

Summer Judicial Internships: Application Steps

Note: This document, with live links, is available on the Office of Public Service website:
<http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/publicservice/Students/Summer-Judicial-Internships.cfm>

1. Geography

Define your geographic target area(s).

Select locations where you can live cheaply or for free.

Don't have strong ties to a place you really want to work in after graduation? Do a judicial externship there! This is a good way to show future employers that you want to work in that area.

2. Federal Judges

Focus on federal district court judges, federal magistrate judges, and federal bankruptcy judges. (Federal court of appeals judges typically do not hire summer interns.)

District court judges hear civil and criminal cases at every stage of the litigation process.

Federal magistrate judges perform many functions similar to those performed by district court judges, but they do not have the authority to make final decisions.

Each federal district court has a bankruptcy court. The U.S. bankruptcy courts have jurisdiction over claims arising under the federal bankruptcy laws.

Determine which federal district court judges, magistrates and bankruptcy judges sit within a reasonable commuting distance of where you will be living. Go to [Symlicity](#) and click on the Clerkship tab. There, type in your preferred city or state to find federal judges in those locations. (To log on to Symlicity, your username is your NetID. If you have misplaced the password we emailed to you, click "Forgot Password" and a new one will be sent to you via email.)

3. State Judges

State court judges at the trial level, appellate level and on courts of last resort all hire summer interns. At the trial level, focus on trial courts of general jurisdiction, as opposed to limited jurisdiction, so you are exposed to a range of subject matters.

Determine your state's court structure, as no two states are alike. Go to the [BNA Directory](#) (scroll down the page to find the link).

Identify the judges who sit in your geographic area. Judges in the courts of last resort and at the appellate level are included in the [Symplicity](#) database. Information on trial-level judges is available in the [BNA Directory](#).

4. Create a Mailing List

For all judges listed in Symplicity, after running your search, export the results to an Excel spreadsheet. For state trial-level judges found only in the BNA Directory, you will need to create your mailing list from the information provided on the site.

5. Draft your resume and cover letter

Review your documents with one of the counselors in the Office of Public Service or the Career Services Office. Counselors will be available to meet with you in person or by phone over winter break, other than the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, when the University is closed. For appointments with Dean Comstock, contact [Molly Brewton](#). [Lisa Carberry](#) schedules appointments for Dean DeRosa, Nicole Sandoz, and Lyndsey Bullock.

6. Timing

For the most competitive courts, especially federal district courts in major cities like New York, you may want to send your applications in early to mid-December so that you can interview with those judges after exams are over. Also, if you will be home over the break and would like to interview with your home-town judges then, you should consider applying in December. For other courts, sending out your applications during the break, in late December or early January, should give you sufficient time to interview with judges before you return to campus. In some cases, judges will interview internship candidates by phone, so interviews after second semester classes have started may not interfere with your class work.