

Accelerated Law Firm Recruiting Timelines: Highlights of What 1L Students Told Us

Based on survey responses collected in October 2025 from more than 2,000 1L students across 196 law schools

Employment Sector Interests

- Big Law interest grew during the first year:
 - **45.4%** of 1L respondents considered Big Law since starting law school.
- Interest in government declined:
 - Interest decreased by **9%** since starting law school.
- Higher Big Law interest was reported among:
 - Continuing-generation college graduates
 - Continuing-generation law students
 - Younger students
 - Full-time students
 - Students at highly selective law schools

Awareness of Accelerated Big Law Recruitment Timelines

- At the time of the survey, **88%** of respondents **were aware** of Big Law recruitment timelines for 2L summer associate positions.
- **25%** were aware of these timelines **before starting law school**.
- Students who considered Big Law **before law school** were nearly twice as likely to be aware than those who never considered Big Law (32.8% vs. 16.8%).
- Higher awareness before law school was reported among:
 - Men
 - Continuing-generation college graduates
 - Younger students
 - Full-time students
 - Students at highly selective law schools

Sources of Information

- **58.1%** learned about recruiting timelines from their **law school career offices**.
- **40.1%** learned from **current or former law students**.
- **28.2%** learned from **law faculty**.
- At highly selective law schools, **25.4%** learned from **law-firm-hosted events**, compared with 19.3% of all respondents and 12% of respondents at law schools in the fourth selectivity quartile.
- **21.2%** of **continuing-generation law students** learned about timelines from family or friends in the legal profession, compared with **9.1%** of **first-generation college graduates**.



Enrollment Decisions

- **30.6%** of respondents said accelerated Big Law recruitment timelines **did not influence** their enrollment decisions
- **29.1%** chose a school with strong overall employment outcomes overall.
- Early interest in Big Law influenced enrollment decisions. Among respondents who expressed interest in Big Law before law school:
 - **40.8%** chose a school with strong Big Law placement outcomes.
 - **21.5%** chose a school that hosted networking events with large law firms.
 - **18%** chose a school that had strong relationships with large law firms.

Impact on the 1L Experience

- **72.6%** of respondents said Big Law recruitment timelines affected their first-year experience.
- **55.5%** of all respondents, regardless of Big Law interest, reported their first-year experience was negatively affected.
 - **67.3%** of students considering Big Law reported a negative impact.
 - **41.3%** of students *not* considering Big Law reported a negative impact.
- “It’s been extremely stressful knowing that we should start applying to Big Law jobs when we started law school just two months ago. I prioritize my schoolwork, but I’m afraid of passing on an opportunity. It’s been extremely overwhelming for my mental health, and I feel like I’m drowning most of the time.”

Law School Career Services Engagement

- **22.6%** received their first career counseling **before orientation**.
- Most students received counseling **during or after orientation**.
- Only **8.2%** had not yet received any career counseling.
- **More than 80%** knew how to access career counseling and would seek guidance on summer opportunities, internships, and postgraduate employment plans.

