

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP HANDBOOK 2017-2018



**The University of Akron School of Law
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Judicial Clerkships

A judicial clerkship is one of the strongest foundations upon which any law career can be built. Judicial clerkships are post-graduate positions, usually lasting one or two years, in which you work as the right hand analytical and research person for a judge. The positions usually start in August or September of each year. Deadlines for applications to federal judges are rolling and determined by individual judges, and you are eligible to begin applying beginning July 1st after your 1L year. Applications for judicial clerkships with state court judges are due for some states during the 2nd year of law school, and for other states, during the fall of the 3rd year of law school.

Judicial law clerk (“judicial clerk”) experience is universally recognized by the legal community to be extremely useful in law practice, so it is one of the most valuable experiences you could ever want on your resume. The training judicial clerks receive in legal analysis, writing and research often leads directly to rewarding careers in public and private practice, and in academia. Judicial clerkships are available at federal, state and local levels in both trial and appellate courts as well as in bankruptcy, tax, immigration and other courts. Other types of judicial clerkships that should be considered are those with Federal Administrative Law Judges (“ALJs”).

Competition for judicial clerkships is fierce from law students around the country. The higher the level of court, the tougher the competition. Geographic location also plays a part in the degree of competition; the more “desirable” the location (i.e. San Diego, California, New York City, Orlando Florida, etc.) the greater the competition. Very strong grades and law review experience are important qualifications for judicial clerkships, though some candidates have secured judicial law clerk positions by demonstrating their work quality to a judge through prior service as a student judicial extern to that judge either as a volunteer or for academic externship credit.

Duties of a Judicial Clerk

The most important function of a judicial clerk is to assist the judge with the research and writing associated with a heavy caseload. The exact duties vary from judge to judge, but duties normally include the following:

- Review competing pleadings
- Research issues presented by the pleadings
- Write legal memoranda respecting the pleadings and recommend disposition
- Draft opinions and orders for discussion with the judge
- Proof and edit opinions and orders written by the judge
- Discuss/argue potential dispositions with the judge
- Shepardize and check citations for accuracy
- Attend/observe many court proceedings

There may be other functions that a particular judge will assign to a judicial clerk. Judicial clerks in a *trial* court may also be assigned the following duties:

- Communicate with attorneys to determine case status
- Conduct settlement conferences with attorneys
- Assist the court during trials
- Write jury instructions

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The work of a judicial clerk in an *appellate* court is sometimes considered to be more academic-like than the work of a judicial clerk in a *trial* court. In appellate courts, caseloads often focus on briefed appeals, and more of a judicial clerk's time is spent researching and writing on each case. By contrast, in trial courts, caseloads are full with pretrial motions and conferences in addition to trials, sometimes leaving less unfettered time for research and writing than in the appellate courts.

Benefits of a Judicial Clerkship

Attorneys who have completed judicial clerkships agree that the experience was invaluable to their careers. A judicial clerk often learns more about how courts actually decide cases than an attorney might ever hope to learn after years of private, public interest or government practice. Judicial clerks fine-tune their writing skills and learn exactly what makes a good (and bad) brief or motion argument. They learn what type of work product persuades the courts and how best to present those arguments. For judicial clerks who are not certain of the type of law they eventually want to practice, the experience gained while clerking often helps to define areas of interest. Law clerks are also exposed to the methods and customs of practitioners, and learn the level of professional behavior expected of lawyers.

Upon completion of a judicial clerkship, clerks often find they are very marketable. The contacts and experience gained while clerking broaden clerk's future opportunities with all types of employers.

I. Courts Where Judicial Clerkships are Available

Traditional U.S. Federal Courts. The Federal Courts (sometimes referred to as "Article III Courts") are the independent Judicial Branch of the United States federal government. The Federal Court system was created by, and its jurisdiction is governed by, Article III of the United States Constitution.

- *U.S. Supreme Court.* Judicial clerks to U.S. Supreme Court Justices have first clerked for another federal judge (usually appellate) before applying.
- *U.S. Courts of Appeals.* The Courts of Appeals consist of thirteen circuits: the eleven numbered circuits and the Federal and D.C. circuits. Judges sit in various locations within each circuit and generally hire one or more clerks.
- *U.S. District Courts.* District Courts are the trial division of the federal courts and are presided over by District Court Judges and Magistrate Judges, both of whom hire judicial clerks. There may be several Districts within a given state. The U.S. District Courts employ Federal Magistrate Judges. Because of overcrowding in the court system, these judges hear many, and in most cases, all of the same matters heard by federal judges. A clerkship with a Magistrate Judge is a phenomenal experience and should be viewed equally to a clerkship with a District Court Judge.
- *U.S. Bankruptcy Courts.* All bankruptcies are controlled by the Federal Bankruptcy Code and are filed under the jurisdiction of the Federal courts. Each U.S. Federal District has a bankruptcy court that acts as a unit of that court.

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U.S. Court of Special Jurisdiction. The Congress of the United States has also established a number of Special Courts which also employ judicial clerks. The jurisdiction of these courts is allocated by subject matter. These courts are also part of the Federal Judiciary.

- *U.S. Court of Federal Claims.* Handles claims for money due from the U.S., including certain tax cases.
- *U.S. Court of International Trade.* Hears cases involving the value, classification and tariffs on imports.
- *U.S. Tax Court.* Jurisdiction over controversies involving income, estate and gift taxes.
- *U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.* Reviews all court martial proceedings.
- *U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran's Claims.* Reviews decisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- *Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation.* Reviews and determines whether civil different federal districts should be consolidated and transferred to one federal district.

Administrative Law Judges. Certain federal executive branch agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency and Drug Enforcement Administration, employ Administrative Law Judges ("ALJs"). ALJs enforce agencies' regulations and hear cases that pertain to the agency. Many, if not most, ALJs employ judicial clerks.

Look for the names and contact information of ALJs here: <https://www.oalj.dol.gov/>

How to Obtain a Federal Judicial Clerkship

The primary method to apply for federal clerkships is through the OSCAR system. Most federal judges utilize OSCAR annually to obtain and review applications for judicial clerkships. NOTE: for judges who use OSCAR, it is the only method. Students interested in a federal judicial clerkship should read the weekly Career Connection and review the online job postings on AkronLawJobs as federal agencies occasionally release clerkship positions to law schools for posting. Further, interested students should regularly check the agency's website and www.usajobs.gov as federal agencies occasionally announce openings for clerkship positions on those websites.

Finally, and most importantly, if you are serious about obtaining a federal judicial clerkship, it is imperative that you contact the CSO immediately and stay in contact with the office throughout your law school career. There are many procedural obstacles and groundwork that needs to be accomplished prior to obtaining a clerkship and you will want the CSO to provide you with information and guidance.

State Courts

Like federal courts, state courts also have both trial and appellate courts. Some states have special courts to address issues relevant to that state. However, unlike the federal courts, not all state courts employ judicial clerks per se. Because states vary so widely in their procedures for

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state court clerkships, check [The Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkships](#) online, state court websites or with the Career Services Office for state by state information. In addition, below is some information for Ohio, as well as a Guide to all states at the end of this Handbook.

About the Ohio Judicial System

The Constitution of Ohio separates our state government into three branches, each with distinct areas of responsibility — the executive, the legislative and the judicial.

The primary function of the judicial branch is to fairly and impartially settle disputes according to the law. To do this, a number of courts have been established in the state by the Constitution and by acts of the General Assembly.

Further, in addition to its place in the court structure as the court of last resort, the Supreme Court, in particular the Chief Justice, is responsible for the administration of the judicial branch in Ohio.

- **The Supreme Court of Ohio**

The Supreme Court of Ohio is established by Article IV, Section 1, of the Ohio Constitution, which provides that “the judicial power of the state is vested in a Supreme Court, Courts of Appeals, Courts of Common Pleas and divisions thereof, and such other courts inferior to the Supreme Court as may from time to time be established by law.”

Article IV, Section 2, of the Constitution sets the size of the Court at seven – a Chief Justice and six Justices – and outlines the jurisdiction of the Court.

The Supreme Court is the court of last resort in Ohio. Most of its cases are appeals from the 12 district courts of appeals. The Court may grant leave to appeal criminal cases from the courts of appeals and may direct any court of appeals to certify its record on civil cases that are found to be “cases of public or great general interest.”

The Court must accept appeals of cases that originated in the courts of appeals; cases involving the death penalty; cases involving questions arising under the U.S. Constitution or the Ohio Constitution; and cases in which there have been conflicting opinions from two or more courts of appeals.

The Court must also accept appeals from such administrative bodies as the Board of Tax Appeals and the Public Utilities Commission. The Court has original jurisdiction for certain special remedies that permit a person to file an action in the Supreme Court. These extraordinary remedies include writs of habeas corpus (involving the release of persons allegedly unlawfully imprisoned or committed), writs of mandamus and procedendo (ordering a public official to do a required act), writs of prohibition (ordering a lower court to cease an unlawful act), and writs of quo warranto (against a person or corporation for usurpation, misuse or abuse of public office or corporate office or franchise).

The Court may also grant leave to appeal a case involving a contested election. This type of a case is unique because it is the only type of discretionary appeal that permits a case to be taken directly from the court of common pleas to the Supreme Court, bypassing the court of appeals.

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The Supreme Court makes rules governing practice and procedure in Ohio's courts, such as the Rules of Evidence, Rules of Civil Procedure and Rules of Criminal Procedure. Procedural rules adopted by the Supreme Court become effective unless both houses of the General Assembly adopt a concurrent resolution of disapproval. The Supreme Court also exercises general superintendence over all state courts through its rule-making authority. The rules of superintendence set minimum standards for court administration statewide. Unlike procedural rules, rules of superintendence do not have to be submitted to the General Assembly to become effective.

The Court also has authority over the admission of attorneys to the practice of law in Ohio and may discipline admitted attorneys who violate the rules governing the practice of law.

The Chief Justice and six Justices are elected to six-year terms on a nonpartisan ballot. Two Justices are chosen at the general election in even-numbered years. In the year when the Chief Justice is on the ballot, voters elect three members of the Court. A person must be an attorney with at least six years of experience in the practice of law to be elected or appointed to the Court. Appointments are made by the governor for vacancies that occur between elections.

- **Courts of Appeals**

The Courts of Appeals are established by Article IV, Section 1, of the Ohio Constitution and their jurisdiction is outlined in Article IV, Section 3. As the intermediate level appellate courts, their primary function is to hear appeals from the common pleas, municipal and county courts. Each case is heard and decided by a three-judge panel.

The state is divided into 12 appellate districts, each of which is served by a court of appeals. The number of judges in each district depends on a variety of factors, including the district's population and the court's caseload. Each district has a minimum of four appellate judges. Appeals court judges are elected to six-year terms in even-numbered years. They must have been admitted to the practice of law in Ohio six years preceding commencement of the term.

In addition to their appellate jurisdiction, the courts of appeals have original jurisdiction, as does the Supreme Court, to hear applications for writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, procedendo, prohibition and quo warranto. The 10th District Court of Appeals in Franklin County also hears appeals from the Ohio Court of Claims.

- **The Court Of Claims**

The Court of Claims has original jurisdiction to hear and determine all civil actions filed against the state of Ohio and its agencies. The court also hears appeals from decisions made by the attorney general on claims allowed under the Victims of Crime Act.

The Court of Claims decides civil claims typically involving contract disputes, property damage, personal injury, immunity of state officers and employees, discrimination and wrongful imprisonment. The Chief Justice assigns judges to hear such cases. In almost every instance, a single judge will hear a case, but the Chief Justice may assign a panel of three judges to a civil action that presents novel or complex issues of law and fact.

Civil complaints filed for \$2,500 or less are decided on the contents of the case file or "administratively" by the clerk or a deputy clerk of the court. Appeals from those decisions

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("administrative determinations") may be taken to a judge of the court upon motion for court review. The court's judgment is not subject to further appeal.

Appeals filed by crime victims are heard and determined by a panel of three commissioners who are appointed by the Supreme Court for a term of six years. A further and final appeal from the panel's decision may be taken to a judge of the court. Like administrative determinations, the judge's decision is final.

- **Courts of Common Pleas**

The Court of Common Pleas, the only trial court created by the Ohio Constitution, is established by Article IV, Section 1, of the Constitution, and its duties are outlined in Article IV, Section 4. There is a court of common pleas in each of the 88 counties. Specific courts of common pleas may be divided into separate divisions by the General Assembly, including general, domestic relations, juvenile and probate divisions. Common pleas judges are elected to six-year terms on a nonpartisan ballot. A person must be an attorney with at least six years of experience in the practice of law to be elected or appointed to the court.

- **General Division**

The general division has original jurisdiction in all criminal felony cases and in all civil cases in which the amount in controversy is more than \$15,000. General divisions also have appellate jurisdiction over the decisions of some state administrative agencies.

- **Domestic Relations Division**

Domestic relations courts have jurisdiction over all proceedings involving divorce or dissolution of marriages, annulment, legal separation, spousal support and allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the care of children.

- **Juvenile Division**

Juvenile courts hear cases involving persons under 18 years of age who are charged with acts that would be crimes if committed by an adult. They also hear cases involving unruly, dependent and neglected children. Juvenile courts have jurisdiction in adult cases involving paternity, child abuse, nonsupport, contributing to the delinquency of minors and the failure to send children to school.

- **Probate Division**

The Ohio Constitution of 1851 provided that probate courts were to be established as separate independent courts with jurisdiction over the probate of wills and supervision of the administration of estates and guardianships. In 1968, under the Modern Courts Amendment of the Ohio Constitution, the probate courts became divisions of the courts of common pleas. Probate courts also have jurisdiction over the issuance of marriage licenses, adoption proceedings, determination of sanity or mental competency and certain eminent domain proceedings. Probate judges can perform marriages and may charge a fee for the service.

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- **Municipal and County Courts**

Municipal and county courts are created by the General Assembly as provided in R.C. 1901 and 1907. When municipal courts exercise countywide jurisdiction, no county court is needed. A county court is needed if an area of a county is not served by a municipal court.

The subject-matter jurisdiction of municipal and county courts is nearly identical. Both municipal and county courts have the authority to conduct preliminary hearings in felony cases, and both have jurisdiction over traffic and non-traffic misdemeanors. These courts also have limited civil jurisdiction. Municipal and county courts may hear civil cases in which the amount of money in dispute does not exceed \$15,000.

Judges sitting in these courts, like probate judges, have the authority to perform marriages. Municipal court judges are elected to six-year terms on a nonpartisan judicial ballot. A municipal court judge may have jurisdiction in one or more municipalities, across county borders, in adjacent townships, or throughout an entire county. A county court judge is elected to a six-year term on a nonpartisan ballot. All county court judges and 20 municipal court judges are part-time.

Municipal court judges and county court judges must be attorneys with at least six years of experience in the practice of law.

- **Mayor's Courts**

Mayor's courts are not a part of the judicial branch of Ohio government and are not courts of record. Still, they must file statistics quarterly and annually with the Supreme Court. Additionally, at the request of the General Assembly, the Supreme Court has adopted rules providing for court procedures and basic legal education for mayors. Mayors whose courts hear alcohol- and drug-related traffic offenses have additional educational requirements.

Ohio and Louisiana are the only two states that allow the mayors of municipal corporations to preside over a court. In Ohio, in municipalities populated by more than 100 people where there is no municipal court, mayor's courts hear only cases involving violations of local ordinances and state traffic laws.

A mayor is not required to be a lawyer, but may appoint an attorney who has engaged in the practice of law for three years to hear cases in mayor's court.

A person convicted in a mayor's court may appeal the conviction to the municipal or county court having jurisdiction within the municipal corporation.

II. When to Apply

A. Federal Judicial Clerkships.

Federal judicial clerkships generally begin in August or September of each year. Second and Third year students and graduates may apply for federal judicial clerkships and law students should start the process in July, preceding 2L year.

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There are two methods by which to apply to Federal Judges: Online and Regular Mail or email. Some judges only accept applications online through a database called “OSCAR” (Online System for Clerkship Application and Review); see <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/home> and more information below, while other judges accept applications only through regular mail.

1. For Judges Accepting Online OSCAR Applications

You will have access to OSCAR to begin your applications July 1st preceding your 2L year. You should frequently check OSCAR to note open positions and deadlines, as they vary by Judge. However, it is highly recommended that you complete your online applications early and prior to all deadlines. **Please note that the specific OSCAR deadlines change every year and are published far in advance by the Career Services Office. Full OSCAR instructions are available in the Career Services Office and below and here:**

<https://oscar.uscourts.gov/applicant-prep-kit>

Applications submitted later than the specified deadlines will likely not be considered timely and will likely not receive the same consideration, if any, as timely applications. Many judges receive hundreds of applications on the deadline date and make their interview decisions immediately thereafter. Therefore, you should research and prepare your federal judicial clerkship applications beginning early in the summer before the applications are due, more than one year prior to the start of the judicial clerkship.

Very occasionally federal clerkships become available in the spring of your 3L year. For instance, when a new judge is confirmed, or when an existing clerk leaves his or her judicial clerkship post early, positions may open up throughout the year. Most often these position openings are posted on an individual court’s website or are announced through OSCAR.

2. For Judges Accepting Regular Mail or Email Applications.

Applicants must mail/send their judicial clerkship applications so that they arrive in chambers of hiring judges ON the deadline date; not before, and not after. Because judges have established these guidelines to gather applications from interested candidates quickly and efficiently, applications received in chambers before this date may be disregarded; and applications received in chambers more than a day or two after this date may be deemed “late”. So strive to have your materials arrive in chambers on the designated deadline date.

B. State Judicial Clerkships.

State judicial clerkships timelines vary from state to state, but like federal clerkships, state clerkships also generally begin in August or September of each year. **Many state courts require applications from second year students more than a year and a half prior to the start of the clerkship.** Other state courts take judicial clerkship applications early in the third year. Still other state courts, such as some California Superior Courts, hire judicial law clerks (sometimes called Legal Research Assistants) late in the third year, only several months in advance of the start of the clerkship.

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Therefore, for state clerkships, you should research the states in which you are interested early (ideally near the beginning of your second year), so you understand the particular hiring process for those states and avoid missing important application deadlines.

See resources below for information about which state courts accept applications and the applicable due dates.

Consult with the Career Services Office staff to ensure you conduct a complete search for federal and state judicial clerkships of interest to you.

III. To Which Judges Should You Apply?

Be Geographically Strategic! Realistically assess the competitiveness of your own candidacy, and decide about the geographic scope of your applications accordingly. If you really want the experience and value of a judicial clerkship you should apply widely, zeroing in on areas where you have ties (where you went to school, were raised or have relatives) and adding “less desirable” regions where you believe you will have a competitive advantage because many law students will not want to apply. These are areas where you will likely have more success than if you limit your quest for these prestigious positions only to highly desirable locations.

REMEMBER: A clerkship in any federal court in the country is valuable no matter where you intend to live and practice. Federal law is federal law no matter where you live! Similarly, a state court clerkship anywhere in your region of preference is of tremendous value to your career. Students have been most successful when they have not limited their search to intensely competitive areas such as California, New York, and other large metropolitan areas or to just Ohio. After one year of judicial clerkships, clerks successfully lateral back to excellent positions in those areas.

After you decide on the geographic scope of your applications, the next step is to decide to which specific courts and/or individual judges you will apply and to compile the list of judges to whom you will apply. The sections below list helpful resources to assist you in identifying federal and state judges in chosen geographic areas. Consider also applying to judges with connections to your undergraduate institution, those with scholarly or practice interests similar to your own, those in your home state, those with apparent political leanings aligned with yours or those whose backgrounds are of particular interest to you. Finally, for federal trial court clerkships, remember to apply to positions with prestigious Magistrate Judges and Senior Judges as well as with District Judges; there is sometimes less competition for these positions, though they are equally as valuable as other federal clerkships.

Finally, if you are interested in business, economics, mathematics, or are not sure what practice area you would like to pursue, apply for a judicial clerkship with a Bankruptcy Court. These are impressive positions with tremendous future career power.

IV. How to Apply (a handy tip sheet is also included here, on Page 23)

A. Federal Judicial Clerkships (including Bankruptcy Courts)

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Important Note: Remember that there are two (2) types of federal judges for application purposes: “Online OSCAR Applications” and “Regular or Email Applications.”

1. Online “OSCAR” Applications

OSCAR is the web-based system funded by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts that enables clerkship applicants to file complete applications, and recommenders to file letters of recommendation, online. Applicants are able to sort and screen clerkships and designate the OSCAR-participant judges to whom they wish to apply. Judges can sort and screen the applications directed to them. Law school administrators are able to view student applicant information, and coordinate the submission of faculty recommendation letters. OSCAR presents a list of all federal judges. Once you are logged in to OSCAR, OSCAR indicates one of the following for each judge (**Note** that these important categories will not be revealed unless you are logged into the system):

- a. “Apply on OSCAR”: accepting online applications only through OSCAR; or
- b. “Traditional Applications”: accepting regular mail/paper applications or e-mail applications; or
- c. “Not Hiring”; or
- d. “No Clerkship Information Available” Note that this category of judges is only available after you have logged in and search for judges. Before logging in these judges are categorized as “Not Hiring”. Be careful. As noted below, this category may present tremendous opportunity with reduced competition.

In the first two instances above, OSCAR presents “job listings” detailing information about application requirements. Last year approximately 800 judges posted listings ONLINE through OSCAR.

For judges listed on OSCAR as accepting online applications, OSCAR enables clerkship applicants to select the federal judges to whom they will apply, and then to build and submit their applications online. For these judges, applicants upload cover letters, resumes, grade sheets/transcripts; writing samples and submit electronic recommendation letters. See below. For online applications from current students, judges will log on to OSCAR on a specific given date each year to view all complete applications, and to begin their hiring process. The specific OSCAR deadline dates are published on a rolling basis – check OSCAR frequently and check in with the Career Services Office.

Helpful hint: you can set up email notifications on OSCAR to be notified about new positions!

For Judges listed on OSCAR as accepting regular or email applications (but not through the OSCAR online system), you will follow the application instructions on the OSCAR “listing” (regarding materials requested, hiring criteria, etc.) but you will send your applications as detailed below under “Regular Mail or Email Applications”.

For judges listed on OSCAR as “not hiring” you will not submit an application. These judges have affirmatively informed OSCAR that they do not have open positions.

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For judges listed on OSCAR as “no clerkship information available” all you know is that they have not provided any affirmative information to OSCAR about their clerkship hiring situation. Some of these judges DO have clerkship openings, but they rely on receiving applications from the diligent students who go outside the convenient online system to discover the opportunity. Some of these judges use this method to reduce the number of applications received to only those from such diligent applicants. On the other hand, some of these judges DO NOT have clerkship openings because they already have term law clerks or career law clerks, or because they do not have law clerks at all on their staffs.

However, you cannot be certain which of these “no clerkship information available” judges is which. **Thus, we strongly recommend that you treat all of these “no clerkship information available” judges as “regular mail” judges and that you send them hard copy applications.** In doing so, you must recognize that some of the “no clerkship information available” judges are in fact not seeking clerks at all for one the reasons above. However, by applying to this group of judges, you will “capture” in your application process those judges who DO have clerkship openings, but who have simply not posted any information about the opening. Obviously, these judges will receive fewer applications, as most students will only apply to those affirmatively posting openings. Thus, your odds of receiving an interview invitation may improve with this narrow group of judges.

To apply ONLINE through OSCAR:

- a. **Step 1- Order copies of your most recent transcript.**
- b. **Step 2- go to <https://oscar.uscourts.gov/> and create a login.**

Click on the applicant registration and complete the registration form and your Profile. This is all self- explanatory. When prompted to include your class rank, round UP to the next higher category. For example, if you are top 11% indicate top 15% rather than “top 10%”. Once registered, you will have access to the database of federal judges who accept online applications through OSCAR.

- c. **Step 3- Download and review the “Oscar Applicant Guide.”**

This guide, located under “Resources,” will provide you will all instructions necessary to prepare and complete online applications for any of the OSCAR judges to whom you wish to apply. In sum, you will upload resumes, cover letters, writing samples and transcripts to the online system, and “build” application packages for each judge.

- d. **Step 4- Contact prospective recommenders and arrange for letters of recommendation in accordance with instructions below for Recommendation Letters.**
- e. **Step 5- Create your own “Grade Sheet” on OSCAR by typing in your transcript information into the online form.**

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- f. **Step 6** – Upload the resume, cover letters, writing samples and other documents you will use to build your online applications to individual judges.
- g. **Step 7-** Designate the OSCAR judges to whom you will apply and upload necessary documents. Note the application requirements for each particular judge on that judge’s page, as the requirements will vary from judge to judge.
- h. **Step 8 - Recommendation Letters-** On each individual judge’s page, designate the names of the individuals who have firmly agreed to serve as your recommenders. Once you do so, that recommender will be notified by email that you have selected them. The Career Services Office will also be notified of your recommender selections. This does not obviate the need to FIRST speak with your recommender before indicating them on OSCAR. It is also a good idea to submit to the CSO a list of your recommenders.
 - i. **Faculty Recommenders.** Ensure that your recommenders submit the letters they write to the Career Services Office no later than the designated deadline in accordance with the important instructions below. The Career Services Office or the faculty member will upload those recommendations to your “application package” for each judge. You will not upload any of your Faculty Recommendation Letters.
 - ii. **Non-Faculty (Employer) Recommenders.** Unlike faculty recommenders, you must ensure that your Employer Recommenders upload their recommendation letters directly to the OSCAR system. As soon as you identify an Employer Recommender on the OSCAR system, the employer will receive notice from the system on how to upload your recommendation letter and the employer must do it themselves with your assistance.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is your responsibility to monitor the preparation of your letters of recommendation and to ensure that your faculty recommenders submit your letters to the Office of Career Services no later than your application deadline date(s). Career Services will not remind your recommenders of their obligations. If the CSO does not receive letters of recommendation from your recommenders by that date, you cannot be guaranteed that the recommendations will be uploaded before the date when judges will be able to view your online applications.

- i. **Step 9 – FINALIZE APPLICATION!!!** Once all required materials are complete and uploaded, click “finalize application” and your materials will be submitted to the judge for review on the established deadline date. (Remember: Submit your applications early to be safe.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not click “FINALIZE APPLICATION” until you are CERTAIN that your application is complete (including recommendation letters) as you will NOT be able to edit the application in any way after you click “FINALIZE APPLICATION”.

**PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR JUDICIAL
CLERKSHIPS FROM AKRON LAW SCHOOL FACULTY:**

1. **Student requests letters of recommendation from professors** as far in advance of application as possible. Students shall notify professors that letters must be uploaded or e-mailed to the Office of Career Services by the specific application deadline. Students shall discuss with professor whether professor authorizes the CSO to sign on professor's behalf.
2. **Student immediately emails lawcareerplanning@uakron.edu** and lets CSO know which professors are preparing recommendation letters and who will sign the letters.
3. **Federal and State Court Clerkship Applications**
 - a. **For Federal Court Clerkship Applications**
 - (i) Professors individually upload to OSCAR or provide CSO with electronic copy of letter by email at lawcareerplanning@uakron.edu by the specified due date(s). Professors confirm whether they will sign the letters themselves or if they authorize the use of electronic signature. Students are responsible for ensuring that faculty members meet all deadline. This is a strict deadline, as hundreds of individual regular mail letters must be prepared and still more letters must be uploaded for OSCAR judges.
 - b. **For State Court Clerkship Applications**
 - (i) Professors provide CSO with electronic copy of letter by email at lawcareerplanning@uakron.edu as soon as possible after request by student, and in appropriate advance time to accommodate application due date which student must determine and of which the student must inform the professor.
 - (ii) As soon as possible in advance of student's preferred application mailing date, student provides CSO with an Excel spreadsheet (See Step 4 below under "Regular Mail and Email Applications") containing the list of state judges (with complete addresses) to whom the letters should be addressed. Letters will be prepared and available to student or faculty member for signature seven (7) calendar days after receipt of both letter and properly formatted Excel spreadsheet.
4. Career Services produces the reference letters and envelopes and provides them to the faculty members for the faculty member's signature.
 - a. If the faculty member will sign all letters personally, Career Services will provide faculty member with the letters for signature. Faculty member will then return the signed letters to CSO upon completion. Career Services will then contact the student for student to pick up letters. **Student then prepares each application and mails all completed applications.**
5. Student should include reference letters with the rest of the application materials. The reference letters should be in individual sealed envelopes addressed to each individual judge.

2. **Regular Mail and Email Applications**

a. **Step 1- Order copies of your most recent transcript.**

b. **Step 2- Request Recommendation Letters.**

- (i) Choose recommenders who will prepare your required letters of recommendation. Most judges require three (3) recommenders. Two faculty recommenders and one legal employer recommender are ideal. Three faculty recommenders are also appropriate.
- (ii) Contact your recommenders personally to inquire if they are willing and able to write a strong letter of recommendation in support of your applications. Instruct them to upload to OSCAR or send the electronic version of any letter of recommendation to Career Services by your deadline date(s).

c. **Step 3- Preparing Recommendation Letters**

- (i) **For NON- FACULTY reference letter writers (i.e., employers) you should ask the writer what you can do to alleviate any burden on them.** At a minimum, you should supply the NON-FACULTY recommendation letter writers with mail merge data for each judge to whom you expect a letter to be prepared. You should also arrange either to pick up the sealed letters or provide postage for mailing to you so they can be included by you in the final application packages you mail to your judges. You could also volunteer to do the actual printing yourself.
- (ii) **FACULTY RECOMMENDATION LETTERS.** Faculty recommendation letters are prepared through the Career Services Office. You must adhere to the above-named procedures in order to obtain such letters of recommendation.

d. **Step 4- Compiling Your Regular Mail Application:**

- (i) All required application materials for an individual judge should be bound together with an appropriately sized binder clip.
- (ii) Individual elements of the application that are more than one page (e.g. writing sample) should be stapled individually and put in binder clip.
- (iii) All letters of recommendation should be sealed in their properly addressed envelopes and sealed envelope put in binder clip.
- (iv) All individual elements of the application should contain your name in the event they separate from the rest of your materials.

3. Additional Resources for Federal Court Applications.

- a. The U.S. Courts site www.uscourts.gov provides links to the websites of individual courts where you will find the most current lists of all judges sitting in that court. In conjunction with the Judicial Yellow Book, this site will ensure you apply to all judges in your regions of consideration. You will also often find a human resources/jobs/employment/career opportunities link.
- b. Newly Appointed Judges. Judges who have been recently appointed do not receive the large number of applications that established judges receive, simply because most law students are not aware of these judges. To determine whether a federal judicial nominee has been approved by the Senate, check:

http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/nominations.htm

- Click on “Confirmed” or “Pending in Committee” under “Nominations Received – Civilian Nominations”
- Scroll down to “In the Committee on the Judiciary”
- I.e., “Jimmie V. Reyna ... to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.”

B. State Judicial Clerkships

1. Step 1- Order copies of your most recent transcript.
2. Step 2 – “The Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkships,” **Current Edition**. Start your research here. It explains each state’s judicial clerkship application procedures at each level with salary and contact information. (Note: Some state court websites provide instruction as to how to apply. We recommend you check these websites and heed state website instruction where it differs from the Vermont Guide.) You may access the Vermont Law School Guide on-line at <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/judicial-clerkship-guide>

Click on “Access the Guide”

Click on “Guide to Judicial Clerkship Procedures” or on a specific state

Please note that the Vermont Law School Guide username and password change occasionally. Please check with the Career Services Office for the most up to date information.

3. Step 3- Other sources of information. Some helpful resources are available on the CSO’s webpage under in the Resource Library and herein.

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V. Tips for Preparing the Application Materials You Need to Apply for Federal and State Judicial Clerkships.

Generally, your application package must include: Cover Letter, Resume, Transcript, Writing Sample, and Three Sealed Letters of Reference.

- A. Cover Letters** Explain in the first paragraph why you want to work for a particular judge and/or why you want to clerk in that court. In the second paragraph explain the skills you will bring to the court and examples of how you have demonstrated these skills. As with any cover letter, you must capture the judge's interest immediately. Work hard on your letters and tailor them to the judge and/or court.

The Career Services Office suggests writing several categories of letters:

1. To your "dream" judges on which applications you will work hardest;
 2. Letters based on your academic credentials to send to judges you think base their decisions mostly on academic qualification;
 3. Letters based on your volunteer/public service experience to send to judges you think might evidence a preference for this type of experience, or who come from such a background;
 4. Separate letters to district judges, and magistrate judges based on the differing nature of the work; and
 5. Separate letters to the judges for each state you might apply to, uniquely identifying the reason for your interest in practicing in the community.
- B. Resume**. Have your resume reviewed again to make sure it is the best it can be for this important competitive process.
- C. Transcript**. You may submit a student issued copy of your official law school transcript which you can obtain from the Registrar's Office. Be sure to request transcripts early. For June applications you should request your transcript no later than May. A small number of judges may also request your undergraduate transcript, so it is a good idea to order one early just in case.
- D. Writing Sample**. You should choose an analytical piece of writing that is your own work product. A brief or memorandum is a good choice, although your scholarly writing may be appropriate if it shows your ability to analyze and distinguish legal issues. Include a cover sheet explaining the source and nature of the writing sample.
- E. Reference Letters**. **You will generally need three letters of reference** (also known as "recommendation letters") from faculty members or attorneys for whom you have worked (preferably three from faculty or two from faculty and one from a legal employer). When you ask professors and legal employers whether they will write such letters for you, talk openly with these individuals about why you are competitive, so they are enthusiastic about writing powerful letters tailored to the duties involved in clerking.

Make sure all of your materials are impeccable and ERROR FREE! Have the CSO, a friend or relative proofread your materials for those difficult to spot errors!

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VI. How Do I Address Correspondence to a Judge?

The proper address and salutation for particular judges will vary depending on the court in which the Judge or Justice sits. Most situations are described below.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Judge's Title as it should appear on letter and envelope</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
FEDERAL COURTS:		
U.S. Supreme Court:		
Chief Justice	The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court	Dear Chief Justice (surname):
Associate Justice	Associate Justice (full name) The United States Supreme Court	Dear Justice (surname):
U.S. Courts of Appeals:		
Chief Judge, Senior Judge, Judge	The Honorable (full name) (position), United States Court of Appeals	Dear Judge (surname):
U.S. District Court:		
Chief Judge, Senior Judge, Judge	The Honorable (full name), (position), United States District Court	Dear Judge (surname)
Magistrate Judge		Dear Judge (surname):
Other Federal Courts:		
Chief Judge	The Honorable (full name) (Position), Name of Court	Dear Judge (surname)
STATE COURTS		
State Supreme Court:		
Chief Justice	The Honorable (full name) Chief Justice, Supreme Court for the	Dear Chief Justice (surname):

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	(State/Commonwealth) of (state)	
Justice	The Honorable (full name) Supreme Court for the (State/Commonwealth) of (state)	Dear Justice (surname)

Other State Courts:

Judge	The Honorable (full name) Title of Judge, Court	Dear Judge (surname)
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VII. Interviewing with a Judge.

If you are called for an interview, schedule the appointment as soon as possible. You do not want the judge to interview someone else and offer the position to another candidate before you can ever get there. GO IMMEDIATELY!

Be aware that you will need to make and fund your own travel arrangements.

At the time of the interview, everything the judge knows about you comes from the materials you submitted. Review your application materials carefully before the interview and be prepared to thoroughly answer any questions related to them. Because judges work so closely with their clerks, interviews can cover a lot of legal and non-legal territory and can include interviews by the judge's clerks and staff members. The judge is attempting to get to know the candidate as a person and as a lawyer. You could be asked questions about a particular case or ruling. It is important that you know about the judge's recent or important decisions and the types of cases presently on the court's docket. Biographical information about the judge may be available in *The Almanac of the Federal Judiciary I* and/or *The American Bench I* (both available in the Akron Law Library), or on-line at www.fjc.gov. As with any interview, the applicant should take advantage of the opportunity to ask inquisitive, well prepared questions of the judge. **Do not, however, ask questions about specific matters currently pending before the judge.**

The judge may ask questions about grades, courses, other clerkship applications you have pending, long term-goals or how you feel about certain issues or decisions. Because of the close working relationship between a judge and his or her clerk, interviews may include discussion of more personal information also. Questions such as "Who is your favorite Supreme Court Justice and why?" are also possible.

The applicant can prepare for the interview by becoming familiar with past decisions rendered by the judge, talking to past judicial externs or judicial clerks, and faculty who may know or be familiar with the judge and his or her jurisprudence.

Come to Career Services Office to polish your interviewing skills in preparation for your interview.

VIII. How Do I Address a Judge in Person?

When speaking to a judge in person, say, "Hello, Justice Kennedy" or Judge Smith, it's nice to meet you". Always use the judge's proper title and last name (see chart above) until he/she directs otherwise. Never use "Mr." or "Ms." or "Mrs." Or "Honorable".

IX. Important Resources.

You are encouraged to use the following hard copy resources, most of which are available in the Career Services Office.

Federal Court Resources:

- Judicial Yellow Book Current Edition (this directory contains a state by state breakdown of all current judges and their staffs, providing basic contact and biographic information and also revealing which judges have clerks).
- Almanac of the Federal Judiciary Available on Westlaw's AFJ Database (The Almanac provides detailed biographic information about individual judges).
- The Judicial Clerk Directory (WLD- CLERK), is available on WESTLAW.

State Court Resources:

- The Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures, Current Edition (As described above, this is a very important guide that provides state by state explanation of state court clerkship procedures at all levels with contact and salary information. Sometimes needs to be supplemented with Judicial Yellow book, WANT Directory or state court site for details of individual judges' names.)
- Directory of State Courts & County Courthouses, Current Edition, WANT Publishing (Provides additional contact information for state courts nationwide.)
- The NALP State Judicial Clerkship Directory is available on LEXIS.

Additional valuable resources containing biographical information about judges is available in the Career Services Office.

- Judicial Profiles, Daily Journal Corp. Biographical sketches that first appeared as L.A. Daily Journal Columns on state and federal judges. Updated regularly.
- Federal Judges and Justices Rothman. Updates regularly.
- BNA's Directory of State and Federal Courts, Judges and Clerks available in the law library.

Online resources for clerkships and post- graduate jobs with federal and state courts:

COURT SITES:

www.courts.state.va.us

www.uscourts.gov

www.oalj.dol.gov

www.ustaxcourt.gov

www.fjc.gov (with biographies of federal judges)

www.fmja.org

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OHIO COURTS

Ohio Supreme Court

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov

Mid-Level Appellate Court – Court of Appeals -- Students should apply to the District Court Administrator for the district in which they want to clerk. There are twelve (12) Court of Appeals districts.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/judsystem/districtcourts/default.asp

First District Court of Appeals – Hamilton County

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district1/default.asp

Second District Court of Appeals – Champaign, Clarke, Darke, Greene, Miami, and Montgomery counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district2/default.asp

Third District Court of Appeals – Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Logan, Marion, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca, Shelby, Union, Van Wert, and Wyandot counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district3/default.asp

Fourth District Court of Appeals -- Adams, Athens, Gallia, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district4/default.asp

Fifth District Court of Appeals -- Ashland, Coshocton, Delaware, Fairfield, Guernsey, Holmes, Knox, Licking, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Perry, Richland, Stark, and Tuscarawas counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district5/default.asp

Sixth District Court of Appeals -- Erie, Fulton, Huron, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams, and Wood counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district6/default.asp

Seventh District Court of Appeals -- Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, Mahoning, Monroe, and Noble counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district7/default.asp

Eighth District Court of Appeals -- Cuyahoga County.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district8/default.asp

Ninth District Court of Appeals -- Lorain, Medina, Summit and Wayne counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district9/default.asp

Tenth District Court of Appeals -- Franklin County.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district10/default.asp

Eleventh District Court of Appeals -- Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Portage, and Trumbull counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district11/default.asp

Twelfth District Court of Appeals --Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Madison, Preble, and Warren counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/districtCourts/district12/default.asp

Trial Courts: Court of Common Pleas – You can find links the courts of common pleas under their counties.

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JudSystem/trialCourts/default.asp

X. Frequently Asked Questions.

After you have made the decision to apply for a judicial clerkship, you will still have many questions about the process. We urge you to meet with Assistant Dean O'Brien to discuss the best way to proceed. The task of deciding which courts and judges to apply takes some effort. The questions most frequently asked by applicants include:

- **How do I decide which writing sample to submit?**

Your writing sample should be your best legal writing to date. Ideally, it is a piece of legal analytical work such as a redacted or publicly filed memorandum you drafted for your summer employer, or a sample from your Legal Research & Writing class. Reread, correct and revise whatever you submit so it is your best work and a reflection of your current abilities. Consult with others about your choice. Have others proofread your sample to ensure it is perfect.

- **What do I do after I send my applications to the judges?**

Many federal and state judges send notices informing applicants they have received their applications. Some do not. When sent, this notice usually gives instructions on the next step. If you have additional favorable awards, honors, or grades to report in the interim, write a letter to the judge updating your file; include your revised resume.

- **Will I have the opportunity to interview personally with the judge?**

Yes, but ONLY if you are being considered for the position. If you are granted an interview and have also applied to other judges in that area, it is appropriate and wise to contact those other judges to let them know that you will be in the area to interview with Judge "X" and to ask if they would also like to schedule an interview while you are there. If they too are interested in your application, they may arrange to see you.

- **How will the judges decide who to interview?**

Grades play a very important part in the selection of judicial clerks. The higher the court, the more important grades become. Writing skills are also very important. The judge will also likely put a great deal of weight on references and/or may weigh heavily the law school or geographic area the student is from.

- **What will a judicial clerkship interview be like?**

Judicial clerkship interviews vary widely. The interview can be brief or it can take a number of hours. The current clerks and the judge's assistant may or may not be present for all or part of the interview. However, as a judicial clerk, you will work very closely with the judge, and therefore you will be under close scrutiny both personally and professionally. The interview may reflect this by posing hypotheticals as well as including more personal examination of attitudes and opinions. Prospective clerks may also interview with current clerks individually. When your interview is scheduled, inquire with whom you will meet.

- **What do I do if I am offered a position?**

The decision to apply for a judicial clerkship is an important one. **THE DECISION SHOULD BE MADE WHEN YOU DECIDE TO APPLY – NOT WHEN AN OFFER IS MADE.** You should apply only to judges from whom you would accept an offer when made. Meet with the Career Services Office to evaluate your own strategy. If offered a position, you should

accept immediately, and promptly withdraw other outstanding offers. DO NOT SAY “NO” TO A JUDGE WHO OFFERS YOU A JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP!

- **What will I do after my clerkship ends?**

A judicial clerkship will increase your marketability dramatically. Law firms sometimes call current judicial clerks to ask them to interview, even before the judicial clerk applies to the firm! If offered a clerkship, you may wish to inquire of the judge once you begin whether you will be allowed to start your permanent job search toward the end of your clerkship. Some judges do not allow this, which should not cause you undue concern, because many law firms will express an interest in a judicial clerk but will not grant a formal interview anyway until the completion of the clerkship to ensure that there is no appearance of impropriety.

Questions a Judge Might Ask a Judicial Clerkship Applicant

1. Why do you want to clerk? Why do you want to clerk for *me*?
2. Why this particular court?
3. What do you hope to learn from a clerkship?
4. Why do you want to clerk in this city (state, region)?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
6. What qualities do you have that might make you a valuable law clerk?
7. What are your short and long range legal career goals?
8. Where do you hope to practice after your clerkship?
9. What type of law interests you the most?
10. Describe your work experience.
11. Describe the work you have completed for your law journal.
12. Tell me about the courses/grades/professors you had in law school.
13. To which judges/courts have you applied?
14. How would you approach this particular issue/case/problem?
15. Do you prefer to work with others? Independently?
16. How do you view the long hours and low pay associated with judicial clerkships?
17. If you and I disagree about a certain issue, would you have a problem drafting an opinion incorporating my viewpoint?
18. What interests do you have outside of law school? Hobbies?
19. What questions do you have for me?

Questions an Applicant Might ask the Current Clerk

1. Describe a typical day as a clerk in this court.
2. What responsibilities do you have?
3. Describe your relationship with the judge.
4. What are the judge's greatest strengths, weaknesses?
5. What contact do you have with the other clerks or practicing attorneys in the area?
6. Tell me about this city/state/region as a place to live.
7. How has this clerkship affected your job search?
8. How has this clerkship affected your career goals?
9. What percentage of time do you spend in court, conducting research, drafting opinions, interacting with the judge?
10. What criteria seem to affect the judge's selection of a clerk?

Questions an Applicant Might want to ask a Judge

1. What criteria do you use in selecting a clerk?
2. What will be the scope of my responsibilities?
3. What is the nature of your docket?
4. Could we discuss the issues you had to reconcile in your recent decision of *Doe v. Smith*? (Do not pick a controversial case where the judge has been criticized for the opinion)
5. What is your timetable for making a decision?
6. Do your clerks have contact with local attorneys?
7. Describe your legal philosophy.
8. What do you see as the primary role of this court?
9. What percentage of my time would I spend in court, conducting research, drafting opinions?
10. When do you prefer your clerks look for permanent jobs?
11. Do you allow your clerks to accept with a firm before the clerkship period is completed?

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The University of Akron School of Law Career Services Office Federal Judicial Clerkships Information Sheet (Post-Graduate Positions)

❖ The following information is provided to students as an introduction to the application process for federal clerkships. Please inform the Career Services Office if you are interested in federal or state clerkships so we may work together in identifying potential clerkships and as you draft your application materials.

❖ The Administrative Office of the Federal Courts has created an online application resource called OSCAR (Online System for Clerkship Application & Review) where *some* federal judges post information regarding their open law clerk or staff attorney positions and where applicants may apply for these positions. Additional detailed information about the application process can be found on OSCAR (www.oscar.uscourts.gov).

❖ Judicial clerkship applicants must be proactive in their pursuit of a clerkship. Information on OSCAR may be updated at any time as needed by judges, so students should either check the website on a regular basis or create a search agent in order to receive email notifications about new postings. Keep in mind that OSCAR is a good resource to consult, but it is not the only avenue to pursue regarding federal clerkships.

❖ Student applicants may apply during their 2L (2D, 3E, 3P) or 3L (3D, 4E, 4P) year. Some federal judges will accept applications from students during the fall or spring of their 2L year, and rising 2L students may access OSCAR on July 1.

❖ Some federal judges do not use OSCAR to post their open clerkship positions or to collect application materials. Students must review the judicial profile information that is provided by the judges on OSCAR. In some cases, you will see application instructions for open positions; in others, you will see an advisory note that the judge is not hiring new law clerks; and in others, you will not see any information at all. In the latter case, students should consult the judge's biography on his or her court website in order to see if the judge has posted any clerkship application information there (this occurs in rare instances).

❖ If OSCAR and the judge's court website are silent as to a judge's open clerkship positions, students are advised to apply via U.S. Mail. Some judges will not post their open clerkship positions because they receive many unsolicited applications and interview from that pool of candidates.

❖ When applying via OSCAR, applicants must create a free account and complete all necessary sections before an application is considered finalized. Students are encouraged to watch the videos on OSCAR before starting their applications. OSCAR has proven to be very confusing to many applicants, and the videos can be helpful in navigating the application process on OSCAR.

❖ Unless otherwise directed, applicants should submit the following application materials:

- *cover letter and resume
- *writing sample (10-15 pages)
- *letters of recommendation (3)
- *law school transcript (unofficial)

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❖ Apply to only those judges from whom you are prepared to accept an employment offer. When a judge selects his or her law clerk from among numerous applicants, the judge assumes that the offer will be accepted almost immediately. Failing to do so could adversely impact your professional reputation and that of future applicants from Akron Law.

❖ Applicants are encouraged to have their application documents reviewed by the Career Services Office prior to submitting them via OSCAR or mailing them to judges. Sample resumes and cover letters are available in *The CSO Handbook* (available at <http://www.uakron.edu/law/docs/Career-planning.pdf>).

❖ Candidates are encouraged to do a mock interview and to review the list of questions that are typically asked during a clerkship interview, which can be found on the Resource Page: <http://www.uakron.edu/law/career-services/resource-library.dot>

SAMPLE CLERKSHIP COVER LETTER

November 7, 2016

Dear Judge _____:

In reference to your upcoming law clerk opening in __ (INSERT DATE OF OPENING) __, I would like to submit an application for your consideration. I am a life-long resident of Northeast Ohio, an Alumnus of The Ohio State University and am currently in my third-year of law school at the University of Akron School of Law. I am excited by the possibility to work for a local judge. I am confident you will find that I am an ideal law clerk candidate because I am an outstanding researcher, I am a talented legal writer, and I have performed exceptionally well in Law School.

I have consistently developed my research skills through my academic and professional experiences. In recognition of my high-level of legal research and writing skills, I received the CALI award for the highest grade in my Legal Research and Writing II course. Moreover, I was an Assistant Editor for the 2015-2016 *Akron Law Review*, performing research, citation, and text checks for the Law Review. I am currently one of the Articles Editors for the 2016-17 *Akron Law Review*, in which my responsibilities have included reviewing and making offers on articles to be published, as well as acting as the Law Review Liaison for the Miller-Becker Institute of Professional Responsibility's yearly symposium. Additionally, I have strengthened my research skills as a law clerk at ABC Law Office. In this position, I was required to research a diverse set of legal issues on a daily basis. Furthermore, I have worked on editing Environmental Law, Cases and Materials, Third Edition, as the research assistant for Professor John Smith. This research experience will help me effectively and efficiently perform any task assigned to me in your chambers.

Throughout my education, I have continuously developed my writing skills. My work during college and Law School has prepared me well for any writing tasks I would perform as your law clerk. While in undergraduate school, I was invited to present the results of my senior honors research paper at the Ohio Association of Political Scientists yearly convention. In Law School, I received the CALI award in Legal Research and Writing II for my appellate brief. As the law clerk at a small Akron firm, I drafted numerous documents for litigation, many of which went on to win judgments in court. These experiences have helped craft my legal writing ability, a skill that will help me produce high quality work for your court.

Finally, I believe my academic performance in law school is indicative of my ability to perform as a highly effective law clerk. In my two years, I have received the highest grade in the class in Civil Procedure I, Legal Analysis, Research and Writing II, Criminal Law, Property I, and Professional Responsibility. I am also currently ranked number seven in my class, with a grade point average of 3.51. I have not limited my law school experience to solely academic learning. I am currently on the Editorial Board of the *Akron Law Review*, being promoted to the position of

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Articles Editor after my time as an Assistant Editor during the 2016-2017 school year. I have also volunteered with the Summit County Legal Defenders Office, the Akron Bar Association's Street Law program, and the Law School Admissions Office. I also participated in Akron Law's Expungement Clinic. I believe the experience I have gained in law school will help me succeed as your law clerk.

I believe I would make an excellent clerk in your chambers. My research and writing skills have prepared me for this experience. Moreover, my academic performance is indicative of my ability to produce high-quality work. I would perform just as exceptionally in your chambers as I have thus far performed in law school. I am also friendly and outgoing and my former colleagues and supervisors will tell you that I am a team-player, a fast learner, and driven to succeed. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you further.

Best regards,

Zippy Law Student

**NALP'S JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SECTION
STATE COURT WORK GROUP**

Insight and Inside Information for Select State Court Clerkships
This document is compiled from information provided by Career Services Office
representatives from law schools all over the country. Please contact the CSO for updates
at to when the most recent version will become available.