

WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON SUMMER EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM



The Western District of Washington is partnering with the M. Margaret McKeown Federal Bar Association to provide summer judicial externships to law students who bring a wide range of perspectives to the legal profession. In addition to being placed in judicial chambers for the summer, the externship opportunity provides each student with a structured educational program. The program includes matching students with an attorney mentor, meetings with Assistant Federal Public Defenders, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and Probation Officers, federal agents and judges, weekly meetings with the judicial coordinator, and opportunities to observe civil and criminal proceedings. The program provides a \$5,000 stipend to defray students' living expenses, as well as a \$200 stipend for travel expenses. Externs will be placed in the U.S. District Court in either a District Judge or a Magistrate Judge's Chambers. Placements are in Seattle and Tacoma.

PROGRAM CRITERIA

This is a summer externship program and is open to all 1L and 2L students at an accredited law school. The program has two start dates: June 2 and June 14, 2027, depending on the students' law school terms. The program is eight weeks long and is full time (40 hours per week). The program is demanding and externs should understand the importance of timeliness and professionalism, and be hardworking, organized, honest, ethical, and committed to making the most of their summer to gain critical lawyering skills and habits.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The application period opens on January 1 and closes on February 1, 2027. Interviews will be conducted over Zoom. Applicants will be notified as soon as possible. Students should submit the following materials to summer_externship@wawd.uscourts.gov:

1. A resume.
2. A one to two page cover letter addressing why you are interested in being a judicial extern, how you believe you meet the program's criteria of serving students who bring a wide range of perspectives to the legal profession, and if you have a preference for placement in Seattle or Tacoma. The program cannot guarantee placement at the extern's preferred location.
3. A writing sample (10 pages or fewer).
4. The names and contact information for three references. One should be a legal writing professor.

Previous participants have commented:

The Summer Program has provided me with opportunities that I don't believe I would have ever gotten otherwise. I was able to work closely with my chambers on drafting orders and memos that have improved my research and writing capabilities tremendously. Not only have I improved, but the work I did was truly meaningful and helped orchestrate the judicial process. Further, participating in the program alongside other externs over the course of 8 weeks allowed us to form genuine friendships. The program provided networking opportunities that gave insight into different career paths within the legal profession that I never thought of before. We were able to meet with professionals such as judges, the attorney general, and our program assigned mentors who spent their valuable time shaping our futures. My favorite part of the program was being able to observe all types of court proceedings. From civil to criminal proceedings, every case had something unique to offer. Overall, I believe this program has something to offer to every law student, and I highly recommend participating in it.

My summer externship at the Western District Court of Washington was truly the best way I could have spent my 1L summer. I was exposed to so many new sides of the law and had a front-row seat to the judicial system. I had the opportunity to learn not just by observing proceedings and reading motions, but by actively contributing to the work in chambers, drafting bench memos, researching legal issues, and discussing case strategy with my judge and clerks. This experience exposed me to a wide range of career paths. I was able to meet and learn from federal judges, law clerks, U.S. attorneys, public defenders, and civil litigators. Each conversation helped me better understand what kind of lawyer I hope to become and the values I want to carry forward in my career. I am incredibly grateful for the mentorship, support, and inspiration I found during this externship.

The externship was an amazing experience for my 1L summer. I had the opportunity to meet with judges and professionals within the district. These meetings brought me to paint a clearer picture of what paths I can take with my legal career. Also, one of the experiences that stood out to me was that I had the chance to witness and learn about the diversion programs of the district. Seeing the efforts of the individuals involved further ignited my hopes to pursue a career that serves others. Moreover, I saw how much my legal research and writing skills improved over the course of the summer. I immensely recommend the Summer Externship Program to law students because I found that it was unique opportunity I would not have found elsewhere!

My participation in the Summer Extern Program was nothing short of amazing! I was given a variety of unique assignments that not only sharpened my legal writing and research skills but also provided a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of the chambers. The program also offered various opportunities to meet with professionals within the legal field, including judges, federal public defenders, and federal prosecutors. One of the most valuable components of the program was the chance to observe both criminal and civil proceedings in real time. Seeing the intricacies of a trial and the intrinsic human element of such is something that one cannot simply gather from a textbook. I would highly recommend the Summer Program to any law school student, regardless of their specific legal interest.