



Lewis & Clark  
Law School

*Career Services*

# Judicial Clerkship Manual 2011-2012



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## Introduction

Lawyers who have clerked for a judge often describe their clerkship as one of the defining moments of their legal careers. A judicial clerkship provides the opportunity to participate intimately in the development of the law with an experienced mentor as a guide. Most clerks find that their experience behind the bench and the ensuing relationship with their judge opens innumerable doors to interesting legal careers. A clerkship can bolster the strength of your candidacy for post-clerkships positions with law firms, other public and private legal employers, and can even serve as a building block for a career in academia. Although judicial clerkships are competitive, especially at the federal level, every student, regardless of grades or class rank, should consider one.

This manual will explain what a judicial clerkship entails, will help you evaluate what types of clerkships may best suit you, and will discuss aspects of the application, interview, and acceptance process. Perhaps the most important thing to remember as you consider applying, and go through the process, is to avail yourself of the resources in Career Services. Obtaining a judicial clerkship takes proper research and planning; not only can we direct you to resource materials, but we can also provide critique of cover letters and other application materials, conduct mock interviews, assign you a faculty advisor, direct you to alumni, and more. Sometimes, asking for help means the difference between success and failure.

To conduct a brief self-assessment, see **Attachment K – Is A Clerkship Right For Me?**

## What does a Judicial Clerkship Entail?

Judicial clerks take on a variety of responsibilities, which differ depending on the court and judge. Most clerks are hired to assist a specific judge (an “elbow” clerk), although some courts instead (or also) employ clerks to assist all or some of their judges (“floating” or “pool” clerks) or employ attorneys as staff attorneys for the court as a whole. Most clerkships are for a one or two-year term that will begin fall after law school graduation and typically after you have taken a bar exam. Some federal and state judges, however, prefer to hire attorneys with a few years of experience. Some judges also have permanent or “career” clerks, meaning that they do not hire on a regular basis. As of September 2007, federal judges are limited to having one career clerk in chambers. All other clerks must be term clerks. Though intended as a cost-savings measure, a secondary benefit of this policy change is that as career clerks are phased out more term positions have become available.

### **Federal Courts**

**US Supreme Court.** Clerkships with the US Supreme Court are extremely competitive and applicants must have clerked for at least one year on a federal circuit court. The Justices rarely hire from “off Broadway” law schools, and the chance of landing a clerkship at the US Supreme Court is slim at best, unless you have influential connections. A Supreme Court clerkship typically lasts for one year only.

**Federal Appellate Courts (US Courts of Appeal).** There are thirteen such courts: the Federal Circuit (which hears appeals from the US Court of Federal Claims, the US Patent and Trademark Office, the US Court of International Trade, and patent-infringement cases from the US District Courts), DC Circuit, and First through Eleventh Circuits. Each judge may have up to four clerks. Circuit court clerkships typically last for one year only. Occasionally, judges hire term clerks to serve for two years. Rarely, a judge will offer both one-year and two-year clerkships. Clerks for Circuit Court judges have often previously clerked for either a US District Court judge or a high-level state appellate court.

**Federal Trial Courts (US District Courts).** There are ninety-four judicial districts throughout the country and US territories. District Court Judges are primarily responsible for hearing civil and criminal trials and sometimes appeals from specialized federal courts. Each judge may have up to two clerks. Most District Court Judges hire their clerks for one year only, but two-year clerkships are common.

**A Note on Magistrate Judges:** Apart from District Court Judges, each United States District Court has Magistrate Judges. A Magistrate Judge is a federal trial judge appointed by the District Court Judges to serve for a term of eight years. The role of Magistrate Judges varies from district to district. In many districts, District Court Judges assign, with the consent of the parties, civil cases to Magistrate Judges for

trial and pre-trial matters. Similarly, criminal cases are assigned to Magistrate Judges on the consent of the parties, except for the trial of felony cases. In other districts, Magistrate Judges do not regularly try cases but instead are primarily responsible for preliminary matters, such as the discovery process in civil cases and arraignment in criminal cases. A Magistrate Judge may also be asked to rule on dispositive motions via “Report and Recommendation,” meaning the Judge prepares an opinion, but the ultimate decision of how to rule rests with the District Court Judge. Magistrates typically hire one clerk.

**NOTE:** In Oregon, a clerkship with a Magistrate Judge is very similar to a clerkship with a District Court Judge, at least for purposes of civil cases. In Oregon, civil cases are more commonly assigned to Magistrates with the consent of the parties than in other districts. For an explanation, see <http://ord.uscourts.gov/our-magistrate-judges>

**US Bankruptcy Courts.** Each district of the United States has a Bankruptcy Court. Most judges have clerks; some employ career clerks. If you want to practice bankruptcy law, there is no better clerkship than this one.

**Specialized Courts.** Most judges in the special courts listed below employ clerks, although qualifications vary and may include experience with another court or in practice.

**US Court of Federal Claims**—hears suits by individuals and businesses (other than tax matters) against the federal government.

**US Court of International Trade**—hears tariff conflicts and appeals from the US International Trade Commission (which investigates and issues rulings concerning unfair practices in import trade). Each judge on the Court lists his or her hiring practices and the names of the current clerks at <http://www.cit.uscourts.gov/Judges/judges.htm>. Judges from this Court require a two-year commitment.

**US Tax Court**—hears taxpayer appeals involving income, estate, and gift taxes.

**US Court of Military Appeals**—three civilian judges review court martial conventions.

**US Court of Veterans Appeals**—reviews decisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Administrative Law Judges.** The federal government employs over 1,000 judges in 28 administrative agencies who hear cases pertaining to their particular agency. Some hire clerks. The *Want's Federal-State Court Directory* contains a list of the administrative agencies with ALJs, and Career Services has the results of a survey of ALJ hiring practices conducted in the Spring of 2009. There is also a list of known and possible opportunities with ALJs in **Attachment C** of this Handbook.

## State Courts

**State Appellate Courts.** The duties of a judicial clerk for a state appellate court judge vary depending on the organization of the state’s court system. Most states, including Oregon, have both a Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Some states have only a Supreme Court. Generally, the responsibilities of a clerk are similar to those in federal appellate courts. The number of clerks hired varies, but typically, Supreme Court Justices hire two clerks, and Court of Appeals judges hire one to two clerks. The length of state court clerkships varies from one to two years. In Oregon, judges expect two years.

**State Trial Courts.** The hiring and use of clerks by state trial court judges varies state to state and often within the state. Duties are similar to federal trial courts except that there are often more administrative tasks and fewer research and writing projects (especially with respect to written opinions, which are rare in most courts).

Some states have additional courts, such as the Oregon Tax Court, and these judges may hire clerks. For more information about the Oregon courts see **Attachment A – Clerkships with the Oregon State Courts** and **Attachment B – Judicial Clerkships with the Appellate Courts**.

## Advantages of Clerkships

The advantages of a clerkship may vary depending on the responsibilities given to the clerk, which in turn depends on the type of court (federal or state, appellate or trial) and the particular judge. Advantages may include:

- Personal insight into the judicial process, namely an opportunity to observe and understand the judicial system and how it works;
- Development of legal research, writing and analysis skills, understanding the practical decisions that lawyers must deal with, learning effective advocacy, and persuasive skills;
- Learning good (or bad) litigation skills, what makes a good brief, a good persuasive argument, and what a judge does/does not want (i.e., what makes a good, bad, or excellent attorney);
- Obtaining a broad exposure to different areas of the law;
- Developing a mentor relationship with a judge;
- Gaining exposure to the legal profession in a given substantive or geographic area;
- Public service.

**Testimonials.** Above all, a clerkship will most likely be the best experience and legal job you will ever have. Consider the following testimonials from faculty members who have clerked:

**Jack Bogdanski:** I clerked for Judge Alfred “Ted” Goodwin on the Ninth Circuit here in Portland in 1978-1979 (a couple of years after Jennifer Johnson did the same). It was a defining moment in my life. I saw what it is like to have enormous power, and to use it wisely and kindly. I got a feel for what it’s like to be a government employee. I learned a lot about appellate practice. I got to know some great judges, and some wonderful fellow law clerks. The year affirmed my then-recent decision to work in the tax and corporate fields. I worked on several amazingly interesting cases, a couple of which wound up in law school casebooks, and only a few dull ones. I did lots of research and writing, was edited well but mercilessly by the judge, and got paid for it all. I saw lots of good lawyering, and some bad. Best of all, the clerkship brought me to Portland—a place I had never even visited before—and I loved it so much that I never left.

**Bill Funk:** I clerked for Judge James Oakes on the Second Circuit in 1973-74. First, it was the most fun legal job I ever had, and I didn’t have to work that hard. The judge was a great guy. Second, clerking was what directly led me to my next job, working in the Office of Legal Counsel in the US Dept of Justice, where Antonin Scalia was my boss. He in turn was the person who encouraged me to go into teaching and wrote recommendations for me. Third, I have lots of great memories involving more than one case. One stands out, however, in which the panel voted to affirm a conviction of a person who had appealed challenging the admission of evidence he claimed had been seized as the result of an unconstitutional search. My judge was assigned the opinion, and he tasked me with writing the initial draft opinion. I kept trying, but it wouldn’t write, so I asked him if I could take a shot at drafting a reversal, finding the search unconstitutional. He said sure; I did; he was convinced, as were the other two judges, and Mr. Alvarado was set free.

**Tomas Gomez-Arostegui:** I clerked from 1997-1998 for Judge Edward Rafeedie, a U.S. District Court Judge in Los Angeles, and from 1998-1999 for Judge John C. Porfilio, who sat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit in Denver. Both experiences were amazing. I worked closely with both judges and worked on some fascinating cases. But more importantly, it took the mystery out of judging and litigating more generally. At the District Court, I analyzed over 100 motions to dismiss, about the same number of summary judgment motions, and just about every other attorney request you can imagine that came through our doors. Given the intensity and breadth of the work, one year of clerking at the District Court turned out to be the equivalent of about 2.5 years of private practice in a large law firm. Clerking on the Court of Appeals differed in that I had much more time to think about the issues, and our work, not surprisingly, had a much broader impact. In both courts, we heard and ruled on some fascinating cases. At the District Court, we analyzed numerous IP cases, including some copyright cases that have ended up in several copyright casebooks. At the Court of Appeals, we heard the appeals of two defendants in the Oklahoma City bombing case and the infamous *Singleton* case.

**Lydia Loren:** I clerked for Judge Ralph B. Guy, Jr. on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from 1992-1993. One month into my clerkship I remember discussing an upcoming case with my judge. In both writing and orally I had summarized the facts, the procedural posture, and the arguments being made by the parties. I then asked him how he thought the case should come out. He looked at me, somewhat puzzled, and said that it was not up to him how the case should come out but that it was up to the law. Prior precedent and the statute would determine the outcome, not him. It was a lesson that stuck with me, and it was just one of many real life legal lessons I learned while clerking. To be sure, reading many appellate briefs, watching oral arguments, researching important legal issues, and writing draft opinions for the judge's consideration, were all a part of my clerkship experience. But I also learned to appreciate that judges are just people seeking to understand and apply the law fairly. This insight helped me tremendously once I was in practice. When I appeared in front of any judge I was far more at ease and confident in the courtroom.

**Joe Miller:** I clerked for Judge Paul Michel, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, from 1994 to 1996. I loved my clerkship because Judge Michel, a highly accomplished and caring lawyer, mentored me directly in a small setting (as every chambers is, in the end). There is no better way to train as a young lawyer than to face a challenging docket that demands efficiency (the parties want and need an answer for their dispute!) and—above all—fairness and accuracy, with a senior lawyer guiding you to success. With this beginning, I've never lost sight of the fact that law is a learned profession, not just a job.

**John Parry:** I clerked for a judge on the 9th circuit, and it was extraordinarily interesting and rewarding for several reasons. First, I got to work closely with a judge and learn about the kinds of arguments that he found persuasive, as well as the extent to which political or ideological concerns played a role in his decisions (not too much, for the judge for whom I clerked). Because it was an appellate clerkship, I also was able to observe the same things in other judges to greater or lesser degrees. I was also interested in the ways they interacted with counsel, clerks, and each other. In addition, the clerks had to brief cases for the judges, and I learned a great deal of substantive law, and a great deal about presentation of information. Working with the judge on opinions also provided extensive opportunities to learn about advocacy, judgment, and legal reasoning. Finally, it was a lot of fun, both in terms of the work and in terms of interacting with my fellow clerks.

**Juliet Stumpf:** I clerked for Judge Richard A. Paez, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, from 2001 to 2002. After working in private practice, as a government attorney, and in a non-profit setting, it was thrilling to be participating so intimately in decisions that shaped the law. Judge Paez's dedication to his work and the depth of his empathy for the parties was inspiring. He discussed every case with his clerks (often over lunch in chambers), challenging us to deepen our research, hone our arguments, and revisit our conclusions until we had plumbed the issues in the case. Judge Paez continues to be an invaluable mentor, and clerking one of the most valuable experiences I have had.

**Anne Villella:** I had the honor of clerking for Judge Rick T. Haselton of the Oregon Court of Appeals. Judge Haselton mentored his clerks and pushed us to think and read critically. He challenged us to articulate our ideas clearly in writing and demonstrated to us the highest standards of professionalism. After two years of working alongside Judge Haselton and a collegial group of judges, staff attorneys, judicial assistants, and clerks, I can confidently say that it was the most challenging and rewarding work I could have undertaken right out of law school.

## Compensation

**Salaries—State.** State court salaries typically range from \$30,000 to \$60,000. For Oregon, trial court clerks typically start around \$32,000 and appellate, tax, and supreme court clerks typically start around \$44,000. A complete listing of state courts including starting salary ranges is available from the *2012 Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures* in the Career Services Office and online at [forms.vermontlaw.edu/career/guides/](http://forms.vermontlaw.edu/career/guides/) (the current username and password is available in Career Services).

**Salaries—Federal.** Federal salaries are set by pay grades with steps between grades that vary with location. Typically, judicial clerks start at federal pay grade JSP-11. The basic pay level is \$59,987, but many locations have

a cost of living adjustment. Thus, for Portland, federal judges typically start clerks straight out of law school at \$60,520. Judges may at their discretion start clerks at a higher pay step based on experience, grades, law review participation, work in a legal aid clinic, and other factors. For multiple-year clerks, judges typically increase the clerk's pay grade to JSP-12 after one year. For Portland, JSP-12 is \$72,540 at pay step one. A complete listing of federal pay grades and steps can be found at:

[www.uscourts.gov/Careers/Compensation/JudiciarySalaryPlanPayRates.aspx](http://www.uscourts.gov/Careers/Compensation/JudiciarySalaryPlanPayRates.aspx).

**Bonuses and Seniority.** In addition, federal clerkships may yield significant long-term financial and promotional benefits. Federal clerks who enter private practice following a term clerkship typically receive a judicial clerkship bonus (as much as \$50,000 at large law firms in larger legal markets for a single year or \$70,000 for two years) and receive firm "credit" in both pay and promotion. Thus, for example, if a graduate clerk one year for a federal District Court judge and then one year for a federal Court of Appeals judge, the student could (in a large market, such as Los Angeles or New York) receive a starting bonus of up to \$70,000 and two years of seniority for promotion purposes and compensation credit, such that the attorney would begin as a third-year associate.

Sadly, the firms in Portland are less generous. Many firms offer some advancement credit for years spent as a judicial clerk, but few offer a bonus, and those that do only offer around \$10,000. Most of Portland's larger firms, however, will allow a new associate to defer their start date to complete a clerkship. If you spend time as a summer associate at a firm, it is important to verify your firm's policy on judicial clerkships, and if they are not generous enough for you, consider other firms.

Graduates wishing to work for the federal government after completing their clerkship also receive credit for their time spent as clerks. The federal pay grades apply to federal government attorneys with advancement based partially on years of work experience. For federal attorney positions, time spent as a judicial clerk counts year for year as attorney experience allowing you to start at GS-12 after a 1 year clerkship, or at GS-13 after a two year clerkship. For Portland, GS-13 is \$86,260 at pay step one.

## Who Should Apply and What Judges Look For

The preferred qualifications for judicial clerkships can be as varied as the courts and judges themselves. Some clerkships are very competitive because of the particular judge, stature of the court, or a desirable geographic location, and competition at all levels has increased significantly in recent years. Federal appellate circuit court clerkships are the most competitive followed by federal district court clerkships and then state appellate court clerkships. State trial court clerkships are typically the least competitive.

**Grades.** Many federal judges and state appellate judges value grades and may look only at students from the top 5, 10, 20, or 25% of the class. Historical data indicate that students with the following class ranks have the best chance of obtaining the following types of clerkships:

US Court of Appeals: Top 5%

US District Court (District Court Judge): Top 10%

US District Court (Magistrate Judge): Top 15%

State Supreme Court: Top 25% (Oregon: 5-10%)

State Appellate Court: Top 25% (Oregon: 15%)

State Trial Court: All

As with other jobs, the importance of where you are in the class may depend on the entirety of your credentials – i.e., other professional experiences and activities, pre-, during, or post-law school. Grades are usually less important for state trial court judges. It is more important to emphasize class rank than GPA, because there is a trend toward grade inflation at many schools and Lewis & Clark does not have a high curve. Grades in particular courses, such as Federal Courts for federal clerkships, may also be important. Indeed, if you are considering a federal court clerkship, taking Federal Courts is near mandatory.

**Law Review.** If you are aiming for a federal or state appellate court clerkship, it will be to your advantage to “write on” to law review if you were not invited on. Many judges value membership on a law review because it evidences your research, writing, and analytical skills and ability.

**Other Factors.** Judges value many additional factors: moot court experience, legal clinic experience, prior work experience and work during law school, extracurricular activities, interest in practicing in the community/state (particularly among trial court judges), and extremely strong recommendations (especially from professors, and especially if they have any connection to the court or judge). Your writing skills can also be evidenced through other experiences and activities such as work product, excellent professor recommendations, or other published writings (legal or nonlegal). Personality, character, and maturity may play a vital role in the decision process once you get an interview – a judge will want to see how you “fit” with the rest of his/her staff.

## How Do I Get This Process Started?

### **Obtain a Faculty Clerkship Advisor.**

When you are ready to consider a clerkship, even if you are not sure whether you would like to clerk, inform Career Services and you will be assigned a faculty clerkship advisor. Your advisor will help you determine whether a clerkship is right for you and, if so, where and how to apply. The sooner you obtain your advisor the better. Students are thus encouraged to obtain an advisor early in the process. **Contact Career Services immediately.**

### **Choose Where and to Whom to Apply.**

**Location.** Where do you want to clerk? What is the competition for the location? Popular locations tend to be more competitive. Would you like to live in the location for up to two years (if the clerkship is for a two-year term)? Do not apply where you absolutely would not go, but do not be too narrowly focused either. You would be surprised at how many clerks end up staying in the city where they clerked even though they had no intention to do so at the outset. Also, remember that a clerkship can be a great experience no matter where you are.

Keep in mind that if you receive an interview, the government will not reimburse your travel expenses. Plan for these expenses when applying. **NOTE:** For students who obtain an interview with a federal District Court Judge, federal Court of Appeals Judge, or a State Supreme Court Justice, your travel expenses may be reimbursable, courtesy of a clerkship promotion fund created by Matthew Bergman, an alumnus of our law school and former federal clerk. The level of reimbursement will depend on many factors, but some level of assistance for traveling to these interviews is likely.

**Court.** Do you meet the court’s hiring criteria or have other qualifications that set you apart? Does the clerkship fit your goals for your legal career? If, for example, you seek a career in academia you should apply for a federal appellate court clerkship. If, on the other hand, you aspire to a career as a litigation attorney, a clerkship with a trial court (state or federal) may provide a better and more relevant learning experience. Can you accept the salary? Federal courts pay about \$50,000 to \$60,000 for law clerks right out of school (depending on cost of living adjustments). State court salaries are inconsistent, especially at the trial court level. State appellate salaries can range from \$36,000 to \$46,000, and sometimes higher. State trial court salaries range from the federal salary level to barely covering subsistence. The one or two years of experience at a lower salary, however, will usually pay off by opening future career opportunities.

**Judge.** The clerkship application process is probably the most competitive legal job market in existence. Thus, though students should avoid applying to judges who have poor reputations, the fact of the matter is that you do not choose the judges as much as they choose you. Your clerkship advisor can help you determine which judges to avoid (there are not many). Your focus will therefore be on location and the type of clerkship that suits you best. Biographies on federal judges may be found in WestLaw’s “AFJ” (Almanac of the Federal Judiciary) database, and biographies of local and Oregon judges are available in Career Services.

**How Many Applications.** How many judges you decide to apply to may vary. Be realistic in deciding where to apply but do not limit yourself. The first consideration is how much you want a judicial clerkship—if getting a clerkship is the most important issue, then apply broadly to many different courts and geographic regions. At the

other extreme, if you only want a clerkship with a particular judge or any judge within a particular city or state, then apply to a more limited number of judges. Do not apply to a judge if you are sure you would not accept a clerkship if an offer was extended; judges will often expect an immediate answer and you may not be able to wait until you hear from other judges. It is extremely bad form to refuse an offer from a judge, especially a federal judge.

Finally, do not overlook applying to judges who have had many Lewis & Clark alumni work as interns, externs, or clerks. In addition, many alumni are themselves judges and are familiar with the school and its quality. Many federal judges have been to Lewis & Clark Law School for training in environmental law or to attend one of the many conferences the school has hosted. Given their familiarity with our school, these judges may be particularly susceptible to an application. Career Services maintains lists of judges who have attended these programs.

### ***When and How to Apply.***

**Federal Courts.** Most federal judges follow the Federal Law Clerk Hiring Plan, hiring law clerks no sooner than the fall of a student's third year of law school. However, it is *very important* that second year students check judges' postings carefully because a few judges may not be following the Plan and may hire earlier.

**When to apply.** Under the current Hiring Plan, the first day that materials from 3L students may be received by judges is September 6, 2011. Judges may begin contacting applicants and scheduling interviews later the same week, beginning September 9, 2011. Judges may conduct interviews and begin making offers on September 15, 2011. If you are a 3L student planning to apply for a federal judicial clerkship, it is *critical* that you submit your materials (including letters of reference) to arrive on September 6 so your materials can be considered in a timely manner. With the condensed hiring timelines proscribed by the Plan, many judges are making hiring decisions and extending offers by the end of September. See **Attachment G**, or the Hiring Plan link from the Career Services website, for complete information.

**How to Apply.** Many federal judges sign up to participate in a system called OSCAR—the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review ([www.oscar.uscourts.gov](http://www.oscar.uscourts.gov)). OSCAR allows you to review application requirements for individual judges, select judges to whom you wish to apply, submit all application materials online, and manage and track what documents have been submitted to individual judges. Judges who participate in this system are able to review applications and can sort and manage submitted applications through the OSCAR system. Judges must “opt in” and choose to participate in the OSCAR system.

*Whether or not a judge has signed up to participate in OSCAR will affect the timing and manner in which you submit your application materials for a judicial clerkship:*

For “OSCAR” judges: You upload your application materials to the system a little at a time, throughout the summer. However, all requested application materials should be uploaded to the system and “finalized” before September 6, 2011. Judges will be able to view materials from 3L students beginning on that date.

For non-“OSCAR” judges: All requested application materials should be mailed, so they are received by the judge(s) in their chambers on or just before September 6, 2011. Keep in mind that putting materials together for separate mailings can be time consuming, so make sure you give yourself enough time. Remember, that even a single typo can ruin an application.

**State Appellate Courts.** Deadlines vary from state to state but typically occur during spring semester of the 2L year through early fall semester of the 3L year. Some courts have one deadline and require one application for all judges in all courts (Oregon is an example). Other states require that you apply directly to each individual judge. Some state appellate judges may have different deadlines and application procedures, even within the same court. **Attachments A and B** explain the process in Oregon. The Oregon appellate courts post application information beginning in January; the deadline to apply is typically in late April. Career Services has some information about deadlines for other states' courts as well, including the publication, *The Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures*, which lists details about each state's hiring procedures. *The Guide* can be found online at [forms.vermontlaw.edu/career/guides/](http://forms.vermontlaw.edu/career/guides/) (the current username and password is available from Career Services).

**State Trial Courts.** State trial court judges typically hire later, during spring of the 3L year of law school or after graduation. There may or may not be any uniformity in the hiring process among judges within the same court. For example, Lane County has a consolidated hiring process, much like the Oregon appellate courts, with one application deadline in the spring of students' last year. In contrast, Multnomah County judges hire individually as needed. If you are interested in a trial court outside the state of Oregon, you are advised to consult the *Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures* (see above) or call the court directly for more information about their hiring process.

**Timing Clerkships with Prior Offers of Post-Graduation Employment.** Many students who received a permanent offer from a law firm after they spend the summer as a summer associate may think they are precluded from applying for judicial clerkships because they have already accepted a firm's offer. Likewise, many 2L students may be reluctant to apply for summer associate positions with larger firms, thinking that this will preclude them from applying for a judicial clerkship the next fall. Many firms, however, are more than happy to defer a student's start date for one to two years for the student to complete a clerkship. Most firms will advise their summer associates about their policies or practices regarding judicial clerkships.

Most federal judges will be hiring and making their decisions between September 1 and December 1. Therefore, you may be able to keep a law firm offer open during the judicial clerkship hiring process. However, in all fairness to the firm, be candid with them. If you intend to apply for a federal judicial clerkship, be sure to inform the firm right away, and keep them informed of what you are doing. Many will allow you to accept an offer and still seek a clerkship, so it is not necessary to keep an offer open. It is critical that if you are in this position, you talk with Career Services, and review the hiring policies in Chapter 1 of your *Career Services Handbook*.

**Reconciling State and Federal Clerkship Deadlines.** As you may have noticed, there is a conflict in application deadlines between the Oregon courts and federal courts. Whereas Oregon will consider applications in the spring of the student's 2L year, federal judges who follow the Hiring Plan consider applications in the fall of the student's 3L year. A student who wants a federal clerkship may feel they must skip the Oregon court process, as one cannot accept a 2-year Oregon clerkship to begin after graduation and then apply in the fall of the 3L year for a federal clerkship also to begin after graduation. Accepting an Oregon clerkship and then reneging so you can accept a federal clerkship is, of course, completely unacceptable. Your faculty clerkship advisor will work with you to help conceive the best strategy. The faculty has also prepared a memorandum describing this issue further, which may be found at **Attachment J**.

**Last Minute Possibilities.** Inevitably, some students will find themselves still searching for a state appellate or federal court clerkship late in their final year of law school. One possibility for getting a state appellate or federal court clerkship is planning on working your way up by looking for a state trial court clerkship and planning on applying to higher court positions that begin in the fall one year after you graduate. The other possibility is to keep looking for positions starting directly after graduation; these occasionally appear late in a student's final year. Although the Federal Judicial Clerk Hiring Plan and many state appellate court hiring programs have strict deadlines and rigid procedures, judges may hire law clerks out of the normal sequence for a number of reasons, including new judicial appointments and unexpected losses of current clerks. In order to keep track of these out of sequence appointments, it is important to keep checking OSCAR. You can also look for postings on the career services online job board, and you can review the regularly updated list of federal judicial confirmations at <http://www.uscourts.gov/JudgesAndJudgeships/JudicialVacancies/CurrentJudicialVacancies.aspx>.

### **Determine the Hiring Process for your Selected Courts.**

There are several resources that can be helpful in determining judicial clerkship hiring processes and timelines:

- The Career Services Judicial Clerkship Website
  - The Judicial Clerkship section of the website has links to most of the information you need and is a good starting point for your research.
- The NW Consortium of Law Schools Judicial Clerkship Database:  
[http://www.law2.byu.edu/career\\_services/government\\_publicservice/judicial\\_clerkships/rocky.php](http://www.law2.byu.edu/career_services/government_publicservice/judicial_clerkships/rocky.php)

- In a joint effort, the Career Services staff from eleven western law schools, including Lewis & Clark, develop and maintain this database containing hiring and application information about federal and state judges in several western states. The website is searchable and allows you to, among other things, pull up information about specific judges or courts and find out when and where to send your application materials. Please contact the Career Services Office to get the current username and password required to access the database.
- *The Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures*: (in hard copy in the Career Services Resource Library and accessible online through a link from the Career Services Judicial Clerkship website and above. See Career Services for the user name and password.) This is a comprehensive guide to state court clerkships. The Guide contains basic information about state court systems for each of the 50 states, along with hiring timelines and application information, website listings and contact information.
- OSCAR: [www.oscar.uscourts.gov](http://www.oscar.uscourts.gov). The OSCAR system is an online system for federal judicial clerkships. Applicants are able to upload application materials and participating judges are able to view, sort and print applicant materials. The site contains a searchable database of judges who have opted to participate and receive applications through the OSCAR system.

Some judges send announcements to law schools and we post all that we receive on our online job postings. Check these postings regularly. Do not rely on these as covering every judge; most judges do *not* submit postings.

## Application Materials

Your application for each judge will generally include a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, undergraduate transcript(s), writing sample, and at least two letters of recommendation. Be sure, however, to read the posting carefully or, if not posted, call the judge's assistant and ask what materials the judge requires. (e.g. if a judge wants only a list of references, do not send letters of recommendation.) **Everything must be impeccably proofread.** With so many high-quality applicants, typos and other small mistakes can be an excuse to reject your application at first glance. Judges seek law clerks with strong research and writing skills, and attention to detail. Everything in your application packet (including your cover letter and resume) is considered a writing sample. By starting early, you will not need to rush when putting your application together and will have more time for proofreading.

Your application must make you stand out. Most judges receive hundreds of applications from bright and capable law students. One way to stand out is to highlight interesting prior work experience. Often, including your interests on your resume can help break the ice in an interview. Unconventional talents, interests, or experience can make you stand out, even if they have nothing to do with the practice of law. Geographic preference is also very important; if you have some tie to a judge's jurisdiction, let the judge know. **Most importantly:** Have Career Services and your clerkship advisor review your application materials before sending them out!

### Resume.

If your qualifications improve after you send your resume to the judge (e.g., you are appointed to the Law Review Editorial Board), be sure to send an updated resume highlighting your latest accomplishments.

### Cover Letter.

A well-drafted cover letter may increase your chances of obtaining an interview; a poorly-written, unprofessional letter will almost certainly negatively impact those chances. A cover letter is an opportunity to highlight your experiences, how they have prepared you for a clerkship, and to articulate why you are interested in a position with this judge or court. Customize your cover letter to the particular judge to whom you are applying. Judges are very interested in knowing whether you sincerely want to work for them or if they are just one employer on a long list. If you have properly researched the judge before applying, you can specifically reference that judge's work in your cover letter. Remember, your cover letter is a writing sample in itself. It must be polished, concise, customized, and engaging. See **Attachment D – How to Address Correspondence** for the proper way to address the Judge and **Attachment H** for sample cover letters.

## ***Letters of Recommendation.***

Because judges may receive hundreds of applications, they use letters of recommendation to distinguish among the many qualified candidates. Most judges require two letters of recommendation; some want three, including most federal judges. At least one of these letters should be from a law school professor. If you are sending three letters, then two of the three should be from a law school professor.

When deciding whom on the faculty you should ask to write your letters of recommendation, remember that the best letters come from professors who can speak from personal knowledge of you and your work. Start during your first year to develop relationships with your professors. One of the best things you can do to prepare early in law school is to take a small seminar class so a professor can get to know you and your legal writing. This will ensure that one or two faculty members know you well enough to write personalized letters of recommendation. If there is a particular professor you would like to have write your letter of recommendation, become actively involved with the professor as a research or teaching assistant, enroll in directed research, or do a volunteer project. The professor will become acquainted with you and your work and will be in a better position to write a glowing recommendation!

Faculty members know that students will be asking for recommendations. Do not hesitate to ask; however, give them plenty of time—at least one month—to prepare the letters. Make *sure* you give each reference all the correct contact information for the judge, including any important information they need to know about the judge's chambers, any contacts they may have with the judge or her colleagues, any familiarity with cases, etc. If you will be applying to several judges, you *must* create an Excel spreadsheet of judges for your recommenders.

### ***Faculty Recommendation Request Procedure:***

- As soon as possible (hopefully before July 30 or one month before your application is due): Ask faculty members to start writing recommendations. You may do this before you have selected judges to whom you will apply. Waiting too long will not allow your professors enough time to draft well-written letters.
- When requesting letters of recommendation for more than one judge, you must supply your faculty recommenders or their assistants with an Excel spreadsheet containing contact information and your application method for each of the judges to whom you are applying. To create your spreadsheet, you must use the Excel template available at: <http://www.lclark.edu/livewhale/download/?id=4633>
  - If you are applying to federal judges, gather contact information by downloading the *Judge List* from [https://webdisk.lclark.edu/lscs/2011 Judge List.xlsx](https://webdisk.lclark.edu/lscs/2011%20Judge%20List.xlsx) (lclark.edu email login required); find the judges you are applying to; and copy the rows for those judges to your recommendation spreadsheet.
  - If you are applying to state judges, consult the *Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures* for contact information.
- **For federal clerkships, you must supply your recommendation spreadsheet to the faculty legal assistant before the set deadline date, typically in late August.** Spreadsheets received after this date may result in recommendation letters not meeting the initial Federal Hiring Plan deadline. Notice of the deadline date is sent out by Career Services in mid-Summer.
- If you request additional letters of recommendation after your initial batch, you must provide your recommenders or their assistants with a spreadsheet containing the additional judges.

Letters of recommendation can either be sealed in a separate envelope and included in the packet with your other application materials, or sent separately. If a judge does not indicate a preference, we recommend that you include sealed letters of recommendation along with your other materials in one application packet. This will decrease the possibility that your letters of recommendation become misfiled. The reference letters should be on letterhead of

the person writing the letter, and be placed in a sealed envelope. The recommender can put his or her signature across the seal. If you do have letters sent separately, be *sure* to note in your cover letter that those letters will be arriving separately. It is also best, if the cover letter is arriving in a separate envelope, that somewhere on the outside of the envelope there is a notation that states, “Reference letter for John Smith” so the judge’s clerk can easily locate your materials. If you are submitting applications through OSCAR, Career Services can explain how to upload the recommendations online.

Resist any requests that you draft the letter of recommendation. It is important the faculty members write the letter (*not you!*) and that they include comments that make it clear they really know your work, your abilities, and that they highly recommend you for the clerkship. If the professor insists that you write the letter of recommendation, try to talk to the professor. If that doesn’t help, talk with your clerkship advisor or come and talk to Career Services.

### **Writing Sample.**

Your writing sample must reflect your very best efforts. The best writing sample is one that a judge is likely to start *and* finish. It is worth a call to the judge’s chambers for guidance regarding what length writing sample is appropriate. If you have several writing samples to choose from, select one that will appeal to the judge. For example, a federal judge would be more interested in a federal law topic than a state law topic. Your sample should be brief (10 or fewer pages) and solely your own work. An excerpt is acceptable; if you submit an excerpt, be sure to put a cover page on it with a paragraph that states what larger body of work the excerpt is from, and orient the reader as to the sample’s relation to the whole. If you are considering using work you prepared for an employer while in law school, you will want to redact any confidential information from the memorandum and obtain consent from your employer. Your faculty clerkship advisor can help you decide which sample is most appropriate. Be sure to proofread every word.

### **Waiting to Hear From the Judge**

Once you have submitted your application materials, the waiting begins. Do not make repeated phone calls to a judge’s clerk, judicial assistant, or secretary. Selective phone calls, to ask about where the judge is in the hiring process, are acceptable. If you receive an interview with one judge outside Portland, you may inform other judges in that same geographical area that you will be interviewing with another judge there, to give them the opportunity to schedule an interview during your visit. It is also acceptable to call a judge’s chambers to say that you will be visiting the area and to request an opportunity to see the judge while you are there.

Some judges send letters of regret to students whom they decide not to interview, and some judges never respond to applications. Do not assume that judges who do not respond are not interested; they may simply make decisions later than other judges on their court. Until you confirm that a judge has completed the hiring process, you should treat your application as pending.

### **Interviewing**

The selection of a judicial clerk is a very subjective and personal decision for a judge. Most judges are interested in finding out about who you are as opposed to questioning your legal knowledge, although substantive legal questions may be asked. The interview test is partly personality match because a clerk becomes part of the court “family,” and working in chambers is an inherently intimate experience. Judges will also be interested in your career goals and how a clerkship would help advance your objectives. Most likely, you will be interviewed by all of the other members of the judge’s staff (secretary, clerks, etc.) and their opinions will be given great deference by the judge. When talking with these individuals recognize that you are still being interviewed, and be respectful of everyone in the courthouse. Some possible questions you may be asked during the interview are included in **Attachment E – Possible Interview Questions**. Prepare for your interview with thorough research about the judge, and their opinions, if possible. Have some questions prepared that you want to ask the judge, current clerk(s), and his or her staff.

To prepare for your interview, contact any alumni who practice in the court within that jurisdiction. Let Career Services and faculty know, and be sure to let your references know you were offered an interview! Often, we can

direct you to alumni who have clerked or externed for a particular judge, or for another judge on the same court, or who practice in that jurisdiction. Reread your writing sample and/or any publications listed on your resume. Stress your writing ability. Know yourself, why you want to be a judicial clerk, and why you want to work for a particular judge *and* that particular court *and* that particular jurisdiction.

Remember to relax and treat the interview as a conversation. All of the applicants the judge chooses are highly qualified on paper. Through the interview process, the judge is looking for the best personality “fit.”

Some judges may conduct initial interviews by phone. Others may be interested in interviewing candidates by video-conference. Lewis & Clark has the ability to set up a video-conference interview for you either through Skype or through the standards used by traditional video conferencing hardware. To arrange for a video-conference interview through either of these systems, contact the Career Services Office.

After your interview, do not forget to promptly send a thank you letter to the judge. Keep them short, but feel free to tie up any loose ends. If you interacted significantly with any members of the judge’s staff, consider sending thank you letters to them as well. One way to handle a thank you letter is to send it to the judge, thanking him or her, and then in the letter asking the judge to thank the law clerks and staff on your behalf. Proofread carefully, and ensure that your thank you letter is free of *any* errors; you don’t want to lose an offer based on a poorly-written thank you letter!

## Offers

When a judge offers you a clerkship, you may immediately accept. Many judges will expect an answer on the spot. Indeed, some offers are known as “exploding offers,” meaning that they expire within a short period. Some as soon as you leave the room! If you need some time to think it over, some judges will give you a short amount of time—usually just a day or two. The more competitive the court, however, the less likely you will be given time to decide, and most judges frown on giving an applicant time to make a decision. If you receive an offer from one judge but are still waiting to hear from a judge with whom you would rather work, it is permissible to say something like: “I just interviewed with Judge B, and would like to give him the courtesy of a telephone call to let him know I received an offer from you before I respond.” Then call Judge B to say that you have an offer and must respond as soon as possible. Of course, if Judge B is not prepared to make a decision, then you must decide.

Promptly after accepting an offer, **please** inform Career Services of your success and withdraw in writing all other outstanding applications, especially any applications pending with judges who have indicated you were being seriously considered. In addition, you should withdraw your application as early as possible in the process if you decide that you do not want to clerk for a particular judge.

## Strategies for Obtaining Great Clerkships

### ***Start Early!***

The earlier you decide to pursue a clerkship, the more time you have to become acquainted with the faculty, obtain valuable work experience, and prepare your application materials. Additionally, if you wait too long to apply, you may find that the most desirable judicial clerkships have been filled. This section discusses some strategies you can use to increase your chances of obtaining a clerkship.

### ***Grades and Co-Curricular Activities.***

Academic honors and achievements are the factors judges look at most when making hiring decisions; however, judges look at other factors as well. These factors include recommendations from people they know and respect, writing ability, research skills, prior work experience, and personality. Remember, the judge is going to work closely with you for at least a year.

### ***Extern or Volunteer for the Judge or Court Where You Want to Work.***

An externship is like a very long interview. If you do quality work during your externship and the judge likes you, she may hire you. Judges dislike reviewing resumes of people they do not know just as much as any other employer. Why hire a clerk who is an untested stranger? There are many judges—some in Portland—who hire

clerks almost exclusively from their externs. Choosing the right place to extern involves early planning. If you are interested in learning more about the possibility of externing during the school year and/or summer, make an appointment with the Assistant Dean for Career Services.

If an externship does not fit into your schedule, some judges will take students as volunteer law clerks. Check the NW Consortium Judicial Clerkship Database to see if the judge has indicated a willingness to take volunteer law clerks. If you are unsure, make a quick call to the judge's chambers to inquire about the possibility. Volunteering for a judge results in many of the same benefits that an externship for credit provides: research and writing experience, exposure to the court system, and the opportunity to work closely with a judge and her clerk(s).

### ***Network with Visiting Judges.***

The Law School often has special events which judges attend (e.g. Board of Visitors, moot court competitions, Environmental Training Conference, Breakfast with Judges, etc.). Check the Career Services online Calendar of Events for information on when judges may be visiting the school. If you would like to clerk for a judge who is coming to the Law School, consult with the hosting dean or faculty member to see if an interview can be arranged.

### ***Get to Know Faculty Members.***

Letters of recommendation, particularly from law faculty members, are a critical part of your application packet. It is imperative (especially if you anticipate applying for a federal judicial clerkship) that you work with and get to know a few law faculty members. This means more than just doing well in a professor's class. When writing a letter of recommendation, a faculty member needs to be able to comment on your intellectual capacity, analytical abilities, research and writing skills, as well as your demeanor, personality, and work ethic. Begin interacting with faculty members early in your law school career. How can you get to know faculty members? Ideas include:

- Apply to be a Research Assistant for a faculty member who teaches in your area of interest, or apply to be a Legal Writing Teaching Assistant;
- Speak up in class and talk to the professor after class, or visit them during office hours to ask questions;
- Take smaller seminar classes and actively participate - do your very best work on any papers or projects;
- Do an independent study research project with a professor;
- Do an externship and get to know your faculty supervisor;
- Interact with faculty members and involve them in your student group activities - they can be a terrific resource when planning guest speaker programs or presentations.

Although faculty members will be very generous with their time and will help you in the clerkship process, you must allow them to get to know you and to see you demonstrate the skills that will make you a strong candidate for a judicial clerkship.

## **Commonly Asked Questions**

**Q: I do not want to be a litigator; can a judicial clerkship benefit me?**

A. Yes. The research, analytical, and writing skills are invaluable, as well as the mentor relationship with the judge and the opportunity to get to know the local legal community. Law firms and public interest organizations love to have graduates who have had judicial clerkships.

**Q: I am in my last year of law school and fall semester is almost over; is it too late to get a clerkship?**

A. No, but it is a lot harder because most federal judges will have hired by the end of fall semester of your third year, and many state appellate judges have already hired by the end of second year. However, opportunities exist for clerkships at all times. Some judges may still be hiring in the late fall of your last year, vacancies may arise due to a new appointment or election, and some judges hire clerks who have a few years of legal experience. Also, most state trial judges hire during the spring of a student's last year or after they graduate. Keep an eye on the job postings and, for federal clerkships, an eye on new OSCAR clerkship postings.

**Q: How do I find out about new judges appointed to the federal bench?**

A. Names of newly nominated and confirmed judges are available on the Senate Judiciary Committee's website, <http://judiciary.senate.gov/nominations/judicial.cfm>.

**Q: How do I decide if I want a judicial clerkship?**

A. Attend the Career Services' judicial clerkship panels, talk with alumni or faculty members who have clerked or get some practical experience (through volunteer experience or through a class such as the Judicial Clerkship CIS or a Judicial Externship).

**Q: Should I do a judicial externship?**

A. Some people believe that a judicial externship is an excellent way to increase your chances of a judicial clerkship offer and/or an excellent alternative to a judicial clerkship after graduation. Many judges choose former externs (not just those who have externed for them, either), as their judicial clerks.

## Attachment A – Clerkships with Oregon State Courts

The system of state courts in Oregon includes the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, the Circuit Courts, the Tax Court and the District Courts. Justice Courts, those conducted by the justices of the peace, operate under state law but are established by county governments. Municipal Courts and state administrative tribunals operate outside the state system but within legislative direction.

The Oregon Supreme Court consists of seven judges, all elected at large. Since 1977, its primary function has been the discretionary review of Court of Appeals' decisions. It also hears direct appeals in death penalty, Tax Court cases and bar disciplinary cases, and certain other cases, and has original jurisdiction over mandamus, habeas corpus, and other special proceedings.

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

The Oregon Tax Court is a court of statewide jurisdiction and consists of one judge and six magistrates. The Tax Court has exclusive statewide jurisdiction over all questions of law or fact arising under the state tax laws and has the powers of a circuit court.

The Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and Tax Court sit in Salem, the state capital, and occasionally in other cities in Oregon.

Oregon's Circuit Courts are organized by county and are of general jurisdiction. This means the Circuit Courts hear all cases, regardless of subject matter, amount of money involved or severity of the crime alleged.

Justices of the Peace operate the Justice Courts, which boards of county commissioners have authorized, but their operation may not extend to any city in which there is a District Court. A Justice Court may try most types of civil cases if the amount claimed is not more than \$7,500.

The Oregon Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and Tax Court are the only courts that hire Judicial Clerks in a systematic manner each year in the spring of a student's 2L year for clerkships beginning the following fall after graduation. The Circuit Courts hire clerks as vacancies occur throughout the year, although not all Circuit Judges hire clerks (especially in the less populated counties). Oregon's Justice Courts and Municipal Courts do not utilize Judicial Clerks.

## **Attachment B – Judicial Clerkships with the Oregon Appellate Courts**

Each Oregon Supreme Court Justice hires one law clerk with whom they work directly; Court of Appeals judges have either one or two clerks. The Tax Court hires one clerk for the magistrate division and one for the judge. The Supreme Court hires one additional clerk who works for all of the judges. Additional clerks work for the Court of Appeals on a “floating” basis, which means that they are not assigned to a specific judge but to a department.

Law clerks are normally hired for two year terms.

Clerks for the Oregon Court of Appeals assist with drafting opinions. Clerks for the Oregon Supreme Court draft opinions and memoranda on petitions for review.

### ***Educational Requirements.***

Requires possession of a Juris Doctor degree from an ABA-accredited law school. Oregon State Bar membership is not required, but some judges may prefer that you take the Bar Exam prior to starting.

### ***Salary and Benefits.***

Salary differs each year and current figures can be obtained from that year’s job posting. Benefits include fully paid employee medical, dental, and life insurance.

### ***Application Process.***

Specific application information is contained in the yearly Job Announcement provided by the Court in January of each year. The deadline is usually in April of a student’s second year of law school. Check the Lewis & Clark Career Services Job Postings for the announcement.

Applicants wishing to specify a preference for a particular court, Justice or judge should do so when applying. If no preference is stated, the application will be circulated to all hiring judges of each court.

### ***Selection Process.***

Interviews are conducted in June unless other arrangements are made. Applicants are notified in early June if they have been accepted for an interview. Most offers are extended in July.

## Attachment C – Opportunities with Federal Administrative Law Judges

The following federal agencies regularly offer judicial clerkship positions through their ALJ offices:

### **Known Post-Graduate Positions**

- Department of Health and Human Services Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals
  - Deadline: Varies, posted through USAJobs ([www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov))
  - Term: 1 year
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
  - Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals - David T. Anderson
    - Deadline: Varies
    - Term: 1 year
    - More info: Contact 202-254-0000
- Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration
  - Hires through DOJ Office of Attorney Recruitment
- Department of Justice - Immigration Court
  - Seattle immigration court has semi-annually positions posted through Career Services
- Department of Labor Office of Administrative Law Judges
  - Chief Judge John M. Vittone
    - Deadline: September 30 annually for positions starting the following fall
    - Term: 2 years
    - More info: Contact Joan Mars, Director, Hiring Committee at 202-693-7377
- Department of Transportation
  - Chief Administrative Law Judge Ronnie A. Yoder
    - Deadline: Varies, posted on USAJobs
    - Term: 2 years
    - More info: Watch USA Jobs Postings
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
  - Chief Administrative Judge Curtis Wagner Jr.
    - Deadline: March 2012 for 2012 start date
    - Term: 2 years
    - More info: Email Martha Altamar, Special Assistant to the Chief Judge, [martha.altamar@ferc.gov](mailto:martha.altamar@ferc.gov)
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission – Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel
  - Deadline: September 30 annually for positions starting the following fall
  - Term: 2 years
  - More info: [www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/employment/judicial-law-clerk.html](http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/employment/judicial-law-clerk.html)
- Securities and Exchange Commission
  - Deadline: See USAJobs
  - Term: 2 years (can be longer)
  - More info: USAJobs

### **Known Intern/Extern Positions**

- Department of Health and Human Services Departmental Appeals Board
  - More info: See [www.hhs.gov/dab/intern.html](http://www.hhs.gov/dab/intern.html)
- Department of Health and Human Services Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals
  - More info: Judith Ziviz, Executive Assistant and Program Analyst, 216-615-4068
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
  - More info: Contact 202-254-0000
- Department of Justice - Immigration Court

- Portland Immigration Court has regularly posted through the Career Services Office
- Department of Labor Office of Administrative Law Judges
  - More info: Contact Joan Mars, Director, Hiring Committee at 202-693-7377
- Department of Transportation
  - More info: [www.dot.gov/ost/hearings/Volunteer Legal Internships/volunteer\\_legal\\_internships.html](http://www.dot.gov/ost/hearings/Volunteer_Legal_Internships/volunteer_legal_internships.html)
- Federal Trade Commission
  - More info: Contact Victoria Arthaud, Attorney Advisor, [varthaud@ftc.gov](mailto:varthaud@ftc.gov)

### ***Other Agencies Worth Contacting***

- Commodity Futures Trading Commission
- Department of Commerce, Trademark Trial and Appeal Board
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration
- Department of the Interior
  - Has shown interest in interns but does not have a set program
- Department of the Interior Board of Indian Appeals
- Department of the Interior Board of Land Appeals
- Department of Justice – Executive Office for Immigration Review
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Communications Commission
- Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission
- International Trade Commission
- National Transportation Safety Board
- Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
- Social Security Administration
- U.S. Postal Service

### ***Agencies with Regional Offices Worth Contacting***

- Department of Justice - Immigration Court
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Merit Systems Protection Board
- National Labor Relations Board
- National Transportation Safety Board

## Attachment D – How to Address Correspondence

Address	Address on letter and envelope	Salutation
<b><i>US Supreme Court</i></b>		
The Chief Justice	The Chief Justice of the United States Address	Dear Chief Justice:
Associate Justice	Justice (Surname) The Supreme Court of the United States Address	Dear Justice (surname):
<b><i>US Court of Appeals</i></b>		
Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals Address	Dear Judge (surname):
Judge or Senior Judge	Honorable (full name) United States Court of Appeals Address	Dear Judge (surname):
<b><i>US District Court</i></b>		
Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge, United States District Court Address	Dear Judge (surname):
Judge or Senior Judge	Honorable (full name) United States District Court Address	Dear Judge (surname):
<b><i>Other Federal Courts</i></b>		
Chief Judge	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge, (Court) Address	Dear Judge (surname):
Judge	Honorable (full name) Court Address	Dear Judge (surname):
<b><i>State Supreme Court</i></b>		
Chief Justice	Honorable (full name) Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the State of (state name) Address	Dear Justice (surname):
Justice	Honorable (full name) Supreme Court for the State of (state name) Address	Dear Justice (surname):
<b><i>Other State Courts*</i></b>		
Chief Judge (Appellate) Presiding Judge (Trial)	Honorable (full name) Chief Judge/Presiding Judge (Court) Address	Dear Judge (surname): (Appellate) Dear Judge (surname): (Trial)
Judge	Honorable (full name) Court Address	Dear Judge (surname):

## Attachment E – Possible Interview Questions

<b>Questions a Judge Might Ask a Judicial Clerkship Applicant</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why do you want to clerk?</li> <li>2. Why this particular court? Why me?</li> <li>3. What do you hope to learn from a clerkship?</li> <li>4. Why do you want to clerk in this city (state, region)?</li> <li>5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?</li> <li>6. What qualities do you have that might make you a valuable law clerk?</li> <li>7. What are your short-term legal career goals?</li> <li>8. What are your long-term legal career goals?</li> <li>9. Do you plan to take the (state) bar exam?</li> <li>10. Do you plan to practice in this state?</li> <li>11. Where (location/type of employer) do you hope to practice after your clerkship?</li> <li>12. What type of law interests you most? The least?</li> <li>13. Describe your work experience (pre/during law school).</li> <li>14. Describe the work you perform for your law review.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. What have you learned from participation on law review or in a moot court or clinical program?</li> <li>16. Why aren't you on law review?</li> <li>17. Tell me about the courses (grades, professors) you had in law school.</li> <li>18. To which judges (courts) have you applied?</li> <li>19. How would you approach this particular issue, case, problem?</li> <li>20. Do you prefer to work with others or independently?</li> <li>21. How do you view the long hours and low pay associated with a judicial clerkship?</li> <li>22. If you and I disagree about a certain issue, would you have any problems drafting an opinion incorporating my viewpoint?</li> <li>23. What interests do you have outside of law school?</li> <li>24. What questions do you have for me?</li> <li>25. Is there anything else you want to tell me about yourself?</li> <li>26. Which of my opinions have you read?</li> </ol> <p>* Talk in detail re: article, writing sample, something on your resume.</p>

## Attachment F – Clerkship Application Checklist – General

- **Narrow Your List of Courts/Judges**  
Review Clerkship binder, on-line resources, almanacs, biographies and talk to professors. You can also contact the judge's current law clerks and ask them about their experience and recommendations - often they will be very helpful. Ask attorneys in the area which judges work well with their clerks. Refer to the Career Services resources which include a list of Lewis & Clark Law School graduates who have clerked for particular judges (and are willing to be contacted).
- **Determine Application Requirements**  
Check the following: Judicial Clerkship on-line resources, WestLaw/LEXIS Clerkship Databases, Boley Law Library, Career Services resources, and the *Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures*. If the application requirements are not available, call the judge's chambers.
- **Request Letters of Recommendation**  
You will probably want letters from both law professors and legal employers.
- **Draft Cover Letters**  
See advice/samples. Try to emphasize something unique about yourself.
- **Have Your Materials Reviewed**  
Bring your cover letter, resume, and other application materials into Career Services for review.
- **Obtain Letters of Recommendation**  
It is helpful to the judge if you gather all of your application materials together (including sealed letters of recommendation) and mail them in one envelope.
- **Submit Your Completed Application Materials by the Deadline Date**  
Keep a list of what materials you submitted to which judge, in case a judge's chambers calls and wants to discuss a portion of your application.
- **Follow-up with a Phone Call**  
You may want to give the judge's chambers a call after a week or two to verify that they have received your application.
- **Supplement Your Application with Grades, etc.**  
If you have significant new developments in your qualifications send the updated information with a short letter requesting them to supplement your application.

## Attachment G – Clerkship Application Timeline – Federal

Spring of 2L year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend Career Services Judicial Clerkship programs and panels</li> <li>• Schedule an appointment with Chris Lombard, Associate Director of Career Services to discuss your clerkship plans</li> </ul>
Before end of May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarize yourself with the federal application process and timelines</li> <li>• Ask faculty and other recommenders about writing letters of recommendation <i>before</i> leaving for the summer</li> </ul>
Spring - Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin researching judges. Determine which federal judges will be hiring in the fall by checking OSCAR</li> <li>• Keep asking for letters of recommendation making sure you have three letters in progress by the end of July; make sure faculty are aware of the late August deadline</li> </ul>
July - August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and compile judicial clerkship application materials - writing sample(s) and undergraduate and law transcripts. Update resume; draft cover letters</li> <li>• Submit resume and cover letter(s) to Career Services for review</li> <li>• Create Excel file with names/addresses/contact information to provide to faculty recommenders. Remind recommenders about clerkship deadlines and for paper applications, schedule a date PRIOR to September 1 to pick up your letters of recommendation</li> <li>• If applying to judges using OSCAR, read the OSCAR Applicant User Guide; begin uploading application materials</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize judicial clerkship application materials</li> <li>• Obtain letters of recommendation from faculty members/other recommenders</li> <li>• Upload materials to OSCAR website on an ongoing basis</li> <li>• Remind recommenders about August 31 deadline for submitting letters of recommendation to their assistants for printing and uploading to OSCAR</li> </ul>
Late August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver your Excel file of judges to the designated faculty legal assistant responsible for uploading letters of recommendation to OSCAR</li> <li>• Faculty recommendations due to faculty assistants for printing and posting</li> </ul>
Tuesday after Labor Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mail application materials timed to arrive in judge’s chambers today!</li> <li>• Ensure that all needed application materials have been uploaded to the OSCAR system and that they have been “finalized” – this is the only way they will be released to your chosen judges in a timely manner</li> </ul>

## Attachment H – Sample Cover Letters

NOTE: This is a standard letter for clerkship applications. It represents one, not necessarily the best, approach for such letters to take. Use it as one example among many, not as a model for your own.

### **Ima Law Student**

12345 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219 (503) 555-5555 istudent@lclark.edu

September 1, 2011

The Honorable Milton L. Schwartz  
United States District Judge  
Eastern District of California  
2504 United States Courthouse  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Judge Schwartz:

I am writing to apply for a clerkship in your chambers for the (hiring year you are interested in applying for) term.

I would like to highlight the year I spent as an extern to The Honorable Diarmuid F. O'Scannlain, United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. In his chambers, I advanced my abilities to a level where I performed virtually all the duties of a law clerk.

My work with Judge O'Scannlain proved to be the most rewarding intellectual experience of my life. I composed bench memoranda on a myriad of civil and criminal cases, prepared draft opinions, traveled with Judge O'Scannlain on calendar, and helped him prepare for oral argument. Beyond the technical skills necessary to work effectively as a law clerk, I also learned to appreciate the weighty responsibility that such a position entails. Having worked on two death penalty cases, I learned to diligently explore every possible argument while remaining dispassionate to personal biases and commitments. Judge O'Scannlain has graciously indicated that he would welcome personal inquiries concerning the work I performed for him.

Since leaving Judge O'Scannlain's chambers, I have further enhanced my knowledge of federal practice and procedure as a research assistant to Professor Arthur B. LaFrance. Professor LaFrance is currently editing and updated a version of *Federal Litigation*, a Legal Services Corporation practice manual. I am also presently enrolled in a course in federal jurisdiction. These activities, combined with my work for Judge O'Scannlain, would enable me to bring to your chambers a broad knowledge and experience with federal civil and criminal law and the judicial process.

I hope that you will carefully consider me for a clerkship in your chambers and look forward to the privilege of an interview. Serving as your law clerk would not only be a privilege from which I would greatly benefit, but also one I would much enjoy.

Respectfully,

I. Law Student

## Ima Law Student

12345 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219 (503) 555-5555 istudent@lclark.edu

September 1, 2011

The Honorable Otto R. Skopil, Jr.  
US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
555 S.W. Yamhill  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Judge Skopil:

I am writing to apply for a clerkship in your chambers for the 2012-13 term.

It has long been a goal of mine to clerk on the federal level. I look forward to the intellectual challenges and the opportunity for personal and professional growth that a clerkship is sure to offer. I have been fortunate to have several mentors who themselves have clerked for the federal courts in years past. Hearing of their positive experiences further convinced me that I would benefit greatly from a clerkship.

My educational and personal background has prepared me well for the duties of a judicial clerk. I received my undergraduate degree in History and Liberal Studies. This double major required me to write an average of five papers a semester. I was able to increase my skill levels in both writing and research during these years. My academic performance during my first year of law school afforded me the opportunity to be a member of the *Lewis & Clark Law Review* this year. In my role as a member, I have been given the task of editing parts of each article that we will publish in the next year. This experience has made me more aware than ever of the value of clear and thoughtful writing. Finally, I was a summer associate with the Portland firm of Tonkon Torp LLP. The skills I demonstrated while working at this excellent firm will enable me to bring to your chambers a solid familiarity with federal civil and criminal law and the judicial process.

I would like to point out that I have worked full-time since the age of sixteen. The challenge of juggling a full school schedule, family and work has not always been easy but it has been a wonderful teacher of efficient time management and responsibility.

My wife and I have been very happy in Portland and plan to make it our home for a long time to come. I can think of no better beginning to my legal career than clerking in your chambers. I hope you will consider me for a clerkship and I look forward to the privilege of an interview.

Respectfully,

I. Law Student

*\*Demonstrating a connection to an area outside of Oregon*

**Ima Law Student**

12345 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219 (503) 555-5555 istudent@lclark.edu

September 1, 2011

The Honorable John Smith  
US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit  
20614 U.S. Courthouse  
601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Judge Smith:

I am very interested in a clerkship with your chambers beginning in August 2012. Because I am originally from Philadelphia and still have family in the area, I am eager to return to the region to begin my legal career.

It has long been a goal of mine to clerk for a federal court. I look forward to the intellectual challenges and the opportunity for personal and professional growth that a clerkship is sure to offer. I have been fortunate to have several mentors who themselves clerked on the federal level in years past. Hearing of their positive experiences further convinced me that I would benefit greatly from a clerkship.

My educational and personal background has prepared me well for the duties of a judicial clerk. I received my undergraduate degree in History and Liberal Studies. This double major required me to write an average of five papers a semester. I was able to increase my skill levels in both writing and research during these years. My academic performance during my first year of law school afforded me the opportunity to take part on the *Lewis & Clark Law Review* this year. In my role as a member, I have been given the task of editing parts of each article that we will publish in the next year. This experience has made me more aware than ever of the value of clear and thoughtful writing. Finally, I most recently was a summer associate with Tonkon Torp LLP, a Portland based mid-sized civil practice firm. The legal skills I developed through my position with this well-respected firm will enable me to bring to your chambers a solid familiarity with federal civil practice and the judicial process.

Although I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Pacific Northwest, and believe I have received an outstanding education at Lewis & Clark, I look forward to returning home. I can think of no better beginning to my legal career than to clerk in your chambers. I have no immediate plans to be in the Philadelphia area but would gladly travel for the privilege of an interview with you. I can also be available at your convenience by phone or for a video conference interview through our law school's video conferencing system.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you regarding an interview.

Respectfully,

I. Law Student

*\*\*The following two letters are samples for the Oregon appellate courts. Notice that the letters are addressed to Mr. Barnum, in the Personnel Division, but that the salutation is directed to the judges and/or justices of the court(s) to which the applicant is applying.*

## **Ima Law Student**

12345 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219 (503) 555-5555 istudent@lclark.edu

March 3, 2012

Mr. Michael Barnum  
Personnel Division  
Oregon Judicial Department  
1163 State Street  
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Your Honor:

I am writing to apply for a judicial clerkship position with the Oregon Supreme Court and the Oregon Court of Appeals. I am a second year student at Lewis & Clark Law School, and I plan to take the July 2013 Oregon Bar Examination.

As my resume indicates, I served as an intern judicial clerk to the Honorable \_\_\_\_\_ during the summer of 20\_\_\_. This opportunity increased my comprehension of the federal courts, particularly motion and trial practice. During my internship, I reviewed summary judgment motions, drafted memoranda and judicial opinions, analyzed attorney fee awards, and assisted at trial and pre-trial proceedings. I found the internship interesting, educational, and challenging, which confirmed my interest in working as a judicial clerk upon graduation.

Having served in the federal trial court, my interest now is to serve in one of the Oregon appellate courts. The opportunity will complement both my formal studies and my trial court experience by providing insight to the state appellate process and state law. Additionally, my goal as a judicial clerk is to use my strong writing and analytical skills to assist the court in continuing its efficient and effective administration. In working towards these goals, I will gain the added benefit of sharpening my lawyering skills and building skills necessary to become a respected appellate advocate.

My work experience and interests are diverse. Before attending law school, I owned and managed a closely held printing franchise, where I oversaw the work of thirteen employees and the timely production of over 200 printing orders each week. During law school, in addition to serving as Articles Editor for the *Lewis & Clark Law Review*, I am currently the Senior Teaching Assistant for both the advanced and introductory writing courses under the direction of Professors Steven Johansen and Daryl Wilson. Additionally, I had the privilege of sitting as a moot court judge during the past two academic years. Commencing May 21, 2012, I will join the Portland office of \_\_\_\_\_ as a law clerk, where I hope to gain additional practical experience.

I am hard working, mature and pride myself in a job well done. As a judicial clerk, I will draw upon my practical experience and formal studies, and will conduct myself as a professional of the highest integrity. I look forward to meeting with each of you to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

I. Law Student

## John Edward Smith

1234 Main St. • Vancouver, Washington 98683 • (360) 555-0880 • email@lclark.edu

February 28, 2012

Mr. Michael Barnum  
Personnel Division  
Oregon Judicial Department  
Supreme Court Building  
1163 State Street  
Salem, OR 97310

To the Justices of the Oregon Supreme Court, and Judges of the Oregon Court of Appeals and Oregon Tax Court:

I am a second year student at Lewis & Clark Law School and am very interested in a judicial clerkship position beginning in August 2013. I have enclosed my resume, transcript, writing sample, and letters of recommendation. After reviewing these materials, I hope you will agree that I would be an asset as a judicial clerk with the Oregon courts.

I am interested in clerking for you because I believe a judicial clerkship will allow me to round out my legal education and better prepare me for the practice of law. My positions before law school allowed me to assist in the law making process as well as witness how those laws are enforced by administrative agencies. During law school, my clerking experience has provided me with some insight on the roles attorneys play in the legal system. While I believe all three positions, coupled with my law school experiences, have given me a good basis from which to launch my legal career, working for a judge will provide me with insights into the practice of law that these experiences combined cannot.

Following law school I plan to take the Oregon Bar Exam and hope to work for a law firm with a litigation practice. I believe a judicial clerkship in your court can help me in this endeavor in three ways. First, I imagine that as your clerk not only would I be able to see how judicial decisions are made, but I would also learn what it takes to be an effective advocate. Second, right now I am unsure of exactly what area of law I want to practice in and am hoping the broad exposure I would get as your clerk will help me in this decision. Finally, as you can see by my writing awards, I have been able to develop strong legal writing and analysis skills. However, I hope that by researching and assisting you with your opinions, I will be able to sharpen these skills even further.

Thus far I have been fortunate to have worked for, and with, some wonderful people. Most of my prior positions have been in small offices that have been filled with high quality, energetic people, all driven by the same goal: to produce outstanding work. I know how to be serious about my work without taking myself too seriously. If the above description sounds like the type of candidate you are looking for, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my experiences and your expectations for the clerkship. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

John E. Smith

## Attachment I – Sample Thank You Letter

**Mary Smith**

10978 SW Durham Rd., #67 • Tigard, OR 97224 • (503) 624-2114 • marysmith@hotmail.com

June 28, 2011

Honorable Elizabeth L. Perris  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court  
1001 SW Fifth Avenue, #700  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Judge Perris:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the judicial clerkship position available with your chambers. Talking with you, and with your staff, about the everyday workings of the Bankruptcy Court confirmed my interest in the position. It would be a tremendous learning experience for me and, in turn, I believe my skills and experience would allow me to positively contribute to the work done by the Court.

Again, thank you for taking the time to interview me for the position and I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding your decision.

Respectfully,

Mary Smith

## Attachment J – Clerkship Application Timing

### ***From the Lewis & Clark Law School Faculty Judicial Clerkship Workgroup***

If you plan to apply for judicial clerkships, the hiring expectations of judges and the hiring timelines for the different courts may influence to which courts you apply. This document provides a quick guide to some of the points you need to think about, particularly when the state and federal court hiring timelines do not coincide.

If a judge extends an offer to you for a judicial clerkship, the judge usually will expect you to accept the offer immediately and complete the full one or two year commitment. Unfortunately, because the hiring timelines for state and federal courts often do not coincide, you will have to prioritize which courts you want to apply to. If extended an offer, recognize that accepting it means withdrawing your application from consideration by other judges and courts.

Currently, many state courts complete the hiring process for judicial clerkships before the application and hiring process begins for federal clerkships. For example, applications for post-graduation clerkships with the Oregon Supreme Court, Oregon Court of Appeals, and Oregon Tax Court can be made during the spring of your 2L year. Interviews and offers occur shortly thereafter, typically in mid-summer. However, applications for most federal clerkships are not permitted until the fall of your 3L year. Thus, if you would prefer a federal clerkship you might choose to apply for federal clerkships and only apply for a clerkship with the Oregon appellate courts if you are not offered a federal clerkship.

These timeline restraints require weighing the pros and cons of applying for state or federal clerkships, or both. In those instances where the state hiring process precedes the federal hiring process, the following sections discuss your different application strategies and options.

**Apply First for Federal Clerkships.** Federal clerkships generally are considered the most prestigious, offer higher salaries, and may provide stronger career opportunities than state clerkships. However, federal clerkships tend to be highly competitive. Thus, you will want to apply first for federal clerkships if (1) you are not interested in a state clerkship (or missed the application deadline); or (2) you are highly qualified and are willing to apply to several courts (or you have strong connections to a particular judge).

If you are not offered a federal clerkship, you could apply for a state clerkship outside the usual hiring process, by submitting your application in the fall of your 3L year. In addition, you could apply for a state clerkship during the spring of your 3L year; however, that clerkship would commence a year after you graduate. Many firms understand the value of a clerkship and will hire a graduate for that one year, with an eye towards them returning to the firm after the clerkship. This approach does present risk, but, depending on your credentials and your flexibility, that risk could pay off.

**Apply Only For State High Court Clerkships.** Apply for state clerkships in the spring of your 2L year. Clerkships with a state's highest court are prestigious and desirable, particularly if you plan to practice in the state where you are offered a clerkship. Thus, you could choose to apply for clerkships with *only* the highest court in a state where the hiring process precedes the federal hiring process. This option would allow you to seek a highly prestigious position without forgoing the state application process and applying only for federal clerkships. As with the federal clerkships, only highly qualified students should consider this option.

*If you plan to apply to the Oregon appellate courts, you should not specify a preference for the Oregon Supreme Court, which is Oregon's highest court. The Oregon appellate courts have a coordinated hiring process and generally consider only those applicants who are willing to consider a clerkship with either the Oregon Supreme Court or the Oregon Court of Appeals.*

If you accept a state appellate court clerkship, you still could apply for a federal clerkship in the fall after graduation (or one year later if your state court clerkship is two years) that would commence *after* your state clerkship. If you are not offered a state appellate court clerkship, you could still apply for a federal clerkship in the fall of your 3L year.

**Apply for State Clerkships in All Appellate Courts.** Apply for state clerkships with all of the state appellate courts during the spring of your 2L year. Most often, students who apply for clerkships with the state appellate courts submit their application for consideration by all of the courts. This option is most desirable if you prefer a state clerkship or if you are not highly qualified for the more competitive federal clerkships or high court clerkships. Clerkships in the state appellate courts provide excellent opportunities and may serve as a stepping stone for a later federal clerkship or state high court clerkship. This option allows you to maximize your opportunities for getting a clerkship.

## Attachment K – Is A Clerkship Right For Me?

This is meant to serve as a brief assessment for students contemplating applying for a judicial clerkship.

**Do you enjoy working in a relatively small setting with few co-workers?**

- Most judicial chambers have few staff members; depending on the court and judge, there may be one other clerk present, and one or more office staff.

**Do you prefer a more academic-type experience, reviewing legal briefs, and do you enjoy conducting legal research and writing?**

- Judicial clerkships are, at their heart, research and writing positions. If you do not enjoy these tasks, a clerkship is probably not the best job for you. Appellate-level courts, in particular, provide a more academic experience – almost an extension of law school itself. Clerks in appellate courts will delve more deeply into a given substantive area and the relevant case law than their trial court counterparts.

**Do you prefer a lively work environment, and to work on multiple tasks at once, and prefer almost daily contact with a variety of people?**

- If so, then a clerkship in a trial court may be ideal. Trial courts will provide insight into the courtroom's day-to-day operations, which can sometimes become quite hectic. Clerks are involved in every stage of the proceedings, and are often called upon to not only research legal issues and draft opinions, but to organize evidence and receive trial exhibits, interact with counsel and handle jury management during trials.

**Do you have financial, familial, or other constraints that make your starting salary an overriding concern? Is the prospect of a temporary position unattractive?**

- Clerkships typically pay less than associate positions with law firms. Be honest with yourself: can you afford to work as a clerk for one or more years? And consider the potential expense of relocating – either temporarily or permanently – if necessary. Also, some students are anxious to begin their “permanent” legal career, and for them, the thought of having to conduct another job search in one or two years is particularly daunting.

Please see Chris Lombard, Associate Director of Career Services, to help you further explore whether a clerkship is right for you. And should you decide a clerkship is right for you, the Office can assist you with the clerkship application process, court and judge selection and how to build a successful application.