

WOLVERINE BAR ASSOCIATION



JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE

The Wolverine Bar Association (“WBA”) was established by a number of African American attorneys during the 1930’s. However, its roots date 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 his dissenting opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which authorized the “separate but equal” doctrine. 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, the Honorable Victoria A. Roberts founded the Judicial Externship Program (“JEP”), in cooperation with the WBA. To date, the program has placed more than 300 students from underrepresented demographic groups 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 \$400,000.00 in stipends through the generosity of its monetary supporters.

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 Judicial Externship Program was created.

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 160 hours, but up to 10 weeks. The Judicial Externship Program is a mechanism for externs 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. Each student selected to participate in the Judicial Externship Program will be assigned a former federal law clerk to serve as a mentor. 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 view, first-hand, pretrial matters, settlement conferences, final pretrial conferences, trials, and/or motion and sentencing hearings. Students will also have the opportunity to

participate in court and affiliated agency intern seminars. Affiliated agencies include the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan and the Federal Community Defender Office of the Eastern District of Michigan.

The Judicial Externship Program offers two highly competitive tracks:

1. **Track One** – Students accepted into Track One will spend 8 to 10 weeks, full-time, in chambers. Track One is geared to students who have a strong interest in pursuing federal or state judicial term clerkships. To that end, Track One will have additional “lunch and learn” writing workshops throughout the summer, a judicial clerkship panel event, and committee review of personal statements for clerkship applications during designated JEP Committee Office Hours. Track One students will be eligible for 100% of the stipend amount available for that summer.
2. **Track Two** – Students accepted into Track Two will spend at least 160 hours (equivalent to approximately 4 weeks full-time) in chambers. Students in Track Two are eligible to split their summer with the WBA Summer Clerkship Program but will only be eligible for a lesser amount of a stipend. Track Two will only be required to attend the initial full-day writing workshop that will occur before the summer begins.

ELIGIBILITY

WBA accepts, encourages, and considers applicants of all backgrounds. Eligibility for the Judicial Externship Program is as follows:

First, second, and third year law students are eligible to participate in the Judicial Externship Program. Applicants 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 2027 (Dual degree and part-time students must complete the applicable portions of the application). Only first year law students are eligible for Track One.

If accepted to Track One, students are required to: (i) attend the full-day writing workshop in-person to prepare students for the rigors of federal practice; (ii) complete a minimum of 8 weeks in chambers between May and August 2025; and (iii) attend at least **two (2)** “lunch and learn” writing workshops and at least **five (5)** court or affiliated agency seminars, including the judicial clerkship panel event.

If accepted to Track Two, students are required to: (i) attend the full-day writing workshop in-person to prepare students for the rigors of federal practice; (ii) complete a minimum of 160 hours in chambers between May and August 2025; and (iii) attend at least **three (3)** court or affiliated agency seminars.

DUAL PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (TRACK TWO STUDENTS ONLY)

While students are not required to also apply for the Summer Clerkship Program, interested students are encouraged to do so. Acceptance into **both** the Summer Clerkship Program and Judicial Externship Program provides students the opportunity to split their summers between a firm and a federal judge. Students accepted into the dual program will spend a minimum of 160 hours in chambers 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. Acceptance into either program does not guarantee acceptance for both programs.

For second- and third-year law school students applying for Track Two, the JEP partners with several law firms that accept referrals from the program. Partner firms include: The Miller Law Firm, P.C.; Brooks Kushman P.C.; Pitt McGehee; and Maddin Hauser.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

If you wish to be considered for either Track One or Track Two of the 2025 Judicial Externship Program you must submit the following materials **no later than noon 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), on Saturday, February 8, 2025:**

- Submit completed electronic application form(s). (Links to the 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 the Southeastern Michigan, and (iii) commitment to service through the WBA. Please note that an applicant may be required to further substantiate their ties to Southeastern Michigan during the application and interview processes.
- 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 exploring how you would advance the historical and current mission of the WBA.

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 15, 2025. Interviews are scheduled to be held Saturday, February 22, 2025 (in-person or via Zoom). Applicants will be scheduled for one 20 to 30-minute interview. Each virtual 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 does consider 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 judges. Decisions on acceptance into the Program will be communicated via email no later than seven (7) days following the interviews. Once acceptance into the JEP program is offered, candidates have 48 hours to accept or decline. The committee will make no exceptions. Judge placement will be communicated at a later date and will sometimes require that candidates schedule an additional interview with specific judges or JEP firms.

All participants are required to attend an in-person training on May 17, 2025, where they will receive valuable training and a clerkship guide.

Failure to attend the training will result in exclusion from the program.

STIPEND OR CREDIT SELECTION

Track One students will receive 100% of the stipend amount. Track Two students will only be eligible for a lesser amount of a stipend. Stipends amounts are determined by the Wolverine Bar Foundation on a yearly basis due to the generosity of private donors. Stipends are intended to cover the costs of transportation, lunch, and parking dependent on the length of the externship. While they may provide nominal compensation, it is not intended to replace the wages of a full-time position. The Wolverine Bar Foundation's board will determine the amount of the stipend following selection of Track One and Two participants.

In lieu of accepting a stipend, students can elect to intern for course credit if their law school permits. The decision 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.

PARTICIPATING JUDGES

Participating judges are located in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Bay City, and Flint. Participating judges accept the candidate selected for placement by the Committee. The Committee tries to accommodate students' first location preference. Some judges may require additional interviews with candidates. Students will be given the same type of work assignments as non-JEP judicial interns and term law clerks. Although not required, judges are encouraged to consider the applicants for future employment as a term law clerk, either within chambers or with another judge. Participating judges for 2025 include*:

Detroit

Chief Judge Sean F. Cox
Judge Jonathan J.C. Grey

Judge Brandy R. McMillion
Judge Paul D. Borman
Judge Terrence G. Berg
Judge Linda V. Parker
Judge Susan D. DeClercq
Judge Gershwin A. Drain
Judge Nancy G. Edmunds
Judge Bernard A. Friedman
Judge Mark A. Goldsmith
Judge Denise Page Hood
Judge David M. Lawson
Judge Matthew F. Leitman
Judge Laurie J. Michelson
Judge Stephen J. Murphy III
Judge Robert J. White
Magistrate Judge Kimberly G. Altman
Magistrate Judge Anthony P. Patti
Magistrate Judge Elizabeth A. Stafford

Ann Arbor

Judge Judith E. Levy
Chief Magistrate Judge David R. Grand

Flint

Judge F. Kay Behm
Judge Shalina Kumar
Magistrate Judge Curtis Ivy, Jr.

Bay City

Judge Thomas L. Ludington
Magistrate Judge Patricia T. Morris

**United States Bankruptcy Court
for the Eastern District of Michigan**

Judge Joel D. Applebaum
Judge Mark A. Randon

***Participating judges are subject to change.**

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