Relocating During a Tough Economic Times

When the economy takes a downturn, as we are currently experiencing, many candidates who are looking for work will consider relocating in order to find a job. This is often a very necessary and successful means of finding work in a down economy. Still, there are important factors one must consider before making the decision to broaden a job search to include multiple regions.

Some factors to consider include:

- **The Bar Exam.** In a down economy, law firms often find themselves with more qualified candidates than they can handle. Thus, one of the easiest ways to "weed out" candidates is to exclude those who are not licensed in the relevant jurisdiction. Whether this occurs will depend greatly on the candidate's specific practice area and/or expertise but, it definitely happens and it is something of which all candidates should be mindful. This is especially true if your search stretches out over the time period in which the bar exam is offered. At that point, law firms often say, "If this candidate is truly interested in relocating, why didn't s/he take the bar exam last month?"

- **Travel Expenses.** Ordinarily, law firms do not cover travel expenses for a screening interview. However, when there is a high demand but low supply of candidates, the firms will often accommodate requests to conduct a screening interview by phone and then cover the cost if they do decide to fly the candidate out for a full round. In a market of high supply and low demand, on the other hand, this often is not the case. Instead, firms will fully expect candidates to travel at their own expense even if it is only for a screening interview. The best plan of attack in this case is to try to get more than one meeting while you are in town. But since interviews may be hard to come by (depending on your practice area and the market you are considering), be prepared to demonstrate your level of interest and commitment to relocating by accommodating the firm's request to fly out at your own expense. The good news is that the firm may decide to go ahead and give you a full round of interviews once you agree to travel. Or, if they decide to bring you back for a full round, they will cover those costs.

- **Logistics.** If you are considering relocation in order to find a job, don't forget to think about logistics. Do you have a home to sell? What are the job prospects for your spouse? How quickly will you be available to start a new position? Are you in a position to meet with firms in multiple regions? While all of these issues come into play regardless of the market, they can be absolute "deal killers" during tough economic times. Thus, be sure to give thought to such issues before you undertake the time and expense of expanding your job search into multiple regions.

These are just some of the issues that may arise as you consider relocation. But, remember, a good recruiter should be able to counsel you and provide job advice in addition to job openings. So if you are considering relocation, contact a local recruiter to discuss the job market and whether there are special factors you should consider in the relevant jurisdiction.