of organizations. Most of these, if you look, they have actually a really extensive database or directory called the [NALP Directory](#), and that's a lot of job openings. Most of those openings are big law.

A job that you're interested in may or may not be covered by this, but assuming that it's covered by the NALP guidelines, you can apply starting on December 1st. If this is something you're interested in, obviously, you need to have your resume, your cover letter, your plan ready to go well before then, because you don't have time December 1st to be starting this project.

Sadie Jones: Correct, and I can tell you as a legal recruiter, I certainly got a lot of resumes at midnight on December 1st. People are ready to go, but not usually as many as I would expect, especially when we'd indicated that we at least may be looking at 1Ls. I would say don't just assume that those jobs don't exist. It is a long-shot, but you should try. I was always surprised at how many people didn't even put themselves out there.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's right. If somebody's listening to this a couple of months before, then they're like, "Oh, of course I would be ready to go on December 1st and apply for these high paid big law summer jobs. That sounds great." But the reality is, the timing on it's just awful. I remember sitting, and this was back in the day before we could just apply electronically, where, you know, sitting on the floor with my roommate, hand-stuffing envelopes full of fancy Crane's paper, where it was such a nightmare to get them to print the right way, with the right logo.

Sadie Jones: Yup.

Alison Monahan: You're just like, "I cannot believe I'm spending hours on this." I think we at some point juts put on a movie, and both of us just sat there and stuffed a hundred envelopes. The reality is both of us ended up getting a job, so I don't think either of us actually got a job through that exact process, but we did both get firm jobs. I don't know, it kind of worked, I guess. It was worth doing.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I just feel like there really isn't much to lose except for some time. Even if you don't get hired for that job, maybe they like you. Maybe they remember you. Maybe they meet you the next year, and you interviewed with them, or they just remember your name.

Alison Monahan: Oh yeah, for sure. I think particularly, if you get an interview as a 1L, even if you don't get hired, that says a lot about their interest level for bringing you back the next year. Certainly, I think that's something you could mention. "Hey, I loved the opportunity. It was so great to go and meet some of your people when I interviewed as a 1L. I ended up working at wherever you ended up working; the Children's Defense Fund for the summer, which was fantastic, but I really enjoyed my experience. I'd love to talk to you about being there as a 2L." That looks good.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I really did remember the really interested 1Ls who kept up with it and came to our events and panels. I did really know their names.

Alison Monahan: Let's talk about that. What are you talking about when you say events, panels? What are these?

Sadie Jones: Really, they're networking opportunities for firms to get to meet people early in their legal career, and for law students to get to know the names of firms, so it creates good buzz on campus. It could be a variety of things. It could just be a

cocktail party. A lot of times, we would do different panels with speakers about a variety of topics; diversity or a practice group or whatnot. I would say, I think that sometimes 1Ls are bombarded with this stuff during a certain time of year, and maybe they don't even know why it's important. But if I were doing this, I would try to go to as many as I could, as long as the firm is something that you might be interested in. Because again, people really do remember you if you make a good impression and you talk to people and you're comfortable socially. It's always helpful.

Alison Monahan: Or you can make a bad impression.

Sadie Jones: Yup.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I remember they had ... In the second semester particularly, they had a lot of these on campus at my law school. Some people treated it as a mid-week opportunity to go get drunk on someone else's money, and a lot of these were people who were like, "Well, I would never apply for a firm job. I'm not going to even do OCI." They make a complete not so favorable impression of themselves, and I'm sure people remembered, and then the next OCI rolls around and you see them in their suit ready to go, and suddenly it's like, oh, you're interviewing at that firm, really? Do you remember how drunk you were at their cocktail party? 'Because I bet they remember.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. I think it's really important to keep in mind that you don't know where you're going to end up or what you're going to want or need to do in the future, so always making a good impression. Always keeping it professional, I think, is important. And it's fine if you go to these things for some free food and drinks. I think that's expected, and maybe there are places you don't think you're interested in, but you never know. And you never know where those people might work at some other time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.

Sadie Jones: And they met you there and they remember you.

Alison Monahan: I think that's the key thing, too. People are moving around all the time to all sorts of different places in the legal profession, and once you have a reputation that is not favorable, they're probably going to remember you wherever they land. And you never know when your resume is going to cross that desk.

Okay, great. So basically, December 1st is our deadline if you're really serious about this. You can officially get help from career services at your campus for your resume, things like that starting on October 15th. That I think is something people definitely probably want to take advantage of. We have an entire episode that we've done on resume and cover letters with Sadie, which has some great information. But these are things that you can be working on now so

that you have a plan and you're ready to go, and all you have to do is push that button on midnight and then move on with your life.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think you should always have a current resume. You can always add to it, and make sure it's up to date. As you do different activities or get grades back, add to it, make sure it's the latest version. But you should always have it available.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. You never know who you're going to meet, who just says, "Oh, shoot me a resume, my friend might be interested in hiring you." Because the reality is, let's face it, most people are not getting NALP big firm jobs their first summer. This is pretty rare.

Sadie Jones: True. They're hard to get, but if you ... If it's a possibility, I would say you should be trying really hard for it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Give me an idea of who would it be a reasonable possibility for, that they should actually give it a shot.

Sadie Jones: I would say, I mean, I think depending on the firm, there's a certain level of school and academics and all of that that's the basics that they're probably not going to look at anyone that doesn't fit that basic criteria. But like I said before, a lot of times, maybe you have a few grades back. Maybe they're even talking to you before you have your grades back. They're probably not going to make you an offer until they see some grades, but you have a real chance to make an impression without that at the beginning.

But what they really want is someone enthusiastic, someone who's going to be a great 1L ambassador. They want someone who's involved in activities, who seems genuinely excited about the firm. A lot of reason that firms don't hire 1Ls is because most firms don't have a great track record of converting 1Ls into future associates, although I can say that I had a pretty good track record. Not 100%, but I would say 75%.

Alison Monahan: That's very high.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. And one of the reasons was at my firm, we have full offers after their 1L summer. It wasn't an offer to come back. So, to a lot of people, that was ... If they knew they liked the firm, they didn't necessarily want to try something else.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: The thing that's great about being a 1L is you kind of get a free summer, and you probably will get an offer at that firm, and then you get to go to another firm or split your summer the next year.

Alison Monahan: Which can really extend the number of weeks that you're working. That's what I did, and I did a normal 2L summer and then I tacked on two or three weeks at the firm I'd worked for as a 1L, which is free money. They already like me, I don't need to do any work, nobody expects me to do anything, they just want me to come and hang out and say nice things. And then, in the end, I hated the firm I worked at my 2L summer, so it actually was a really good fallback option that honestly, if I'd stayed in New York, I would have very seriously considered.

Sadie Jones: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And I think that is a freebie that other people aren't going to have, because it's very hard to find a 3L summer job-

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: ... where it would be like that. So, what they really want is a great ambassador on campus. I would say that's what you want to show, is who are you?

Alison Monahan: What about diversity? Are they looking for diverse candidates to mix it up a little bit?

Sadie Jones: Yes. I think that is very important, and it's especially important with 1Ls. Firms get a different choice of people 1L summer than they would get 2L summer.

Alison Monahan: Sure. Definitely.

Sadie Jones: So maybe they get a chance at people that would be harder for them to recruit as a 2L, because they would have a lot more options.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that particularly applies to the more mid-market firms, particularly in a city like New York, where it's like there's so many firms, there's so many people, there's so many schools. They're going to have a shot at people that wouldn't probably look at them for the 2L summer, and then as you're saying, the whole goal is that you go back and be like, "Oh, yeah, I had a really great experience, they were so nice, I really liked it," and then someone else from that school who maybe doesn't have a top at the very top firms, they might say, "Oh, I'd love to ..." That's actually what happened to me. Basically, I recruited people for them that I thought were great, that would be a really good fit, and they loved them.

Sadie Jones: That's why, to the firm, I don't know that it's super important that they do convert that person into a real associate. It's great if they like them, but really, if they find them a bunch of other people and can develop their reputation on campus, that's what the firm really wants from you as a 1L. So I think diversity's important, your activities, your excitement about the firm, obviously academics are still important.

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, and again, it's kind of a long shot, let's face it.

Sadie Jones: Yes.

Alison Monahan: Let's move on to ... Well, I guess, first off, people are going to find these opportunities basically in the NALP directory. It's possible that career services may also send emails or have a database. One thing that I hear from people sometimes that I find astonishing is they're like, "Well, I get all these emails from career services, but I just don't really look at them." It's like, okay, I get that you have a lot going on, but these are people who basically are trying to find you a job and are sending you job options. You might want to check this out.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and I think that's where the events come into play also.

Alison Monahan: True.

Sadie Jones: Not just from firms; from all different organizations. Again, I think networking is really key as a 1L. To leverage your own network, to meet new people, to put yourself out there to see if there are job fairs. There can be 1L job fairs.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely.

Sadie Jones: And again, certain people are going to interview on campus. It's a rare thing, but I've done it before. And I was surprised that a lot of 1Ls didn't even know what that was.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I just feel like people not paying a lot of attention sometimes. I understand you get a lot of annoying emails from career services, but you really ought to consider at least filtering these into a special folder and then reviewing them fairly regularly, several times a week, because these are not opportunities that you want to miss. You know?

Sadie Jones: I agree. I would keep it really organized, and I think filtering is a great way to do that. I would also swing by career services and see if they have things posted. Maybe you didn't get an email.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly, or even just make friends there, you know? That's one of those places where having an ally on the inside who knows what you're looking for and knows you and is invested in your success and likes you and might be willing to shoot you an email being like, "Hey, just thought you might be interested in this great opportunity that we sent out or put on a job board, but nobody's paying attention to. Seems right up your alley." That's highly valuable. So make these people your allies, I think.

Sadie Jones: Also, yeah, they're the people who are talking to the employers, and employers might say to them, "Hey, do you have anyone in mind?" You want to be someone who's at the top of that list.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I think there's just no downside, really, to trying to make these people your friends. I mean, I have friends who work in career services, and a lot of them are kind of depressed still, particularly the first semester, because they're like, "Nobody's coming to talk to me. I have all this great information and great resources, and I try to get people to come in, and I feel like they just don't." You know?

Sadie Jones: I agree.

Alison Monahan: Point being, you have a real opportunity to stand out here if you make an appointment, let them know what you're looking for, maybe drop a resume, get some advice, and then just pop by occasionally. You can bring cookies. It's not going to hurt.

You mentioned job fairs. I think that's a really important place that people can look for work, particularly if you are interested in public interest work. There is a [large nationwide job fair essentially run by Equal Justice Works](#). I think it's happening in late October, usually. That's not necessarily the greatest opportunity for 1Ls, unfortunately, because it's so early that you really have to be paying attention and plan ahead, but if you look at their website, it does say, look, we accept 1Ls, you can show up, you can do drop-in interviews. You know, if there's any way you can get there, I think that's totally worth it. If not, keep it in mind for next year when you're looking for your 2L job.

[PSJD on their website actually has a list of public interest career fairs](#), most of which are later. They're in January and February. That is a great option if you strike out with your unlikely big law hunt, or you just don't get around to things because you are taking exams and you want to focus on your grades, which is also completely legitimate. But, this means that when you come up for air in January or February, hopefully you've had the winter break to work on your materials, get your ducks in a row, and then you can go out and do some interviews and hopefully find something that's really interesting.

I don't actually know exactly when judges hire. That's also a great option, as an extern for a judge, where you work in chambers and you're basically like a mini-clerk. A lot of times, the schools will post that.

Sadie Jones: I think there might be a website also that might keep track of all of them. But I don't think it's a set process, so I think you might want to do some research about who are the local judges.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Sadie Jones: You know, do a little more legwork on that. But I agree; I would say at a firm, most of the resumes I saw during their 1L year, they either worked for a judge or did public interest work.

Alison Monahan: Right, I mean, those-

Sadie Jones: Either one is totally acceptable.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and those are jobs that are much easier to find, and are super interesting. Another good thing about those is you actually get probably more on the ground legal experience than you're going to get working at a firm or something like that. I know Lee I think worked in the DA's office or for the U.S. attorney, I can't remember which one, but one of those, and her first day, basically, she was thrown into court. They're like, "Okay, we're going to deputize you," and then ... I mean, you know, they were misdemeanor cases. These weren't felony murder. But you know, she got to stand up after her first year of law school and say, "May it please the court, I represent the state of California." That's pretty cool. And it gives you-

Sadie Jones: I would focus, like I said before, really on the experience you're going to get. And really think about it, and think what would be helpful, and what is going to help your own development, too.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. There are all kinds of different options, and you might think, oh, well, I'm not really interested in public interest. I want to do entertainment law. It's like, oh, well, do you know about volunteer lawyers for the arts? Maybe that's up your alley. You know? Or whatever it is. I feel like there's almost a public interest organization for any topic that someone could possibly be interested in.

There are a lot of government programs, too. Some of these even hire earlier, because you have to do an [extensive background check if you're going to work for the FBI or something](#). But those are options. You know, I think really the 1L job search, the world is almost your oyster, and I think it's an opportunity for you to be flexible and to really explore something that you actually are interested in.

Sadie Jones: I would also say take advantage of upperclassmen who are either mentors or would be open to giving you advice. Talk to a lot of people about what they did, how they found out about it. I think they're the best resources.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, 'because I think those personal connections are often how people land these jobs. One of our writers that we did a podcast with, Shirlene, she was working ... I can't remember if it was Lexis or Westlaw, but on campus rep, and was talking to her supervisor about how she was stressed out about not having a summer job, and her supervisor said, "Oh, well, you know, I think a friend of mine is looking to hire someone at this small firm. Would you be interested in working there?" Answer, yes.

It's not like these things are just going to fall into your lap, but I think the more you put yourself out there in a nice way, just an exploratory way, not, "I need a

job right now. Who's going to help me?" That people are going to be willing to help you. And if they can match you up with someone who's looking for a newly minted law student slash young lawyer type to work for them, great. Bonus. Win-win.

Sadie Jones: And I would say it sounds small, but offer to buy someone coffee.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly, I mean-

Sadie Jones: Or to do something for someone.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I have a whole series on the Girl's Guide about how to do good informational interviews, everything from literally what to write in that first email that you cold email someone, but the reality is, people are actually willing to help you. I think Bar Association events also can be a great opportunity. Some of them even have networking or job search type of things for 1Ls and 2Ls. These are the things that are high value activities, that you just really need to be putting yourself out in. Because you just don't know.

Sadie Jones: I would say if there is a certain practice group you're interested in or an area you're interested in, get involved in whatever they have on campus related to that, because they're probably going to have connections in that area.

Alison Monahan: True. I remember going to events on campus for speakers, and there might be 10 people in the audience sometimes, or even five people if it's a very specific topic or at a weird time. At that point, you can go up and talk to the speaker, and again, these are pretty high-profile people often times. They've already made the effort to come and give this talk. I'm sure they would appreciate someone coming and saying, "Oh, I really enjoyed the talk that you just gave on structuring transactions," blah blah blah, presuming you're interested in this. You know, "I'm interested in getting into this area. Do you have any thoughts on how I might do that or what kind of job I might look for?" Blah blah blah.

Sadie Jones: And I would say I think 1Ls may not realize that these things are geared towards them. On the firm side or the employer side, we did this stuff specifically for 1Ls, but it would be open to everybody, because you can't necessarily say that.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: And a lot of times, it would be filled with 3Ls.

Alison Monahan: Interesting.

Sadie Jones: Who are still looking for jobs, which is fine, but I would say I was surprised that 1Ls didn't seem to realize that these things were going to be helpful for them or important.

Alison Monahan: Right. Well, I mean, I think they're not necessarily getting the greatest information and so hopefully if you're listening to this, really make an effort to figure out what is available on your campus. What are people doing? Show up to those things. Yes, you're busy, but finding a job is kind of one of the key aspects of law school, so you can definitely take an hour or two off and go to a panel discussion or go to a networking party and actually meet some people. You just never know.

All right, so let's drill down a little bit more, because I know a lot of people who are listening are probably thinking, okay, I'm going to do OCI, I'm going to need to talk about this job. What are firms really looking for in terms of future impact? Are there any types of jobs that you would think badly of, some that you find more or less impressive?

Sadie Jones: You know, not that much, I have to say. 'Cause, as we've said, there's such a wide variety. I think if you didn't have a legal job or you didn't have anything related, and you just had whatever summer job you had in undergrad, that would probably be an issue.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And sometimes people come to us with questions and they say, "Well, what if I can't afford to do an unpaid legal job?", which is a totally valid question. My response there is usually, try to find something at least part time to put on your resume, and you work for free, and then you can work in the evening or whatever it is, on your off days, and you don't have to put that on the resume. But you want to have something.

Sadie Jones: I was going to say, I think there's a way to do it where you're still ... you have something legal on your resume. I also think you've probably put so much time and money into going to law school that it would kind of make the whole thing a waste.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. You have to look at your sunk cost at this point.

Sadie Jones: I think you have to keep that ... But I would say really, like I said, public interest. Working for a judge. Maybe there is some kind of small firm job, not really paying you much, it's not like a big firm where they're paying you as an associate a lot of money, but I saw a lot of that, and I think you can learn a lot from those kinds of jobs. I think you have to think, okay, what would I be doing at this job, and how could I talk about it as an OCI candidate?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think one other consideration is location. If you know that you're going to be interviewing later, in a city that's not where you're going to school or maybe not where you have a lot of connections, this 1L summer can be an opportunity to create those connections. I knew someone who really wanted to be in San Francisco, but had had never any connections there, and she basically pounded the pavement and found a small firm who would hire her there, because then the next summer, it's so much easier to say, "Well, I worked in San

Francisco in the legal community last summer, and I really enjoyed it, and I think it's definitely a great fit." That's going to be a lot easier story than, "No, I've never really actually been here except on vacation."

Sadie Jones: Definitely. That's an excellent point. I saw a lot of people who did have that on their resume, and usually I would think, oh, I wonder how they ended up there. It doesn't seem like they have any other connections. But the truth is, if you got yourself there, you probably didn't get your transportation paid for and you lived there and you made it work. That says so much about your commitment to the city.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly.

Sadie Jones: So, I think that's an excellent point. I mean, I also think it's not the end of the world if you tried out the city and realized it wasn't for you and it's better to figure that out now.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure.

Sadie Jones: Than to interview all your 2L jobs there.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I completely agree. Basically, this 1L job is pretty flexible. I think the most important thing is just find something that's going to get you good experience, give you something to talk about, give you something to put on your resume for later. Maybe you work your location, but honestly, once you find something, I feel like people just don't really need to stress that much over this.

Sadie Jones: Use the time period when this 1L time is going on to, again, network and think about your 2L summer, because that's going to be the most important summer. So yeah. Aside from just finding the job, I would use the time and, like I said, events add job fairs and all that stuff, to try to meet people in areas that you're interested.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think it's also worth reading some career books or maybe doing some career counseling about what are you really interested in, what's going to work long-term for you, that kind of thing.

One question I get a lot, I don't know if you have any thoughts on this. If not, I can talk about it a little bit. We get a lot of questions from people, say, come March or even April, who are really struggling to find something. What should these people be doing?

Sadie Jones: Well, again, I would go back to some of the advice we talked about before, which is have you exhausted your network? Because I think it's very rare that there aren't more people you can reach out.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, there's always someone.

Sadie Jones: There's always someone who knows someone. Keep the chain going. I would really be going to career services and saying, I'm in this difficult situation. They want you to find a job.

Alison Monahan: For sure.

Sadie Jones: It is their job to make sure you find a job. So, I think that you just need to make sure that you've really looked at all of the possibilities. I don't know if you had more advice about last effort ...

Alison Monahan: No. I completely agree. The reality is, the 1L job search is probably the hardest job search you'll do, just because you don't really have much experience. There aren't a whole lot of people who are willing to pay you a lot of money to do these things, and if they are, it's incredibly competitive. You just have to keep pounding the pavement. There's really no other option.

Sadie Jones: And you may have to face the fact that you may have to do something where you're not really paid.

Alison Monahan: Well, I think at that point you're probably not going to be paid.

Sadie Jones: And you find another job. Yeah.

Alison Monahan: If you don't have a job and you don't have funding by March, you're probably not going to be paid unless your school is one of those where it's like, well, if you find a public interest job, we will pay for you. In which case, great, but I think by March or April, you've got to accept the reality. You're probably going to be working for free. You are probably going to have to just take whatever comes along that you can find. But that's fine. It's not the end of the world. It's not a disaster. You can learn something in basically any type of legal work that you're doing, and worse case, you find out you never want to do this type of work again.

Sadie Jones: I agree, and I also think that if you do want to do the work and you find something, and maybe it's not great, and it's not paid, and it's not exactly what you were thinking, there is always a way to spin that job later and figure out a way to put it in the best light. I've seen a lot of stuff where we've come up with stories and explanations, and I don't think the firm really notices.

Alison Monahan: No, I don't think people care. It's really just you need something to talk about. I agree with you, I think the worst-case scenario is just that people do something that's not at all legally related.

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: I have one question. Sometimes people come to me and they're like, "Well, I haven't really found a job yet. Is it okay if I do study abroad?"

Sadie Jones: Really?

Alison Monahan: How do you view that? Law school study abroad for that summer?

Sadie Jones: Well, I mean, I guess it's better than doing nothing. I guess I would try to figure out if there's a way that you can ... I'm trying to think if you're abroad, whether you could even work anywhere.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that would be my suggestion, too. Can you intern? I mean, honestly-

Sadie Jones: Yeah, yeah.

Alison Monahan: ... I would say that's probably ... I mean, that, to me, is one of your worst-case scenarios. Okay, your parents are willing to pay for this, maybe a vacation in France doesn't sound that bad. But I don't think it looks great for your later applications.

Sadie Jones: I agree. Unless you have some kind of set thing where you know you're going to get something 2L year so you don't have to worry about your 1L year, you have some kind of connection, you feel really confident in it. But I think if you're just out there, trying to find a job, that's probably not going to look great. You're going to have to explain it in some way.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree.

Sadie Jones: I would think it would be better to take a job that's not particularly legal-related, but maybe business related or whatever. More than that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that you can at least spin as, well, I worked in a startup because I really want to do internet law or whatever.

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: That's feasible, too. But I think the takeaway message is, really, really, really try your best to find something that is legal. And then beyond that, don't worry about it too much.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I would imagine those people where it's March or April and they don't have anything, they did not take our advice about starting early.

Alison Monahan: Well, probably not. They probably don't ... Basically, if you start early and you do a serious effort of going to some job fairs in January and February, you really probably will find something by March or April. I'm not guaranteeing it, but I think your odds are pretty good. Most people find something.

Sadie Jones: I agree. And they're not all the top students, and I don't think you have to worry about being the best in your class to get that. I think people at all levels are finding things.

Alison Monahan: Exactly. All right, any final thoughts for our eager 1L job seekers?

Sadie Jones: I would say practice your interviewing skills before you get out there.

Alison Monahan: Good point.

Sadie Jones: Because you probably haven't done it in this environment before, and so I would say, I would really ... Even if it's going to be painful, you're going to have to get feedback. I know a lot of schools have 1L mock interviews, and I was surprised at how few people really sign up for them.

Alison Monahan: There seems to be a recurring theme.

Sadie Jones: I know.

Alison Monahan: We're surprised by how little 1Ls are taking advantage of the things that are designed to help them find work.

Sadie Jones: A 1L mock interview is such a good opportunity.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure. You could even ... If you can't do it officially, you could have friends do an interview with you, record that ... Yes, it will be painful, but I guarantee you, you will learn something.

Sadie Jones: And my final, final advice is read over your resume and cover letter, have at least two or three other people read them over for any mistakes, and make sure that when you're addressing things, you're addressing it to the right firm and the right person, and you've spelled their name right.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, this is definitely a place where attention to detail is critical. No one is going to hire you if you sit down and type a resume full of typos. That is not the type of person that they are looking for to help them do a better job at their own work, which is actually why they're hiring you.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. That's my final piece of advice.

Alison Monahan: All right. Well, thank you. Thanks so much for joining us. With that, we are unfortunately out of time. But we really appreciate your time in coming on and giving our advice.

Sadie Jones: Thank you.

Alison Monahan: Our pleasure. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox Podcast, please take a second to [leave a review or rating](#) on iTunes or your favorite app, because we would really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe, so you don't miss anything. Our new episodes come out on Monday.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at [Lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:Lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [Alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:Alison@lawschooltoolbox.com), and you can always contact us via our [website contact form at, you guessed it, lawschooltoolbox.com](#). Thanks for listening. We'll talk soon, and good luck finding a summer job.

**Resources:**

- [NALP General Standards for the Timing of Offers and Decisions](#)
- [NALP Principles & Standards Interpretations: 1L Student Employer Contact Prior to December 1](#)
- [NALP Directory](#)
- [Equal Justice Works Conference and Career Fair](#)
- [PSJD Public Interest Career Fair and Events Calendar](#)