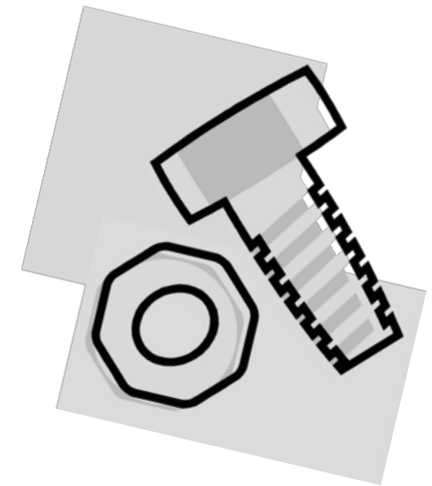
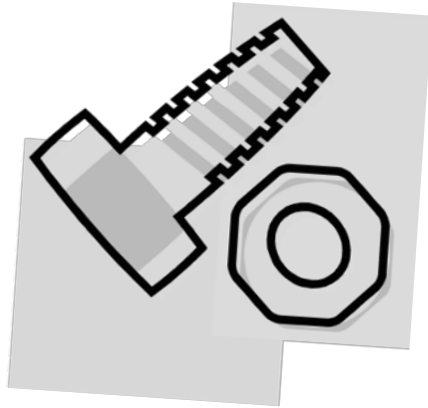


*presents*

# Clerkships 201:

The Nuts and Bolts of  
Applying for Judicial  
Clerkships

Updated for Fall 2016



# Today's Material

- 10 Steps for Applying to Clerkships—overview
- OSCAR for Federal Clerkships—intro
- Researching State Clerkships
- Application Materials
- Letters of Recommendation—asking, process
- Interviewing and The Offer
- Following Up
- Question and Answer period

# Golden Rule

You must accept a clerkship if it is offered to you.

This means that you must only apply to locations, courts, and judges where you would accept a clerkship if offered.

You cannot leverage clerkship offers.

# 10 Steps: Applying for Judicial Clerkships

1. Research types of positions, judges, courts, and locations now.
2. Critical: ask at least three professors/legal employers for letters of recommendation.
3. Inform your recommenders of how you need letters, whether hard copy or digital/OSCAR letters.

# 10 Steps: Applying for Judicial Clerkships

4. Draft personalized, tailored cover letters.
5. Select 1-2 writing samples.
6. Update your resume.
7. Federal OSCAR applicants: select and save judges, courts, and SAOs to your profile.
8. Request an unofficial transcript from each of your educational institutions.

# 10 Steps: Applying for Judicial Clerkships

9. Pick up your completed hard copy letters of recommendation and mail application packages, or if using OSCAR for federal applications, finalize your application.
10. OCPD Mock Interviews, OCPD Judicial ListServ, Judicial Clerkship Faculty Practice Groups, CareerLink opportunities.

# Research Federal Clerkships

- The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR).
- Circuit and District Judges, Magistrate Judges, Special Masters, Bankruptcy Judges, Pro Se and Death Penalty opportunities, Staff Attorney Offices.
- Now available once you have completed your 1<sup>st</sup> full year of law school.


# Research Federal Clerkships

- Administrative Law Judges—some hire clerks, some don't. Many use Honors Programs or OCI to hire, including DOJ and DOL. Check USAJOBS, too.
- Specialty Courts may hire directly.
- General research: BNA Directory, Judicial Yellowbook (all linked on OCPD page).
- Apply on paper or online?



# OSCAR Introduction

- Log in, create account, verify truth and accuracy of your submissions.

 TEST, Clerk

[Profile](#) [My Account](#) [My Career Office](#) [My History](#)

[Edit Profile](#)

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### General Information

First Name: Clerk

Last Name: TEST

Citizenship Status: U. S. Citizen

Email Address: [clerktestwcl@gmail.com](mailto:clerktestwcl@gmail.com)

Address:

**Address #1**  
Street:  
4801 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
City:  
Washington  
State/Territory:  
District of Columbia  
Zip:  
20016  
Country:  
United States

Contact Phone Number: 2022744251

Email Frequency: Never

Receive Reminders: Never

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### Education

BA/BS From: American University  
Date of BA/BS: May 2007

JD/LLB From: American University, Washington College of Law  
Date of JD/LLB: May 21, 2016

Class Rank: 15%

Law Review/Journal: Yes

If Yes, Name of Journal(s):

Does your law school have a law review/journal?: Yes

Moot Court Participation: No

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### Bar Membership

Membership(s): No

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### Prior Judicial Experience


Judicial Internships/Externships: Yes

Post-graduate Judicial Law Clerk: No

# OSCAR Help

- Rely on the OSCAR Applicant Resources for the best walk-throughs, trouble shooting, and FAQ assistance.

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 **Applicant Resources**

Applicants should first contact their law schools for direct assistance. If applicants need additional OSCAR assistance, they can send an email to OSCAR support at [oscar-support@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:oscar-support@ao.uscourts.gov).

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### Applicant Tip Sheets

**Get Started**





[An Overview of the OSCAR Application Process](#)  
[Update Your Applicant Profile](#)  
[Change Your Password](#)  
[Update Your Security Questions](#)

**Create Application Documents**


[Upload Application Documents](#)  
[Requirements for Uploading Documents](#)  
[PDF Conversion Guidelines](#)  
[Create a Cover Letter Using the Online Editor](#)  
[Create an Applicant Grade Sheet](#)

[View All >](#)

### Applicant Video Tutorials

	<a href="#">An Overview of the Application Process</a>
	<a href="#">Step 1: Upload Your Documents</a>
	<a href="#">Step 2: Identify Recommenders</a>
	<a href="#">Step 3: Search for and Select Positions</a>

### OSCAR Application Process



*Click the graphic above for a larger, interactive version*

### Employment Information

[Understanding the Federal Courts](#)  
[Duties of Federal Law Clerks](#)  
[Qualifications, Salary and Benefits](#)  
[Citizenship Requirements](#)  
[Judicial Employees Code of Conduct](#)  
[Value of Federal Law Clerk Experience](#)  
[Federal Law Clerk Hiring Best Practices](#)  
[Is This Career For You? \(Video\)](#)

### Applicant Downloadable Resources

[Applicant Quick Reference](#) (PDF, 424KB)  
[OSCAR Applicant Process Graphic](#) (PDF, 70.9KB)  
[OSCAR Glossary \(PDF\)](#) (PDF, 1.29MB)

# Finding Opportunities on OSCAR

- Search for Positions tab, select Judges or SAO, enter search terms. “Available” yields open positions

The screenshot displays the OSCAR website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the OSCAR logo and the United States Courts logo. Below the navigation bar, there is a menu with options: HOME, MY PROFILE, MY DOCUMENTS, MY RECOMMENDATIONS, SEARCH FOR POSITIONS (highlighted), MY APPLICATIONS, RESOURCES, and HELP. A green button labeled "RETURN TO ADMIN" is visible.

The main content area features a "Search For Positions" section with a "Judges" tab selected. Below this, there are tabs for "Judges List", "Advanced Search", "Folders", and "Archived Positions".

A blue informational box contains the following text: "Listed below are federal circuit, district, magistrate, and bankruptcy court judges, as well as specialty courts and special masters appointed by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. Judges choosing to post one or more positions in OSCAR will have position information listed below the judge's name, while judges not choosing to post positions in OSCAR will not have any position information below their name. Judges who are not participating in OSCAR at all (do not have an account) are grayed out in the list below. Click on any OSCAR participating judge's name to see basic judge and chambers information. If the judge has a position posted, you can also view the position details and create an application."

Below the informational box, there are two sections: "Tip Sheets" and "Video Tutorials".

The "BASIC SEARCH" section includes a "Keywords" search box, a "Clerkship Position Status" dropdown menu (with a red arrow pointing to it), a "Clerkship Type" dropdown menu, and an "Application Method" section with checkboxes for E-mail, Fax, On-line, and Paper. A green "Apply Search" button is at the bottom.

The "Judge Types" section has a dropdown menu. The "Term Start Month/Year" section has two dropdown menus for Month and Year, with a note "Month/Year both required." The "Post/Last Modified Date for Open Positions" and "Post/Last Modified Date for Closed Positions" sections each have a dropdown menu.

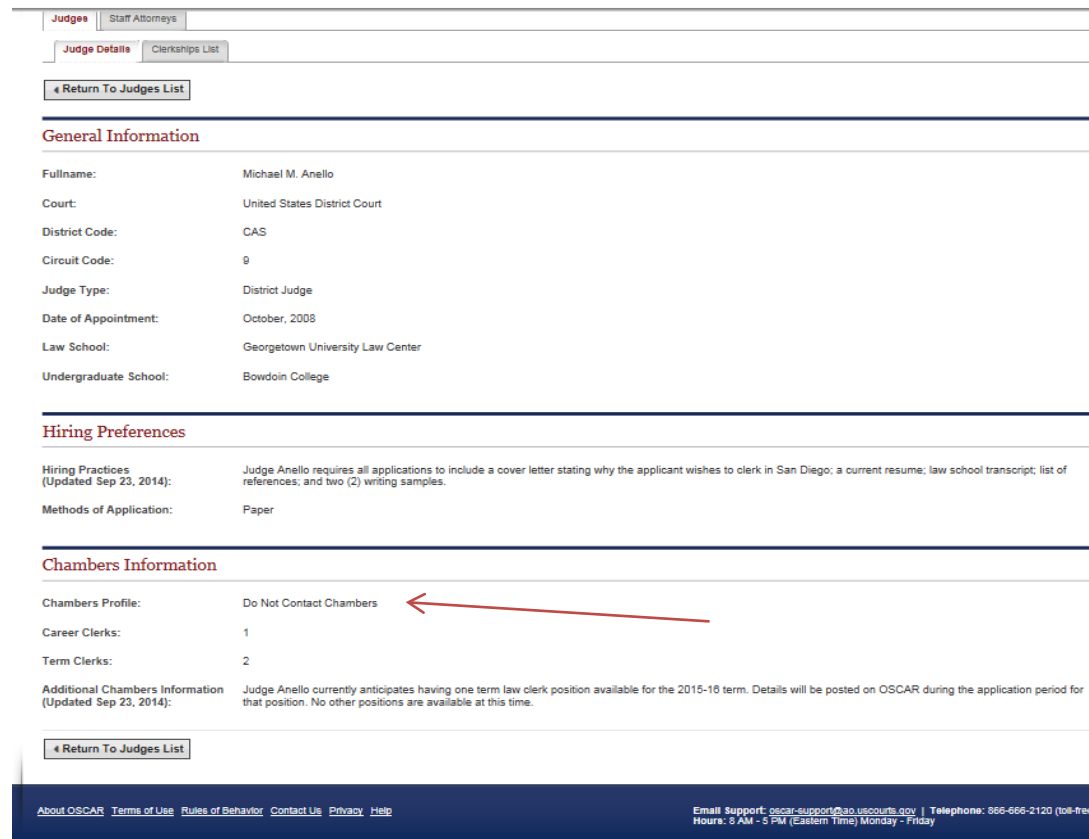
# Search Results in OSCAR

- Judge, court, location, term available, due date, method of application.

<a href="#">Replace Resume/Cover Letter</a>   <a href="#">[Copy To New Folder]</a>   <a href="#">Copy To Existing Folder</a>   <a href="#">Remove From Existing Folder</a>   <a href="#">Delete Folder</a>   <a href="#">Finalize Applications</a>   <a href="#">Save This List to Excel</a>									
☰	Last Name	First Name	Type of Judge	Court	City	Apply Online	Application Methods	Date Profile Modified	
	<a href="#">Abrams</a>	Ronnie	District Judge	United States District Court, Southern District of New York	New York	✓		Jun 05, 2014	
Clerkship Information									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	1 Year	Term Start: 10/1/2017	Term End: 9/30/2018	Accepting Applications: 6/5/2014 - 1/1/2016		Available		
	<a href="#">Anello</a>	Michael	District Judge	United States District Court, Southern District of California	San Diego			Sep 30, 2014	
Clerkship Information									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	1 Year	Term Start: 9/1/2015	Term End: 8/31/2016	Accepting Applications: 9/23/2014 - 10/10/2014		Available		
	<a href="#">Baker</a>	Kristine	District Judge	United States District Court, Eastern District of Arkansas	Little Rock	✓		Apr 08, 2014	
Clerkship Information									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	2 Years	Term Start: 8/25/2015	Term End: 9/2/2017	Accepting Applications: 4/8/2014 - 11/1/2014		Available		
	<a href="#">Baker</a>	Tim	Magistrate Judge	United States District Court, Southern District of Indiana	Indianapolis	✓		Sep 16, 2014	
Clerkship Information									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	2 Years	Term Start: 8/1/2015	Term End: 8/1/2017	Accepting Applications: 7/28/2014 - 10/10/2014		Available		
	<a href="#">Berman</a>	Richard	District Judge	United States District Court, Southern District of New York	New York	✓		Sep 22, 2014	
Clerkship Information									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	1 Year	Term Start: 6/1/2015	Term End: 6/1/2016	Accepting Applications: 9/22/2014 - 1/1/2015		Available		

# Hiring Preferences in OSCAR

- Preferred qualifications and application materials



The screenshot displays the OSCAR website interface for Judge Michael M. Anello. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'Judges' and 'Staff Attorneys', with sub-tabs for 'Judge Details' and 'Clerkships List'. A 'Return To Judges List' button is located below the navigation. The main content is organized into sections: 'General Information', 'Hiring Preferences', and 'Chambers Information'. The 'Hiring Preferences' section includes 'Hiring Practices (Updated Sep 23, 2014):' and 'Methods of Application:'. The 'Chambers Information' section includes 'Chambers Profile:', 'Career Clerks:', 'Term Clerks:', and 'Additional Chambers Information (Updated Sep 23, 2014):'. A footer contains links for 'About OSCAR', 'Terms of Use', 'Rules of Behavior', 'Contact Us', 'Privacy', and 'Help', along with contact information for OSCAR support.

**Judges** | Staff Attorneys

**Judge Details** | Clerkships List

[Return To Judges List](#)

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### General Information

Fullname: Michael M. Anello  
Court: United States District Court  
District Code: CAS  
Circuit Code: 9  
Judge Type: District Judge  
Date of Appointment: October, 2008  
Law School: Georgetown University Law Center  
Undergraduate School: Bowdoin College

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### Hiring Preferences

Hiring Practices (Updated Sep 23, 2014): Judge Anello requires all applications to include a cover letter stating why the applicant wishes to clerk in San Diego; a current resume; law school transcript; list of references; and two (2) writing samples.  
Methods of Application: Paper

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### Chambers Information

Chambers Profile: Do Not Contact Chambers  
Career Clerks: 1  
Term Clerks: 2

Additional Chambers Information (Updated Sep 23, 2014): Judge Anello currently anticipates having one term law clerk position available for the 2015-16 term. Details will be posted on OSCAR during the application period for that position. No other positions are available at this time.

[Return To Judges List](#)

About OSCAR | Terms of Use | Rules of Behavior | Contact Us | Privacy | Help

Email Support: [oscar-support@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:oscar-support@ao.uscourts.gov) | Telephone: 866-866-2120 (toll-free)  
Hours: 8 AM - 5 PM (Eastern Time) Monday - Friday

# Applying on OSCAR

- “Clerkships List” under Judge’s page

The screenshot shows the profile page for Judge Richard Berman. At the top, there is a header with the name "Berman, Richard" and a briefcase icon. Below this are tabs for "Judges" and "Staff Attorneys". Under the "Judges" tab, there are sub-tabs for "Judge Details" and "Clerkships List", with "Clerkships List" being the active tab. There is also a "Positions" tab. Below the tabs, a table lists available clerkships. The table has columns for Options, Clerkship Type, Clerkship Term, Term Start Date, Term End Date, Accepting Applications, Status, and Application Status. One row is visible for a "Term Law Clerk-Chambers" position with a "1 Year" term, starting on "Jun 01, 2015" and ending on "Jun 01, 2016". The "Accepting Applications" period is "9/22/2014 - 1/1/2015" and the status is "Available". A green button labeled "View & Apply" is next to the row. The table is paginated to show "Items 1-1 of 1".

Options	Clerkship Type	Clerkship Term	Term Start Date	Term End Date	Accepting Applications	Status	Application Status
<a href="#">View &amp; Apply</a>	Term Law Clerk-Chambers	<a href="#">1 Year</a>	Jun 01, 2015	Jun 01, 2016	9/22/2014 - 1/1/2015	Available	

- “View & Apply,” then “Build an Application”

## Judge Richard Berman

Status:  
Available

Clerkship Type:  
Term Law Clerk-Chambers

Clerkship Term:   
1 Year

Term Start:  
June 1, 2015

Term End:  
June 1, 2016

Accepting Applications:  
Sep 22, 2014 - Jan 01, 2015

Interview Method Preferences:  
No Preference

Description:  
Chambers is accepting applications to fill one term law clerk position in 2015. Applicants with at least two years of post-law school experience are preferred.

Renewable:  
No

## Build an Application

Application materials may be submitted via the following methods (**Online applications are preferred.**):

Online:  
Submitting an application requires 2 steps:

**Step 1:** Begin creating your draft application by posting the documents you wish to include in your application packet, one of which must be a resume. You will then specify your recommenders. Click the **Create Draft Application** button to begin building a draft application and to trigger recommendation requests to your recommenders.

**Step 2:** When you are satisfied with the contents of your application, it is time to finalize your application to make it available to judges. Click the **Finalize Application** button to finalize your application. You may finalize applications individually through the Build an Application box under each judge's Clerkship Details, or you may "batch finalize" by clicking on the Applications sub-tab.

[+ Create Draft Application](#)

\* indicates a required field

Choose My Documents:  
Select documents you have uploaded in My Documents Section

Cover Letter [\[new\]](#):  
No Cover Letters found!

# OSCAR: Draft vs. Finalized

- **Draft** applications are in progress. Upload one document to begin a draft application for each judge.
- Creating a draft triggers the recommendation notification in OSCAR, so create draft applications early in the process. **Do not wait.**
- **Finalized** applications are sent to judges.
- Now, you can edit some documents **after you finalize** because you might be applying early.

# Research State Clerkships

- Learn about a state's court structure and locations on BNA Directory—on OCPD site.
- Start with CareerLink, but don't stop there.
- *The Vermont Law School Guide to State Judicial Clerkship Procedures*: lists hiring data including timeline, salary, preferences, where/how to apply, etc.
- When in doubt, **call courts directly** for the most up-to-date information on hiring.



# Application Materials

- Cover Letter: personalized to each judge
- Resume: ONE page, consider interests line
- Transcripts/Grades: Law, Undergraduate, any other degrees; OSCAR “grade sheet”
- Writing Sample(s): 7-15 pages, cover sheet, practical legal writing preferred (IRAC), minimal outside editing, have a back up
- 2-3 Letters of Recommendation (*more later*)

# Effective Cover Letters: Overview

- Address to the specific judge using Mail Merge, and tailor the letter to that application.
- This is your chance to add some color to your black-and-white resume. Don't regurgitate.
- Some federal appellate judges like short, low-detail cover letters. Talk to OCPD about these.

# Effective Cover Letters: Structure

- Open by introducing yourself and your purpose (“I want a clerkship!”), and your brief one line hook. This may be subject matter, geography, or something else.
- Show the judge that you have the skills, experiences, and abilities to make his/her job easier.
- Explain how clerking fits into your career arc.
- Be open to interviews and offering more info.

# Things to Highlight in Cover Letter

- Legal research
- Legal writing
- Ability to manage multiple competing priorities and deadlines—*can you triage?*
- Intellectual curiosity
- Any litigation or chambers experience
- If applicable, subject matter exposure

# Letters of Recommendation

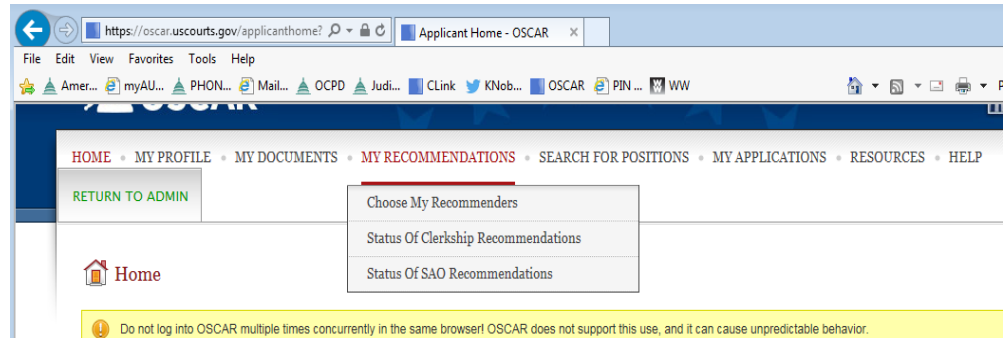
- Plan on needing 2-3 recommenders.
- If you are applying to a large number of judges, ask more than 3 so you can build teams.
- Choose people who can speak about your legal research and writing, intellectual curiosity, suitability.
- Law professors and legal supervisors preferred.

# Steps for Letters of Recommendation

- Ask recommenders with enough time to spare
- For *ONLINE* letters (OSCAR): have recommender email body only of letter to [OSCAR@wcl.american.edu](mailto:OSCAR@wcl.american.edu); OCPD will upload and manage requests for ONLINE applications
- For *PAPER* letters (all state, some fed): provide Excel spreadsheet to recommenders and assistants for a mail merge; pick up letters. OCPD is not involved with paper letters.

# OSCAR Recommendations

- Log into OSCAR and select “Choose My Recommenders”



- Depending on your recommender(s), select Faculty, Search All, or Add New

## Choose My Recommenders

or  or

**Note:** Removing a recommender from the My Current Recommenders section will remove any pending requests and completed requests from any Draft applications where the recommender's name appears.

## My Current Recommenders

No Records Found.

# OSCAR Recommendations

For each draft application that you create, you must select your recommenders. This sends OCPD a note to fill the pending request. When it's filled, a green checkmark appears.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Judge	Documents	Recommendations	Position	Type of Judge	Court	Position Status	Application Status	Date Finalized	Last Updated	Options
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brody, Anita		Ahranjani, Maryam Chavkin, David Hackner, Paul	1 Year (Sep 01, 2015 - Sep 01, 2016)	District Judge	Eastern District of Pennsylvania	Filled		Feb 28, 2014 8:47 pm Conf #: 20140228-5ef7c16d		<input type="button" value="Withdraw"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bumb, Renee		Hackner, Paul Chavkin, David	2 Years (Sep 01, 2015 - Aug 31, 2017)	District Judge	District of New Jersey	Filled		Feb 25, 2014 5:34 pm Conf #: 20140225-914e86fa		<input type="button" value="Withdraw"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dalzell, Stewart		Hackner, Paul Ahranjani, Maryam Chavkin, David	2 Years (Aug 24, 2015 - Aug 24, 2017)	District Judge	Eastern District of Pennsylvania	Filled		Mar 03, 2014 11:00 pm Conf #: 20140303-22eea17b		<input type="button" value="Withdraw"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Davis, Legrome		Ahranjani, Maryam Hackner, Paul Chavkin, David	1 Year (Sep 01, 2015 - Aug 31, 2016)	District Judge	Eastern District of Pennsylvania	Filled		Mar 24, 2014 1:46 pm Conf #: 20140324-45f8f1e1		<input type="button" value="Withdraw"/>

If you don't see a checkmark, contact the recommender, then contact OCPD.



# Paper Letters: Mail Merge

- OCPD Judicial page, “Letters of Recommendation” outlines the process
- Link to the Excel Spreadsheet—you MUST use this with all WCL recommenders, I suggest you use it with outside recommenders too.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
THE HONORABLE + FULL NAME	TITLE (if necessary)	COURT NAME	ADDRESS #1	ADDRESS #2	CITY, STATE ZIP	SALUTATION (TEXT TO INSERT AFTER "DEAR")				
The Honorable Gerald Bruce Lee		U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virg	Albert V. Bryan, Sr. U.S. Courthouse	401 Courthouse Square	Alexandria, VA 22314	Judge Lee				
The Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby		D.C. Court of Appeals	H. Carl Moultrie I Courthouse	500 Indiana Avenue, NW	Washington, DC 20001	Judge Blackburne-Rigsby				
The Honorable Elizabeth B. Lacy		Supreme Court of Virginia	Supreme Court Building	100 N. Ninth Street	Richmond, VA 23219	Justice Lacy				
The Honorable A. Joe Fish		U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Te	U.S. Courthouse	1100 Commerce Street	Dallas, TX 75242	Judge Fish				
The Honorable DeLawrence Beard	Chief Judge	Montgomery County Circuit Court	Judicial Center	50 Maryland Avenue	Rockville, MD 20850	Chief Judge Beard				

You are responsible for ensuring that the titles, contact info, and salutations are correct.

# Paper Letters: Mail Merge

- If a WCL professor or adjunct, email the recommender and CC their FASS assistant, including the Excel spreadsheet
- They will generate the hardcopy letters for you
- You will pick up the sealed envelopes and mail the letters with the rest of the application
- If you need more, create another Excel sheet and repeat the request, CC'ing FASS
- Non-WCL recommenders can do Mail Merge, too; ask what they/their assistant prefers

# Interviews

- It is not uncommon to apply widely and only get a handful of interviews, if any. Clerkships are popular and competitive, but do not let this dissuade you from applying.
- If you get an interview, **take it**. It is bad form to decline an interview. You may always withdraw after an interview.
- Ask about where/how to interview—phone, in person, video—but be prepared to go.

# Interview Prep: Mock Interviews

- Contact OCPD immediately—we are available for mock interviews as part of our regular offerings, and I specifically prioritize mock interview appointments to ensure that you get practice.
- Work with Faculty Practice Group members for mock interviews, too! They will provide an excellent practice run for you.

# Interview Prep: Research

- Start by researching the judge's bio, the court structure, recent cases and decisions, and newsworthy events in the jurisdiction.
- OCPD's lists of alumni clerks is on the Judicial page. Check it, and talk to faculty too.
- Use the OCPD Alumni Survey Database on the Judicial page to locate data about alumni clerkship interviews and clerkships themselves.
- Become an expert on your own application.

# The Offer

- If you have a successful interview with a judge or court, you may be offered the clerkship.
- Exploding offers—offering during the interview and expecting an immediate response—are decreasing, but they still exist. Be prepared.
- Very short time to consider: no more than 1 week; often more like 1-2 days.

# Accepting the Offer

- Because you've followed the **GOLDEN RULE** of clerkship applications, you've only applied to places where you will accept the offer when given, so...

**ACCEPT THE OFFER!**

# Congratulations, You Were Awarded a Clerkship!

- Immediately contact other courts/judges where you have pending applications and withdraw.
- On OSCAR, set yourself as UNAVAILABLE for the term you'll be clerking. This automatically withdraws all pending applications for that term.
- Contact OCPD immediately for more guidance.



# Following Up

- Contact your recommenders and share the good news!
- If you worked with anyone on the Faculty Practice Group, contact them and share the good news!
- Add the clerkship to your resume now.
- Keep working with OCPD and your network on your post-clerkship employment picture.

# Summary

- 10 Steps for Applying to Clerkships—overview
- OSCAR for Federal Clerkships—intro
- Researching State Clerkships
- Application Materials
- Letters of Recommendation—asking, process
- Interviewing and The Offer
- Following Up

# In Your Packet

- More OSCAR FAQs and info
- Some state court hiring timelines
- FAQs about OCPD Clerkship Resources
- Info on diversity clerkship programs
- “Nine Ways to Increase Your Chances of Obtaining a Judicial Clerkship”

# Questions?

For more: Request an appointment with Traci Jenkins, Assistant Dean, by logging into CareerLink