



JUDICIAL EXTERNSHIPS

Judicial Externships

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Panelists

- Karura Njoroge, 3L – The Honorable Allison Williams, Sacramento County Superior Court
- Dane Knotts, 2L – The Honorable Gary Spraker, Chief Judge of U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Alaska
- Alexandra Patzakis, 2L – The Honorable Shama Mesiwala, California Court of Appeal, Third District

What is an Externship?

A **judicial extern** is a law student who conducts legal research and writing to support the work of a judge or of a court's central staff, which can include law clerks and staff attorneys.

To be distinguished from a **judicial law clerk** who is a law school graduate with a greater level of responsibility and time commitment to the judge or court's central staff.



Where ? – Court Level

Federal

The Federal Court System is comprised of:

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Courts of Appeals

U.S. District Courts (District and Magistrate Judges)

U.S. Court of Claims

U.S. Court of International Trade

U.S. Bankruptcy Courts

Administrative Law Courts

State

Most states have:

Supreme

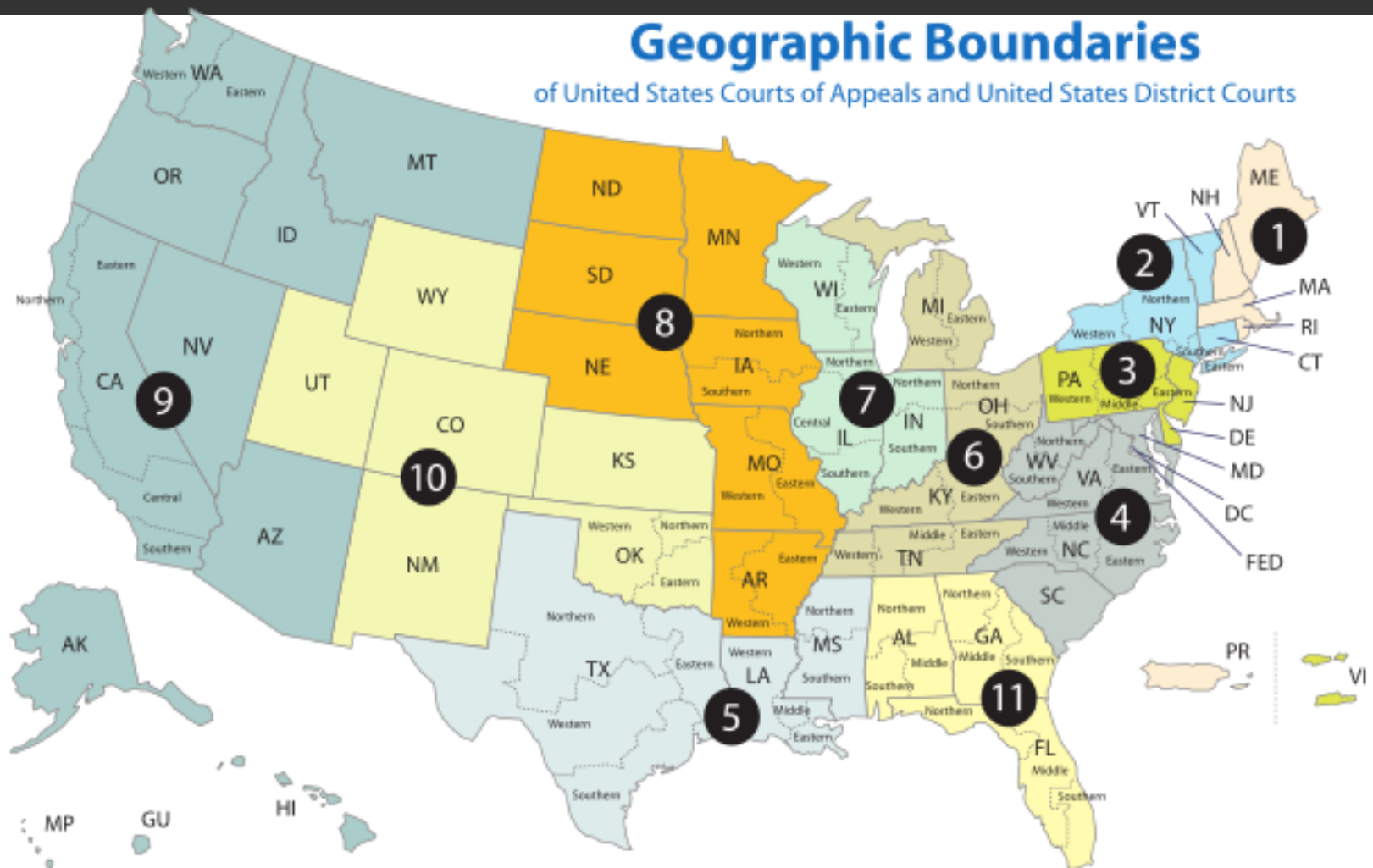
Appeals

Trial (or Superior) Courts.

State courts hear most criminal cases, probate (will and estates), contract, tort, family law cases, etc. Some also have tax and other specialized courts.

Office of Administrative Law Judges

Where? – Geographic Location



Why Extern for a Judge?

- ❑ Improve your resume
- ❑ Develop your legal research and writing skills under supervision
- ❑ Build your connections
- ❑ Gain exposure to litigation and various legal issues
- ❑ Develop a mentoring relationship with a judge or staff attorney
- ❑ Observe different forms of advocacy

How? – Resources

- Judicial Externship webpage:
<https://law.ucdavis.edu/career-services/job-resources/judicial-externship.html>
 - Judicial Extern Information for select courts
 - Judicial Extern Application Information by CA Court
 - Notes on Judicial Externship Hiring
- Court Opportunity Recruitment for All (CORA)
- Court Websites
- Your connections – students, alumni, professors
- 12Twenty

How? – Application Materials

Assemble and Mail (or E-Mail) Application Packets

Cover Letter

- ❑ Use resume paper (white or ivory, 25% or more cotton content)

Resume

- ❑ Use resume paper

Reference List

- ❑ Use resume paper

Writing Sample

- ❑ Use regular paper
- ❑ 5-10 pages
- ❑ include cover sheet

Transcript(s) (if required)

Envelope (9" x 12")

Labels

- ❑ address and return labels should be typed
- ❑ use mail merge to save time

E-Mail (merge all documents into a single PDF)

Online portals for Northern District of CA, 1st District Court of Appeal, SF County Superior



When? By Dec. 1st

- Do NOT wait for fall semester grades to apply – it will be too late.
- Summer externships are popular and competitive – apply ASAP (before finals).
 - The Northern District – No deadline - <https://cand.uscourts.gov/Externs/Application>, submit grades when released.
 - The Eastern District courts in Sacramento - (Also hire for next school year externships) – Apply by Dec. 1
 - 1st District Court of Appeal - <https://www.courts.ca.gov/42955.htm>
 - SF County Superior Court - <https://sf.courts.ca.gov/externs>
 - Yolo, Sacramento, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Solano, Los Angeles County Superior Courts
 - Just the Beginning: Summer Judicial Internship Project -- <https://jtb.org/summer-judicial-internship-project/> (Early January deadline)
 - ABA Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP) – Early January deadline
 - ABA Business Law Section Diversity Clerkship Program – Apps open in October
 - MABA Judicial Externship Program – Mid-December deadline
- Interview over winter break if possible.
- School year for credit – Shannon Kahn, Director of Externships (smkahn@ucdavis.edu)

When?

- **Yolo:**
<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/yolocourts>
(legal research externship)
- **Sacramento:** through Career Services
- **Santa Clara:**
<https://agency.governmentjobs.com/scscourt/default.cfm> (judicial intern I and II), Judge Nicole Isger '98
(San Jose)
- **Contra Costa**
- **Solano**
- **Los Angeles:** send an email to extern@lacourt.org

Interviewing

You may be interviewed by a judge, a law clerk, a research attorney, a judicial assistant, or a combination thereof.

They look for:

- ❑ **Preparation**
- ❑ **Maturity, integrity, initiative, diligence, and ability to accept constructive criticism**
- ❑ **Professional compatibility**
- ❑ **Keen interest in and understanding of the law**
- ❑ **Analytic ability**

Schedule your interview as early as possible to increase your chances of an offer.

Follow-up and Acceptance

- Send a **thank you** letter (or e-mail if appropriate) within 24 hours of the interview
- **Follow-up:** If you have not heard after **two weeks** and were not provided a timeframe, you may call the law clerk, staff attorney, or judicial assistant to express your continued interest and ask when you will hear about selection.
- Be prepared that **some judges make on-the-spot offers.**
- If you have multiple offers from employers, or are concerned about timing, please come talk to Career Services
- **Do not withdraw an acceptance to take a later offer.**
- **Do not accept a school-time externship and then back out.**

Funding

- Some funding is offered through ABA Programs
 - **Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP)** – Last year deadline January 9, 2026 (<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/jiop/program/>)
 - 2K stipend, numerous judges participate
 - First 500 applicants guaranteed at least one interview
 - **Business Law Section Diversity Clerkship Program (for 1Ls, 2Ls)** – Late Dec/early Jan deadline (https://www.americanbar.org/groups/business_law/initiatives_awards/diversity/)
 - 3K stipend, only 6-9 interns selected each year
 - Need two (2) letters of recommendation
- **Mexican American Bar Association (MABA) Judicial Extern Program**
(<http://mabaattorneys.com/edit-password/federal-judicial-externship-program/>)
 - Federal Judicial Externships in Los Angeles with a 2K scholarship
 - Deadline: mid-December
- UC Davis School of Law **Public Service Summer Grant**
(<https://intranet.law.ucdavis.edu/community/career/summer-funding.aspx>)
 - Up to 4K total, if you have other funding under 4K, still apply
 - Applications available end of February, Deadline: late March/early April
 - Not guaranteed and competitive process
 - Part-time externships will be prorated
- RA positions - Part-time and remote

Upcoming Events

- **Wed. Sept. 16** – Capitol Reception at Cafeteria 15L (Sacramento)
- **Sat. Sept. 19** – South Asian Bar Association (SABA) Diversity Law Student Reception at Justice Mesiwala's home (Davis)
- **Sat. Sept. 26** – Sacramento Diversity Career Fair at McGeorge School of Law (Sacramento)
- **Tues. Nov. 10** – State Judicial Reception co-hosted with McGeorge at McGeorge Library (Sacramento)
- **Tues. Dec. 1** – Submit summer judicial externship applications (federal)
- **Wed. Jan. 13** – Eastern District of CA Judicial Reception in the federal courthouse (Sacramento)

Questions?

Natalie Butcher

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Clerkships**

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