



RHODE ISLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM C. CLIFTON, SR. CLERKSHIP PROGRAM

The Attorney General's Office is committed to protecting and serving the people and interests of Rhode Island and this work depends on building a professional workforce that embraces the cultural and demographic dimensions of our state. Our Office is stronger, more credible, and more capable when our attorneys bring diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives to their work. In keeping with this commitment to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace, the Office designed the William C. Clifton, Sr. Clerkship Program to attract talented, underrepresented law students to careers in public service. William Clifton, Sr. was the first African American Special Assistant Attorney General in the Attorney General's Office and was later appointed to the Rhode Island District Court, where he presided with distinction. Judge Clifton was known as a consummate jurist, admired for his intellect and judicial temperament, and respected by colleagues, court personnel, lawyers, and litigants. Throughout his life, Judge Clifton gave his time and energy to causes larger than himself and used the law to better his community.

Created in 2019, the Clifton Clerkship Program, provides first- and second-year law students from historically underrepresented populations the opportunity to spend the summer working on substantive legal matters and building valuable career experience at the Attorney General's Office. Over the 10-week, full-time program, law students will split their time between two units—typically one Criminal Division unit and one Civil Division unit—and receive legal assignments that touch on areas of interest for the Clerkship participants. Students in the program will also be assigned a mentor and attend educational and networking events, which will help Clifton clerks gain exposure to, and build relationships with, members of the legal community.

Each selected law student will receive a stipend of approximately \$4,000 for the summer clerkship.

The William C. Clifton, Sr. Clerkship Program is open to all qualified applicants but is designed to provide qualified members of diverse groups and persons with disabilities with summer opportunities in the Attorney General's Office where these groups have been underrepresented. Students who have faced social and/or economic disadvantages on their path toward the practice of law, first generation law students, students from unique educational and family circumstances, and individuals who have overcome significant obstacles are encouraged to apply. Clerkship applicants will be evaluated on several factors including, but not limited to:

- Demonstrated interest in public service
- Commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion
- Personal and professional accomplishments
- Academic record and relevant skills, including research and writing

APPLYING TO THE CLERKSHIP PROGRAM:

To apply for the Clerkship, please complete the application form available on the Attorney General's Office website (<https://www.riag.ri.gov/about-our-office/internships>).

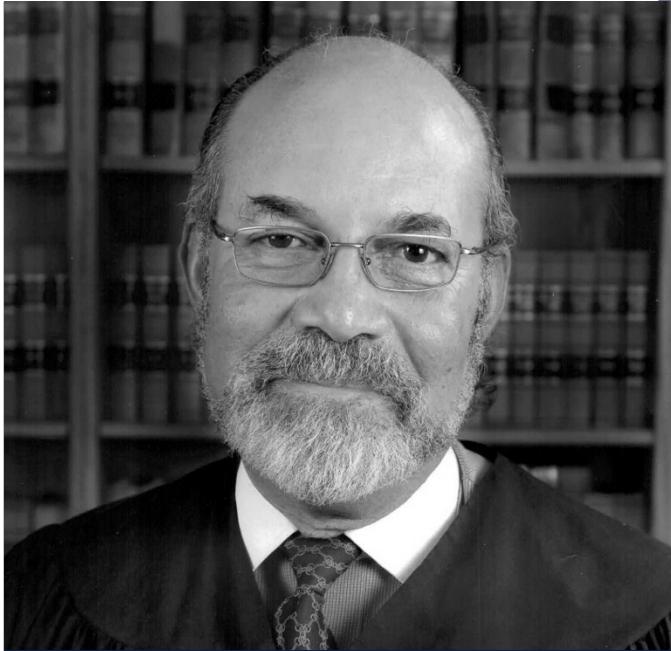
Applicants must submit the following materials:

- Resume
- A short cover letter
- Unofficial copy of law school transcript
- Two references (one academic)
- Personal statement

Personal statements should be 500 words and should respond to the prompt provided on the application.

All application materials should be submitted as PDF files via email to Cliftonclerkship@riag.ri.gov.

The applications must be submitted by email no later than January 30, 2026. All finalists will be invited to interview before final selections are made. Applicants may direct questions about applying to Cliftonclerkship@riag.ri.gov.



“Education can lift you up from poverty. I lived the American nightmare of second-class citizenship and segregation. Yet I also accomplished the American Dream: I worked hard, I studied hard and made something of myself.”

Judge William C. Clifton, Sr.

JUDGE WILLIAM C. CLIFTON, SR.

During his life and career, the Honorable William C. Clifton, Sr. reached the highest and most esteemed echelons of the legal profession, while maintaining a steadfast commitment to public service, community, and family. He overcame poverty, segregation, and untold barriers to forge a path of success for himself and those fortunate to follow. In the history of the Rhode Island Attorney General’s Office, Judge Clifton will forever occupy a place of honor— in 1974, he became the Office’s first African American Special Assistant Attorney General.

Judge Clifton was born in San Antonio, Texas on October 14, 1942. After graduating from California State University at Los Angeles and the UCLA School of Law, he began his career in public service by providing free legal aid to those who couldn’t afford it as a Staff Attorney at Clark County Nevada Legal Services. It was from there, that he moved to Rhode Island to serve as a Special Assistant Attorney General for several years.

Thereafter, Judge Clifton co-established the law firm of Stone, Clifton & Clifton, and later, William Clifton and Associates. Yet, he also continued to answer the call to service—serving at various times throughout his career as Legal Counsel to the RI Commissioner of Education, Legal Counsel for the Public Utilities Commission, Hearing Officer for the Department of Environmental Management, and Assistant City Solicitor for Cranston. His diverse and remarkable legal career culminated in his appointment to the District Court in 2004.

Throughout, Judge Clifton always found time to give even more—serving on numerous public and non-profit boards and committees, mentoring and inspiring young people, and focusing on time with a loving family who shared his passion and commitment for service and community.

RHODE ISLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE:

The Attorney General is the state’s top lawyer and law enforcement official, protecting and serving the people and interests of Rhode Island through a broad range of duties. Every day, the Office’s attorneys fight to ensure the public safety of the state’s communities, improve the economic security of its citizens, safeguard the state’s spectacular natural resources, and restore the public’s trust in government. Assistant and Special Assistant Attorneys General represent the people of Rhode Island in civil and criminal matters before trial courts, appellate courts, and the supreme courts of Rhode Island and the United States. Through affirmative litigation, attorneys in the Office protect the public by bringing lawsuits against individuals and companies that break the law in ways that harm citizens and their communities. In criminal matters, the Office’s attorneys prosecute complex and violent crimes but also functionally serve as one of the nation’s largest district attorney’s offices, prosecuting all felonies throughout the state.

The Rhode Island Attorney General’s Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As with permanent positions, the Office is committed to a policy against discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or employment status. United States citizenship is not required for internship placement, but all applicants must be legally authorized to work in the United States and will be required to submit proof of eligibility. The William C. Clifton, Sr. Clerkship Program is open to all applicants based on the eligibility requirements and based on the merit and completeness of the application materials requested above.