

Why network?

The overarching purpose of networking is to build mutually beneficial relationships based on shared competencies, interests, and goals. Whether you're exploring what you want to do with your legal career, mapping the individual and institutional actors in your practice area, or searching for jobs, networking is a process of community building through which you establish an identity and reputation for yourself. If tended to properly, this community will facilitate your professional growth. So how do you get started?

Start now

Networking is a process that should be conducted throughout your career. There's no better time to start than while in law school!

Know your elevator pitch

A good elevator pitch should be audience-adaptable, genuine, and focus on what makes you unique. A good elevator pitch should NOT sound like an elevator pitch.

Listen

While networking, your job is to listen and learn. This is your opportunity to gather information. When feasible come prepared with questions. Consider taking notes after each conversation that you can reference.

Be proactive

Networking opportunities exist all around you. Your job is to seek them out! Keep your eyes on events that arise with state and local bar associations, alumni networks, and career centers.

Prepare

If you know who you will be speaking with, research where they work, what their organization does, and what they do within their organization.

Exchange information

Maintaining a community requires periodic contact so get the contact information of everyone you talk to. Remember that the responsibility to maintain and develop relationships is yours.

Develop mutually beneficial relationships

Whether offering services, flagging opportunities, or connecting members of your network, be aware of how you may help others achieve their goals.

Be patient

Best played as a long game, networking is a continuous process of learning and relationship building that will bear fruit over time. Be patient and persistent throughout the process.