

FINDING A SUMMER JUDICIAL INTERNSHIP

An internship with a judge is a good way to learn about the judicial process, how trials are conducted, and the inner workings of the court. You will see how judges make decisions, learn what judicial clerks do, and observe trials and hearings in court. It is a wonderful opportunity to gain experience that will help you on the path from law student to lawyer. The experience also may help you obtain a post-graduate judicial clerkship if you decide to pursue one. While most judicial internships are unpaid, they will usually qualify for a summer stipend from the law school.

Judicial interns do many of the things that clerks do – often, their immediate supervisor is the judge’s clerk, and they assist the clerk in research and writing for the judge. Interns may be given a project of drafting an order or helping the clerk to write a preliminary draft of an opinion. Judges usually allow interns to observe interesting court proceedings, and to participate in discussion regarding cases before the court.

Where Should You Consider Applying

Many judges, both federal and state, take on interns over the summer. You might choose to apply to a judge in your home city or state, a jurisdiction where you have connections or plan to practice after graduation, or to judges locally in Richmond or elsewhere in Virginia. Check with family and friends who may have a connection to a judge and may be willing to assist you with an introduction.

In addition to geographic considerations, the jurisdiction and level of court may play a role in where you apply. State circuit court judges preside over state civil and criminal matters, and also decide some family law matters. Federal district court judges preside over similar cases in federal court. Federal magistrate judges decide preliminary matters such as warrants, initial appearances and bonds; they conduct probable cause and motions hearings; and preside over some trials. Bankruptcy judges preside over bankruptcy proceedings, which may encompass many areas of law, including corporate, tax, family, and intellectual property law. State and federal courts of appeals judges hear appeals from lower courts. Occasionally, courts not of record, such as juvenile and domestic relations courts, may hire interns. As a general rule, appeals courts and federal courts will be the most competitive, and judges often will only consider applications from those in the top ranks of a given class. However, other considerations may play a role, such as personal connections, or a special status (veterans, for instance).

Finally, many judges in Virginia, on both the state and federal level, are alumni of the law school, and enjoy providing internship opportunities to Richmond students.

Some judges only hire first-year law students as interns, and some hire both first- and second-year students. Some judges hire students only for half a summer; some will allow students a full-summer internship opportunity. The Career Development Office maintains a list of Virginia

judges who frequently hire Richmond law interns. Some of these judges post their internship opportunities via Symplicity or participate in the Government and Public Interest Interview Program. Other judges prefer that you demonstrate the initiative to reach out to them about internship possibilities.

Many Virginia state circuit court and appellate judges (and some federal judges) are Richmond alums. These judges may be particularly receptive to hosting Richmond interns. Check with the Career Development Office for more information about reaching out to alumni judges.

How to Find Judicial Internships

If you are interested in interning with a judge, you can apply to advertised internships through Symplicity or other posted opportunities. However, since many judges prefer to hire those who reach out and apply on their own initiative, you can research judges using a variety of sources including: the Leadership Directory (available through the [Muse Law Library](#) website); the [Virginia Supreme Court's website](#); the [Guide to State Judicial Clerkships](#) (for other states' courts – contact the [Career Development Office](#) for login information); Symplicity (especially for contact information for federal judges); individual court websites (use search terms such as “California Superior Court,” “New Jersey Courts,” “Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas”).

While there is no particular “season” when judges hire interns, it is best to apply early. Consider applying early in December (before you get caught up in exams!) so that you will not miss opportunities. Check with the Career Development Office about the hiring plans of specific judges.

How to Apply for Judicial Internships

Judges want to see your resume, a well-written cover letter, your grade list, and a legal writing sample. In order to have the best chance of being considered for an interview, request that your materials be reviewed by your career advisor. Judge expect submitted materials to conform to traditional standards, and to be completely free of errors. Creative cover letters or distinctive resumes are not likely to be considered. Your grade list should conform to the template provided on the [CDO website](#) (do not use a download from Bannerweb), or request an official transcript from the registrar's office. If you are applying prior to release of your first semester grades, you may want to include your undergraduate GPA on your resume.

When applying to intern with a judge, consider the following:

- A judge's chambers is the most formal of all legal settings. All your communications with a judge should reflect this. This is not the time to express creativity.
- Excellent writing skills and attention to detail are two of the most important factors that judges consider in making hiring decisions.
- Before you apply, research the court and the judge. Know what kinds of legal matters the court has jurisdiction over, and what law applies. For instance, if you are applying to a federal judge, who rarely decides matters under state law, you will not get far if you say your interest is due to your hope to learn more about Virginia law practice.

- Research the judge. What kind of law did she practice before being elevated to the bench? Has the judge decided any important cases? Does the court have any specialized programs, such as a drug court, or mental health court?
- In your cover letter, demonstrate your knowledge of the court when you state the reasons for your interest in interning.
- Your cover letter and resume serve as the first example of your writing that a judge sees. Make sure they are perfect: ask your career advisor to review your cover letter and resume. Use the provided templates and examples on the CDO website to guide you.
- If you plan to practice in a particular community, or are from that community, express this in your letter. Judges like to know that they are providing opportunities to someone who will be part of the local legal community, or are from the community that the court serves.
- Include the best sample of your legal writing that you have. Something that demonstrates your legal research abilities would be particularly helpful. Incorporate any feedback you received from your professor, and then go over it again with a fine-toothed comb for any spelling, grammatical, citation, or formatting errors. Include a cover page (see example on the CDO website) that indicates what the sample was written for, whether it has been shortened from its original length, and – if written for an employer – whether you have permission to use it, and if client names have been redacted.
- Internships with judges are not paid. If you apply to be a judicial intern, make sure you timely file the proper documents for a summer stipend.
- Unless specifically invited to, do not email a judge. It is best to send unsolicited application materials through the mail.
- Check with the CDO for information about specific courts, judges, and internship opportunities. You may also review materials on the [CDO's clerkship page](#).

The Interview and Offer

If you are chosen for an interview, prepare by researching the court, the judge, and recent cases that the court has decided or for which it is known. You should know what kinds of cases the court has jurisdiction over, and if there is any important litigation recently decided or pending in that court. You should also be aware of recent major decisions by the US Supreme Court, or the highest court in the state where you applying. Judges often include other chambers personnel in interviews, so be prepared to be interviewed by clerks, court reporters, and judicial assistants as well as the judge. Be prepared to answer questions about your writing sample, about where and what kind of law you plan to practice, and why you decided to attend law school. Have questions prepared to ask the judge. Make sure you write down or memorize the names of any clerks or other assistants who participate in interviews; you will need to send thank you notes to all after the interview. When applying to work with a judge, it is expected that if an offer is extended, you will immediately accept. If not, the offer is likely to be extended to another applicant. If you accept an offer of employment elsewhere before receiving an offer, immediately notify the judge's chambers that you are no longer available.

Note: another way to gain experience working with a judge during law school is to participate in the Clinical Placement Program in your second or third year.



State Court Judicial Internship List

Individual courts and judges within courts may not have formalized internship programs but may be open to accepting interns. If particular court or judge is not on this list, write directly to the Judge you are interested in working for. Most judges will want to see your grade list and a writing sample. Before submitting, check with your career advisor to review your documents.
Key: Red=not hiring; Yellow=no information.

Court	Takes summer interns?	How to Apply	Notes
Abingdon Circuit Court, Judge Sage Johnson (alum)	1L or 2L		expect posting in Symplicity this winter
Albemarle Circuit Court, Judge Cheryl Higgins (alum)			Posted in Symplicity
Alexandria Circuit Court	1L or 2L		Does not offer internships
Anne Arundel, MD Circuit Court, Judge Paul Goetzke	2L	contact courts administrator, Douglas Hofstedt cthofs00@circuitcourt.org	
Arlington County Circuit Court	1L or 2L	Lauren Brice is new contact	Will post in Symplicity in January
Buchanan County Circuit Court, Judge Patrick Johnson		Students can send in their resumes anytime to Judge Patrick Johnson	
Caroline County Circuit Court			left a message
Chesapeake Circuit Court	1L or 2L	Posts in sympathy Jan or Feb, 1 or 2 interns. Resume (with GPA and class rank), cover letter, and unofficial transcript.	Nate Berry, alum, is courts admin
Chesterfield County Circuit Court	1L or 2L		left a message
Danville Circuit Court			didn't last year, not sure this year
DC Court of Appeals	1L or 2L	Apply directly to each Judge. See CDO for list. Send: cover letter, transcript, resume, list of references.	There is not a specific deadline for applying. Decisions are usually made in March.
Richmond, City of: Circuit Court	haven't had summer intern since 2009		Don't expect to offer this year
Court of Appeals of Virginia	1L or 2L	Individual judges	Sometimes posted in Symplicity
Fairfax County Circuit Court	1L or 2L		apply directly to individual judge
Fredericksburg Circuit Court	no		Not hiring. Remodeling, no room
Goochland County Circuit Court	no		not interested
Hampton City Circuit Court	1L or 2L	Send resume to The Honorable Bonnie L. Jones or The Honorable Wilford Taylor, Jr., PO Box 40, Hampton, VA 23669	They do accept applications for summer law clerks on rolling basis.
Hanover County Circuit Court			left a message. Secretary: Sue Bowen (804)365-6161

State Court Judicial Internship List

Henrico County Circuit Court			Already filled for next year
Hopewell Circuit Court, The Hon. W. Allan Sharrett - Sixth Judicial Circuit	1L, 2L Summer		Probably: will decide early January
The Honorable Bernard Goodwyn, Supreme Court of Virginia	1L or 2L	Send cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample, and two letters of reference	Hires 2 summer interns. Wait for fall grades before applying. Do NOT apply unless prepared to move to Hampton Roads/Chesapeake area for the summer
The Honorable Donald W. Lemons - Supreme Court of Virginia	no		doesn't usually hire interns
Louisa County Circuit Court	no		Judge is not interested
The Honorable William C. Mims - Supreme Court of Virginia	1L or 2L		May post in Symplicity
Montgomery County Circuit Court	maybe		needs to contact each judge separately
Norfolk Circuit Court	1L or 2L		Only one Judge hires interns, usually from W&M-- needs a local connection.
Office of the Chief Staff Attorney, Supreme Court of Virginia			I'LL CONTACT
Petersburg Circuit Court	No		not interested
Portsmouth Circuit Court	1L or 2L		Posts in Symplicity
Roanoke City Circuit Court			Won't be back at the office until Tues, 12/10. left a message (540)853-6700. E-mail: Brenda.hamilton@roanokeva.gov
Roanoke County Circuit Court			Talked to Clerk McGraw said no summer interns
Rockingham Circuit Court	1 yr. Judicial Clerkship after graduation		waiting to hear
Russell County Circuit Court	1L Summer Employment		waiting to hear
Suffolk Circuit Court	no		Not interested
Santa Clara County Superior Court of CA	1L, 2L Summer	apply online: http://agency.governmentjobs.com/scscourt/default.cfm	apply in January, decisions made in March/April, internships begin June
Stafford Circuit Court	1L, 2L, summer	apply through CDO	send cover letter, resume, & writing sample to Valerie.lherrou@richmond.edu by Feb. 1
Sussex County Circuit Court	no records		left a message (804)733-2623
Virginia Beach Circuit Court	1 yr. Judicial Clerkship after graduation		Called and left message with Tracey (757) 385-4181

Federal Court Judicial Internship List

Individual courts and judges within courts may not have formalized internship programs but may be open to accepting interns. If particular court or judge is not on this list, write directly to the Judge you are interested in working for. Most judges will want to see your grade list and a writing sample. Before submitting, check with your career advisor to review your documents.

Court	Takes summer interns?	How to Apply	Notes
The Honorable Judge Robert S. Ballou, Magistrate Judge, WDVA	1L or 2L	In Symplicity	Posts in Symplicity
The Honorable John S. Gibney, U.S. District Court, EDVA	1L or 2L		Send cover letter, resume, transcript, writing sample before Feb. 1
The Honorable Joel Hoppe, Magistrate Judge, WDVA	1L or 2L	In Symplicity	see posting in Symplicity
The Honorable Henry Hudson U.S. District Court EDVA,	1L or 2L	Mail care of Ms. Robin Belcher by April 1	hires 3 summer interns each 6 weeks long, overlapping
The Honorable M. Hannah Lauck, U.S. District Court, EDVA	1L or 2L	Not sure if taking an intern for 2015. In Symplicity if so.	
The Honorable David J. Novak, Magistrate Judge, EDVA	1L	Apply after 1st semester grades:	cover letter, resume, transcript/grade list, writing sample
The Honorable Rebecca Beach Smith - U.S. District Court EDVA	1L or 2L		said chambers isn't set up for internship
The Honorable Frederick P. Stamp, Jr., U.S. District Court for NDWVA			Alum. Waiting to hear. Call back on Monday- hiring for summer 2016
The Honorable Michael Urbanski, U.S. Dist Court, WDVA	1L or 2L		Applicants should apply directly to judge before end of fall sem
U.S. Bankruptcy Court Eastern District of Virginia			No, but its possible that some of the individual judges do
The Honorable Chief Judge Patricia Campbell-Smith	2L or 3L		For Summer 2015 internship send resume, cover letter, writing sample, unofficial transcript, and two letters of recommendation by March 1, 2015.
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York			No response so far
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York	1L or 2L		through Hank Henry LGBT judicial internship program
US District Court of the Virgin Islands	1L or 2L	See Symplicity	Posts in Symplicity
US Immigration Court, Oakdale, Louisiana	1L or 2L	See Symplicity	