

The  
NBA Law Student  
Fellowship  
Handbook  
2024-2025



NATIONAL BAR  
ASSOCIATION  
EST. 1925



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September 2024

Dear Fellows and Section and Division Chairs,

Congratulations for taking advantage of the NBA Law Student Fellowship Program. It is a tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the resources and energy of the National Bar Association!

On behalf of the NBA, I am honored to have the opportunity to work with you during my bar year. You are a part of my vision of success for the NBA. Under my leadership, the NBA will continue to increase the number of African-American lawyers entering and remaining in the profession. The Fellowship Program has a vital role in enabling the NBA to reach this vision. We hope you will be both encouraged and fulfilled with your participation in the NBA Law Student Fellowship Program.

I encourage you to participate in all the programs offered by the NBA. Lawyering and becoming a successful lawyer is truly a process that invites support and guidance. The NBA can offer such support and guidance.

Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires courage. Allow the NBA to assist you in mapping your course of action.

Congratulations to Shumika T. R. Sookdeo, NBA Board Member-at-Large, who is doing a tremendous job in managing the Program this bar year. Congratulations and welcome to you for taking a key step in your career to become a NBA Law Student Fellow.

Sincerely,

Wiley S. Adams

**Wiley S. Adams**  
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During the first quarter of the 20th century, twelve African American pioneers with a mutual interest in, and dedication to justice and civil rights for all, helped structure the struggle of the African American race in America. These individuals conceived the National Bar Association, formally organized in Des Moines, Iowa on August 1, 1925. When the NBA was organized in 1925, there were fewer than 1,000 African American lawyers in the nation, and less than 120 belonged to the NBA. By 1945, there were nearly 250 members representing 25% of the African American members of the bar.

The purpose of the National Bar Association is to advance the science of jurisprudence, uphold the honor of the legal profession, promote social intercourse among members of the bar, and protect the civil and political rights of all citizens.

The work of the National Bar Association and its members provided the foundation for major civil rights legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Over the past 75 years, the NBA has grown massively in size and influence.

# Fellow Guidelines

**Location:** All Fellows will work virtually with the Section or Division, unless otherwise expected to attend in person meetings or events. This will be addressed by the Section or Division Chair.

**Assignments:** All assignments will be given by the Section or Division Chair or designee. Fellows are expected to work with the Section or Division Chair to ensure that all assignments are understood, executed, and all deadlines are met.

**Reporting:** Fellows are responsible for completing three reports. Report templates will be sent to each Fellow electronically. Each report is to be submitted to Shumika Sookdeo via email by the following deadlines:

**Inception Report:** due no later than three weeks after appointment

This report should demonstrate that the Fellow has established the proper contact with the NBA Section or Division Chair. In addition, this report should include the Fellow's understanding of the nature of the fellowship. Finally, this report should state projected goals and targets of the fellowship as well as a timeline for achieving these goals.

**Mid-Term Report:** due no later than February 1, 2025

This report should describe all activities and goals achieved subsequent to the initial contact with the Section or Division Chair.

**End of Term Report:** due one week prior to end of term

This report should summarize the fellowship experience including tasks, projects, and whether or not the individual has met their goals and targets. The report should also serve as a transition document for the incoming Fellow in that particular section. The report should include comments for how to improve the program.

**Fellowship Term:**

November 18 - Start of Term

November 27 - Break for Exams

January 6 - Resume Fellowship

April 11 - End of Fellowship

All questions or issues that cannot be resolved by the respective Section or Division Chair should be sent to Shumika T. R. Sookdeo: [shumika@robinsonsookdolaw.com](mailto:shumika@robinsonsookdolaw.com).

# Section and Division Chair Guidelines

**Assignments:** The Section or Division Chair has the discretion in determining what the assignments and deadlines will be for the designated Fellow. However, Fellows are expected to do work that is legally pertinent, relates to the running of the particular section, and/or enhances the NBA and law student relationship. Tasks should not be purely clerical in nature. Examples include:

Participating in conference calls, meetings and NBA programs;

Assisting in organizing meetings;

Completing research and writing assignments, including the opportunity to be published; and,

Assisting in developing and implementing programs that will enhance the pipeline between the NBA and law students.

**Travel:** Due to the expenses associated with travel, all travel requirements should be discussed with the Fellow early in the program. The Section or Division Chair should work with the Fellow to determine alternative means to fund travel expenses, such as budget requests submitted to the respective law school, or funds requested from the NBA.

**Direct Supervision of tasks of Fellow:** The Section or Division Chair is responsible for assigning and reviewing all tasks.

**Feedback to Fellows:** It is expected that all Section and Division Chairs will schedule conference calls to give feedback and guidance on the performance of the Fellow and to gain feedback from the Fellow. Section and Division Chairs should do this at least once, preferably before the Fellow resumes his or her responsibilities in January. In addition, Section and Division Chairs should schedule an end of term conference call to determine the status of all pending projects and research for a smooth transition.

**Reporting Required of Fellows:** All Fellows are expected to report three times to the NBA. All Fellows will be responsible for sending an inception report that will inform the NBA that the Fellow has begun and has assignments; an interim report to assess the status of projects/assignments and experience; and an end of term report to assess the overall experience and transition. These reports are to ensure that Fellows are having positive, rewarding experiences, and to ensure accountability.

**Reporting Required of Section Chairs:** All Section and Division Chairs will be expected to comply with reporting as well. Section and Division Chairs will complete an exit survey, due by May 1, 2025 for yearlong Fellows, and by September 1, 2025 for summer Fellows.

**All questions or issues from Section Chairs should be directed to 951.255.8852.**