



CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE JOB GUIDE

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

Description

Prosecutors work in all levels of government—local, state, and federal. Prosecutors are responsible for representing the government in criminal cases, including felonies and misdemeanors. At the state and local level, this work is typically done by District Attorneys' Offices or Solicitors' Offices. Offices of State Attorneys General may also have some responsibility for criminal matters of statewide significance or for criminal appellate or post-conviction matters. Federal criminal matters (e.g., financial crimes, drug enforcement, and organized crime) are typically handled by a U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) either exclusively or in cooperation with the Criminal Division of the Office of the U.S. Attorney General.

Qualifications

Many prosecutors' offices prefer that entry-level attorneys have coursework, summer experience and/or law school clinical experience related to criminal justice work, e.g. volunteering with a DA office in the summer or through the [Prosecutorial Clinic](#). Most employers also place an emphasis on substantive trial experience, including research, writing, and analysis. Candidates should also demonstrate an ability to work closely with victims, witnesses, opposing counsel, defendants, juries, and judges. Additionally, employers often emphasize the importance of a strong commitment to the criminal justice system and to public service. USAOs typically do not hire students immediately after graduation, but instead recruit more seasoned attorneys.

This is a practice area where you will get courtroom experience often and early. Consequently, even the prosecutors who hire entry-level attorneys will often require that you already be licensed when hired.

Types of Employers

Federal—U.S. Department of Justice:

Post-Graduate Jobs. The DOJ hires entry-level attorneys only through the [Attorney General's Honors Program](#). The application period is very short, typically the month of August in the year prior to your graduation year. The number of attorneys hired varies from year to year, and the positions are highly competitive.

Paid Summer Internships. The DOJ hires a number of students for paid summer positions through its [Summer Law Intern Program](#). These positions are open to 1Ls and 2Ls, although most successful applicants intern during their 2L summer. Graduating law students who will enter a judicial clerkship or a full-time graduate program may intern following graduation. The application period is very short, typically the month of August in the year prior to the summer you would be working.

Unpaid Internships. Current students (but not graduates) may work as volunteers in DOJ locations and USAOs throughout the country, under the DOJ's Volunteer Legal Intern Program. Each participating office has its own deadlines and processes for applying. More information about DOJ field office locations is available on the [DOJ Offices by State Chart](#). Contact and employment information for each USAO can be found on the [DOJ's website](#).

State and Local:

State Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General of a state serves as the legal advisor for the governor and all state agencies, departments and authorities. This includes prosecuting certain cases when charges are filed against persons doing business with the state. The Georgia Attorney General's Office has a [summer intern program](#) for rising 3Ls, and externships during the academic year are available through the Civil Externship

Clinic. The Office also hires entry-level attorneys from time to time, and current open positions are listed on the Office's [website](#).

District Attorney's and Solicitor's Offices. Typically, a solicitor prosecutes all misdemeanors and all traffic and ordinance violations in a jurisdiction. The district attorney in the jurisdiction prosecutes all other crimes. In Georgia, both DAs and solicitors will hire summer interns and entry-level lawyers. Contact information for all Georgia DA and solicitors' offices may be found at the website for the [Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia](#). That website is also one of the best locations for finding current job postings, although many of these positions are primarily advertised through word of mouth.

Job Search Strategy

Because of the need to be licensed at the time of hire, many new graduates do not secure these positions until close to the time that they receive bar exam results. However, the most successful applicant for one of these positions will have an established relationship with the employer prior to the position coming open. That relationship is best achieved by working as an intern during the summers, during the school term, and even after graduation until bar results arrive.

As you plan your path to a criminal prosecution career, consider the following advice:

- For your 1L and 2L summers, secure a position for at least part of each summer with a District Attorney's office, Solicitor's Office, or perhaps with a U.S. Attorney's Office.
- Look for internship positions in Symplicity or at external job posting sites listed below. You should also talk with Professor Alan Cook, your CDO Counselor, and 2Ls and 3Ls who had such internships in the past. You can get lists of summer positions held by our students during the most recent summer from your CDO Counselor.
- Watch for panel discussions organized by CDO, at which practicing district attorneys will give you tips.
- Be mindful that most internships at district attorney's offices are unpaid. However, there may be some opportunities for stipends or fellowships (see the sample list below). In the alternative, you may be able to receive course credit for summer positions. Check with [Professor Alex Scherr](#) or [Professor Alan Cook](#) regarding course credit.
- During your 2L and 3L years, enroll in the [Prosecutorial Clinic](#). This will give you classroom

instruction and hands-on experience. You should also get to know Professor Alan Cook. He can be a valuable contact and reference for your job search.

- Participate in extracurricular activities and professional organizations. You can network with helpful people at meetings, and it helps to have these affiliations on your resume.

Interviews for prosecutor positions often differ from interviews with law firms. In DA offices, it is common to encounter multiple rounds of interviews as well as the use of hypothetical questions to test the interviewee's commitment to criminal justice and ethics. Typically, employers are assessing the candidate's thought process, communication skills, and judgment, rather than the legal correctness of the response.

Experiential Learning Opportunities

The most effective course work is to participate in the [Prosecutorial Clinic](#). This clinic, which requires a three-semester commitment, provides you with hands-on experience, including opportunities to act in court under Georgia's Third-Year Practice Act (as of August 2015, this Act will also extend to second-year students). You may only register for the Clinic during the Fall semester of your 2L year, to begin in the Spring semester of 2L year. For more information about how to enroll, see the Law School's [website](#).

Relevant Courses

For additional information about relevant courses, the following video provides helpful guidance from Georgia Law Professor Russell Gabriel. Also, check the Law School's [Course Offerings page](#) for a list of courses offered and the applicable semester class schedule.

Criminal Law
with Professor [Russell Gabriel](#)



Relevant Law School Activities

[Prosecutorial Clinic](#)

[Moot Court and Mock Trial](#)

[American Constitution Society](#)

[Equal Justice Foundation](#)

[Public Interest Law Council](#)

[Working in the Public Interest](#)

Bar and Professional Organizations

[Georgia Bar Association Criminal Law Section](#)

[Atlanta Bar Association Criminal Law Section](#)

[Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia](#)

[Federal Bar Association Criminal Law Section](#)

[American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section](#)

[National Black Prosecutors Association](#)

[Association of Prosecuting Attorneys](#)

[National District Attorneys Association](#)

Job Fairs

Georgia Public Sector Career Fair (Spring)

- Takes place in Atlanta
- Last year, it included over 75 employers from the Southeast
- Registration period is in mid-January, and the job fair is typically during the third week of February
- No website; see a CDO Counselor for more information

[Equal Justice Works \(Fall\)](#)

- Takes place in Washington, D.C.
- Last year, it included over 140 employers from across the country
- Registration period is August 11–September 14, 2015, and the job fair is October 23-24, 2015

External Job Posting Sites

[Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia Employment](#) (announces open positions in DA and Solicitor's Offices throughout Georgia)

[National District Attorneys Association Prosecutor Job Openings](#) (jobs in Alexandria, VA)

[Georgia State Attorney General](#)

[U.S. Dept. of Justice's Office of Attorney Recruitment and Management](#) (federal prosecutor careers)

[U.S. Dept. of Justice](#) (summer internships)

[PSJD.org](#) (limit by practice area to "Criminal Law/Death Penalty")

[National Association of Attorneys General](#)

Fellowships and Funding

[UGA Law Public Service Fellowships](#) for post-graduation (talk to your CDO Counselor)

[UGA Equal Justice Foundation Fellowships](#)

[PSJD Summer Funding](#)

[UGA Law Downs Loan Repayment Assistance Program](#)

Recent Jobs

The table below lists some of the employers who have hired UGA Law students in the criminal prosecution practice area. For confidentiality reasons, we do not publish the names of specific students; however, CDO may have contacts at these employers who can help you.

Name	Location	Type of Job
Alcovy Circuit District Attorney	Covington, GA	Post-Grad, Summer
Cherokee County Solicitor General	Canton, GA	Post-Grad
Clayton County District Attorney	Jonesboro, GA	Post-Grad
Cobb County District Attorney	Marietta, GA	Summer
Cordele Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Cordele, GA	Post-Grad
Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Blairsville, GA	Post-Grad
Forsyth County Solicitor-General	Cumming, GA	Post-Grad
Fulton County District Attorney	Atlanta, GA	Post-Grad
Griffin Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Fayetteville, GA	Post-Grad
Gwinnett County District Attorney	Lawrenceville, GA	Post-Grad
Jackson County District Attorney	Jefferson, GA	Post-Grad
Miami-Dade Co. State Attorney	Miami, FL	Post-Grad
Northeastern Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Gainesville, GA	Post-Grad
Ogeechee Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Statesboro, GA	Post-Grad
Piedmont Judicial Circuit District Attorney	Winder/Jefferson, GA	Post-Grad
USAO for the Northern District of GA	Atlanta, GA	Summer
USAO for the Southern District of GA	Savannah, GA	Summer

Other Resources

- [*Sizing Up the Prosecution*](#), Harvard Law School
- [*Careers in Criminal Prosecution*](#), PSJD
- [*Criminal Law Lib Guide*](#), UGA King Library