

What is government practice?

- ◆ Government practice is an area of the law that includes constitutional and administrative law, and government practice focuses on the means of governing. Some government practitioners seeking to achieve written laws and policy.
- ◆ Obviously lawyers employed by the government work in a government practice. In addition to state and federal judges, government practitioners include U.S. attorneys, prosecutors, public defenders, and judicial law clerks. There are many federal agencies that employ lawyers, such as the Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service, the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Securities Exchange Commission to name just a few.
- ◆ Public policy and government relations practitioners also work in a government practice. These attorneys represent corporations, nonprofits, and individuals with issues relating to federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. The primary roles of the public policy and government relations practitioner are education and advocacy. Unlike more traditional lawyer roles, the advocacy of the public policy and government relations practitioner spans many congressional offices and various executive branch agencies, and/or their state counterparts. Public policy and government relations practitioners air issues before members of Congress and their staffs, as well as other legislative bodies and executive agencies that may have an interest in a particular piece of legislation or regulation.

Where do government lawyers work? Government lawyers work for all three branches of the government at the federal, state, and local levels. There are government attorneys who work in almost every substantive legal field.

How do I get into government practice?

- ◆ Work as a judicial law clerk
- ◆ Intern with government agencies
- ◆ Show interest in specific government jobs or in particular fields of law
- ◆ If interning with a firm, seek out cases involving government issues

What skills should I try to develop as a law student interested in government practice?

Government lawyers have a passion for public service through their government work. Typically, they have good interpersonal skills, as it can be difficult to strike a balance between dealing with bureaucracy in an effective and efficient manner and maintaining good relationships with the people within the bureaucracy. For any law job, strong research and writing skills are preferred.

What classes should I take?

- ◆ Take trial advocacy, administrative law, education and civil rights, conflicts, civil procedure III and remedies.
- ◆ Take classes in the area of government law in which you are interested.
- ◆ Participate in Moot Court
- ◆ Do an externship

What are the daily activities of a government attorney?

- ◆ **Researching:** This might include investigating agency requirements and reviewing contracts, statutes, and regulations.
- ◆ **Writing:** Writing for government practice might include creating notice letters, drafting complaints, and completing briefs
- ◆ **Litigating:** This includes prosecuting or defending criminal cases and/or civil cases
- ◆ **Counseling:** A lawyer who works in government might provide advice about contract compliance or litigation

Government Practice Resources

Check out the American Bar Association

- ◆ The website for the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division can be found at:
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/government_public.html
- ◆ Did you engage in military service? Advice for transitioning from military practice to civilian practice can be found at the following webpage (contains useful tips about cover letters, resumes, and writing samples for anyone):
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/government_public/resources/military_lawyers_conference/transitioning_to_civilian_life.html

Online Resources

- ◆ *Government Executive* is government's business news daily and the premier digital destination for senior leaders in the federal government's departments and agencies.
www.govexec.com
- ◆ Online slideshow about government lawyers and ethics: <https://www.apta.com/mc/legal/previous/2014/synopsis/Documents/Critical%20Legal%20Ethics%20Issues%20for%20Government%20Lawyers.pdf>
- ◆ Official websites for the U.S. Executive Branch: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/news/fedgov.html>
- ◆ Official websites for the U.S. Legislative Branch: <https://www.congress.gov>
- ◆ Official website U.S. Judicial Branch: www.uscourts.gov

University of Memphis Law Library Resources

- ◆ Administrative Law and Process in a Nutshell—Ronald M. Levin and Jeffrey S. Lubbers
KF5402 .L48 2017 (Available on Level 1 in Open Reserve)
- ◆ Constitutional & Administrative Law—Hilaire Barnett
eBook
- ◆ Careers in Nonprofit and Government Agencies
eBook