

TIPS ON APPLYING FOR JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS!

By the time you have completed your first year of law school, you know that obtaining a judicial clerkship can be extremely beneficial. As a rising 3L/4L, you may not, however, be totally clear on how to proceed with the application process which often varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. **The first thing to know is that, with a couple of exceptions such as some appellate state courts and described below, now through the summer are the best times for you to apply for post graduate judicial clerkships.**

HOW DO I BEGIN?

Depending on the court and the jurisdiction, you will be required to submit a resume, a cover letter, transcript, writing sample(s) and a list of references or recommendation letters. All of these documents should be free from error. In addition, your cover letter should focus on your: research, writing and analytical skills; ties to the local jurisdiction; common sense; integrity; attention to detail; interpersonal skills, commitment to public sector employment; knowledge of procedural rules; and good communication skills.

WHO NEEDS WHAT WHEN?

- Most state trial court judges in our area require only a resume and cover letter to begin the application process with the additional documents such as a writing sample and list of references to be submitted at a later point in the process.
- Most federal judges and some state appellate courts will require that you submit a resume, cover letter, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation (usually 2 or 3) to begin the process.

The majority of post graduate federal judicial clerkship applications are handled online through Online System for Clerkship Application and Review or "OSCAR"
<http://oscar.dcd.uscourts.gov>

State appellate courts usually receive applications by direct mail as well. Nevertheless, be sure to follow any specific directions provided by the Court as to proper method to apply.

In any event, whether you are applying to state or federal judges you will need to work on securing faculty and other recommendations/list of references NOW so that your application(s) will be complete and ready for mailing at the end of June.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

❑ For Federal Clerkships beginning in Fall 2014:

Please be advised that you must adhere to the following Federal Clerkship Hiring Plan when applying for a post graduate federal clerkship.

THE LAW CLERK HIRING PLAN: full plan is available at <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/drupal/content/federal-law-clerk-hiring-plan>

* The critical dates under the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan are as follows:

First date students can view and apply to clerkship positions through OSCAR:

Friday, April 12, 2013.

The new "critical date" or deadline is **Friday, June 28, 2013 at 12 p.m., edt.** Rising third/fourth-year law school applicants should have their complete applications, including faculty recommendation letters, uploaded to OSCAR by this date. Please also note that under this new hiring plan, judges may schedule and conduct interviews and make clerkship offers to third/fourth-year law school applicants on **June 28th**, the same day that the system opens to them.

(Rising 3Ls/4Ls may also access OSCAR to view and apply to appellate staff attorney positions)

How do I apply for federal clerkships online?

For some of federal judges, you must use the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review ("OSCAR"), <http://oscar.dcd.uscourts.gov>

This software allows clerkship applicants to select from among participating federal judges and build and submit their applications online.

Applicants must first register and then upload their cover letters, resumes, transcripts, and writing samples. You then will select the judges with whom you are interested in applying. Your recommenders must also upload or input your recommendation letter into the OSCAR system. In order for them to do so you must provide OSCAR with contact information for each recommender and the system will electronically invite the recommender to log in and create a letter of recommendation on your behalf. Applications including recommendation letters must be complete by the time judges begin viewing applications on **Friday, June 28, 2013 at 12 p.m., edt.**

Please note that not all federal judges use OSCAR. Therefore, applicants must mail "paper" applications to judges who have declined to participate electronically.

Take the time now to work on creating a resume and cover letter appropriate to a clerkship application. You should also attempt to secure recommenders early as they must also submit their letters on your behalf in a timely fashion. The Career Development Office would be happy to review your resume and cover letters prior to your uploading them into OSCAR.

☐ For State Court Clerkships beginning in Fall 2014:

☐ For state clerkships on the supreme and appellate level: these courts tend to seek applicants earlier and could begin screening candidates as early as Spring of your second year of law school.

☐ For state trial clerkships, you should apply directly to the judge's chamber with resume and cover letter in the late summer/early Fall.

Please note that New Jersey has a direct mailing AND centralized process for collecting clerkship applications. New Jersey courts application procedures can be found at:

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/lawclerks/>

Additional helpful information about New Jersey clerkships can be found at:

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/lawclerks/lawclerkletter2014.pdf>

☐ Delaware: <http://courts.delaware.gov/>

☐ Maryland: <http://www.courts.state.md.us/>

Additional helpful information about Maryland clerkships can be found at:

<http://www.mdcourts.gov/jobs/lawclerks/index.html>

☐ Pennsylvania: <http://www.pacourts.us/courts/#>

Contains links to the various Pennsylvania Courts and listings of current judges/justices

WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS?

☐ www.JudicialClerkships.com

☐ http://www.uscourts.gov/court_locator.aspx

National courts site map.

☐ <http://www.fjc.gov/history/home.nsf/page/judges.html>

Federal Judges' Biographies