

# **PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT'S JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION**

## **Section 1 - Introduction**

In January 2011, the Philadelphia's First Judicial District, in conjunction with the Earle Mack School of Law at Drexel University, Temple University Beasley School of Law, the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Villanova University School of Law, Rutgers University School of Law-Camden, Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law and Widener University School of Law established a Judicial Fellowship Program for law school graduates interested in gaining professional experience to work directly with judges within Philadelphia's court system.

The Court recognized that there are many exceptional graduates seeking professional development opportunities in our current difficult legal economy, and that many judges could benefit from additional legal talent due to the Court's commitment to prompt and fair resolution of cases notwithstanding the Court's high volume caseload. The Philadelphia's First Judicial District initiated a Fellowship Program for their mutual benefit. Although the program began working with Philadelphia area law schools, it has since expanded and any law school graduate is invited to apply.

The Judicial Fellowship Program aims to provide talented law graduates with substantive experience in the law, and to support the Court in carrying out key functions. Fellows volunteer their time, have the same responsibilities as regular paid judicial law clerks, and gain the benefit of training by judges in the Philadelphia courts. Judges help new lawyers by mentoring, providing legal experience and enhancing their ability to acquire paid employment. The fellows help Philadelphia's high volume court system maintain its superior quality of service to the Philadelphia community. This program has had a positive impact on both the graduates and the chambers in which they are placed.

The streamlined and selective application process is a key to its success. Prospective judicial fellows apply directly via email to judges with whom they are interested in working. Judges select judicial fellows from those applicants who apply to them directly. The list of judges with available positions for judicial fellows is provided on the Judicial Fellowship Program's website (<http://www.courts.phila.gov/jfp>). Each judge and fellow team designs a flexible schedule (minimum of 20 hours per week) that ensures reliable service to the judge but permits the fellow to seek a paid position elsewhere. Judicial fellows do not commit to any length of service enabling them to leave the fellowship with two weeks' notice to their judge upon obtaining paid employment.

After three years of the Program, the First Judicial District has hosted 150 judicial fellows. A substantial number of judicial fellows secured paid positions during their judicial fellowship. Many attribute their success in part to the experience they gained during their judicial fellowship.

## **Section 2 – Application Process**

### **Overview**

Prospective judicial fellows apply and interview directly with those judges listed on the Judicial Fellowship website as interested in hosting a judicial fellow.

Judicial fellowships may be awarded to *Juris Doctor* graduates of any accredited law school who:

1. Are applying within the first two years of graduation; and
2. Submit a complete application, via email.
  - Fellows will work a minimum of 20 hrs per week.
  - All fellowships are unpaid.
  - Fellows do not need to be barred in Pennsylvania or any other state.

### **Application Procedure**

Law graduates seeking a judicial fellowship should follow the following steps:

1. Make sure you read the attached [Expectations of Judicial Fellowship Program](#) which emphasizes that Judicial Fellows are expected to treat the judicial fellowship and their accompanying responsibilities just as they would a paid legal position.
2. Select judges to whom you wish to apply from the list of judges posted.
3. Email the following documents to the judges' listed contact person with the subject caption designated as "Judicial Fellowship Application":
  - a. Completed application (available from the form section of this website)
  - b. Cover letter
  - c. Resume
  - d. Writing sample
  - e. Law school transcript (unofficial transcript is acceptable)
  - f. A list of three (3) references (one of which shall be a law school professor).

The individual judges participating in the Fellowship Program may request additional information and/or documents from the applicant if they determine that the information is needed to evaluate the application.

4. Judges interested in interviewing applicants will contact them directly and arrange for interviews. Selection of judicial fellows is done solely by individual judges.

### **Section 3 – Acceptance of a fellowship**

Once applicants have accepted a fellowship, they shall:

1. Contact individual judges to withdraw any outstanding fellowship applications;
2. Notify their respective career offices;
3. Contact Administrator of the Judicial Fellowship Program, Gail Dargan, at

[Gail.Dargan@courts.phila.gov](mailto:Gail.Dargan@courts.phila.gov) to notify the Court of their decision acceptance of a fellowship.

4. Complete necessary paperwork with the Court's Human Resource Department including a [FJD Application Form](#) (located in forms section of the First Judicial District's website) and email it to Ms. Dargan in order to be processed through the FJD's Human Resource Department. Ms. Dargan will arrange for the required criminal background check, get WESTLAW access and get the fellow listed on the judicial fellows list serv.

5. It is imperative that the Court have judicial fellows' current email addresses for the judicial fellow list serv. Judicial fellows are included in the Court's educational programs for judicial clerks (many of which qualify for CLE credit at a nominal cost). The email list will also be used to notify judicial fellows of job or networking opportunities.

#### **Section 4 - Termination of the Fellowship**

If an active fellow is offered and accepts a paid position during a fellowship, the fellow must provide the judge and their law school a minimum of two weeks notice before leaving the fellowship placement and transitioning into the new position and complete any pending assignments. Complete Judicial Evaluation Form which is included in the forms section of this website and email to Ms. Dargan ([Gail.Dargan@courts.phila.gov](mailto:Gail.Dargan@courts.phila.gov).)

**PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT'S JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**  
**JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION**

**PREFIX:**

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**FIRST NAME:**

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**MIDDLE INITIAL:**

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**LAST NAME:**

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**ADDRESS:**

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**CITY & STATE:**

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**ZIP:**

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**TELEPHONE NUMBER:**

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**EMAIL:**

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**GRADUATION DATE:**

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**BAR ADMISSIONS (IF APPLICABLE):**

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**ATTORNEY ID NUMBER (IF APPLICABLE):**

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**PRACTICE/SPECIALTY AREAS:**

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**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that all the information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I confirm that I have read and understood all of the above fellowship guidelines.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PHILADELPHIA'S FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT'S JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Application
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Cover Letter
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Resume
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Sample
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Law School Transcript
6. \_\_\_\_\_ List of three (3) references