

NALP'S JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SECTION

STATE COURT WORK GROUP

# Insight and Inside Information for Select State Court Clerkships



This document was compiled from information provided by Career Services Office representatives from law schools all over the country. Their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated. This document should be read in conjunction with [The Guide to State Court Judicial Clerkships](#), published by The Vermont Law School. A PDF of the most current version of this document is available in the Judicial Clerkships Section of the NALP website.

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to all NALP Judicial Clerkship Section members who have contributed to this document. If you are able to contribute an entry for a missing state, please submit that material to Molly Stafford at [mstafford@pacific.edu](mailto:mstafford@pacific.edu).

## ARIZONA

Please note that this information is accurate as of June 1, 2013.

### ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

The Arizona Supreme Court consists of 5 Justices, all of whom post their judicial clerkship application requirements online at [www.azcourts.gov/aochumanresources/Jobs/OtherCourtPositions.aspx](http://www.azcourts.gov/aochumanresources/Jobs/OtherCourtPositions.aspx). Each Justice typically hires 2 clerks each year, for 1-year terms. The Supreme Court of Arizona typically follows the Federal Judges Law Clerk Hiring Plan. The application packet should include the following: cover letter, resume, law school transcript, undergraduate transcript (if available), writing sample, and 2-3 letters of recommendation.

Applicants should submit a paper application packet to each Justice to whom they wish to apply as follows:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Justice, Supreme Court of Arizona  
1501 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

### ARIZONA COURT OF APPEALS

The Court of Appeals is comprised of two Divisions. Division One consists of 16 judges who are located in Phoenix. The 6 judges of Division Two sit in Tucson. Most judges in Division One hire term clerks annually and follow the timeline established by the Arizona Supreme Court for that term. Some judges require applications to be emailed; others prefer paper applications. Interested applicants should contact individual chambers in spring of the 2L year in order to ascertain specifics. See <http://azcourts.gov/coa1/Home.aspx>.

Division Two judges are not as regular in their hiring. Interested applicants should contact individual chambers in late spring of the 2L year to determine which judges will be hiring, what their timelines will be, and what application materials are required. Typically, those judges who are hiring will accept materials as soon as 2L grades are available (i.e. mid-late June). See <http://www.appeals2.az.gov/>.

### ARIZONA TRIAL COURT

Arizona's trial court is the Superior Court. It is a single entity with locations in each county. The counties with the largest number of courts are Maricopa County (Phoenix)

and Pima County (Tucson). Maricopa County Superior Court does not have traditional law clerks; instead, the court hires a few Law Researchers and Law-trained Bailiffs. See <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/maricopa/default.cfm>. There are no fixed application timelines; openings are posted as vacancies occur. Pima County Superior Court maintains a pool of law clerk applicants from which judges may choose when clerkships become available. Most law clerks also perform bailiff duties. Interested applicants should submit employment application with cover letter and resume shortly before graduation. See [www.sc.pima.gov/?tabid=288](http://www.sc.pima.gov/?tabid=288).

## **CALIFORNIA**

The Justices of the California Supreme Court and the California Court of Appeal no longer hire term law clerks, except in a few rare cases. However, term clerkship positions (law clerk/research attorney positions) at the California Superior Courts occasionally become available to graduating students and experienced attorneys. Applicants should conduct research on the courts' websites and/or contact the personnel offices or supervising research attorneys of the superior court in which they are interested in working, as well as the individual judges on the court. Positions with the California Supreme Court and the Californian Courts of Appeal can often be found on the website of the California Supreme Court.

Over the last three to five years, the superior courts in Los Angeles and San Francisco have hired the greatest number of graduating students as law clerks/research attorneys. The economic downturn, however, has led to an increase in the number of experienced attorneys applying for and landing these positions. Typically, the Los Angeles superior court begins accepting applications from mid-November until mid-May of the preceding clerkship year. The San Francisco Superior Court typically posts a job announcement in February when hiring for positions that would begin in the fall of that clerkship year.

Also it should be noted that while the California Supreme Court and the California Court of Appeal does not generally hire term law clerks, there are some career positions, such as Staff Attorney positions with the Habeas Corpus Counsel or Appellate Attorneys positions, with the courts as advertised. These positions are typically for experienced attorneys.

## **COLORADO**

### **COLORADO SUPREME COURT**

Application requirements for the seven justices of the Colorado Supreme Court are available at: [http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Supreme\\_Court/Applicants.cfm](http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Supreme_Court/Applicants.cfm). It is best to follow the specific application requirements for each justice as there are minor variations between them.

While the website identifies a specific time frame during which some justices accept and review applications, it does not provide this information for all of them. Some justices conduct interviews as early as the summer between the 2L and 3L year. Most justices complete their hiring in September or October. Therefore, to maximize consideration by all justices, it is best to apply for these clerkships in the summer after the second year of law school, as soon as possible after receiving second year grades and class rank.

Like most other judges, the Colorado Supreme Court justices tend to seek clerks with strong writing skills. In addition to featuring traditional legal writing experience on the resume (e.g. Law Review; Moot Court; Legal Writing Competitions, etc.) applicants should consider listing any significant non-legal writing experience on their resumes.

## COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS

The Colorado Court of Appeals consists of 22 judges, most of whom post their judicial clerkship application requirements at [http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Court\\_of\\_Appeals/Applicants.cfm](http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Court_of_Appeals/Applicants.cfm). It is best to follow the specific application requirements for each judge as there are significant variations between them. Where the website does not provide specific information on a judge's application requirements, applicants should send a standard application packet consisting of a cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample, and three letters of recommendation.

The website identifies a specific application time frame for some judges, but it does not provide this information for all them. While most judges complete their hiring during the fall, in recent years, some judges have hired as early as July while others have waited until spring. Given the wide variability among the judges in the timing of their law clerk hiring, it is recommended that students apply to each judge as early as possible in the time frames set forth in their individual hiring procedures on the website. For judges who do not publish their hiring procedures on the website, it is recommended that students apply in the late summer to early fall of their third year.

Colorado Court of Appeals judges also vary in the way they staff their chambers with law clerks. Judges may choose to have one or two law clerks. Those who opt to have one law clerk typically choose to have an administrative assistant in lieu of a second clerk. Judges who have two law clerks can opt to have permanent clerks or term law clerks. Some judges have one permanent clerk and one term clerk, while others opt for two term clerks. As of summer 2009, all judges have at least one term clerk. Most term clerk positions are for one year; however, at least two judges require a two-year term.

Finally, some Colorado Court of Appeals judges require candidates to perform a substantive research and writing exercise as part of the interview process. Examples have included post-interview legal writing assignments and asking interviewees to come to the interview prepared to discuss a particular legal issue.

## COLORADO TRIAL COURTS

The Colorado trial courts are organized into twenty judicial districts, each covering one or more counties. A list of the trial courts is available at

<http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Index.cfm>.

Colorado district court judges post their clerkship positions at

<http://www.courts.state.co.us/Careers/Index.cfm>.

In general, Colorado District Courts do not have a uniform clerkship cycle. Most judges post positions when they receive notice that their current clerk is leaving and will typically seek to fill the positions as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs.

Accordingly, students interested in these positions should check the website regularly and apply as soon as possible after a position is posted. While an opening could occur at any time, most openings tend to appear between April and September. As a result, most clerks obtain these positions over the summer after graduating from law school.

Unlike the other Colorado District Courts, the Twentieth Judicial District, which covers Boulder County, has a uniform clerkship cycle. Clerks on this court typically start work in September and complete their clerkships in a year. Positions are typically posted sometime between November and January in the student's third year of law school and hiring for the positions usually occurs in the spring.

The Colorado State Judicial Branch requires applicants for trial court clerkships to submit a Colorado Judicial Department Employment Application, which is available at <http://www.courts.state.co.us/Careers/Index.cfm>. Individual job postings may not specify what other materials are required, but it is generally a good idea to submit a cover letter, resume, writing sample, transcript, and a list of 3 to 5 references.

Depending on the court, judges may be assigned to civil, criminal, domestic, juvenile, or probate dockets. Larger courts, such as the Denver District Court (2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District) will often assign judges to a docket handling specific types of cases (e.g. criminal or civil). The judges on courts with specialized dockets often rotate from one type of docket to another on a periodic basis. Other courts assign judges to "mixed" dockets, meaning that each judge will preside over different types of cases. Frequently, law clerk job postings do not identify the judge or the docket associated with the law clerk position. Therefore, applicants may want to call the court's district administrator or clerk's office before applying. This information is available on the State Judicial Branch Website.

Very few, if any, Colorado state court judges require applicants to take the Colorado Bar Examination.

## CONNECTICUT

### SUPREME COURT

Most of the judges on this court now have one permanent clerk and one term clerk.

The court opens its application process in early July and typically has a stated application deadline in early September. Some of the Justices have, however, been known to conduct interviews in late August. To ensure full consideration by all of the justices, applicants should be encouraged to submit their materials by mid-August.

Applicants are not expected to sit for the Connecticut Bar Examination.

Most interviews are held in early to mid-September in Hartford. Applicants should plan to be available on short notice as interview dates/times are often set only a few days in advance. The court will finish its clerkship hiring by the end of September. If an applicant does not hear something from the court by October, they can assume that they are no longer being considered.

### APPELLATE COURT

The court hires clerks for its current judges as well as for the pool of Judge Trial Referees (retired judges and justices who are sitting on a reduced schedule). Typically each of the current judges will hire one term clerk. Clerks who are hired by the Judge Trial Referees (JTRs) will often work with two or three JTRs.

The court opens its application cycle in early July. It continues to accept applications generally until the end of August. There is no particular advantage to getting materials submitted early in the process as the court does not review applications or extend interview offers until late September.

Interviews are not scheduled until after the Connecticut Supreme Court concludes its hiring process.

Interview dates are set and announced before the court begins accepting applications. Typically interviews are planned for a Thursday and Friday in early October. Applicants will generally not receive more than a week's notice of their selection for interviews. Thus, applicants should plan to be available on the set interview days.

The court will notify selected candidates of their interview schedules by email. As all of the interviews are centrally scheduled by the court, an applicant will receive a full schedule if he/she has secured more than one interview. The court attempts to schedule multiple interviews for candidates all on one day to reduce the need for candidates to be at the court for multiple days.

Candidates who receive interviews with the JTRs will often interview with two or three judges at once. These will be the judges who will “share” the clerk. It will be clear from the interview schedule if the candidate will be meeting with multiple judges.

Once interviews are completed, successful candidates will often hear back quickly from judges who are extending them offers. The court generally completes its hiring process by the end of October.

There is no expectation that clerks will sit for the Connecticut Bar Examination.

## CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH – OFFICE OF LEGAL RESEARCH (TRIAL COURT)

The Judicial Branch participates in a number of fall job fairs and a variety of on-campus recruiting programs. If their representatives come to your school’s on-campus recruiting program, students are strongly encouraged (almost required) to submit their materials for consideration through that process. Students who do not participate in that process often seem to be disadvantaged in the process. If the Judicial Branch does not come to your campus, and your students cannot interview with their representatives at a job fair in the fall, they can submit their materials directly to the Judicial Branch.

The initial on-campus/job fair interview is a largely informational interview. Interviewers will describe the Judicial Branch’s clerkship program as well as detail the next steps in the application process. Interviewers want to leave the initial interview knowing that applicants are interested in dedicating their clerkship to legal research and writing and that they understand they will not be assigned to a judge.

Following the initial interview, applicants will be required to submit a complete application packet, typically by the end of October.

Second round (on-site) interviews are usually scheduled during December and January. Applicants will be given a packet of materials to review in advance of the interview and asked to complete a one hour writing exercise based on those materials during the interview. Applicants will also meet with Judicial Branch attorneys for a formal interview. The whole process usually lasts about two hours.

The Judicial Branch will make its hiring decisions in late March or early April. Applicants are clearly told at the conclusion of their on-site interview not to contact the Judicial Branch about decisions. No information will be available until hiring decisions are made and those decisions cannot be made outside of the pre-established process (regardless of what other offers an applicant may have pending).

When an offer is made, it is a general offer. Selected candidates are not promised a court location or a precise start date. Candidates are asked to indicate their



preferences as to location and start date. Those preferences are accommodated where possible, with candidates typically getting one of their top two choices.

It is very important for applicants to understand that they are making a one-year commitment. The Judicial Branch looks very unfavorably on individuals who do not take this requirement seriously (i.e., ask to leave early for another job). If an applicant is considering a clerkship with the Judicial Branch, he/she should be prepared to plan the next steps in his/her career around the one-year commitment that he/she is making to the Judicial Branch.

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS**

This is the highest court in the District of Columbia, there is no intermediate appellate court. The court currently consists of nine active judges (including one Chief Judge) and 12 senior judges. There are two types of clerks, Judicial Clerks and Court Clerks (who serve all the judges). For the Judicial Clerks, each of the judges hires two law clerks, except for the senior judges who share clerks.

Most of the judges hire 3Ls directly from law school, but in recent years several judges have hired law clerks with one or two years of experience. The clerkships are typically for a one year term. The judges typically hire very close to the federal law clerk hiring plan deadlines, so students should apply by late August/early September. The senior judges tend to hire slightly later in October. For those judges who have hired alumni, some judges have interviewed over the summer in July/August in the year before the clerkship term. Most interviews are held in early to mid-September through October.

Although most judges follow this time frame, one or two judges have sometimes waited until later in the year to hire, as late as March or April. Students should follow up directly with the court to see if there are any openings after the fall hiring season.

For Court Clerks, applicants need only send one application to Staff Counsel Rosanna M. Mason. E-mail: [rmason@dcca.state.dc.us](mailto:rmason@dcca.state.dc.us), (202) 879-2718, Fax: (202) 626-8840 at the courthouse, and the deadline is typically in early December of students' third year.

### **SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

The Superior Court handles all local trial matters, including civil, criminal, family court, probate, tax, landlord-tenant, small claims, and traffic. The court consists of a chief judge and 61 associate judges. The court is assisted by the service of 24 magistrate judges as well as retired judges who have been recommended and approved as senior judges. Each associate judge hires one law clerk, and the magistrate judges typically share clerks. Students should apply individually to each associate judge and magistrate judge. The Senior Judges on each floor share clerks, the judges are on the 3rd and 5th floor and students can send applications to "Senior Judges, x floor" For more

Information, they can contact April Whitaker at 202 879 4816 (3rd Floor) and Anna Scanlon at 202 879 1172 (5th Floor).

The judges are organized into divisions (Family, Civil, Criminal, Probate & Tax, and Domestic Violence) and then assignments within those divisions. The assignments are updated yearly in January, but judges typically stay at least two to three years in any particular division before rotating to another one.

The associate judges typically hire graduating 3Ls for one year terms. Some judges have hired more experienced attorneys who serve for longer than one year, and judges are usually flexible if clerks would like to stay for longer than a year. Some judges hire in September/October of students' third year of law school, some wait until November/December, and some make decisions in January/February. By March, most of the judges have hired, but a few may still be accepting applications. Students can submit applications to all judges as early as September, but may need to follow up with judges in January if they still have not heard.

Most judges request a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, writing sample, and at least two letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation are often optional, and applicants can submit a list of references instead. Cover letters should highlight the applicants' relevant experience and background.

## **FLORIDA**

### **FLORIDA SUPREME COURT**

Seven justices make up the Florida Supreme Court, which is located in Tallahassee. The Chief Justice oversees the entire State Courts System. Opportunities to clerk exist with the individual justices, as well as with the Central Staff Office and Clerk's Office. Most justices have at least one term clerk. Term clerks are typically hired for a two year term. Vacancies are usually posted on the Florida Supreme Court's employment page available at <http://www.floridasupremecourt.org/employment/index.shtml>.

While the justices' application timelines vary, in order to maximize consideration it is best to apply during the summer after the second year of law school, as soon as possible after receiving second year grades and class rank. Most justices request a cover letter, resume, self-edited writing sample, law school and undergraduate transcripts and letters of recommendation (or list of references). The primary selection criteria tend to be class rank, law review membership, and writing and research experience. Several of the justices require that their clerks sit for the Florida bar exam.

### **FLORIDA DISTRICT COURTS OF APPEAL**

Florida's intermediate courts of appeal are known as the "district" courts of appeal. There are five such districts that are headquartered in Tallahassee (First DCA),

Lakeland (Second DCA), Miami (Third DCA), West Palm Beach (Fourth DCA), and Daytona Beach (Fifth DCA).

A fair number of Florida DCA judges employ career clerks exclusively. However, there are many judges who also hire term clerks for one to two year terms. The Fourth and Fifth DCAs tend to do the most hiring of term clerks. Those interested in a clerkship position with a DCA judge should address their inquiries to the individual judges. Vacancies occur at various times in each chambers, but most new term clerks typically begin in August of each year. While many judges who hire term law clerks tend to hire during students' third year of law school, it's advisable to send application during the summer after the second year of law school, once second year grades and ranks are available.

Florida DCAs also have central staff attorney offices that employ judicial law clerks. Staff attorney office clerkships are not "elbow clerkships." Rather, DCA staff attorneys serve all of the judges on the DCA and report to the Chief DCA judge. Many of the DCAs treat these as one or two year term positions. These positions are sometimes posted on the DCAs' websites. However, because not all DCAs post their staff attorney positions online, those interested in working as a staff attorney can send the DCA Deputy Marshall an application and ask that it be held on file until a position becomes available.

A comprehensive list of all of the circuit courts' websites is available at: <http://www.flcourts.org/courts/dca/dca.shtml>. Because Florida DCA judges do not always post their vacancies online, as stated above, interested applicants should contact judges' chambers directly to ascertain the hiring needs.

## FLORIDA CIRCUIT AND COUNTY COURTS

In Florida, trials are conducted in "circuit" or "county" courts, depending upon the type of case and/or amount in controversy. Individual circuit and county court judges in Florida do not employ law clerks. Rather, each of the 20 circuits in Florida has a staff attorney's office which serves all of the judges within the circuit. These positions are referred to as Trial Court Law Clerks. The vast majority of these positions are permanent positions. Vacancies are usually posted on the circuit court's website (though not always for very long). A comprehensive list of all of the circuit courts' websites is available at: <http://www.flcourts.org/courts/circuit/circuit.shtml>. An exception to this is the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit in West Palm Beach, which treats law clerk positions as two year term positions. Vacancies at the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit are usually posted on the court's website.

\* \* \*

Individuals interested in clerking for any court in Florida can also post their materials on the Florida State Courts Law Clerk Resume Repository, available at <http://lawclerk.flcourts.org>. However, because it's unclear how many judges use the

Repository to identify law clerk candidates, applicants are advised to use that method in addition to submitting applications to the individual justices'/judges' chambers.

## GEORGIA

### GEORGIA SUPREME COURT AND GEORGIA APPELLATE COURT

The justices and judges at each of these courts now have career staff attorneys/law clerks. The judges on each court require applicants to have some practical legal experience prior to serving as staff attorneys or law clerks. Applicants must be admitted to the Georgia state bar prior to submitting their applications.

While vacancies don't happen with regularity, it is important when positions are available for applicants to demonstrate a connection to the state and/or a concrete reason for their interest in working in Georgia. Being able to show that connection through a resume and/or a cover letter is critical. It is not enough to be able to speak to the connection during the interview process.

Applicants should give careful consideration to what they submit as a writing sample. Justices and judges on these two courts tend to prefer a more practical writing sample over more academic pieces. Applicants should be encouraged to select a writing sample that they have drafted from their prior legal experience (a brief, etc.) rather than a publication style piece (note, article, etc.).

Applicants interested specifically in the Georgia Appellate Court should note that the court has a central staff attorney pool in addition to those staff attorneys hired by individual judges. These staff attorneys work for the court as a whole, but offer another viable opportunity to secure a clerkship position.

### GEORGIA SUPERIOR COURT

Many of the judges on the Superior Court level share law clerks, meaning that one clerk will likely work with a few judges simultaneously during their clerkship. While the hiring is done on a very ad hoc basis, interested applicants must begin regularly checking the court's website at [www.georgiacourts.org/courts](http://www.georgiacourts.org/courts) for position openings early in the spring of their second year (or third year for students in part-time/four-year programs). When posting their clerkship openings, judges will often post well in advance.

These clerkships are more traditional one-year positions. It is, however, important to note that not all clerks are hired directly by an individual judge. In some circuits (generally smaller circuits), clerks are hired by the superior court to serve all judges sitting within that circuit.

Applicants should be sure to highlight their connections (if any) to the area in which they are applying for a clerkship. This is particularly important for applicants whose resumes

may not readily demonstrate their connection to the state of Georgia. Judges want to know that the applicant has a well-thought out reason for applying and/or a connection to the area.

Note: Georgia also has clerkship opportunities at its State Courts. These courts are county level courts with jurisdiction over misdemeanor criminal cases and unlimited jurisdiction over civil matters. Applicants interested in these opportunities should apply directly to the individual judges and should be encouraged to apply broadly in order to secure a clerkship position.

## **ILLINOIS**

### **ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT**

The Supreme Court Justices almost universally have career law clerks. Applicants interested in securing a clerkship should have a demonstrated connection to the area as well as some practical post-graduate legal experience. It seems as though some justices consistently hire from particular law schools.

### **ILLINOIS APPELLATE COURT**

The Appellate Court is divided into Districts. Generally, there are no term clerk positions as most judges have career clerks. These judges seem to prefer applicants with some post-graduate legal experience over recent graduates. Increasingly, there seems to be a trend to hire law clerks that have served (or are currently serving) on the court as Staff Attorneys. Applicants should do a bit of research - beyond mere geography - before applying to any particular appellate district. The first and second appellate districts tend to be the most active districts and engage staff attorneys in more matters. This additional experience can be helpful to the candidate who ultimately wants to transition into a law clerk position on the court.

### **ILLINOIS CIRCUIT COURT**

The Circuit Courts encourage applicants to check with individual judges regarding their clerkship requirements. It seems, however, that the only Circuit that hires with any regularity is Cook County. The individual judges in Cook County will consider recent law school graduates for clerkships. Applicants should demonstrate their connection to the area in their cover letter and/or resume.

## **IOWA**

### **SUPREME COURT**

Traditionally, each of the seven justices on the Iowa Supreme Court and each of the nine judges on the Iowa Court of Appeals employs a law clerk. The clerks' duties

typically include conducting legal research, drafting memoranda, preparing summaries, and reviewing opinions to assist the justice or judge with the disposition of cases. The eight judicial districts (trial courts) also employ law clerks to assist trial judges. Law clerk duties at the district level may vary from district to district, but generally include legal research and writing.

Work locations of Iowa Supreme Court law clerks are usually split between the courthouse in the justice's home county and the Judicial Branch Building in Des Moines. Law clerks for the Iowa Court of Appeals work at the Judicial Branch Building in Des Moines. Locations vary across the state for district court law clerks.

Law clerks must be law school graduates. Employment is usually for a one-year period, beginning in August. At a judge's discretion, clerks may be offered the opportunity to continue employment for another year or so. Law clerks are eligible for a full range of benefits including health and dental insurance, disability and life insurance, 11 holidays and two weeks vacation.

Application deadlines vary, but applications for positions start arriving as early as spring of the year prior to commencement of employment. Application criteria vary somewhat according to the individual preferences of the judge or justice. In general, strong writing ability, GPA, class standing, and law review experience are important.

Each justice and judges sets his or her own interviewing schedule. Applications should include a resume and cover letter. Some justices or judges may request a law school transcript, recent writing sample and references. Address and send applications to individual justices or judges in care of:

Iowa Supreme Court  
Judicial Branch Building  
1111 E. Court Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Iowa Court of Appeals  
Judicial Branch Building  
Attention: Dan Marvin  
1111 E. Court Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Mr. Marvin will make the applications available to judges seeking to fill clerk positions.

#### DISTRICT COURT

Send resume and cover letter to District Court Administrators as directed in the Vermont Law School guide.

## MARYLAND

The [www.courts.state.md.us](http://www.courts.state.md.us) website is helpful for biographies of judges, links to county court websites, information about judicial nominations, and job postings other than clerkships in the court system.

### COURT OF APPEALS

This is the state's high court. There are seven judges on this court. Each judge has two term clerks. Some judges opt not to have a judicial assistant and instead have a third clerk who sometimes is a term clerk and, other times, is a career clerk. The judges' chambers are located throughout the state of Maryland. Oral arguments occur in Annapolis, Maryland, where a number (but not all!) of the appellate judges are located.

Each judge determines his or her own hiring timeline and application requirements. Typically, though, the judges begin accepting applications in late December/early January of the second year of law school. All the judges usually are finished hiring by the end of the spring semester of the second year. It is best to call each judge to determine the application requirements because there are slight variations between the judges. Contact information is available on the Maryland Judiciary website.

### COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS

This is the intermediate appellate court that hears both criminal and civil appeals as a matter of right. It is often referred to as the "workhorse court" of the appellate courts because the volume of cases is so great here. There are thirteen judges on this court currently, but that number will increase to fifteen in July 2013. Like the Court of Appeals judges, each judge on this court is budgeted two law clerks. Most judges choose to have two term clerks. Some judges, however, choose to have one permanent clerk and one term clerk. Still, others choose not to have a judicial assistant and have a career clerk and two term clerks. Also, like the Court of Appeals, the judges' chambers are located throughout the state of Maryland, with oral arguments occurring in Annapolis, Maryland.

Each judge determines his or her own hiring timeline and application requirements. An increasing number of Court of Special Appeals judges are accepting applications, conducting interviews, and making offers starting in the middle of the spring semester of the second year of law school. There are a few judges, though, who may accept applications sooner, but will not conduct interviews or make offers until late summer (August) or fall (one typically hires in December) of the third-year of law school. Like the Court of Appeals, it is best to call each judge regarding application materials and exact timing because they do vary between the judges.

## CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES

In most counties, the judges do their interviewing and hiring individually, so students need to call each chambers and ask for application information and deadlines. An increasing number judges look at applications as early as the summer before third year. Many begin receiving the bulk of their applications in September and make a decision between October and December. Then, there are some who do not hire until the winter or spring. It is always helpful to apply early, as these application deadlines are rolling, and judges can make decisions at any time.

In smaller counties, usually those judges hire individually, too; however, there are a few counties where they accept applications as a group through the chief administrative judge; in past years, Wicomico and Harford counties operated in this way. While the law clerks work for individual judges, the hiring process is streamlined, and applicants send applications to the administrative judge. In Baltimore City, the Retired and Visiting Judges share a law clerk, so applicants apply to them as a whole.

In some of the larger counties, judges are assigned to specific dockets for a period of time. In the smaller counties, they may hear a variety of cases. To find out a judge's docket for your clerkship year, you can call the chambers to ask or ask a judge during the interview. The Circuit Court for Baltimore City posts the docket rotation on its website. Also, there are specialized dockets, such as the Business and Technology Docket or a Drug Treatment Court, so students could investigate those areas of interest.

## CIRCUIT COURT MASTERS

Masters also hire law clerks. In Baltimore City, individual masters have law clerks. The General Master's Office in the city hires staff attorneys from time to time when there are available positions. It is best to call each master's chambers directly to find out application information.

## ORPHANS' COURTS

In Baltimore City, the Orphans' Court judges hire and share a law clerk. Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County Orphans' Courts hire clerks, so applicants should call to find out specific information.

## DISTRICT COURTS

Some of the district courts hire law clerks. Applicants should call those courts in the fall for application information. Hiring decisions could be made in the fall and winter. Send applications to the chief administrative judge for each district court, because that judge is the point of contact for the hiring process. Those clerks work for more than one judge at a time, and some of the larger counties hire two clerks. The state Administrative Office of the Courts in Annapolis can inform applicants what information to send to the



various district courts and by when. A list of the judges is on the Maryland court website.

## **MASSACHUSETTS**

### **MASSACHUSETTS SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT**

The SJC is the Commonwealth's highest appellate court. The Court consists of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices. Each SJC Justice has two law clerks. Most law clerks spend one year at the SJC, but occasionally clerks will stay for two years, and there are a few career clerks as well. Whether a law clerk stays for more than one year is up to the clerk and individual justice.

The SJC generally begins to accept clerkship applications in late August or early September. Candidates are encouraged to apply as early as possible, since the Justices make offers on a rolling basis, generally by mid-September. Exact dates and deadlines can be found on the SJC's website, <http://www.mass.gov/courts/sjc/>, and are usually posted in the spring.

Each candidate must submit a single application in paper form: (1) a current resume; (2) an official law school transcript; (3) a writing sample not to exceed ten pages and not edited by another; and (4) two letters of recommendation from law school faculty members. Cover letters should be addressed to "The Justices," although applicants may indicate a preference for clerking for a specific justice or justices. The candidate should arrange to have the law school send an official transcript directly to the Hiring Coordinator, however, the applicant may submit an unofficial transcript with the resume and writing sample. Letters of recommendation may be sent after the candidate's initial submission of materials, but the candidate might not be considered until the letters are received.

Applications are reviewed in their totality, however, academic excellence at the law school one attends is a significant factor among successful candidates. Interviews are scheduled at the request of individual justices. Candidates interview with an individual justice in-person, and sometimes current clerks meet with the candidates as well.

Most law clerks are hired straight out of law school, but the SJC also hires individuals who have been out of law school for a few years. Most SJC law clerks sit for the Massachusetts Bar Exam in July, however, sitting for the bar and passing the bar is not a requirement for the position. The Court informally cautions law clerks against sitting for the bar exam in February while serving as a law clerk.

### **MASSACHUSETTS APPEALS COURT**

The Massachusetts Appeals Court is a court of general appellate jurisdiction, with a large caseload in both criminal and civil matters. It currently comprises a Chief Justice and 24 associate justices. From time to time, retired appellate justices also serve. The Chief Justice has two law clerks; the other justices have one. Generally, the Court hires approximately 30 law clerks for a year. Several law clerks stay on for more than one year, and a few have stayed on indefinitely as career law clerks.

The court has a centralized application process. Persons interested in law clerkships apply by mailing or emailing one set of materials, which include a cover letter, resume, copy of a law school transcript, a completed online application for employment, and two or more letters of recommendation (employer recommendations are recommended; letters should be addressed to Managing Attorney Frank Mockler, and they may be sent separately). Candidates should include their e-mail address with their application. Application materials can be mailed or emailed ([frank.mockler@appct.state.ma.us](mailto:frank.mockler@appct.state.ma.us)) between mid-August and late September (exact dates are posted on the website, <http://www.mass.gov/courts/appealscourt/>, sometime in the spring).

Applicants should demonstrate superior academic achievement, an ability to work professionally and independently, and an interest in legal research and writing.

Interviews are conducted on a rolling basis in September and October, and final selections are usually made in November. Screening interviews are with the Court's Managing Attorney, Frank Mockler, and applicants should be prepared to articulate why they are interested in clerking for the Appeals Court.

The majority of law clerks are hired directly out of law school, although in the last couple of years, about five out of 28 were recent graduates and lawyers. There is no requirement that law clerks take (or pass) any bar exam. However, the Appeals Court encourages law clerks to take a bar exam the summer after graduation so that they do not have to study and take the exam while balancing clerkship duties.

## MASSACHUSETTS TRIAL COURTS

The Trial Courts are comprised of the following Court Departments: Boston Municipal, District Court, Housing Court, Juvenile Court, Land Court, Probate & Family Court, and Superior Court.

Due to a hiring freeze, that has been in effect since 2009, the Trial Courts are not accepting applications for law clerk positions.

## MICHIGAN

### SUPREME COURT

The Michigan Supreme Court consists of seven justices who are nominated by political parties but elected in nonpartisan elections for eight-year terms. The Supreme Court has discretionary review of cases from the Michigan Court of Appeals and other state courts. The Supreme Court sits in Lansing, although the justices can have their "home" chambers in other areas of the state; it is quite common for several justices to actually spend most of their time in Detroit.

Each justice has four clerks. The justices can choose whether they want to hire term clerks, career clerks, or a mix of both. If they have term clerks, they can also choose the term length for their clerks; terms are most commonly one or two years, but some justices have three-year terms for their clerks. The employment section of the Michigan Courts website (<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/>) perpetually advertises that candidates interested in clerking for a justice may submit materials directly to the justice at any time of year. However, in reality, those justices that hire term clerks tend to review

applications in mid to late summer of the year prior to the start of the term (similar to the federal hiring plan). It is advised that applicants interested in clerking for a Michigan Supreme Court justice for a specific term check the Judicial Yellow Book to determine which justices will have a term position vacancy during the relevant term and/or call chambers directly to ascertain the needs of the justices. Openings for career clerk positions will be on an as-needed basis and are typically posted on the employment section of the Michigan Courts website.

## COURT OF APPEALS

The Michigan Court of Appeals is comprised of four districts from which twenty-eight judges are elected in nonpartisan elections for six-year terms. The First District is based in Detroit, the Second District in Troy, the Third District in Grand Rapids, and the Fourth District is in Lansing. There are seven judges assigned to each District, although the judges within each District do not necessarily have their “home” chambers in the exact city where their District is based; hence there are Court of Appeals judges with chambers throughout the State. The Court sits in panels of three judges each. Each judge has a law clerk and a judicial assistant. The vast, vast majority of law clerks who work directly for individual Court of Appeals judges (i.e., “elbow clerks”) are career clerks. When there are “elbow clerk” vacancies, they are typically filled by attorneys that the judges know via their work with the Research Division (see below). As such, it is relatively rare to see a posting for an elbow clerk position with an individual Michigan Court of Appeals judge. However, postings for elbow clerk positions with Court of Appeals judges are found on the employment section of the Michigan Courts website (<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/>) or on the employment section of the Michigan Court of Appeals website: (<http://coa.courts.mi.gov/resources/employment.htm>) on an as-needed basis.

In addition, the Michigan Court of Appeals has a Research Division, which has offices in Lansing, Detroit, and Grand Rapids. The Research Division typically hires in the fall of a student’s third year of law school for a two-year term that begins the fall following law school graduation. The Research Division recruits on campus at some Michigan law schools during the fall recruiting season. Interested applicants from other schools should send their materials directly to the Research Division.

## TRIAL LEVEL COURTS

Michigan trial level courts include circuit, district, and probate courts, as well as some specialty courts such as the Court of Claims, the Michigan Tax Tribunal, and other administrative law tribunals. The number of law clerks varies widely among the trial courts – some busy trial level courts employ many and others lack funding to hire any. For courts with clerks, the judges and/or local governing bodies of the specific courts determine whether the positions are term or career positions, and this can change year by year. As such, the availability of clerkships at the trial level in Michigan state courts varies widely. Applicants interested in clerking at the trial court level in Michigan should contact the specific court(s) of interest to inquire if and when they are hiring clerks for

the relevant term. The Michigan Courts website has a helpful directory of Michigan trial courts: <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/dirs/trialdir.htm> The trial level courts that routinely hire term clerks typically post positions in the spring for positions to begin that same fall. Postings are often found on the employment section of the Michigan Courts website (<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/>) or sent directly to the career planning offices of local law schools.

## **MISSOURI**

### **SUPREME COURT**

The Missouri Supreme Court consists of a Chief Justice and six judges. Pursuant to the state's constitution, the only judge in Missouri who is referred to as a "justice" is the chief justice of the Supreme Court. Other judges are referred to as "judge." By tradition, the chief justice typically is elected on a rotating basis by a vote of all seven Supreme Court judges to a two-year term. Selection of Supreme Court judges is governed by the merit-based Missouri nonpartisan court plan. Pursuant to article V, section 19 of the Missouri constitution, the regular term of a Supreme Court judge is 12 years, and a judge may seek to serve for multiple terms. All judges must retire at the age of 70, although if they wish, they can apply for senior status, which permits them to continue hearing cases on a limited basis.

The Supreme Court sits in the state capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri. While many of the judges live in their hometowns throughout the state and only travel to Jefferson City for court, most of these judges will have their clerks work in the courthouse in Jefferson City. Each judge has at least two clerks.

Presently, two of the judges have permanent/career clerks, and one has one career clerk and one term clerk. The remaining four judges hire term clerks for one-year terms, with one of those judges hiring for rotating two-year terms.

Most of the judges hire between May and September after the 2L year. If interested in this court, be sure to refer to the court's website for hiring information and specific application requirements. <http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=36777>. Because there is no guarantee that all openings will be posted on the court's website, it is best to confirm hiring plans with the judges' chambers directly.

### **COURT OF APPEALS**

The judges of the Missouri Court of Appeals review the decisions made by the trial courts and certain administrative agencies. They have jurisdiction over most appeals. Typically, the judges sit in panels of three, although occasionally all the judges of one of the districts of the Court of Appeals might sit en banc. Selection of Court of Appeals judges is governed by the merit-based Missouri nonpartisan court plan. Pursuant to article V, section 19 of the Missouri constitution, the regular term of a Supreme Court judge is 12 years, and a judge may seek to serve for multiple terms. All judges must retire at the age of 70, although if they wish, they can apply for senior status, which permits them to continue hearing cases on a limited basis.

The judges of the Court of Appeals are divided into three geographic areas. There are judges in the Eastern District, based in St. Louis; in the Western District, based in Kansas City; and in the Southern District, based in Springfield.

Hiring practices vary for each district. Most of the judges on the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Eastern District have two clerks. Over two-thirds of the judges have permanent/career clerks. More recently appointed judges have returned to hiring term clerks. Most terms are for one year (there are a couple who hire rotating two-year term clerks), however the judges have been known to extend the terms depending on the circumstances. Judges in this district hire as early as the summer after 2L year (4 semesters of grades), and as late as spring of the 3L year. Occasionally openings are posted on the court website at <http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=1180>. It is always best to confirm hiring plans with the judges' chambers directly.

Most of the judges on the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Western District have two clerks. Many are permanent/career clerks, but some judges hire a term clerk as well. Terms are typically for one-year, but can sometimes be extended depending on the circumstances. Judges in this district hire as early as the summer after 2L year (4 semesters of grades), and as late as spring of the 3L year. Occasionally openings are posted on the court website at <http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=1180>. It is always best to confirm hiring plans with the judges' chambers directly.

The judges on the Missouri Court of Appeals for the Southern District have one permanent/career law clerk that works with them in chambers. The court as a whole also hires two rotating clerks for one-year terms. Sometimes these rotating positions may be extended to two-year terms depending on the circumstances. The rotating clerks work with one judge for three months at a time, and then rotate to a different judge on the court. Because the rotating clerkships can open at any time, those interested in these clerkships should submit their applications to be held on file, even if a position is not currently posted on the court's website at <http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=1180>. Applications for rotating clerkships should be sent to the Clerk of the Court, Sandra L. Skinner, John Q. Hammons Building, 300 Hammons Parkway, Springfield, MO 65806. When a judge is in need of replacing a permanent/career clerk in their chambers, they have been known to hire those clerks out of the rotating clerks.

## TRIAL LEVEL COURTS

The trial court judges in Missouri typically do not hire term clerks. Some of the circuits have permanent research attorneys that may open from time to time. It is best to check with the court directly about openings and requirements at <http://www.courts.mo.gov>.

## NEBRASKA

### NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court is composed of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices representing the six Judicial Districts of the State. The most common arrangement is for each justice to have one permanent clerk and one term clerk. Term clerks traditionally stay for one or two years although it is not unheard of for a justice to hold onto a clerk for three or even four years depending on individual circumstances. This practice significantly limits the number of clerkships available on a yearly basis. The appellate judges vary in their hiring practices but generally hire somewhere between late summer and October of the 3L year. There is no uniform hiring practice at the appellate level and not all openings will be posted on the Nebraska Judicial Website. The best practice would be to send materials to the judges sometime mid-summer between 2L and 3L years so as not to miss an opportunity. The Fourth Judicial District trial courts will post their position beginning in December of the 3L year and typically hire by February.

### NEBRASKA COURT OF APPEALS

The Nebraska Court of Appeals is the state's intermediate appellate court. There are currently six judges, who sit in panels or divisions of three judges each. Each judge traditionally has two clerks with one permanent and the other term. The appellate judges vary in their hiring practices but generally hire somewhere between late summer and October of the 3L year. There is no uniform hiring practice at the appellate level and not all openings will be posted on the Nebraska Judicial Website. The best practice would be to send materials to the judges sometime mid-summer between 2L and 3L years so as not to miss an opportunity. The Fourth Judicial District trial courts will post their position beginning in December of the 3L year and typically hire by February.

### NEBRASKA TRIAL COURTS

Nebraska is divided into 12 Judicial Districts encompassing all 93 counties. Only the Fourth Judicial District, based in Omaha, hires a pool of post-graduate judicial clerks each year. The clerks work under the direction of the Deputy Court Administrator, Lead Law Clerk, and the District Court Research Director. The clerks perform legal research for all the district judges of the Fourth Judicial District as well as for the court administrator.

### CURRENT HIRING INFORMATION

Nebraska courts are currently under a hiring freeze. Due to current budget constraints judicial clerkship vacancies are not being filled. In the future such positions will be evaluated as they become available and hiring decisions made on a case-by-case basis.

## NEVADA SUPREME COURT

### NEVADA SUPREME COURT

The Nevada Supreme Court is composed of seven justices, each elected to a six-year term. Applicants may submit a single application which is circulated to all selected justices. The Employment Application is available here <http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/human-resources>. The application is typically due by June 1 of the preceding year.

Justices Douglas and Pickering are the only Nevada Supreme Court Justices with chambers in Las Vegas. The chambers of all other justices are located in Carson City. Applicants may state a preference for location or specify a particular justice(s) of interest on the Employment Application.

If called for an interview, applicants are required to take a three hour written examination, similar to the Multistate Performance Test (MPT). The results of the examination are analyzed by staff and provided to the justices.

### NEVADA DISTRICT COURTS

The Nevada District Courts generally hire between September and April of students' 3L/4LPT year for clerkships beginning in the summer after graduation. However, some judges hire outside of this timeframe.

For the Second Judicial District (Washoe County), students are encouraged to send in applications between September-December of their 3L/4LPT year, and most interviews take place over winter break.

## NEW JERSEY

New Jersey is a rich source of judicial clerkships, as each justice and judge hires recent law school graduates, resulting in approximately 480 openings. Although the appellate level clerkships are generally filled early, many trial division judges do not complete their hiring until the spring. To identify the judges who are still hiring in the spring, the best course of action is to call chambers directly. You may also obtain a list of the judges who have not yet hired clerks from the HR office of the judiciary. See the website referenced below for the most up to date contact information. The HR Office updates that list upon receipt of the personnel paperwork from the newly hired clerks. Because of the lag time between the judge's hiring of a clerk, and the paperwork being received in the HR office, the best source of information is to call the judge's chambers directly.

### NEW JERSEY SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey is an excellent bench, and positions there are highly sought after. Each justice has three clerks, almost all of whom are

hired directly out of law school. Students typically apply around the same time as federal clerkship application cycle. Applications for the Supreme Court should include letters of recommendation, writing sample and transcripts. Justices may inquire as to candidates' connection with New Jersey, but do not have an expectation that they will sit for the New Jersey bar examination.

Although there is a method for centralized applications, as described in the Vermont Law School guide and at [www.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us), applicants for Supreme Court clerkships ought to apply directly to each justice.

#### NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR COURT – APPELLATE DIVISION

Procedures are similar to the New Jersey Supreme Court.

#### NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR COURT – TRIAL DIVISION

Judges in the NJ trial courts are divided into those hearing civil, criminal, family and equity matters. Candidates should apply directly to the judges in those areas in which they have an interest. Trial courts are divided into vicinages which correspond to a county or counties. Look for the “General Assignment Order” on the New Jersey Judiciary website to identify judges in each location.

#### NEW JERSEY TAX COURT

New Jersey Tax Court judges sit in throughout the state. Application procedures are similar to that stated above.

### **NEW YORK**

In addition to the specific opportunities listed below, applicants should periodically check the New York State Court System's website for clerkship postings. See [www.nycourts.gov/careers](http://www.nycourts.gov/careers): Current Opportunities > Jobs Statewide > Legal Titles.

#### NEW YORK STATE COURT OF APPEALS

##### Term Clerks

Openings are sporadic and not all judges hire clerks on a rotating or regular basis. To learn of term clerk opportunities on this court, contact Lisa M. Cleary at (518) 455-7757.

##### Central Legal Research Staff

Each year, the Court of Appeals hires five or six attorneys into two-year clerkships with its Central Legal Research Staff. Central Staff clerks work in Albany and prepare reports on appeals and motions for leave to appeal. Candidates apply between July 1 and September 15. Starting salary will be over \$76,000 per year plus state employment benefits. Application information is available on the web:

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/CTAPPS/clrkship.htm> (Note: Associate Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam, the Court's newest judge, is not yet listed on this page.)



NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION, FIRST DEPARTMENT (NEW YORK CITY)

Term Clerks

There are no term clerkships available in this Department, as all the judges hire permanent clerks.

Central Legal Staff

The hiring freeze imposed in 2011 has been lifted. Open positions with the Central Legal Staff's office will be posted at [www.nycourts.gov/careers](http://www.nycourts.gov/careers) when available.

NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION, SECOND DEPARTMENT (BROOKLYN)

Term Clerks

There are no term clerkship openings in this Department, as judges hire permanent clerks.

Central Legal Staff

The hiring freeze that began in 2011 continues. As a general rule, this Department is not considering applications for Central Legal Staff positions. However, should staffing levels become critically low, positions may be authorized and posted at [www.nycourts.gov/careers](http://www.nycourts.gov/careers).

Previous conversations with this office have confirmed that even when there is no hiring freeze in place, this is a very competitive position to obtain. Less than 10% of those who apply are invited to participate in an orientation session and writing test. Those who pass through that screening are interviewed by the Chief Court Attorney and a panel of judges. If they "get the job," applicants are put on a list of eligible candidates who fill positions as they are vacated. Positions become vacant very sporadically.

NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION, THIRD DEPARTMENT (ALBANY)

Term Clerks

There are no term clerkship openings in this Department, as judges hire permanent clerks.

Central Legal Staff

[The following information pertained to hiring in the 2012 season. Based on past hiring practices, we expect this information will be the same for the 2013 hiring season. A new posting will likely be published by the Department in early August. We will update this document when new information is available.]

The Third Department hires eight Appellate Court Attorneys to one-year terms. These Attorneys will research and analyze legal questions and issues, prepare preliminary

reports and confidential memoranda, review draft decisions, and check citations for the Justices of the Department. Salary ranges from \$64,834 to \$76,195, depending on experience.

Applications will be accepted between August 1 and September 18. Apply online at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ad3/EmploymentOpportunities.htm>. Alternatively, interested persons may submit a resume, together with a cover letter, legal writing sample and law school transcript, to Sean M. Morton, Chief Appellate Court Attorney, Appellate Division, Third Department, P. O. Box 7288, Capitol Station, Albany, New York 12224.

## NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION, FOURTH DEPARTMENT (ROCHESTER)

### Term Clerks

There are no term clerkship openings in this Department, as judges hire permanent clerks.

### Central Legal Staff

The Fourth Department hires eight Appellate Court Attorneys each year for two-year terms. These Attorneys work with all twelve Appellate Justices in the Department. Through researching and writing memoranda, they assist the court in deciding approximately 2000 appeals annually. Starting salary is \$64,834 in the first year and \$76,195 after admission to the New York Bar.

Applicants should send a resume, transcript of law school grades, and writing sample to Craig D. Peterson, Esq., Chief Appellate Court Attorney, 50 East Avenue, Suite 200, Rochester, New York 14604 before October 15, 2013. See also [www.courts.state.ny.us/ad4](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ad4)

## NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURTS

### New York County

Judges in the County hire only permanent clerks.

### Other Counties

Some individual judges and counties may hire term clerks or pool clerks. (Pool clerks are similar to Central Legal Staff attorneys in that they work for a group of judges, rather than an individual judge.) Contact judges' chambers to learn of term clerk openings and contact the Chief Clerks of each Supreme Court to inquire re: pool clerk positions.

## OHIO

### OHIO SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court of Ohio offers one-three year clerkship opportunities which may begin the summer following graduation from law school. Students interested in a clerkship should be aware of the application deadline which is in the early spring of 2L year. The 2013 salary range is from \$60,444 to \$90,313 depending upon the experience level of the clerk. Candidates interested in clerking for the Supreme Court of Ohio should apply directly to the individual justice(s). Included in the application should be a cover letter, resume, two letters of recommendation, unofficial law school transcript, and a writing sample. More information, such as mailing address and justice bios can be found at: [www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/sco/justices/](http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/sco/justices/) .

### OHIO COURT OF APPEALS

There are 12 District Courts within the Ohio Court of Appeals. Students wishing to apply for a clerkship for one of these courts should apply directly to the District Court Administrator for the district in which the student wants to clerk. Salaries vary by District Court. Additional information can be found on the Supreme Court of Ohio website which links to all District Court homepages at: [www.sconet.state.oh.us/judsystem/districtcourts/](http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/judsystem/districtcourts/) .

### OHIO TRIAL COURTS

Ohio trial courts are referred to as Courts of Common Pleas and are organized by county. The following larger counties are more likely to hire law clerks: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Montgomery and Summit. Salaries for these clerkships vary by county. Students should apply to the Court Administrator for the county in which they want to clerk. Additional information is available on the Supreme Court of Ohio website which links to all the Courts of Common Pleas homepages, under their county names, at: [www.sconet.state.oh.us/web\\_sites/courts/](http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/web_sites/courts/) .

## OREGON

### OREGON SUPREME COURT

The Oregon Supreme Court consists of seven justices, elected statewide. Since 1977, its primary function has been the discretionary review of Court of Appeals' decisions. It also decides direct appeals in death penalty, Tax Court, bar disciplinary, and certain other cases, and has original jurisdiction over mandamus, habeas corpus, and other special proceedings. This court sits regularly in Salem and occasionally in other cities in Oregon.

Each Supreme Court justice employs one law clerk to work directly with the justice. The Supreme Court has three additional clerks who work on a rotating basis for all seven justices. Law clerks in the Supreme Court generally are hired for a two-year period. Occasionally, clerks are hired for a two-year period. Renewal beyond the two-year period is at the hiring justice's discretion.

## OREGON COURT OF APPEALS

The Oregon Court of Appeals, the intermediate appellate court, was established by statute in 1969 and now consists of ten judges, elected statewide. It is the court for first appeal by right from Oregon trial courts and most administrative agencies.

Each of the three Presiding Judges of the Court of Appeals has one law clerk. Other judges have two law clerks, with the exception of the Chief Judge, who does not have any law clerks. Law clerks in the Court of Appeals are generally hired for a two-year period. Occasionally, and only by the express agreement of the hiring judge, clerks are hired for a one-year period.

## OREGON TAX COURT

The Oregon Tax Court was established by statute in 1961 and consists of one judge and four magistrates. The Tax Court has exclusive jurisdiction over all questions of law or fact arising under the state tax laws.

The Tax Court employs two law clerks, one of whom works directly with the judge of the Regular Division and one whom works primarily with the four magistrates. The Regular Division clerk is generally hired for a two-year period.

## CLERKSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

The posting for Oregon Appellate Court Clerkships, which include the Oregon Supreme Court, Oregon Court of Appeals and the Oregon Tax Court usually come out in late January. Applications are accepted through mid-April. At this time, the courts hire from the current 2L law school class for positions which will begin the fall after graduation one year later. Most all judges/justices have term law clerks with staggered-year start dates. There is also a "petitions" clerk position with the Oregon Supreme Court, as part of the floater clerks mentioned below.

You may specify in your cover letter specific judges for whom you want to work. However, in all cases, letters, applications, or telephone inquiries should be directed only to the Personnel Division at the address listed. Do not apply directly to individual judges. If you do not state a preference, your application will be circulated to all judges who interview. Please submit only one set of application materials.

Michael Barnum  
Oregon Judicial Department

Personnel Division  
1163 State Street  
Salem OR 97301-2563  
(In person: 1241 State Street, 2R)  
Telephone: 503-986-5513

E-mail: michael.p.barnum@OJD.state.or.us

Please do not send letters, applications, or other materials directly to the judges. Please do not telephone the judges directly.

Applications must include:

1. A cover letter with:

a) mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address (If your contact information should change during this recruitment process, please inform the person listed above);

b) an indication as to whether or not you intend to take the Oregon bar examination (these positions do not require bar membership)

c) a specific notation as to which court(s) and/or judge(s) for whom you are interested in working (if you do not state a preference, your application will be circulated to all hiring judges); and,

d) a brief response to this question: "Why are you interested in working as a law clerk for the Oregon Supreme Court, the Oregon Court of appeals, or the Oregon Tax Court?"

2. A resume, including academic highlights, honors, and extracurricular activities in college and law school. Also include grade point average and class rank for college and law school (please indicate if your school does not rank).

3. An undergraduate transcript.

4. A law school transcript, complete to the time of your application.

5. LSAT score.

6. At least three letters of recommendation.

7. A writing sample, single-sided and not to exceed 15 pages, that you certify to be your own work.

All the required information must be submitted by the close date in order to be considered for an interview. Only one copy should be submitted.

The selection process includes a criminal history check. Felony convictions may be an automatic bar to employment. Misdemeanor convictions will be reviewed on a case-by-

case basis and may be a bar to employment if the circumstances of the crime are directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the position for which application is made.

Applications are normally due mid-April of each year. You will be notified by the end of May if you have been scheduled for an interview. Interviews will normally be conducted between the last two weeks of June. If an applicant has multiple interviews with judges, those are centrally coordinated by the Court Administrator. Each judge conducts their own individual interview; there are no panels of judges interviewing. Because of this, interviews can vary widely between the judges. Students often find it is imperative to read about the judge, their opinions, any on-line court information etc., for which the judge might be a contributor. The current judicial clerk often screens applications for the judge, and conducts their own interview of the candidate.

Applicants are told the specific date which ALL judges/justices who are hiring will be making offer calls to applicants. The student is told this date at the interview and encouraged to be by the phone all that day as they “go down the list” making calls with offers.

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

Almost all judges in Pennsylvania have a career or permanent clerk. Very few hire term clerks.

### **PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT**

At the Supreme Court level, individual justices have chambers in different cities around the state, then travel to hear matters at courthouses in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices have five to six clerks each. A few of the justices (Castille, Saylor, Eakin, Baer) have two or three of those positions for term clerks, and the rest are career. Some are two year terms and some are one year terms with the possibility of extension. The Supreme Court justices will accept applications in spring of 2L year, through fall of the 3L year, and may call applicants for interviews at any time throughout the fall.

### **PENNSYLVANIA SUPERIOR COURT, PENNSYLVANIA COMMONWEALTH COURT, PENNSYLVANIA COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

Openings at the intermediate appellate courts and the trial courts are sporadic. When courts or judges have openings, especially in the rural counties, they tend to send vacancy announcements to all Pennsylvania law schools.

The Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Human Resources Office maintains a file of applications for law clerk positions, and judges have been known to review those files when searching for a new law clerk. Applications should be directed to:

Human Resources  
First Judicial District  
City Hall, Room 668  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## **RHODE ISLAND**

### **RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT**

Justices at the Supreme Court all have their own individual application requirements and timelines. Not all of the justices hire law clerks each year. Interested applicants should contact each individual chambers early in the summer prior to graduation in order to determine which justices will be hiring, what their timelines will be for the upcoming hiring cycle and what application materials are required. The best way to find out about the justices' plans for the upcoming hiring cycle is to call their chambers directly. Typically, those justices who are hiring will accept materials beginning in July or August and will often start interviewing in mid-August or early September. Applicants should be prepared to address their connection to or interest in working in Rhode Island in both their application materials and their interviews.

Each justice conducts his/her interviews differently. Some justices interview very few applicants while others seem to interview a very large number of applicants. Those justices who tend to interview large numbers of applicants will generally hold off on making any clerkship offers until later in the hiring process. Those justices have, in the past, been known to end interviews by telling candidates to stay in touch and asking candidates to contact them before accepting another clerkship offer. This should be viewed as a genuine statement of interest in the candidate. In some instances, when a candidate then is able to contact the justice to inform him/her that another offer has been extended, the justice will extend the candidate an offer over the phone. If applying to the court, applicants should be aware that such a situation may arise and know how to handle the situation professionally.

## **TENNESSEE**

The Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts' website ([www.tncourts.gov/](http://www.tncourts.gov/)) has information on the different courts in Tennessee. It also contains a directory of judges with biographies and contact information. Students interested in judicial clerkships in Tennessee should check out this website and note that clerks are not required to pass the Tennessee bar exam.

### **TENNESSEE SUPREME COURT**

The Tennessee Supreme Court is the state's court of last resort. The five justices normally meet in three sections of the state to hear cases: (1) the western section

(Jackson); (2) the middle section (Nashville); and (3) the eastern section (Knoxville). The justices' offices are located in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville.

Each justice has the ability to hire two law clerks. Some justices have career clerks while others hire term clerks. Applicants should mail a cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample, and three letters of recommendation to the individual justice of interest. Students should submit their applications in early summer (May) after their 2L year. While some justices wait to conduct interviews in the fall, others will conduct interviews in late summer. Offers can be made as early as July and as late as February.

## TENNESSEE APPELLATE COURTS

The Tennessee Appellate Court is divided into the Tennessee Court of Appeals and the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. All appellate court judges are elected on a "retain-replace" ballot every eight years.

### Tennessee Court of Appeals

The Tennessee Court of Appeals hears appeals in civil cases from trial courts and certain state boards and commissions. The court has 12 judges who sit in panels of three. The panels meet monthly in Jackson, Nashville, and Knoxville. When necessary, the court may meet in alternate locations. Although the judges meet in three sections of the state, their offices are located across the state in the following cities: Memphis, Jackson, Dyersburg, Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

Each court of appeals judge has one or two law clerks, depending on whether the judge also has a judicial assistant. Many of the judges have career clerks; however, some hire rotating term clerks. Students interested in a clerkship should apply directly to a judge's chambers. Students should apply during the summer after their 2L year by mailing a cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation. The judges typically finish interviewing and extend offers by in late fall or early spring.

### Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals hears trial court appeals in felony and misdemeanor cases, as well as post-conviction petitions. Similar to the Tennessee Court of Appeals, the criminal appellate court has 12 judges who sit in panels of three in Jackson, Nashville, and Knoxville. When necessary, the court may meet in alternate locations. Tennessee Criminal Court of Appeals judges have offices located throughout the state in the following cities: Memphis, Jackson, Huntington, Nashville, Dickson, and Knoxville.

Each court of criminal appeals judge has one or two law clerks, depending on whether the judge also has a judicial assistant. Many of the judges have career clerks; however, some hire rotating term clerks. Students interested in a clerkship should apply directly to a judge's chambers. Students should apply during the summer after their 2L year by



mailing a cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation. The judges typically finish interviewing and extend offers by late fall or early spring.

## TENNESSEE TRIAL COURTS

Tennessee's 95 counties are divided into 31 judicial districts. Within each district are Circuit Courts and Chancery Courts. Some districts also have Criminal Courts and Probate Courts. Judges in these courts are elected to eight year terms.

Circuit courts are courts of general jurisdiction in Tennessee. Circuit court judges hear civil and criminal cases and appeals of decisions from juvenile, municipal, and general sessions courts. Criminal cases are tried in circuit court except in districts with separate criminal courts established by the General Assembly (the largest districts have separate criminal courts). The jurisdiction of circuit court and chancery court often overlap. Chancery courts are courts of equity that handle a variety of issues including contract disputes, application for injunctions and name changes. A number of matters, such as divorces, adoptions, and workers' compensation are heard in either chancery or circuit court. Finally, probate courts have jurisdiction over probate of wills and administration of estates. Probate judges also handle conservatorships and guardianships.

Most trial court judges do not hire law school graduates as full-time law clerks. (Most will hire law students on a part-time basis.) There are a few exceptions in the larger districts. Some of the larger districts have judges or chancellors that hire law school graduates for clerkships. As of May 2013, Shelby County, Hamilton County, Knox County, and Davidson County have a couple term clerk positions available. The courts in these counties encourage students to apply to the individual judge in the fall of their 3L year. Interviews and offers are extended in late fall and spring.

## TEXAS

### TEXAS SUPREME COURT

There are nine justices who sit on this court in Austin. It is the highest civil appellate court in the state, and hears civil and juvenile appeals.

- Every year, each justice hires 2 law clerks, who typically come to the court right after law school. Law clerks are hired for a 1-year term, which begins mid-August and ends at the end of July.
- Each justice also has a staff attorney, who is a permanent employee. Staff attorneys are lawyers who usually have at least 3 years' practice experience before coming to the court. In most chambers, the staff attorney functions as a kind of chief of staff and is the person directly responsible for overseeing the work of the clerks and interns.

- There is no specific time frame for law clerk hiring, nor any application deadline. Theoretically, students can apply, and justices can hire, at any time. But in general, the court is on the same time table as the bulk of the federal courts.
- Students should NOT contact any chambers directly to inquire about the justice's hiring plans. The court posts a clerkship brochure on their website in late winter/early spring that will contain application information for each justice.

## TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

There are nine judges on this court which sits in Austin. It is the highest criminal appellate court in the state and hears criminal appeals, including death penalty cases. Each of the judges hires one term law clerk. Most are for a one-year term but some judges will consider a two-year term for a law clerk. Each judge has his or her own hiring criteria so it is a good idea to apply for each office individually or to call each office to get more specific information about whether they are hiring. Open clerkship positions are also usually posted on the court's website. Judges may take applications from spring of 2L year to no later than September of the 3L year.

## TEXAS COURT OF APPEALS (FIRST THROUGH FOURTEENTH)

There are 14 appellate courts throughout the state with approximately 80 justices. These courts hear civil and criminal appeals, except for criminal cases involving the death penalty. Some of the justices take term clerks, known as briefing attorneys, and some have career clerks and do not hire clerks for terms. This varies by court and you need to contact the courts around April to determine who will be accepting applications for briefing attorneys. Applications should be sent in August or September of the 3L year. Interviews are conducted in early September and decisions are made at the end of September.

## TEXAS TRIAL COURTS

The Texas Trial courts do not hire full time clerks after graduation, but many do take judicial interns throughout the fall, spring and summer. The district courts, county-level courts, justice courts and municipal courts all have interns but no full time term clerks.

# VIRGINIA

## SUPREME COURT

All of the justices on this court hire term clerks, for terms lasting one to two years. Some also have career clerks. The opening of the application process varies among the seven justices, but most begin accepting applications in the spring of students' second year. All justices require a cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample and

at least two letters of recommendation. Some justices provide email notification to candidates once their application has been received.

Application deadlines also vary, but it is best to apply before September, as most interviews are held in late summer or early fall. Candidates are notified of interviews by email or letter.

The majority of justices prefer candidates to sit for the bar exam in Virginia. Justice's chambers are located in various areas around the state. The justices ask that candidates be certain they are willing to live in or commute to the area prior to applying for the clerkship.

## COURT OF APPEALS OF VIRGINIA

All of the judges on this court hire term clerks, for terms lasting one to two years. Some also have career clerks. For most judges, the application process is conducted on a rolling basis and remains open until the positions are filled. For this reason, it is best to apply as early as possible. All judges require a cover letter and writing sample. Some also request a transcript and letters of recommendation.

Most interviews are held in the fall; however, some judges choose to interview whenever they receive a candidate's application. Candidates are notified of interviews by telephone, email or letter.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to hone their writing skills. The majority of judges on this court require that candidates take a two to three hour writing test, if called in for an interview. A candidate's writing ability is often weighted more heavily than the substance of their resume or interview.

Since the clerks will be analyzing Virginia law, the Judges on this court prefer that candidates sit for the bar exam in Virginia, although it is not required by all.

## VIRGINIA CIRCUIT COURTS

There is a circuit court in each city and county in Virginia (31 circuits and 120 courts). Some of the circuit courts hire clerks for terms of one year, while some maintain career clerks. Circuit courts that hire term clerks generally begin accepting applications in late summer and early fall of an applicant's third year of law school.

The required application materials range from a cover letter and resume only to cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample, multiple recommendation letters, and a city or county government employment application form. Some circuit courts also require successful candidates to sit for the Virginia bar exam.

Some circuit courts begin conducting interviews in the fall of a candidate's third year, while others wait until the spring semester of to begin conducting interviews. Candidates may be notified of interviews by telephone, email or letter.