



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're talking about OCI offers with ex-Big Law recruiter, Sadie Jones. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, that's me, and 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-related website, [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening 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 to the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#). Today, we're discussing OCI offers with ex-Big Law recruiter, Sadie Jones. Welcome, Sadie, thanks for joining us.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: Our pleasure. Let's start with the basics; how does this offer process work for these post-OCI offers?

Sadie Jones: The firms are meeting with you back at the office after you do your initial interview, and then usually, there's just one round of, let's say, four to six interviews back in the office, and then you should be hearing back about offers. The timeline can kind of depend. Some firms are doing them on a rolling, continual basis, once a week. Sometimes, it could take a few weeks. Sometimes, it could take longer if potentially you get put on hold and they haven't made a decision. But usually these days, with everything being so condensed, you should hear back pretty quickly after you go into the office.

Alison Monahan: And just so people are clear, what exactly is this an offer for?

Sadie Jones: If we're talking about 2L recruiting, which is kind of the traditional OCI process, we're talking about an offer to return the following summer to work for the firm, and then most likely, you're going to get a permanent offer after that. So you really are evaluating, most likely, where you're going to start practicing law.

Alison Monahan: Right, and I think that's a good thing to keep in mind. It's not just about the experience over the summer. People need to be thinking longer term here, right?

Sadie Jones: Correct, because although it's not out of the question to find something else after your 2L summer, I wouldn't go into it assuming that that's an option. So I



would go into it thinking about really where you want to be practicing law, not just where you want to be the following summer.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I kind of made that mistake, which we can talk about later. So, who is regulating this process, if anyone? Is it a total free-for-all, or are there certain rules that people need to be following?

Sadie Jones: There are rules. Whether or not they're followed to the T kind of depends on the firm. There is [NALP](#), which is the organization that regulates law firms and law schools and talks about what they're allowed to do if they're part of NALP. [There are certain rules](#). They're not necessarily an organization that is going around penalizing people or punishing them for not following it.

On the other hand, I can't really think of a situation I've heard too often where a firm didn't follow the rules. Occasionally, students don't know the rules and might do things that are a little outside of them, and again, it's not really regulated that well. But I would say it's kind of a self-regulating situation, where they do pass them. Firms agree to them, and almost all of the time, that's how it works.

Alison Monahan: Right, and these are rules around things like how long the firms have to keep your offer open, how many offers a student is allowed to have at any one time. But like you said, nobody's going around with a clipboard checking off, "Okay, Sadie has six offers open and she's only supposed to have five offers open." I mean, I think it's a little bit of the honor system here, right?

Sadie Jones: It really is, and I think these are, especially on the student side, you're going to be a lawyer. So you are assuming that you're going to be ethical and follow the rules and try your best. Occasionally, a student doesn't know, or they've lost track, or things like that. There's no way really for him to know how many offers you have open. They can ask you, but there's not like you're reporting them in or anything like that.

And, the firm does have certain rules that they need to follow, and they also regulate expenses and things like that. Travel, all that stuff. So, it is a good idea, I would say, to go to the website if you're a student, and look at what they are, so that you're clear on it, because there's stuff that you're responsible for. There are rules that the firm's responsible for, and if you know that, you can try to regulate it a little bit.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and if you're interested, you can go to [NALP.org](#), and they've got the full text of these principles and standards. You can read them. I think it's actually a good idea to read them. If you have any questions, you can ask your career services if you don't understand something. But it does give students certain rights, and also certain obligations, so a firm can't make, say, for example, under



the NALP rules, they can't make an exploding offer that says, "Oh, you'd have to tell us on the spot if you're going to accept it." You get a certain amount of time to think about it, which is good. I think they try to make it fair for both sides, but it's also important to understand your obligation, so that you're behaving responsibly and not keeping offers open and things like that, that you don't really want to take, that could go to somebody else.

Sadie Jones: I was going to say, I think the key takeaway is that the way you behave is going to affect your peers. So, it's not necessarily just about the firm; it's how you're treating your fellow law students, and how you want to be treated. So I would say, act in a way that you feel is fair to everybody.

Alison Monahan: Right, I think that's always a good point. Because you might be thinking about it, but this might be your decision, just to keep open every possible offer, even the ones you know you're not going to take, might actually be impacting someone else in your class negatively who really does want that offer. Let's assume for now that you're a person that has more than one offer on the table. You're in a very enviable position, everybody wants you. What factors should students be looking at as they consider these different offers?

Sadie Jones: I would say that to me, the number one thing to look at is, who do you want to work with? And where do you really see yourself having your career, starting your career? And I would make it based on substantive reasons.

Alison Monahan: Right. I mean, I guess I'd push back a little bit on the first thing you said, which is just, how do you know that somebody that you want to work with is going to be there when you graduate several years from now? Do you think that's something people can rely on at this point?

Sadie Jones: No, they cannot necessarily rely on a specific person. But I do think, having worked at different law firms, that there is usually a culture, and there is usually certain types of people that are attracted to certain places. So I don't mean it in terms of one individual.

Alison Monahan: Okay, so it's not like, "I want to work with partner X."

Sadie Jones: No.

Alison Monahan: Okay.

Sadie Jones: Not unless you have some kind of inside information that the person is definitely going to be there. But I don't really think that's anything you can count on. But I would say that the types of people that seem like they're attracted to somewhere, a firm doesn't usually completely change in a year or two. So, where do you see yourself fitting in, I think is a question I usually



suggest to law students. And then beyond that, their practice areas are most likely going to be similar, and there's certain things that are not going to change. But I would say, I would really get into what do you think it's going to be like to work at this place on a daily basis?

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's the key question. Is this a place that you're going to fit in? Is it a place that you're going to feel comfortable? Is it a place that you're going to want to spend 10 to 12 hours a day?

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: So, where can people get either that kind of information about fit, or sort of more objective criteria, if there are objective things that they're interested in?

Sadie Jones: There are publications that have information on different firms. There's [Vault](#), [American Lawyer](#), [Chambers](#), and a lot of them do have surveys of mid-level or junior or senior associates. There's a summer associate survey that comes out every year. I would say I wouldn't put all of your stock in those types of things, but it's good to look over. I always found the summer associate survey specifically was extremely skewed, and not really that helpful in terms of information. If you look at the scale, it's on such a huge curve that it's hard to know what's true.

So, I think look at all of those things, but I would say, try to talk to recent summer associates, new associates. I would definitely ask to go back to the office. I would talk to people at your school that know things about these different places, and know people that have recently worked there. I would try to get more real information from people who know you or know people that know you, or know your school. Because I do think some of these surveys are hard to know what's real.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think so. I think particularly the summer associate one, they definitely come by and they're like, "Okay, so everybody give us a five on everything," right? "If not, don't fill it in." I summered a bunch of places. They always wanted to make sure they got fives.

Sadie Jones: It's true, because the difference between a four and a five is the difference between the worst firm and the best firm.

Alison Monahan: Right. It's like, one summer associate who puts one four down basically tanks your entire reputation for that year.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, exactly.



Alison Monahan: So yeah, I think sometimes, looking beyond just the numbers. If people have comments or things, those again are probably going to skew positive, because you were unhappy, you're probably not going to leave a review. But you can sometimes get better information. Is there anything people can do to figure out the financials of different places?

Sadie Jones: Well, that's where some of those publications do have to publish specific information that you know is real. There is the profits for partner, which in theory, could tell you something about the financials of the law firm. I think that those numbers, again, are hard to know what that really means.

Alison Monahan: They can mean a lot of different things.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, because there are firms that went out of business-

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: ... that looked like their financials were really good right before.

Alison Monahan: Well, that's kind of what I'm wondering. If I'm a student and I think, "Okay, maybe we're going to be heading into another recession," or something, I think ... And maybe people don't realize, but when the last recession hit, a lot of summer associates had really serious problems.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and there were firms where sort of they were recruiting, even knowing that they were in serious trouble. So that was definitely an issue, if you all of a sudden don't have a firm to go to, that was recruiting on campus a few months before. So, I think it's hard to know for sure. But I do think you can use information to put together to get an idea of how things are going, and I think that even just looking at the firms that are more upfront about their information. There are firms that are choosing to put information out there, because they want people to know.

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah, and it might behoove you to go back in the [Above the Law](#) archives and see who it was that really screwed their summer associates over back in the day, years ago. Because they might do that again.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I would say along those lines, it's hard to look at it and say, "This firm had no problems, and all their summer associates started. It was fine." I would look more at, how did they handle a really bad situation?

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: There are firms that chose to not get rid of anybody, but maybe defer a class, put people in public interest jobs or whatnot, but everybody eventually started,



and there are firms who rescinded offers. To me, that's a big difference. How did they handle a really hard time?

Alison Monahan: Right. You might want to consider those things when you're considering what type of firm you might want to work at. So, talk a little bit more about ... You said you can go back, or you can talk to more people. How does that work, exactly?

Sadie Jones: I highly recommend that. Most firms are really happy to have people come back. They want somebody who's done their homework and knows that they want to be at their firm. It's not just about getting people to accept their offers. It's about finding the right fit, both ways. I would say most of the time, you probably hear from the firm with offers to come back. You'll either hear from the recruiter, or a hiring partner, or somebody you met with on campus, or somebody you met with after. A lot of firms will assign one or two attorneys to be your follow-up people, so they'll be calling you, emailing you, asking you if you want to go to lunch or grab a drink, or come back to the office and meet more people.

I would say take them up on it, as long as you're seriously considering the place. And I would ask to meet with who you want to meet with. If there's people in certain practice groups, or people at certain levels, or people in whatever area, now you're in a position where you have an offer, so it's all on you. So they want to make you happy. And you want to find real information, so asking to meet people outside of just the people who are following up with you directly, I think is a good idea. And asking to meet people beyond the people you've already met.

Alison Monahan: And what type of stuff can people ask about here? I mean, is this really the time to get nitty gritty about all the things you didn't want to ask about during the callback interviews? Like, how many hours are you working, what's your pro bono situation, talk to me about family leave policies? Some of this, you can probably find out on the website. But for questions that you can't, are people going to be taken aback? Or are they going to think you're doing your due diligence?

Sadie Jones: I don't think anyone's going to be taken aback. It might depend on how far you take those questions. There are people who are probably not going to want to tell you exactly how many hours they billed last month. But they'll probably give you an idea, and I think this is your chance to ask those questions that you didn't ask before, and that's okay. You have the offer, and they're expecting it. And, you know, sometimes, they might just refer you to, "This is our pro bono policy." And it depends how candid the person wants to be.



I always think it's good for the follow-up to meet with people at different levels, but definitely to meet with somebody who's a first year, who's right above where you're going to be, and see what their life is like, and see how honest they're going to be with you. I think that's another thing. Do you feel like you're getting real answers out of people, or they're just selling you on the firm?

Alison Monahan: Right. Yeah. I mean, and the reality is, of course people might put a spin on things. But if you really feel like, okay, I've looked at the statistics and know that the average billables in this office are whatever they are, and you're telling me that they're half that, okay, this is probably not for real.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And you can read between the lines, I think, a lot of the times.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, for sure.

Sadie Jones: And you're going to get a mix. I am sure that some people are just going to tow the party line, and some people are going to tell you some inside stuff. But that's why I would say, meet with a variety of people. And, I've rarely had a situation where I thought, "Oh, they're asking for too much follow-up," or anything like that. I think it comes across as your genuine interest, and I always think that's a good thing.

Alison Monahan: I agree, and I think you have to be careful, too, not to take ... If you talk to one disgruntled associate who maybe just got back from trial and is like, "I work all the time," you can't take that too seriously. Just like if you talk to one person who's like, "Oh my God, this is the most amazing time I've ever had in my whole life. I go home at five, and I get paid so much money." Okay, that person is probably not telling me the truth either. You've kind of got to be looking for, I guess, the average here.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, I agree. I would throw away the highest and lowest scores.

Alison Monahan: That's a good point.

Sadie Jones: Like, you know.

Alison Monahan: In ice skating.

Sadie Jones: In a competition, yeah, exactly. Or I would think about it also like Yelp or a message board or something. There's going to be people who say something was fabulous, and there's going to be people that say that it was horrible, and they might be the really outspoken people. But I bet the average middle of the road is more accurate.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Like, you may or may not have a great experience. That's hard to predict, but if everybody's saying, "Here's a realistic assessment of my life," and you're like, "Yep, I could live with that," then most likely, you're going to be okay.
- Sadie Jones: The other thing I would say is, usually at that point, either there's a class that just finished their summer, or even could potentially still be there, and you absolutely can ask to talk to them, and there might be somebody at your school. I feel like some people kind of forget, but ask what their summer associate experience was like. If they don't have anyone that they're even willing for you to talk to, that's sort of telling.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I mean, typically. When I summered as a 1L, basically they called me up or emailed me and were like, "Hey, we've got people who are considering coming to the firm as a 2L. Can you talk to them? They're in your class." And of course I talked to them, and they all went there. I'm very convincing.
- Sadie Jones: You're a good salesperson.
- Alison Monahan: No, they actually called me up. They're like, "Man, you did an amazing job. Our rate at your school is fantastic." I'm like, "Well, that's why you hired me. I get what this is about."
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. That's the beauty of a 1L.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I did like it. Honestly, I probably liked it better than my 2L summer. But yeah, so I think talking to people at your school almost ... I mean, not always always, but most of the time, there's going to be somebody in the class ahead of you, or two classes ahead of you, who summered at the places you're considering.
- Sadie Jones: Definitely. Unless you're a write-in candidate, let's say, from some random...
- Alison Monahan: Right, or you're going totally different location or something. But typically, the same firms interview at the same schools year after year, right?
- Sadie Jones: Yep, absolutely. I also think there's value if they invite you to do something outside of the office. It's sort of the opposite of the lunch interview. I think it's when you're going in for OCI, it's your chance to see someone in a social situation and evaluate it, where you're on the other side of it. So I always think that's a good idea.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. Basically, I think the takeaway message here is, the tables have turned. You have the power, and you can ask whatever you want.
- Sadie Jones: You are in the power position.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. All right, well, let's go through a couple of things that you may have touched on, or other things ... Because sometimes people think things maybe are important that are not important, and vice versa. We've already a bit touched on this. How important is the survey of the summer associate experience?
- Sadie Jones: I think very unimportant.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. This is one of those things where it's like, if you're really basing this decision on a 4.8 versus a 4.9 in the summer associate experience survey, you need to take a step back here. This is not about who has the best party. This is about the rest of your life, so you've got to take a longer view here.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I'm not saying don't look at it.
- Alison Monahan: Sure, look at it.
- Sadie Jones: But I really wouldn't make a decision based on that.
- Alison Monahan: What do you think about something like the mid-level associate surveys, that are a little bit more substantive?
- Sadie Jones: I think that can be more real. I wouldn't take it 100%, and mid-levels can be a group that can go really one way or the other on things, depending on their personal experience. So, I wouldn't put everything in it. But I do think it's interesting to see what they say, and to see where things stand at that level, because of people who have been there a little bit, and I think you can be more honest.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think those are the people who are getting to the slightly disgruntled stage, usually, in their career.
- Sadie Jones: Yes.
- Alison Monahan: They're in that three to five year window where they're deciding if they're going to stay in big law or not. So, you know, sometimes people have interesting stuff to say. Yeah, I agree. I think that one is more legit. I mean, you've got to also keep in mind time framing. This is a snapshot in time. Things might be different when you're a mid-level six or seven years down the road, but I think it is ... I mean, obviously it's a more substantive type of thing than just the summer associate party program.
- Sadie Jones: And I would say especially if you see more positive stuff on a mid-level survey, I would think that's a pretty good sign.



- Alison Monahan: Right.
- Sadie Jones: Because I would say it skews negative.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree. Let's talk a little bit about practice areas. Because a lot of firms say they do a bunch of stuff, but then maybe they have areas that they focus on, or don't focus on so much. How important do you think that is?
- Sadie Jones: Well, I think it depends on where you fall right now. Because I do think there are people who go in very strongly in one direction or the other. But I think most law students are not totally sure what they want to do. So I think it depends how strongly you feel about a practice area, especially ... I kind of split it just between transactional and litigation. I think within those areas, there's lots of room, and you don't know you're going to get something super specific. A lot of law students come in interested in international arbitration.
- Alison Monahan: I used to say that.
- Sadie Jones: And things like that, yeah. It's a very common thing. You should not come in do or die, international arbitration. It's just not a good idea.
- Alison Monahan: Well, finally, I had an interview with a partner who sort of looked at me and he's like, "You know, a lot of people say that." He's like, "Do you realize that that's just contract law?" And I was like, "Oh, I don't like contract law." He's like, "Then you don't want to do international arbitration. Pick something else."
- Sadie Jones: It sounds exciting, right?
- Alison Monahan: Oh, yeah.
- Sadie Jones: It's like ... And, you know, entertainment law, things like that. So, I would say it is good, maybe, to have an idea which side you're on, although I always encourage summer associates to do at least one assignment on the other side. So even if you're like, "I would never do transactional work," I think it's a really good idea to do at least one assignment, because you might surprise yourself. And it's good to see what the other side is doing. So, in terms of practice group, I would say it is important, especially if there's an area you're really interested in, and if you want to full force go for it, then it's great to start early and really make those relationships in that group. Because it does make a difference when they're picking, that that summer associate really wanted to work with them and they remember that. But if you're open, I would say it's less important. Unless the firm doesn't have the practice group at all.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, I made a bit of a mistake here, because I went to a firm that was known much more for their corporate transactional side, even though they did



litigation, and they had some strong litigators or whatever. But it definitely wasn't really the focus of the firm, in comparison to the place I summered after my first year, where that really was what they did. They were trial lawyers. And again, they had other stuff. They had corporate stuff. But basically, their real focus was on being litigators. So that was an interesting experience, because there, the books in the library and everything was sort of targeted towards that.

So I don't think ... You can make it work either way. But I think on balance, you're probably going to be better off somewhere where what you think you want to do is playing really to their strengths.

Sadie Jones: I totally agree. And I would say ... I usually just say, "Be sort of flexible," because the other thing you don't know is the outside factors that can play in, like you're saying. All of a sudden, the economy goes in a different direction. And things can disappear or become less important than what they were before, and you've got to be someone who can roll with it. In that case. But most likely, if something is their main focus, you can get that.

Alison Monahan: Right. If they stop practicing in that area, they're probably going out of business, so ...

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Then you've got a real problem.

Sadie Jones: Something major, exactly. Yeah, exactly.

Alison Monahan: All right, well, on sort of this point, how important do you think slight differences in starting pay and things like bonus structure are? I mean, right now, we're kind of in this transition where certain firms are going to start paying more, and maybe some place you're considering is not necessarily going to match that. What should you think about with that?

Sadie Jones: I feel like, depending on how big the difference is, it's not something that I would think was the most important thing. There are the tiers, right? If you're in big law at a certain level, there might be slight differences between firms, but most likely, the differences are going to be really small if you look at over your career, or even in a paycheck.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: So, I would say that if you feel like something is a better fit, but you don't know that they're going to go up the \$10,000 to the next level for the next salary, I think it's more important to go to the place that's the better fit. I don't think that that money is going to make a big difference in the long run. Those things



also change. Bonus structures change. They can change every year. You have no idea. You don't know if you'll hate your hours requirement. So I'd be actually even less focused on the bonus piece, because I just think that people get really, really hyper-focused on that, especially reading Above the Law and all of those things. And in the end, that is probably not going to make the biggest difference to what your experience is at a firm.

It's different if you're deciding between something where your salary will be twice as much as another place, because you're looking at a much smaller firm. That's another scenario, and probably has much lower hours requirement and things like that. But if you're looking at the difference between the top 10 firms that are definitely going to match each other, and then some other firms that might not, I wouldn't make that the priority.

Alison Monahan: I completely agree. I think sometimes, people get really obsessed and ego-driven about this, but it's like, "Look, if you end up liking a place enough that you can stay an extra couple months, you've more than made up the difference in your starting salary."

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I understand you're going into it with student loans, and you're stressed out, and you've maybe paid for your bar review and things like that. But I think you have to look long-term, like we've talked about.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, absolutely. Another thing people can get really interested and caught up in is this profits for partner number, but I think from an associate perspective, you really have to look at what that means for you more than the possible money you might be making 20 years from now. I mean, basically, if profits for partner are really high, it means you're probably billing a lot as an associate, right?

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and I also think those numbers are skewed. And firms are even going away from releasing them. So, I just think it's something I wouldn't give too much thought to. And I agree, it can be a much more competitive environment, if that's what people are talking about all the time. So, think about more what that means than what the numbers are.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's kind of a vanity metric at this point anyway. I mean, they've got so many non-equity partners and things like that, that that is almost meaningless. But it might tell you something about the culture, more than anything.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, and that's what I would try to get at; the stuff underneath all of this.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Also, I think one interesting question can be asking about how work is assigned, if you go back and talk to people. Because that can really impact your experience a lot as an associate. Do you have to go out and hunt for work,



basically? Or is somebody managing this process in some sort of more rational way?

Sadie Jones: Definitely. Because that is the stuff that's going to affect your daily life.

Alison Monahan: Right.

Sadie Jones: And you can sort of find out, are people feeling like they're not making their hours and they're really stressed about that? Or are people feeling like they're working too much? All of those kind of things. Sometimes, you can ask other questions that get to those.

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. All right, let's shift gears a little bit and talk about a few specifics before we wrap up. Do you have any advice for people who maybe are handling offers in different geographic locations?

Sadie Jones: Of the same firm, or a different firm?

Alison Monahan: Well, I think it could be either. It either could be I interviewed in these two different cities, and now I have offers from two different firms, and I can't decide which one to take; or it could be a firm that has multiple offices, and maybe they're either willing to let you split, or they're going to make you pick. What do people do about this?

Sadie Jones: If you can, my advice is to really do some soul searching and try to figure out what you actually want. I don't actually think splitting is a great idea, and I don't think splitting between two offices of the same firm is a good idea. A lot of firms let you do it, and I've dealt with students who do it, and sometimes it works out. But you don't get enough of a chance to really see what one is like. I don't feel like you get the same experience and the same relationships, and I think all you're really doing is kicking the can down the road to make the decision.

So, I understand why it's nice to have options. But I would say you have to really ask yourself, "Where do I want to be for the next few years?" Not forever. Not for your whole life. But I do think it's better to figure that out before you even decide about the summer. There might be factors that make that just impossible to figure out right now, if there's family issues or things like that, and you could change your mind down the road. But I would say do your best to try to figure it out first. I think that is a better approach, and it just ... I think the decision actually becomes harder.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, do you think there's any benefit in, say, for example, picking a firm based on the fact that they have offices in multiples locations you might want to practice in, if that happens?



- Sadie Jones: I do think there's benefit in that, if you feel like that's a strong possibility. And especially if they have an office in a certain place where maybe your significant other is going to get a job there, that's where your family is, so it's not where you want to be right now, but you see it down the road. And I would say, try to get an idea of how people switch offices, and how has that gone? There's a way to do that without being super obvious, because I don't think you want to start out being like, "I'm going to be a difficult person. I'm going to be someone who's going to take multiple bars and ask you for lots of stuff."
- But I do think there's value to having a place where you can see people have moved between offices, or they have a whole bunch of offices all over. Even that you have the possibility of working out of another office, that kind of thing. I think that's fine. I would just say, I think it works out better for the summer when you don't actually split.
- Alison Monahan: I think that's right. One of the firms I worked at, I did international half the summer and then came back to New York, and it was fine, but I wasn't in the culture the way that I was when I was there for the whole summer. It was like, oh, here are all the people who went abroad. Oh, hi. Nice to meet you. Okay, now we're back doing whatever we did before.
- Sadie Jones: Because I think what happens is neither office really feels that connected to you, so I always found that ... You know, they usually would pick one of them, but a lot of times, those people wouldn't get the practice group they wanted, or wouldn't get what they expected after, because it was like, "Oh, who was she?" You know? I don't really remember her that well.
- Alison Monahan: Right, he's like, "Who was that person who did two assignments for us? We don't really remember."
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. The other option that I think might be better is to try to work with someone in that office from the other office. That's something that I think has worked out better in my experience for people, and usually that's a possibility depending on how they do summer associate assignments.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, splitting also just seems like a logistical challenge. You've got to find a place to live in two different cities, and if it's not provided for you ... I mean, yeah, I would-
- Sadie Jones: Oh, that's another thing to keep in mind. Sometimes, summer associates don't understand that. That's all-
- Alison Monahan: Right, that you have to find your own housing.



Sadie Jones: Yeah. I've had people ask last minute, "Where am I going to stay?" A lot of times, they will send you message boards or things like that, or they'll send things around. But that's all on you. So yeah, it can be difficult.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it can be really expensive, too.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely, depending on the city. So I would keep all of that in mind, in terms of what you want out of your experience, versus having more options maybe later.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree. I think the more you can nail down now, probably the better. All right. Well, once you have decided this firm is not the one for you, what should you do?

Sadie Jones: You should tell them right away.

Alison Monahan: Who's "them"? Who do I tell?

Sadie Jones: Directly. I think most of the time, you're telling either the recruiter, who is probably the person who's been communicating with you the most, and it's perfectly fine to tell them. It's not like you need to tell a partner, or you need to tell someone else.

Alison Monahan: They're going to be like, "I'm sorry, who are you?"

Sadie Jones: Yeah. I think that the students think it's a bigger deal, it's a major life decision. And really, on the firm side, it's like, "We have 100 people. We're just trying to-"

Alison Monahan: Yeah, check the box. Or, have you filled in the spreadsheet?

Sadie Jones: Yeah, we're trying to get through it. Yeah, I think ... I've found students are super nervous to say no, and we're just like, "No, please tell us."

Alison Monahan: Right. So is email acceptable, for example?

Sadie Jones: Email is totally acceptable. If you want to call, that's fine. You can leave a message, also fine.

Alison Monahan: If somebody calls, do you think you need to follow up in writing, just to be safe?

Sadie Jones: I think that's a good idea. I think that can't hurt, especially if you left a voicemail and you think, "Oh, I just want to make sure that they got it." You could also tell the hiring partner, or the person who ... You could tell any of the attorneys you talked to, is fine. I would say my recommendation is to tell the recruiter,



because they're the ones ... Or at least first, because they're the ones who are keeping track of this, and then you could follow up ... Let's say you made a relationship with somebody, so you want to tell them directly. That's fine.

The other piece of information is, you should tell them if you accept another offer. And if you haven't accepted an offer, you should tell them what are the other places you're deciding between. It is not a secret. There's no reason to keep it a secret. I don't know why students don't understand this. It's information that is helpful for everybody, and it's not like anyone's going to be offended that you picked a different person over them.

Alison Monahan: Right, and I think that firms, even if you're still deciding between, say, a few other offers, they would still rather have the information that you've definitely decided to turn them down sooner rather than later.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I would say I can understand why you would want to leave a bunch of offers open and have more options, but I do think you're just making the decision harder on yourself. So as soon as there's enough reasons where you're not going to go to place A, you should tell place A, even if it leaves less options open for you.

Alison Monahan: Right, and you're not allowed to ghost here. I've read an article recently about millennials ghosting on firms. That's not cool. Just close all the doors.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. But that's happened a bunch of times. Or we've continually followed up, and they don't return your call. That makes you look bad.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that's just rude. Are you ever allowed to change your mind? Say you turn down a firm and then you realize, "Oh my gosh, I've made such a mistake." Are they ever going to let you back?

Sadie Jones: I have had people ask.

Alison Monahan: Really?

Sadie Jones: Yeah, more after the summer, I would say, than right away. I don't know if I've had anyone turn us down and the next week, say, "I changed my mind." I think it's possible, depending on if they still had offers open, and how you're going to spin the reason you turned them down, and that you're changing your mind. If you had a really good reason for why something else wasn't a good fit. But I would say that is probably not a good idea.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think it would have to be something along the lines of, your spouse has just found out suddenly they have to move to a different city, and this is the only offer you had in that city, or something. Even then.



- Sadie Jones: Even then, they're not going to help you.
- Alison Monahan: Probably not.
- Sadie Jones: ... you know, super, super back up. But maybe they didn't fill their class, and they did really like you, and you explain how much you love them, but you really thought you had to be in the other city.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. It could happen, but I wouldn't count on it. But you need to make your decision, and make it for real, basically.
- Sadie Jones: And I feel like actually, a similar thing applies. Like I said, I remember one student who came back to us right after the summer that he had picked somewhere else, and was like, "I made a huge mistake. Is there any way I could come back as a 3L? I know you're the right firm for me." And there wasn't a spot for him. I think he was someone who did make a decision based on a ranking, and not necessarily what he was looking for. That's why really put some good thought into the offer for your 2L summer.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, it's important. You don't end up having to go there. I mean, definitely, I didn't go any of the places I summered. But it makes it a lot easier if you do.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: All right, well, we're unfortunately out of time. Any final advice for people here?
- Sadie Jones: My final advice is really just what I said about that student. Do not look at just rankings or things that seem important, that I have a feeling you're going to think are arbitrary in the long run. You have to really consider where you see yourself practicing law, and starting your career, and where you're going to be a good fit. Because no one really cares whether it was ranked 20 or 30.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. If you're more successful at a place that's slightly less prestigious or whatnot, well, you're still better off. So, I agree completely. I think I made this mistake of just thinking short-term, like, "Oh, it'd be so fun to do this thing and go live abroad for a while," but I really wasn't thinking through what the best option long-term was, and that came back to bite me, because then I had to go find another job, and it didn't work out.
- Sadie Jones: And these days, classes are smaller and there's less places taking 3Ls, or people starting out who hadn't been there the summer. So, I think you have to really put a lot of thought into that.
- Alison Monahan: I agree, it's an important decision. All right, well, Sadie, thank you so much for joining us.



Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.

Alison Monahan: Our pleasure. With that, we are out of time. For more career help, or the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, check out [CareerDicta.com](https://www.careerdicta.com). If you enjoyed this episode of the [Law School Toolbox podcast](#), please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app, because we would really appreciate it. And be sure to [subscribe](#), so you don't miss anything.

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). Or, you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at [LawSchoolToolbox.com](https://www.lawschooltoolbox.com). Thanks for listening, we'll talk soon, and good luck picking those offers.

#### **RESOURCES:**

- [CareerDicta](#)
- [NALP – National Association for Law Placement, Inc.](#)
- [NALP Principles and Standards](#)
- [Vault](#)
- [American Lawyer](#)
- [Chambers](#)
- [Podcast Episode 140: OCI Strategy \(w/Sadie Jones\)](#)
- [Podcast Episode 152: Top OCI Mistakes to Avoid \(w/Sadie Jones\)](#)
- [Podcast Episode 155: Top Callback Mistakes to Avoid \(w/Sadie Jones\)](#)