



/ Public Interest Law References Advice

References may be requested by an employer in the initial application or later in the interview process. It should be consistent with your resume and cover letter in terms of formatting (font, headers, etc.). Generally, a reference list has contact information for 2-3 individuals that have had personal experience with you as a student or as an employee. You do not have to supply a reference list until requested.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD REFERENCE?

Employers are most interested in references who can discuss you in terms of the skills important for the position, such as legal writing and analysis, ability to assume responsibility, and interpersonal skills. They should be able to share why you're drawn to the mission of the organization or to the type of work that the position will entail. Do not use individuals that you know in a purely social setting or ones that will not be able to speak about specific skills you possess.

Faculty (preferably from law school but undergraduate is acceptable) with whom you worked closely may serve as strong references. They should be able to speak significantly about your class participation, conversations outside of class, or research or other independent work that you performed for them.

Certain positions may require that references be former supervisors, have known you for a certain number of years, etc. so pay attention to this and be sure to follow their instructions before sending.

PREPARING YOUR REFERENCES

Prior to listing someone as a reference, be sure that they are comfortable with providing you with a strong, positive recommendation. You should have a frank conversation with them about your interest and career goals. It is also a good idea to furnish your references with an updated copy of your resume to refresh their memories and to keep yourself and your job search fresh in their minds.

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REFERENCES

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