Clerkship Applications to State Court Judges at the Trial Level
Cornell Law School, Office of Public Service

To determine the hiring procedures for state trial-court judges, see the Guide to State Judicial Clerkships (username: white; password: pine) and the State Court Clerkship Information (NALP) for general information. For many states, however, these resources do not contain specific information, as none is available. In these cases, the best way to determine the details of clerkship hiring by state trial-court judges is to call the judges’ chambers. However, because your schedule may be very busy, we recognize that making individual calls to judges might not be possible.

(Note: If you do decide to make phone calls, the best resource for finding contact information for state trial-court judges is published by BNA. You can access “BNA’s Directory of State and Federal Courts, Judge, and Clerks” from the Office of Public Service website, in the State Judicial Clerkships section.

To save time and resources, we offer this general advice where there is no available information on a particular state trial-level judge and you do not have time to make calls. Based on the experience of prior generations of Cornellians, the Office of Public Service believes that, overall, state trial-court judges tend to hire a bit later than other courts. Sending in your application in September or October of your third year is usually a safe bet. In addition, as a general matter, you may initially submit a cover letter and resume (omitting letters of recommendation, a writing sample and a transcript) to state trial-court judges. In the cover letter, indicate to the judge that you will forward any additional materials s/he requests.

For tailored advice on pursuing state trial-court clerkships, please make an appointment to meet with Karen Comstock or Elizabeth K. Peck by emailing our assistant, Molly Brewton.