

Diversity Clerkship Program



About the Program

The State Bar's Diversity Clerkship Program is a limited-term, summer employment opportunity that gives first-year Marquette University Law School and University of Wisconsin Law School students with diverse backgrounds the opportunity to build legal practice skills and knowledge. Student clerks gain practical legal experience, and participating employers obtain valuable legal support.

Program Goals

- Provide legal employers with access to first-year law students with diverse backgrounds from Wisconsin law schools
- Enhance law student academic education with practical legal work experience
- Expose law students to varied legal employment opportunities
- Provide full-time, limited-term summer clerkship experiences with premier legal organizations

Student Eligibility

First-year Marquette University Law School and University of Wisconsin Law School students with diverse backgrounds who are in good standing may apply. Successful applicants demonstrate a commitment to diversity and a record of academic achievement.

Employer Eligibility

Although our employer roster changes from year to year, we look for a broad representation of employers that reflect the real-world legal environment, including traditional law firms, government agencies, and in-house counsel.

We primarily recruit employers from Wisconsin, and a majority of our employers are located in Madison and Milwaukee. We have occasionally had a few employers located in small to medium, sized Wisconsin cities or out of state.

Employers provide the same salary, work experience, and social opportunities to our clerkship students as they provide to any of their other summer associates.

All labor and employment laws relating to hiring a student through the program must be followed. Many employers provide an in-house mentor for their student clerk. The program requires employers to provide students with periodic evaluations during the summer and an exit interview at the end of the clerkship term of service.

Our roster of employers changes from year to year. A finalized list of employers is not available until early February 2017.

Continued Employment

Participating employers commit to hiring a student for a limited period of time during the summer. Outside of the program, employers and students are free to negotiate continuing employment.

State Bar Sponsorship

The Diversity Clerkship Program is an initiative of the State Bar of Wisconsin. The State Bar's Diversity Inclusion and Oversight Committee oversees the program with the help of State Bar staff. Members of this committee assist in the recruitment of employers and students and work with the program's selection committee. The selection committee determines the employer-student assignments and conducts on-going program evaluations.

For more information about the program, please contact Megan Zurbriggen, State Bar of Wisconsin, (608) 250-6083 / mzurbriggen@wisbar.org or Atty. Andrew J. Chevrez, achevrez@wi.rr.com.

Diversity Clerkship Recognition Reception

Each year, the State Bar's Diversity Inclusion and Oversight Committee plans a recognition reception honoring past and present Diversity Clerkship employers and law clerks. The reception is typically held in July. All employers and students are encouraged to come to this evening of celebration.



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Student Selection Process

Interested first year law students meeting the eligibility requirements apply to the program at the beginning of their second semester. Candidates submit a written application, resume, legal writing sample, and personal statement demonstrating their commitment to diversity.

A selection committee of practicing attorneys reviews the application materials and conducts interviews before making final selections.

The selection committee considers the following criteria when choosing participants:

- Commitment to diversity
- Probability of success, as measured by maturity, judgment, motivation, and ability to relate to others
- Academic achievement in law school and prior to law school
- Proficiency in English - oral and written
- Ability in legal research and writing
- Previous work experience and volunteer activities
- Interview evaluations by selection committee

Once selected, all students are interviewed by all participating employers. Both students and employers rank their assignment preferences based on the interviews. The selection committee then makes student-employer assignments.

“My placement at the Law Offices of Thomas P. Stilp far exceeded my expectations. My introduction to the world of civil litigation was absolutely fantastic. I gained valuable experience in legal writing and research as well insight into the inner workings of the civil system. The people at Stilp were very friendly and helpful. I truly loved my job this summer.”

Angela Harden
Former Clerk at Law Offices of Thomas P. Stilp

“My experience with the clerkship was chock-full of different interesting assignments. My legal writing assignments were very interesting – ranging from evaluating the DOC’s sick leave policy under FLSA to evaluating whether inmates may obtain proxy marriages through the state of Colorado. I was also able to sit in on various depositions and hearings. I wrote motions and heard my motions in front of a judge. Furthermore all of the attorneys were very helpful, nice, and friendly. I genuinely felt that the office attorneys and paralegals were happy to have me working with them. Needless to say, I had a wonderful experience at the DOC. ”

Eugenia Lee
Former Clerk at Wisconsin Department of Corrections

“The Diversity Clerkship Program brings legal employers and law students together to provide superior client representation through a diverse bar. This unique program offers exceptional clerkship opportunities to law students of diverse backgrounds. Eligible law students are assigned to employers who offer mentoring as well as hands on legal work in settings from large to small firms, in-house to government agencies. I can personally attest to the professional value this Bar program brings to both students and employers.”

Kathleen Chung, Past Chair
Diversity Clerkship Program

Diversity Clerkship Program



What Employers Want to Know

Why should my organization participate?

Reap the benefits of a more diverse workforce and gain access to the best up-and-coming legal talent in the state. Students who make it through the rigorous selection process are committed to working hard and learning quickly during their clerkships.

The number of students selected for the program each year must match the number of participating employers. The more employers who take part in this valuable program, the more students get the opportunity to participate!

How are employers recruited for the program?

Participation is completely voluntary. Members of the State Bar of Wisconsin Diversity Inclusion and Oversight Committee help to recruit employers. Interested employers can contact Megan Zurbriggen, State Bar of Wisconsin, (608) 250-6083 / mzurbriggen@wisbar.org or Atty. Andrew J. Chevez, achevez@wi.rr.com.

What is the employer's commitment?

Program employers commit to accepting any assigned student, even if the student is not among their top preferences. Employers hire the assigned student for a limited term and agree to provide the student with the same salary, work experience, and social opportunities as provided to their previous student clerks. Employers agree to comply with all labor and employment laws relating to hiring a student through our program. Employers provide mentoring to the clerk and also provide the student with periodic evaluations and an end-of-term exit interview. There is no obligation to offer continuing employment beyond the program dates.

Will we be matched with one of our top student choices?

Employer and student preferences are just one of many factors considered during the assignment process. We make every attempt to maximize employers and student preferences; however, there is no guarantee that students or employers will be granted their top preference.

2016 Employers

- American Family Mutual Insurance Co.
- Boardman & Clark LLP
- Clean Wisconsin
- CUNA Mutual Group
- Law Office of Odalo J. Ohiku
- Law Offices of Thomas P. Stilp
- Madison City Attorney Office
- Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co.
- Rockwell Automation, Inc.
- SC Johnson & Son, Inc.
- Stafford Rosenbaum, LLP
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
- Wisconsin Department of Corrections

All students chosen to participate in the Diversity Clerkship Program have met the program's criteria and have the potential for success.

Can we contact previous employer participants?

Absolutely! Just contact us for employer names and telephone numbers.

For more information or to apply, visit www.wisbar.org/dcp
