



GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

Resources for Lawyers Going Overseas

Finding employment abroad is challenging and requires persistence, patience, and flexibility as well as time to do some homework--ideally before you are assigned a post.

In order for you to work legally on the local economy at your new post, there must be a bilateral work agreement or de facto work arrangement in place so that you can obtain work authorization from the host country. A [list of countries with work agreements](#) is available on the Family Liaison Office (FLO) website. You will also need to research the local parameters for practicing law there and any authorization needed.

If you are interested in continuing work with your current firm, the firm should have an office overseas, be looking to establish an office overseas, or be willing to let you telework. If these arrangements are not possible, there are other American law firms overseas with locations typically located in large cities in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Lawyers interested in public international law may have a broader selection in terms of locale. Many United Nations (UN) agencies or initiatives and NGOs have offices in a wider range of countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia.

Some family members have also secured work with local firms in various capacities. The Consular section at most posts has a list of in-country legal services that they provide to U.S. citizens seeking assistance. Some local firms work with foreign companies that want to establish businesses in country. Such practices may seek to hire English speakers. Other family members overseas have started their own practices working with clients virtually but based in the U.S.

U.S.-trained lawyers might expand their prospects by teaching American advocacy skills or terminology to foreign lawyers wishing to work in the U.S. or seeking to become adjunct law professors at universities working directly with U.S. institutions. University's often have classes teaching U.S. law or comparative law (e.g. common law compared to the civil law system). Lawyers can also become corporate trainers or legal consultants on U.S. ethics and policies for businesses looking to work with American companies. Other options include working at think-tanks and other sectors that can use well-honed professional legal skills in public speaking, writing/editing, researching, and lobbying.

U.S. embassies and consulates might have positions in the Political section (e.g., working on human rights issues). In the Consular section, work as a Consular Adjudicator includes researching, reading, interpretation, and application of the Immigration and Nationality Act and the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM). Visit FLO's website for more information on the Consular Affairs Appointment Eligible Family Member Adjudicator (CA/AEFM) program. USAID and the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) may also have contract

positions or work with local firms. Both entities do a lot of work in rule of law capacity building, working with the host government and civil society. Some positions may only be advertised on the contractors' site.

Once you find employment on the local economy, all positions need to be approved by the Chief of Mission to be sure they do not require you to give up certain immunities and are not contrary to U.S. interests. A [template for seeking this approval](#) is available on FLO's website.

American Law Firms with International Locations

As mentioned above, many law firms have offices overseas. Below are just a few of the larger U.S. law firms. Firms from other English-speaking countries (e.g. UK) are also good options. Areas of practice typically include international corporate issues (e.g. mergers and acquisitions, intellectual property, and financial transactions), international dispute resolution, and international trade.

[Baker & McKenzie](#)

[Cleary Gottlieb Steen and Hamilton](#)

[DLA Piper](#)

[Herbert Smith Freehills](#)

[Hogan Lovells](#)

[Jones Day](#)

[K&L Gates](#)

[Kirkland & Ellis LLP](#)

[Latham & Watkins LLP](#)

[Mayer Brown](#)

[Morrison Foerster](#)

[Norton Rose Fulbright](#)

[Orrick](#)

[Reed Smith](#)

[Scadden, Arps, Slate, Meager and Flom](#)

[Sidley Austin LLP](#)

[Weil, Gotshal and Manges](#)

[White & Case](#)

Recruiters

There are many recruiters who are looking for talented legal professionals. Below are just a few that recruit globally. Many list open positions on their websites. Browse their sites to get a sense of the types and locations of available positions. Most accept resumes and can be contacted directly or on LinkedIn.

[Douglass Scott](#)

[Garfield Robbins International](#)

[GMK Legal](#)

[Hewetson Shah](#)

[JLegal](#)

[Kinney Recruiting](#)

[Lipson Lloyd-Jones](#)

[Major, Lindsey and Africa](#)

[Taylor Root](#)

General Sites to Find Legal Jobs

- [Legal Week Jobs Page](#) - Law firm jobs, including overseas jobs that can be filtered by region.
- [The Posse List](#) - A great resource for temp, part time, full time, virtual/telework, domestic, and international law jobs.

Intergovernmental Organizations

Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) often have hiring needs related to public international law and supranational law. IGOs are composed primarily of sovereign states or of other intergovernmental organizations and are established by treaty or other agreement that acts as the originating charter.

Apart from the traditional centralized UN career-path jobs, individual UN agencies also hire contractors overseas. By developing contacts at the agency office in each country of interest you can uncover opportunities.

- [United Nations System Chief Executive Board \(UNSCEB\)](#) - Provides a directory of all the UN entities.
- [UN Careers](#) - Official job search site.
- [UNJobs.org](#) - All UN jobs searchable by posting. Includes some contract jobs and NGO jobs.
- [International Organization Careers](#) - IO jobs searchable by sector.
- [UN Rule of Law](#) - Lists related to [International Development Law Organizations](#)).

NGOs

NGOs hire lawyers for a variety of positions including research, trial advocacy training, mediation training, neutral trial observation, community outreach, civic education, and research and technical assistance. A large number of NGOs are human rights oriented and hire researchers, advocates, and associates.

- [UN Rule of Law](#) - Lists many of the larger NGOs (including ABA and USIP), their websites, and the type of work they do.
- [University of Minnesota Human Rights Library](#) - A more comprehensive list of Human Rights NGOs.

Most NGOs list job openings on their websites. You can also use the NGO job search engines below to see what is available in your country. Even if no jobs are listed, reach out to the NGOs in the country of interest to learn more about their organizations, let them know you are available, and see if they have any contacts in the field they would be willing to share with you.

- [Devex](#)
- [Relief Web](#)
- [DevNet](#)
- [Idealist](#) - for remote work

Working Locally

Practicing law in a host country depends on local regulations; many countries will not recognize U.S. bar admission. U.S. attorneys may only be able to practice U.S. law or work as an associate with a local attorney. In some countries, there may be no restrictions while in others you may not be able to practice at all. Do your research.

Check the American Citizen Services page on the U.S. embassy website for the list of lawyers provided to U.S. citizens or contact the Consular section for the list. Also, reach out to the local American Chamber of Commerce for networking ideas. Meet with these contacts to determine available opportunities. You can also look at one of the global networks for a larger local firm. These well-known associations of independent law firms are often the go-to for international companies seeking to hire legal assistance overseas.

- [Lex Mundi](#)
- [Teera Lex](#)

- [Tag Law](#)

Flexible, local options include proofreading or translating legal documents and teaching at the local university. American Bar Association approved schools may liaise with foreign universities for study abroad programs and provide classes in English on U.S. law. Other local universities may have general law classes that are taught in English. You can find information on study abroad programs on the [American Bar Association's website](#).

Entrepreneurship

Technology now allows people to work from anywhere. Apart from teleworking for an employer in the U.S., you may also want to look at freelancing or starting your own practice.

[Solo Practice University \(SPU\)](#) has several courses available to help you start a law practice. Also, FLO has a podcast on portable legal careers with Solo Practice University founder Susan Cartier Liebel.. Email FLOAskEmployment@state.gov to request a copy.

U.S. Department of State family member, Vonda K. Vandaveer set up her own practice years ago and has taken it to Tunisia and Belgium. She has two courses available at SPU: *How to Build an International Law Practice* and *How to Build a Portable Law Practice*. Ms. Vandaveer also created a presentation for Foreign Service spouses in 2011 and her PowerPoint is available from FLO. Email FLOAskEmployment@state.gov to request a copy.

Additional Entrepreneurship Resources

- [American Bar Association Solosez Listserv](#) – A great resource on practice management issues and a place for lawyers to support each other.
- [Small Business Association](#) – Includes resources for starting a business including business plan templates.
- [American Bar Association article on eLawyering](#)
- [Library of Congress Guide to Law Online](#) - An annotated guide to sources of information on government and law.

General Job Search Tips and Additional Resources

Starting the job search months before going to post is essential if you want to be employed soon after you arrive. Most jobs are found through people in your network, which can include family, friends, former employers, LinkedIn contacts, and alumni from your alma mater. These contacts may also be able to connect you with American, British, or other foreign attorneys in your host country. Set up informational meetings with them to learn who is looking to hire foreign attorneys on the ground and for advice on finding employment. Contact your Global Employment Advisor (GEA) for networking and job search guidance at GEI@state.gov. Also, reach out to your former law school to ask about job search and networking support..

- [Planning a Legal Career Overseas Part 1: Picking the Right Practice Area and the Right Firm](#) - 2014 article from *Above the Law*.
- [Planning a Legal Career Overseas Part 2: Language Skills, Caveats and What You Can Be Doing Now](#) – 2014 article from *Above the Law*.
- **Careers in International Law**, Salli A. Swartz - Book published by the American Bar Association.

- [Harvard Law School Site on Public International Law](#) – This site includes info on the various sectors, personal assessments, a page on how to break into the international NGO field, and more.
- [Law Firm Practice](#) – A Yale Law School Career Development Office document that has a good basic chapter on seeking careers in International Law.
- [The Variable Value of U.S. Legal Education in the Global Services Legal Market](#) – A *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics* article from 2011 on the topic of whether there is a set of common characteristics and credentials to define a global lawyer.
- [Global Practice from the U.S. Perspective: Trends for Law Firms, Implications for Lawyers](#) – A 2013 article from the Thompson Reuters website with footnotes.
- [Working Overseas-A Reality Check](#) – Testimonies from lawyers who have successfully worked overseas from *Law Practice Today* on the American Bar Association site, 2008.
- [Lawyers Wanted Abroad, That Is](#) – *New York Times* article from 2008 that provides information about American lawyers seeking employment in Asia and the Middle East.
- [List of 100 Largest Law Firms by Revenue](#) – Wikipedia site provides a list of successful American Law firms and categorizes them as national or international.
- [Which U.S. Firms Ranked in the Asia 50](#)
- [How to Go About Hunting a Job in the UN System](#) – Blog from Peace and Collaborative Development Network.
- [FLO webpage on Bilateral Work Agreements](#)
- [FLO webpage on Consular Affairs Adjudicator Program](#)

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