



## Administrative Office of the Courts

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Contact: Beth Wojahn, communications officer  
[bwojahn@nmcourts.gov](mailto:bwojahn@nmcourts.gov); 505-469-5415

### **New Mexico Judiciary launches Rural Justice Initiative Clerkship Program**

SANTA FE –The New Mexico Judiciary is launching the Rural Justice Initiative Clerkship Program today to help provide more legal services providers in rural New Mexico.

The program will create four paid law clerk positions in Farmington, Aztec or Gallup, Clovis and Portales under the guidance and mentorship of state judicial district Chief Judges.

“The Rural Clerkship Program addresses the dire need for lawyers in rural areas,” said New Mexico Supreme Court Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon. “We’re creating career opportunities for new lawyers who can provide more access to justice in our rural parts of the state.”

Chief Judge Donna J. Mowrer has lived in eastern New Mexico since 1970 and will lead the initiative in the Ninth Judicial District, serving people in Curry and Roosevelt Counties. “Living and working in a smaller community has many benefits,” she said. “Lawyers can develop a rich and thriving law practice while forming strong personal and business connections.”

According to the State Bar of New Mexico, Curry and Roosevelt counties have fewer than 60 active attorneys for the more than 66,000 residents in the Ninth Judicial District.

“There are roughly 135 active lawyers in my district for the more than 190,000 people living there,” said Chief Judge Curtis R. Gurley. “Out of more than 7,300 attorneys in the state, it’s just not enough to fill people’s legal needs.” Two law clerks will work for Chief Judge Gurley in the Eleventh Judicial District, which serves people in San Juan and McKinley Counties.

Law clerks will work on assigned cases, perform legal research, analysis, writing, and editing. Under this initiative, the law clerks are expected to commit to two years with a salary of \$70,000 a year, plus all judicial branch benefits.

Attorneys seeking a clerkship through the program should submit an application, along with a writing sample and three letters of reference, by March 1, 2024. For a complete job description, list of benefits, minimum qualifications, and to apply, please visit [nmcourts.gov/careers](https://nmcourts.gov/careers).

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