

# RETURNING TO PRACTICE AFTER TIME OFF

People often find themselves returning to legal practice after time off. If you are in the position where you are looking for legal employment after having children or working in a different field, there are some things you definitely need to consider in preparation for your job search.

## **I. Update Your Knowledge:**

After being away from practicing, you will need to update your skills to prepare for the current workplace. Computer skills are essential. Be sure to update your training on the Microsoft Office Suite. It is also essential that you are current on your legal research skills. Get retrained in Westlaw and Lexis/Nexis. To stay current with trends in the legal community, you should join LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a good resource for industry specific news. There are also many other resources online that will help you get up to speed. You may also consider joining a bar association to begin meeting people in the legal field once again and engaging in discussions about current trends in the legal market. Additionally, Continuing Legal Education courses are excellent ways to learn about specific practice areas

## **II. Update Your Experience:**

After time away, your lawyering skills will need to be refreshed and employers will want to see that you have recent experience. Consider taking on pro bono cases through organizations such as Chicago Volunteer Legal Services. Many other public interest organizations will take attorney volunteers as well. For a complete list of Chicago area public interest employers, log on to Symplicity and enter the Document Library. You may also want to reach out to staffing agencies and see if there are any substantive short-term projects that you are qualified for.

## **III. Making a game plan:**

After time off you will need to get reacquainted with the legal market. After you have done substantive research to get up to speed on trends in the industry, you should construct a game plan for how you will reenter the legal profession. First, you should become familiar with job search resources. The Career Services Office assists alumni, so you should schedule an appointment by calling (312) 987-1402. You should ask for a password so that you may utilize Symplicity, the job search portal used by John Marshall and many other law schools. Symplicity allows you to search for open positions in Chicago, the surrounding areas and other states as well. Other job search resources include [www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org) and [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). You should speak with a counselor at John Marshall to learn more.

Before you reach out to employers you are interested in, you should have a resume and cover letter ready. Any documents that you send to potential employers should be perfect, so speak with a counselor at John Marshall for feedback. This website contains sample resumes for alumni.