

WOLVERINE BAR ASSOCIATION

SUMMER CLERKSHIP & JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE

The Wolverine Bar Association (“WBA”) was established by a number of African American attorney’s during the 1930’s. However, its roots came much earlier, in 1919, when the Harlan Law Club was formed by black attorneys in the Detroit area who were excluded from other bar associations because of discrimination. The name recognized U.S. Supreme Court Justice John M. Harlan, who pushed for equity for all. His philosophy was exemplified in the dissenting opinion of the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court Case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The Wolverine Bar Association replaced the Harlan Law Club and expanded its influence from Detroit to the entire “Wolverine” state. The Wolverine Bar Association, like its predecessor the Harlan Law Club, is a powerful mechanism by which African American attorneys in Michigan address the unique and distinct needs of their community for legal service, representation, and protection.

In 2000, Judge Victoria A. Roberts founded the Judicial Externship Program (“JEP”), in cooperation with the WBA and the Wolverine Bar Foundation. To date, the program has placed more than 300 students from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged backgrounds in summer clerkships with federal judges, and the Wolverine Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the WBA, has awarded these students over \$391,000.00 in stipends. The program also annually hosts a full-day writing workshop.

Nearly four decades ago, the Summer Clerkship Program (“SCP”) also began in cooperation with the WBA. Participating firms and corporations pay the SCP interns’ salaries directly, while the Wolverine Bar Foundation incurs the program costs for interview workshops, training, and receptions.

MISSION STATEMENT

WBA strives to increase the number of attorneys who are committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession, and can bring a diversity of perspectives, based on life experiences, while employed in well-respected positions, such as partners, associates, in-house counsel, and judicial clerks in Southeastern Michigan. In line with this goal, the Summer Clerkship and Judicial Externship Programs were created.

In partnership with several law firms and corporations, the Summer Clerkship Program places first-year law students in clerkship positions that will provide opportunities to establish a network of contacts, develop practice skills, and acquire other benefits. Working in a challenging professional environment will allow the participants to gain the skills necessary to launch a successful legal career. The Program provides participating employers an opportunity additional mechanism to affirm their individual commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, while simultaneously underscoring the importance of promoting diversity in the legal community, at-large. Law firm placements are also available for second- and third-year students as well, through the Judicial Externship Program.

To expand the diversity of students pursuing judicial clerkship opportunities, the Judicial Externship Program works in conjunction with the United States District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan and is administered by the Honorable Jonathan J.C. Grey. The Program pairs eligible students with participating federal district and magistrate judges for a minimum of 4 weeks. Participating externs in the Program are provided the opportunity to establish relationships with judges and federal law clerks, further their analytical reasoning and legal research and writing skills, and become comfortable with the decision-making process that judges employ. Additionally, externs are routinely exposed to the practical application of the law.

ELIGIBILITY

WBA accepts, encourages, and considers applicants of all backgrounds. Eligibility for the Summer Clerkship and Judicial Externship Programs are as follows:

To be eligible to participate in the SCP program, an applicant must: (i) demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the WBA, which *may* include, but is not limited to, life experiences as a member of an underrepresented demographic group; (ii) be in good standing at their law school; (iii) demonstrate strong research, writing and analytical abilities (iv) have ties to Southeastern Michigan and a desire to practice in metropolitan Detroit after completing law school; (v) have completed a legal writing course before the clerkship begins; (vi) by the time the clerkship starts, have completed ***no more than 30 credit hours*** toward graduation; and (vii) expect to graduate no later than May 2026 (Dual degree and part-time students must complete the applicable portions of the application).

First, second, and third year law students are eligible to participate in the Judicial Externship Program. If selected to participate in the Judicial Externship Program, students must: (i) complete a minimum of one hundred sixty (160) hours in chambers between May 2024 and August 2024 and (ii) attend at least **three** (3) court sponsored and approved seminars. For a law firm placement for second and third year students, the same requirements of SCP apply, except for requirements (vi) and (vii).

DUAL PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Acceptance into **both** the Summer Clerkship Program and Judicial Externship Program may qualify a student to participate in our dual program, where the students split their summers between a firm and a federal judge. Students accepted into the dual program will spend a minimum of four (4) weeks with their assigned judge and approximately eight (8) weeks with a law firm/company.

NOTE: If you are interested in the dual program, you must select the box indicating your interest, and complete both the Judicial Externship and Summer Clerkship Program Applications.

Second and third year law school students, while ineligible for SCP, are eligible to extern for a law firm as well, but **only** through acceptance and placement in the Judicial Externship Program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

If you wish to be considered for the 2024 Summer Clerkship and/or Judicial Externship Programs you must submit the following materials **no later than 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), on Friday, February 9, 2024:**

- Submit completed electronic application form(s). Links to applications for both Programs may be found below.
- A short cover letter explaining your (i) career goals and how you believe participating in the Program will further those goals; (ii) commitment to practicing law in Michigan and connection to Southeastern Michigan, and (iii) commitment to service through the WBA.
- A current resume.
- An official or unofficial copy of your law school transcript. If an unofficial transcript is not available by the application deadline, you must provide a letter from each professor, on the school's letterhead, reflecting your performance in each course. Applicants who are selected to interview with the Program's Committee must bring a copy of their transcript to the interview.
- A writing sample **not exceeding five (5) pages in length**, double-spaced, in the form of a legal memorandum or brief, showing the applicant's ability to identify and analyze legal issues. The writing sample may be an excerpt from a larger

project, if clearly identified as such. The writing sample should demonstrate your legal analytical skills. The writing sample should not contain any comments or markings from your professor/instructor.

- Two letters of recommendation from current or former employers, professors, or someone familiar with your work ethic, character, and judgment.
- One-page statement explaining how race affected your life, be it through discrimination, inspiration or otherwise, and how that uniquely qualifies you to advance the Mission of the WBA to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive legal community and address the unique and distinct needs of the black community for legal services, representation, and protection.

This year's applications are available electronically. Applicants are required to submit all application materials as a **single PDF** following the completion of the online application.

SELECTION PROCESS

Due to the volume of applications received, the Committee will complete an initial evaluation of each candidate based upon the application package and the criteria listed below. Candidates selected to interview with the Committee will be notified by e-mail no later than February 16, 2024. Interviews are scheduled to be held Saturday, February 24, 2024 (In-person or via Zoom). Applicants will be scheduled for one 20–30-minute interview. Each interviewee should plan to log on at least ten (10) minutes before their scheduled interviews in case there are any technical issues.

Although the Committee considers an applicant's class ranking and grade point average, other factors, including the applicant's work history, undergraduate record, extracurricular activities, and oral and written communication skills are also reviewed. After completion of all interviews, the Committee will select applicants for placement with the participating employers. Decisions on acceptance into the Program and

Placement will be communicated via email no later than seven (7) days following the interviews.

PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS

Participating employers accept the candidate selected for placement by the Committee. It is expected that participants will be given the same type of work assignments and be paid the same salary as other clerks or summer associates at the firm or company. If you are selected by a participating employer, you will be treated and evaluated in accordance with the standards and guidelines established by the participating employer and are not to be accorded any special treatment. Although not required, employers are encouraged to consider the applicants for employment as a summer associate the following year if warranted by the applicant’s performance and the employer’s hiring needs. Some firms have recruitment policies that require participants to re-apply to participate in the firm’s summer program the following year. Some of the 2024 participating employers are*:

Bodman PLC	Dykema Gossett PLLC	Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP	Dickinson Wright PLLC
Varnum LLP	Plunkett Cooney, P.C.	Butzel Long PC	Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, P.L.C.
Jaffe Raitt Heuer and Weiss (Taft)	Brooks Kushman P.C.**	Warner, Norcross, & Judd LLP	The Miller Law Firm, P.C.**
Maddin Hauser**			

*** Participating law firms are subject to change.**

****First, second, and third year law students will be considered by these firms through the JEP.**

*****Inquiries about the application process for the Summer Clerkship Program may be directed to Angela Enoch at angelaenoch@yahoo.com.**

*****Inquiries about the application process for the Judicial Externship Program may be directed to Celeste Kinney at celeste_kinney@fd.org or Jasmine Moore at jasmine.moore97@gmail.com**

PARTICIPATING JUDGES

Participating judges are located in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Bay City, and Flint. Every effort will be made to place students at their first location choice. Students will have the opportunity to work directly with federal judges and their law clerks in preparing bench memoranda for pending cases and other duties as assigned. Students will also observe pretrial matters, settlement conferences, final pretrial conferences, trials, and/or motion and sentencing hearings. Externs will also be provided with a small stipend due to the generosity of private donors. In lieu of accepting a stipend, students can elect to intern for course credit if their law schools permit. The decision to opt to receive credit, in lieu of the stipend is **FINAL**. Any subsequent request to receive a stipend will be denied. Participation in JEP will preclude a student from working in any other legal capacity while externing at the federal court.