

Cornell Law School

Lawyers in the Best Sense

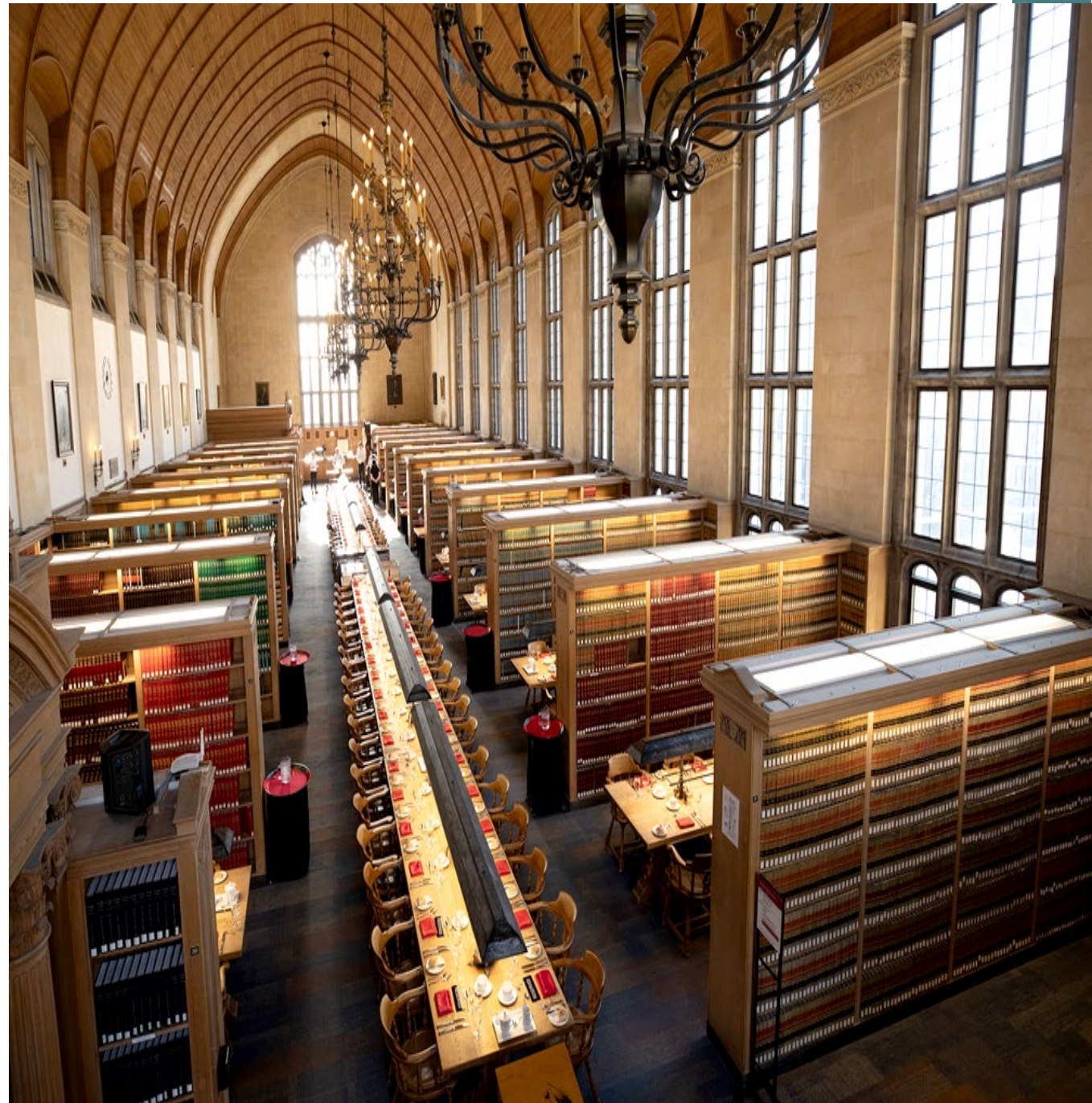
Could Law School be the Key to a Public Service Career?



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Why Law School for Public Service Career?

- Translates Society's Values Into Action
- Platform for Advocacy and Problem-Solving
- Tools for Navigating and Shaping Institutions and Government
- Means
 - Direct representation (immigration, public defense, civil rights)
 - Policy implementation and enforcement (federal, state, tribal gov't/agencies)
 - Impact litigation
 - Legislative drafting



Pathways to Public Service

- Before Law School, admissions committees value:
 - Sustained commitment to something (not just law)
 - Leadership, initiative, real-world impact
 - Service oriented work can be helpful
 - Demonstrated academic potential
- At Law School, build skills and network through
 - Clinics and Externships
 - Public Interest Organizations
 - Pro Bono Scholars Programs
- After Law School, serve the public interest in
 - Government
 - Public Interest Organizations
 - Public Defense/Prosecution
 - Clerkships to Public Interest
 - Private Sector → Loan Repayment/Experience → Public Sector



Apply Now or Work First?

➤ Law School will be here later

- Benefits of work experience
- Gain clarity of purpose
- More experience – stronger application
- Build financial strength

➤ But some are ready right after college. . .

- If you have clear motivation
- Academic Momentum
- Relevant experiences and work exposure during college



Financial Strategy for Law School

- How you pay for law school strongly impacts your career planning
 - More debt → more pressure to work in private sector rather than public service roles
- Merit-based aid dominates Law School market
 - Higher LSAT, Higher undergrad GPA = Higher Grant Aid
- Loan Repayment Assistance Programs
 - Some schools are quite generous
 - Some schools don't offer this
 - Read the fine print
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness
 - Forgives your remaining loan balance after you make 120 months of qualifying payments while working in qualifying position
- Federal Loan Program Changes
 - \$50,000 federal loan cap per year on 'professional' programs (i.e. law school)
 - Private loan market is re-emerging – research carefully



Steps to Take

- Discover your Purpose – Be able to Explain it: Why Law? Why Now?
- Build a compelling narrative (not just a resume)
- Track experiences aligned with service
- Prepare Seriously for LSAT
 - Drives admissions outcomes and scholarship \$\$\$
 - Almost all of your pre-law school application efforts should be invested here
- Research Schools and prepare applications months in advance
- Apply early due to rolling admissions

