

# Federal Judicial Law Clerk (FJLC) Committee Guide

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**Federal Bar  
Association**

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## 1. Introduction to the Judiciary Division

The Judiciary Division is the FBA's home for all state and federal judges, clerks of court, and federal judicial law clerks ("judicial law clerks"). The Judiciary Division coordinates with other Divisions to give access to its members who can share their unique experiences and insights gained from within the court systems.

The Judiciary Division is Chaired by Hon. Michael J. Newman, U.S. District Judge (S.D. Ohio) and comprised of the following Committees and committee chairs:

- U.S. District Judges—Hon. Beth Bloom (S.D. Fla.)
- U.S. Magistrate Judges—Hon. Karoline Mehalchick (M.D. Pa.)
- State Court Judges—Hon. Alison Bachus (Arizona Superior Court)
- Administrative Law Judges—Hon. Madeline Garcia (Miami Immigration Court)

Clerks of Court—Robert Farrell (Clerk of Courts, D. Mass.)  
Federal Law Clerk Committee—Trevor Jones & Constantine Economides (S.D. Fla.)  
Ad Hoc Committee on Pathways to the FBA: Hon. Mimi Tsankov (New York  
Immigration Court)

## 2. Mission of the FJLC Committee

The National FJLC Committee’s mission is to serve the interests and needs of current and former judicial law clerks by providing educational, career, and networking opportunities. To do so, the FJLC Committee provides guidance and resources to local Chapters and implements national programs. Through those efforts, the FJLC Committee aims to grow the federal judicial law clerk network and increase FBA membership, with a specific goal to support and expand existing diversity and inclusion initiatives.

## 3. Purpose of this Guide

The following information is intended to be used by local FBA Chapters to create new or expand existing local FJLC activities including committees to broaden the FJLC network and generate sustained judicial law clerk alumni memberships with the FBA.

## 4. Structuring Chapter FJLC Committees

A Chapter’s Federal Law Clerk committee should ideally consist of a Chair (or co-chairs) and 3 to 5 judges and current or former judicial law clerks who are Chapter Board Members (or designees of Chapter Board Members), with at least one current judicial law clerk (whether career or term) serving as a current clerk liaison. The current clerk liaison is not necessarily an active FBA member, but selecting an active (or newly active) FBA member is encouraged. We also encourage selecting former judicial law clerks on different career paths (whether private practice, including big firm vs. small firm, or public interest or non-profit work).

Each Chapter will have an assigned National FJLC Committee Member liaison to discuss proposed Chapter FJLC programming and report programming successes and challenges. This structure will serve to improve all Chapters’ programming and the National FJLC initiatives.

## 5. Suggested FJLC Programming

The following list of suggested programming provides Chapters with ideas for potential events. While some of the suggested programming is universally applicable, other ideas may be unique to specific districts. Each Chapter is encouraged to develop programming

that suits the specific needs of the judicial law clerks serving in that Chapter's District(s), and the National FJLC Committee is always open to new ideas or concepts for future programming.

a. Annual New Clerk Welcome Event (Fall)

- This event should occur when most new judicial law clerks begin their term clerkships. It has often been successful as a happy hour mixer event with current and former federal law clerks who work and live in the area.
- A sign-in list is encouraged for this event to capture each new law clerk's information for the National FBA's use in developing a judicial law clerk alumni directory, as well as for encouraging FBA membership and attendance at Chapter events. Importantly, the request should be for personal email, not court work email addresses, because court email address will expire for term clerks.
  - For an example of a template, please see the E.D. Michigan Chapter's information form: [http://fbamich.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Law\\_Clerk\\_Alumni\\_Information\\_RE.pdf](http://fbamich.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Law_Clerk_Alumni_Information_RE.pdf)
- Many courthouses host an all-clerk orientation. A social event can occur afterwards which will allow for law clerks from other courthouses in the same District to attend. It can be held remotely or in person with or without judges.

b. Networking/Philanthropic/Social Events (Winter/Summer)

- Habitat for Humanity
- Walking Tours
- Intramural Events, e.g., Tennis, Bowling, Softball, Kickball
- Standard Happy Hours
- Brown Bag Lunch Events with Former Judicial Law Clerks
- Trivia Night between Judges' chambers (can be held virtually)

c. Educational/CLE Programming

- Examples include substantive practice area training, electronic discovery training, ethics and professionalism, post-clerkship potential business models (including local counsel engagements, etc.), implicit bias, and/or legal writing workshops.
- Invite current law clerks to regular FBA programming and CLEs.

d. Resume Workshops (Winter)

- Committee members review current law clerks' resumes, offer suggestions and job search advice for those seeking post-clerkship employment, and provide candid

guidance about post-clerkship employment. The topics discussed during the workshop may include:

- Employment Interviews: Common Questions/Issues
- Proper Writing Sample from your Clerkship
- Recommendations/References
- Applying to Law Firms
- Applying to Government
- Tips for a Smooth Transition from Clerking to Practice

e. Post-Clerkship Employment Recruitment Reception (Spring)

- This is an annual event creating a great opportunity for job-seeking federal law clerks to connect with legal organizations located in or near the Chapter's District(s). Suggested format is a cocktail-and-appetizers event where the FJLC committee invites one or two managing or hiring partners from private firms and/or for-profit corporations, as well as public interest or non-profit organizations, prosecutors and public defenders (state and federal). The event is free to job-seeking federal law clerks but attending organizations may pay a modest sponsorship fee to offset expenses for the event.

f. "Lunch and Learn" for Judicial Interns (Summer)

- An annual event where the FJLC committee assembles a panel that includes former federal law clerks employed in different practice areas (e.g., judge, large firm partner, small firm or solo attorney, criminal defense attorney, prosecutor, non-profit or public interest attorney, etc.). In preparing these panel discussions, the FJLC committee should aim to include diverse former judicial law clerks as speakers (see Section 5(g) below for a list of affinity groups that may help find diverse speakers).

g. Panel Discussion Series for Prospective Law Clerks (Fall/Spring)

- Series of Panel Discussions geared towards prospective judicial law clerks featuring current and former federal clerks or law students who have secured post-grad clerkships to address the application and interview process, what to expect while clerking, how to excel as a judicial law clerk, and other topics.
  - In preparing these panel discussions, the FJLC committee should be sure to include diverse current and former judicial law clerks, as well as to invite attendance from local affinity groups, such as:
    - Black Law Students Association

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association
- Disability Rights Bar Association
- Haitian Lawyers Association
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Lambda Legal
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- National Association of Muslim Lawyers
- National Association of Women Lawyers
- National Bar Association
- National LGBT Bar Association
- National Native American Bar Association
- National Native American Law Students Association
- Any other student or attorney groups offering academic, networking, career, or service opportunities for attorneys diverse in race, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, and socioeconomic background.
- We encourage Chapters to coordinate with the national Federal Judicial Law Clerk Committee either to host this event virtually or record it, so that it may be shared with students and lawyers outside your Circuit or district, but who may be interested in clerking there.

#### h. Judicial Family Reunion

- This semi-formal event reunites judges in your local circuits and/or districts with their current and former law clerks—many of whom may have moved away from the area. This event may be held less often than annually, given the associated expense and overall purpose. The goals accomplished by this “family reunion” include (1) continuing a signature event for the Law Clerk Committee; (2) encouraging law clerk membership in the FBA; (3) developing the relationships between the bench and bar; (4) formalizing and enlarging the network of former judicial law clerks within the local federal courts.

## 6. National Initiatives

#### a. Former Clerk to Current Clerk (“Clerk-to-Clerk”) Mentoring Program

Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship designed to assist new clerks as they embark on the start of their clerkships and careers. The Clerk-to-Clerk Mentoring Program will connect former federal law clerks (mentor) with current federal law clerks (mentee). The program should coincide with the start of most federal clerkships and could

potentially kickoff with a national virtual or in-person meeting. Thereafter, mentors and mentees would meet, either virtually or in-person, four to six times during the year to discuss topics and engage in activities selected from a mentoring plan developed by the National FJLC Committee with pertinent topics and activities. Contacts from the mentor outside the structured activities are also encouraged when helpful for the mentee. Mentors and mentees should be paired according to the mentor's preference, if possible. (e.g. a former clerk for the same judge, a former clerk in the community where their clerkship is located, or a former clerk where they hope to eventually practice). Clerks who serve multiple years can sign-up for the program throughout their clerkship. Depending upon the number of mentors and mentees who sign up, FBA chapters are encouraged to proceed jointly with other FBA chapters in the same state or region to facilitate a robust mentoring program.

b. National Federal Judicial Law Clerk Directory

One of the National FJLC Committee's key projects is to assemble and continually update a Law Clerk Directory with the assistance of the local Chapters. The directory will be a searchable database of former law clerks that can be filtered by Circuit, District, and/or Judge.

- The Eastern District of Michigan launched a Federal Judicial Law Clerk Directory for their Chapter in 2019. The directory is available to all current and former law clerks and E.D. of Michigan FBA Chapter members: <https://fbamich.org/committees/federal-law-clerks-past-present/>

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The FJLC Guide was prepared by the Chapter Outreach and Membership Committee of the FBA Judiciary Division's Federal Judicial Law Clerk Committee. For more information, please see the FBA website or contact:

[Chapter Outreach and Membership Committee](#)

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