

DAUPHIN COUNTY'S JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Beginning in 2015, Dauphin County Court in conjunction with the Dickinson School of Law and Widener University School of Law established a Judicial Fellowship Program for law school graduates interested in gaining professional experience working with judges.

The Judicial Fellowship Program's goal is to provide talented law graduates with substantive experience in the law and to assist the Court. Fellows volunteer their time, have the same responsibilities as a paid judicial law clerk and gain the benefit of training by Dauphin County judges. Judges help lawyers by mentoring, providing legal experience which enhances their ability to acquire paid employment. The judicial fellows work closely with the judge's judicial law clerk.

Dauphin County judges have areas of concentration. Five judges are assigned primarily to criminal court, two judges are assigned primarily to civil court and three judges are assigned primarily to family court. The application allows the prospective judicial fellow to note areas of interest but their preference is not guaranteed.

Prospective judicial fellows should complete the application; attach a cover letter, resume, writing sample and a list of three references. The application and documents can be mailed to the attention of Deborah Freeman, District Court Administrator at 3rd Floor, Dauphin County Courthouse, 101 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 or emailed to dfreeman@dauphinc.org.

The Court Administrator will refer the applications to the judges who have expressed an interest in this program. The judge will review the applications and schedule interviews. If selected, the judge and fellow will design a flexible schedule with a minimum of twenty hours a week. Judicial Fellows do not commit to any length of service and this enables them to leave the fellowship with two weeks' notice to their judge upon obtaining paid employment.

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PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR JUDGES

When agreeing to hire a volunteer judicial fellow, judges should be guided by the following expectations:

- Give the judicial fellow only the kind of work that you would ask your paid judicial law clerk to perform which includes legal research and writing assignments, assistance with docket management and communication with attorneys.
- Provide both positive and constructive feedback to the judicial fellow regarding their work product.
- Serve as a mentor to your judicial fellow by talking with them about their career goals and providing advice and guidance. Be open to serving as a reference for your judicial fellow when they are seeking employment.
- Bring your judicial fellow with you to bar association meetings and functions.
- Maintain flexibility regarding the judicial fellow's time in chambers to allow for job seeking or professional development opportunities.
- Permit the judicial fellow to continue pro bono work or paid work that does not interfere or conflict with the work of your chambers and ethical rules.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR JUDICIAL FELLOWS

When engaged in service as a judicial fellow, judicial fellows should be guided by the following expectations:

- Treat this position as seriously and professionally as if you were a paid and permanent member of the judge's staff.
- Communicate with the judge and staff about your schedule.
- Seek the input and advice of the judge and other Court members on your professional development. Take advantage of networking opportunities provided by the judge and others.
- Work with the judge to produce a useable writing sample. Make sure the judge approves the distribution of any writing produced during the judicial fellowship to avoid disclosing confidential information.
- Investigate and observe the different practice areas presented across the assignments of the court.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information you learn as a judicial fellow, dress professionally and conduct yourself with integrity as a representative of the judge in the legal community.
- Provide two weeks' notice prior to ending your fellowship and complete any pending assignments.