

## NEW APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

Court Contacts:      Andrew Burke      617-748-9147  
                                 Madison Capezzuto      617-748-9602

### **FORM AO-78 - Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment:**

The Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment form requests personal history, education, work experience, and other data. The information provided on this form will be evaluated by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO) to ensure that you meet all requirements and qualifications for the pay grade to which you are appointed. It is important to provide complete and accurate information on the form.

In completing this form, please note:

#### **Address:**

If you currently reside out-of-state prior to the start of your clerkship and/or appointment and you plan to relocate, **do not** use that address on your appointment paperwork. To avoid a delay in salary payment, you must have an established address in advance for the state in which you will be working. Your paperwork cannot be submitted to the AO for payroll processing and tax purposes without a proper address.

#### **Education:**

"Dates Attended" -- the month and year are sufficient.

"Date Received" -- the **exact date is required**.

"Number of Credit hours" can be omitted if a degree was received.

"Grade Point Average or Scholastic Standing" -- Scholastic standing may help meet the minimum qualification requirements to be appointed as a federal law clerk, particularly if applicant did not serve on a law journal, moot court competition, or other type of demonstrated proficiency in legal studies.

Information regarding work on an editorial board of law review, and other noteworthy honors, should be reflected under #18(c).

**Applicants for Legal Positions:**

Federal law clerks must be admitted to the Bar and have one year of full-time legal work experience after graduation from law school for appointment at pay grade JSP 12. Appointment at pay grade JSP 13 requires bar admission and two years of full-time legal work experience after graduation from law school. **The exact date of bar admission and the state/jurisdiction must be listed.**

**Work Experience:**

Start with present/most recent position and work back 10 years.

Law Clerk applicants should include all law-related experience, whether obtained before or after graduation from law school. For legal work experience performed after conferral of the JD degree, **exact start and end dates are required (not just month/year).**

Address and telephone number of employers are not critical but should be provided if known.

**Optional Background Information (Questions 18-20):**

Due to the sensitive nature of law clerk positions, incoming term law clerks must complete questions 18-20 regarding their criminal history. Criminal history is not in itself disqualifying. All available information, past and present, favorable and unfavorable, about the reliability and trustworthiness of an individual will be considered when making an employment suitability determination. Providing false and/or misleading information may be grounds for removal from the application and selection process, as well as disciplinary action if discovered after an individual's date of hire.

**TAX WITHHOLDING FORMS:**

- Federal tax withholding form (W-4)
- State tax withholding form (not applicable to residents of NH)

These forms must be submitted with the initial appointment paperwork and contain a proper address as indicated above.

## **FORM I-9 - Employment Eligibility Verification:**

This form is required for each new employee/intern and must be submitted with the initial appointment paperwork. Please submit a copy of the required identity documentation with your paperwork and bring the originals with you on your start date.

Verification is required of either:

- One (1) item from List A

(For example, a U. S. Passport);

OR

- One (1) item from List B **AND** one (1) item from List C.

(For example, a state-issued driver's license AND original social security card OR a state-issued driver's license AND certified copy of employee's birth certificate.)

Section 1 - Completed by the employee.

Section 2 - Certification will be completed by an authorized court representative.

## **DIRECT DEPOSIT FORM:**

This form is required for all new hires and must be submitted with the initial paperwork. To avoid any delays in payment, please ensure that your bank routing and account numbers are accurate. Alternatively, you can attach a voided check showing all account and routing numbers.

In section 3, the Routing Transit Number is always a nine-digit number. The Check Digit is the last (ninth) digit of the Routing Transit Number.

## **FINGERPRINT CHECKS/BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS:**

Each new appointee (including volunteer judicial interns) is required to have an FBI fingerprint check. Incoming employees and volunteers must complete and return the AO-65 FBI Privacy Act Statement as part of their new appointment forms. Certain high-sensitive positions also require a full background investigation. The court will coordinate fingerprinting and prepare the requisite additional paperwork for completion of the background investigation (if required).

Paid employees are considered provisionally hired pending completion of the fingerprint check/background investigation with a favorable suitability determination. Volunteer positions (including judicial interns) must generally be fingerprinted and a favorable suitability determination must be obtained before they can begin the volunteer position.

### **SECURITY ID:**

Security identification cards are issued for access to your office and other areas of the building as necessary. These security cards are issued by designated Judiciary personnel in conjunction with the U.S. Marshal's Office. This process will be coordinated for you.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN COMPARISON AND ELECTION INFORMATION:**

**New employees have 60 days from the date of their appointment to elect health insurance coverage.** The sooner the election is made, the sooner the coverage will begin. Health insurance elections are made using the Judiciary Benefits Center (JBC) online benefits portal. We will send you instructions for accessing the JBC after your new hire orientation. Coverage cannot begin until after the date your employment begins. The effective date of your coverage will be the start of the next pay period following your enrollment. Pay periods begin on a bi-weekly cycle.

If you are enrolling dependents (e.g. a spouse and/or children) on your health insurance plan, you will need to obtain birth certificates, marriage certificates, or other applicable documentation before you onboard to ensure that they can enroll in your health insurance benefits in a timely manner. Further details can be found [here](#).

Employees will still have a 60-day enrollment period to enroll as a new hire/newly eligible employee. However, the elections will not be sent to the carrier and premiums will not be deducted until all dependent verification documentation have been received and approved by the JBC.

There is a benefits "open season" for health insurance (and other benefits) once a year, typically in November. If health insurance is not elected within the 60-day new hire time period, the employee will be required to wait until an open season to elect health insurance coverage. Health insurance elections can also be made outside the 60-day window and/or open season when employees experience a "qualifying life event (QLE)," such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, or loss of outside coverage.

A tool to compare health insurance plans available in your area is accessible from: <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance>

## **LIFE INSURANCE BROCHURE AND ELECTION FORM:**

**Unlike other benefits, Basic Life Insurance (salary plus \$2,000) is deemed elected unless specifically waived.** All benefits-eligible new hires are automatically enrolled in basic life insurance. Life insurance can be waived by using the JBC online benefits portal. We will send you information about accessing the JBC after your new hire orientation. You have 60 days to elect additional life insurance coverage.

## **DENTAL INSURANCE AND VISION INSURANCE:**

Dental insurance and vision insurance are available, and elections are made on the Benefeds website. **New employees have 60 days from the date of their appointment to elect either or both.** Additional information and plan comparison tools for both dental and vision insurance can be found at <https://www.benefeds.gov>

## **FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PROGRAM (FERS) AND THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP):**

Federal retirement programs are only available for career positions. Term and temporary positions (such as Term Law Clerks) do not participate in these programs. Information regarding the retirement programs will be provided to employees appointed to career positions during their new hire orientation.

All employees pay social security and Medicare/Medicaid taxes during their employment.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS INFORMATION:**

The federal judiciary provides other benefits to employees. More specific information regarding those benefits will be provided directly to the employee during the onboarding process. Information regarding these benefits can also be found at <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>

## **DESIGNATIONS OF BENEFICIARY:**

In the event of an employee's death, many federal benefits (e.g. life insurance, FERS, and TSP) result in the payment of money. Generally, employees can decide who receives the payments by filing the appropriate designation forms. In the absence of a properly filed Designation of Beneficiary form, benefits will be paid following the legal order of precedence below:

1. To your widow or widower, if living;
2. To your child or your children in equal shares, with the share of any deceased child distributed among the descendants of that child;
3. To your parents in equal shares or the entire amount to the surviving parent;
4. To your estate executor or administrator;
5. To your next of kin entitled under the laws of the state in which you live.

If you are satisfied with the legal order of precedence, you do not need to file a designation of beneficiary.

Designation forms must be free of mistakes. Forms with corrections/scratch-outs will not be accepted for filing. Designation forms must contain **original signatures**.