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Summer Program

The summer program is designed to provide a sense of what it is like to practice law at Fredrikson, while also giving you the opportunity to meet people at the firm, hone your skills, become familiar with the city, and enjoy the summer.

Our 2023 Summer Program will include summer associates in our Des Moines and Minneapolis offices and Summer Law Clerks in our Bismarck, Fargo and Madison offices.

Current Openings

We are currently hiring for a 2L law clerk (2024 grad) for our Bismarck, ND office and are accepting applications online.

Our Minneapolis, MN and Des Moines, IA offices are no longer accepting applications for 2L (2024 J.D. graduates) and 1L summer associates (2025 J.D. graduates) for the 2023 Summer Program.

Our 2022 on-campus interviews included the schools and job fairs listed below.

Job Fairs

Lavender Law Conference Career Fair (7/29)

Minnesota Minority Recruitment Conference (8/5)

On Campus (and virtual) Interview Programs

Boston College (7/25)

Drake Law School (Des Moines) (8/12)

Howard (8/5)

Indiana University, Mauer School of Law (Minneapolis) (8/9)

Mitchell Hamline School of Law (Minneapolis) (7/25)

University of Iowa College of Law (Des Moines and Minneapolis) (7/25)

University of Michigan Law School (Minneapolis) (8/3)

University of Minnesota Law School (Minneapolis) (8/4)

University of St. Thomas School of Law (Minneapolis) (7/25)

University of Wisconsin Law School (Minneapolis) (8/2)
Washington University School of Law (Minneapolis) (7/27)

What To Expect

Summer associates receive projects from every area in their office location. The realities of law practice mean that it is often easier to “parcel out” portions of litigation and legal research, but summer associates have the opportunity to work on and observe the transactional side of the practice as well. The program is flexible. If you are interested in a particular area of law practiced within your office, you should be able to get projects from and/or exposure to that area.

Summer associates routinely have the opportunity to perform legal research and draft litigation and transactional documents. Summer associates are also invited to assist with pro bono projects, with assistance provided as needed by a supervising attorney. Throughout the summer, summer associates are invited on field trips with attorneys, which could include the opportunity to attend closings, court arguments, witness depositions and/or attend client meetings.

Summer associates, like lawyers at Fredrikson, are largely autonomous, with the only requirement being that they must be able to meet the client’s needs. Most summer associates arrive somewhere between 7:45 and 9:00, and wrap up work on assignments between 5:00 and 6:00. They spend a portion of each day in non-billable activity. This can include social events or simply getting to know their colleagues.

Each Friday morning, there is a summer associate group meeting. The meeting is a chance for summer associates, workflow coordinators and recruiting professionals to come together and discuss the events of the week. Each week, we also invite guests from various legal and business departments. In addition, summer associates are invited to attend monthly department meetings. This is another opportunity to meet attorneys and learn about the departments.

The summer program is designed to allow for summer associates to have consistent feedback on projects. Assigning attorneys have the opportunity to provide written feedback on every project a summer associate completes, in addition to conversation and in-the-moment feedback. The firm also conducts individual mid-summer and end-of-summer check-in reviews with each summer associate. These various sources of feedback and evaluation allow for transparency and support continued professional development through the summer program and beyond.

Finally, each summer associate can shape his/her own experiences. Most Fredrikson attorneys work with their literal and/or virtual doors open and summer associates are welcome to stop by. Summer associates often use that opportunity to seek out particular types of projects or field trips, to explore an interest or just to talk with a future colleague.

Fredrikson is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Typical Day

Tarun Sharma

Tarun Sharma was a 2021 Summer Associate and is now an associate at Fredrikson.

“As a Fredrikson summer associate, my typical day consisted of taking advantage of learning opportunities disguised as work assignments; pursuing my interests in corporate work and sports law; and enjoying collegial interactions with attorneys, staff and my fellow summer associates.

I had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects which allowed me to learn about different areas of law. In addition to projects, summer associates are expected to take on at least two writing assignments. Through my first assignment, I got to practice my skills communicating with my supervising attorneys, researching a very niche topic, and writing in a method that would be useful to the attorneys in court. Although I don't anticipate practicing litigation, this was a great opportunity to apply and sharpen skills that I have been building in law school. My project was well-received and helped our client protect their business. By stepping outside of my comfort zone early on, I gained confidence that I was able to carry with me the rest of the summer.

I was also given many chances to pursue areas of law that I knew I was interested in. I learned so much about what a corporate attorney does on a day-to-day basis through my work assignments. I assisted with the various components of private equity purchases from due diligence to agreements dealing with individual employees. I was able to research and write a memo regarding cryptocurrency, draw up new intellectual property transfer agreements, create employment contracts for a new company, and research statutes pertaining to vehicle dealers. By far my favorite project was going back and forth with attorneys working in the Sports and Entertainment group, an area that I am most interested in, to craft an engaging piece for clients. The article was published on the firm's website and co-signed by attorneys in our Sports and Entertainment practice group, including my mentor, Chris Pham, and was the signature moment of the summer of which I was the most proud!

One of the things that I appreciated the most about the summer was building relationships with my fellow summer associates. Despite spending nine of our ten weeks working virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone from the summers to the staff stepped up to make meaningful connections in the virtual environment. Every attorney I reached out to was gracious with their time and helped me continue my development as a young attorney. By the time we were all finally able to get together in Minneapolis for the final week of the program, we didn't miss a beat! Our group was tight knit and that has carried over beyond the program. Finally, as a second generation Indian American, it was also nice to see other minorities represented within the firm. I was lucky enough to join the Diverse Attorneys Resource Group (DARG) for dinner and interact with other attorneys from underrepresented groups! One thing that I really love about Fredrikson is that it is full

of people who practice law instead of lawyers who sometimes get to be people. This strong collegial culture has me so excited to join the firm.”

Hannah Weymiller

Hannah Weymiller was a 2020 and 2021 Summer Associate.

“As a summer associate at Fredrikson, I was constantly learning and growing. Each day consisted of working on meaningful projects and building relationships with dedicated attorneys and staff.

I spent two summers at Fredrikson and had such a well-rounded experience. The first summer was unique due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the virtual summer program was organized, efficient and thorough. Despite being virtual, I had the opportunity to work on many projects, such as drafting petitions, transactional documents, and research for interesting topics regarding employment law, qualified immunity and trademarks. As a 1L, I was receiving real, substantive work, which speaks to Fredrikson’s culture. The attorneys want to help you learn and are willing to facilitate the opportunities for you to do so.

My second summer was in-person and back to “normal,” and it truly highlighted the quality of the firm and summer program. I was greeted in the mornings with friendly faces and invited to coffee or lunch multiple times every week. Attorneys would swing by my office to ask how I was doing, to include me in their projects, or to just chat about life, family and hobbies. I also received challenging work that pushed me outside my comfort zone. Attorneys let me take cracks at projects that were totally new to me and then provided honest and helpful feedback. I felt like I learned something new every day!

Fredrikson encourages summer associates to pursue the type of work that interests them. Because I wanted to learn about different departments and areas of the law, I received projects of all types—from creating merger documents to drafting sections of a response to a motion for summary judgment. I was free to reach out to individual attorneys to ask for projects, and the attorneys were always very receptive and generous with their time. One of my favorite experiences was helping an attorney prepare for oral arguments and then watching her argue at the state appellate court. I also sat in on employment advising meetings, a closing call for an acquisition deal, an interview with a potential witness, and many more meetings and calls.

The summer program also provides opportunities to network with attorneys outside of the office. In addition to regular happy hours, we had a social event at a winery with live music and went to a brewery with a dog park (and many people brought their dogs!). The attorneys at Fredrikson genuinely care about the summer associates and are quick to schedule coffees, answer questions and provide career guidance. They get to know you as a person, not just as a law student.

I had wonderful experiences both summers, even though they looked different, and I am very thankful for the intentionality embedded in Fredrikson's summer program. It creates an environment where summer associates develop professional and personal skills—and have fun!”

Marielos Cabrera

Marielos Cabrera was a 2019 and 2020 Summer Associate and is now an associate at Fredrikson.

“My typical day at Fredrikson included learning from experienced lawyers, working on interesting projects, and experiencing a sense of community within the firm.

Fredrikson's summer program facilitated mentorship, fostered camaraderie, and provided excellent training. I was able to choose projects from a project portal and seek individual opportunities from attorneys all over the firm. This format allowed for me to try a variety of projects and eventually tailor projects to my specific interests. Projects vary in time and complexity but all allow for summer associates to feel they are contributing to the firm in a valuable way. If I was assigned to a project it was expected I would take ownership of that work, but attorneys were always willing to answer my questions, talk things through and provide meaningful feedback.

Attorneys at Fredrikson look forward to engaging with summer associates. They are excited to provide guidance and are more than willing to meet for coffee (even virtual coffees). The attorneys at Fredrikson genuinely care about my development as an attorney and my well-being as a person. I had many attorneys check in with me and see how I was coping with a global pandemic, social unrest and starting a new job during it all. I felt like I could ask any question about balancing workloads or firm culture and I would receive a genuine answer.

Each summer associate is paired with a Legal Administrative Assistant (LAA). The LAAs at Fredrikson are knowledgeable, legally savvy and dedicated to making their summer associates feel supported. The relationships I was able to build over the summer made me feel confident that the firm was a good fit and that I could see myself being a part of the team for a long time to come.

In addition to getting wonderful professional training, I also made great friends during the summer program. I had the privilege of being a summer associate for two years. My first summer was traditional and my second summer was entirely remote. The first summer included social events such as attending a soccer game at Allianz field and enjoying a lake day as a summer class. The second summer looked different, but we enjoyed weekly virtual happy hours and many interactive virtual activities like trivia and Scattergories. My summer classes were both very collaborative and supportive. I always had someone to bounce ideas off of, vent to, or grab a coffee with. During both of my summers I felt like the members of my summer class were friends first and colleagues second.”

Samuel Levy

Samuel Levy was a 2020 Summer Associate and is now an associate at Fredrikson.

“As a Fredrikson summer associate, my typical day consisted of substantive legal work, project management, educational opportunities of all types and social engagements.

I spent most of my day working on multiple phases of legal projects. I was able to select interesting projects in various practice areas. Fredrikson shareholders and associates submitted these assignments throughout the summer, so I was able to take on new projects fluidly as my workload allowed. Half of my legal work was for pro bono clients, and I am extremely proud of Fredrikson’s strong commitment to the pro bono endeavors of all its attorneys (and summer associates).

The attorneys and staff managing Fredrikson’s summer program empowered me to take full ownership of my projects. Once I had accepted an assignment, I would reach out to the managing attorney to discuss their expectations, timelines and how my work product would fit into a larger picture. In addition to vastly improving my legal research and writing, this “real world” approach significantly improved my time management, task prioritization and organizational skills. Of course, there was always help available if I ever needed advice, particularly from my incredibly kind and understanding workflow coordinator, one of Fredrikson’s litigation associates.

Every day, the summer associates had multiple educational opportunities. I frequently attended practice group meetings, continuing legal education seminars, hearings, one-on-one training sessions with Fredrikson research librarians and various skills workshops organized by the summer program team. I particularly enjoyed attending a few practice group lunch meetings that focused on client needs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was fascinating to hear Fredrikson attorneys’ insights into various industries and how legal services could provide stability in such unprecedented times.

While I worked remotely during my entire summer with Fredrikson, I never felt distant. Multiple times a week, the summer associates would have scheduled video coffee chats with groups of various attorneys. Additionally, multiple times a day I would have one-on-one meetings with associates and shareholders to discuss their practice areas, life at the firm and their lives outside the firm. Every single attorney I reached out to—and there were many—was extremely excited to get to know me and share advice, stories, and information about the firm and Minneapolis (I had never lived in Minnesota).

Despite never meeting each other in person (due to the pandemic), the summer associates developed very strong bonds with each other. We had many informal hangouts and multiple times a week would attend social events with rotating groups of attorneys, from remote trivia nights to a guided virtual tour of the legendary First Avenue nightclub of Purple Rain fame. My summer at Fredrikson was as fun as it was educational, and each day brought exciting new projects, opportunities and experiences.”

Emani Marshall-Loving

Emani Marshall-Loving was a 2019 and 2020 Summer Associate. Emani is currently clerking after graduating from the University of Iowa College of Law.

“A typical day as a Fredrikson summer associate involved challenging substantive work, relationship-building with attorneys and fellow summers and constantly having a great time. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to experience the summer program twice!

During my first summer, I explored different areas of the firm by working on projects with various practice groups. Each project presented unique and challenging facts. By the end of the summer, I observed a mediation, worked on an asset purchase agreement and conducted legal research in areas ranging from intellectual property to eminent domain. My second summer took place virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, Fredrikson went above and beyond to ensure the summer associates had the same quality of substantive work. During my second summer, I shadowed a phone hearing and a call with opposing counsel, drafted memoranda, conducted legal research in areas ranging from civil procedure to tax, and worked on engaging pro bono projects. The firm offers summer associates both autonomy and guidance. I structured my workday and picked my projects; but I could always reach out for help.

Summer associates are encouraged to get to know attorneys throughout the firm. During my first summer, I had lunch and coffee with attorneys nearly every day. I found that Fredrikson attorneys are more than happy to share their work experiences, the firm culture, and favorite places to grab lunch or coffee. To further build relationships, I attended department and practice group meetings. Though we could not be together in person during my second summer, Fredrikson rose to the challenge. A virtual program did not get in the way of networking with attorneys. We had two weekly coffee breaks where we could network with attorneys across the firm. We could attend department and practice group meetings. Also, we were encouraged to set up individual and group coffees with attorneys. Attorneys were responsive, transparent and happy to share their experiences with the summer associates.

In addition to providing challenging substantive work and networking opportunities, the two summers were fun. The planned events facilitated bonds between the attorneys and the summer classes. During my first summer, we attended an overnight retreat, went to many happy hours and events with associates and shareholders, took a First Avenue tour and cheered on the Minnesota United soccer team. During my second summer, we had great virtual events! We had happy hours, themed events with various practice groups, weekly summer associate hangouts and the annual First Avenue event.

I couldn't have asked for better summer experiences and am grateful to have been a Fredrikson summer associate.”

Schuyler Troy

Schuyler Troy was a 2020 Summer Associate and is now an associate at Fredrikson. Check out this link from the University of Minnesota describing Schuyler Troy's experience with us.

Interview Kit

During the blur of on-campus interviewing, it often seems like all law firms are alike. In fact, there are distinct differences between firms. Unfortunately, the distinctions are not always apparent until after you start working and comparing notes with your friends. The variations between firms are not necessarily good predictors of whether the firm will be successful, but they can be excellent indicators of whether you will enjoy working in a particular environment. There is no foolproof way to determine all of the characteristics of the firms, but here are some questions that you may wish to ask yourself, and the firms, to draw out the unique qualities and their importance to you.

To find out more about Fredrikson regarding interviewing or applying, please contact:

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Questions to Ask Yourself

Do you prefer to work on many different projects at once, or to work on one project for longer periods?

Some firms tend to have very large projects that last for long periods; other firms have more, smaller projects. A large litigation case can result in a lawyer's spending years working exclusively or nearly exclusively on one project. Working with many small clients can require a lawyer to bounce rapidly from one project to another. Would you find working on one matter for a long time dull or comforting? Are frequent interruptions by clients calling with questions a break in the monotony or stress inducing?

Do you thrive on the excitement of putting out fires, or do you prefer a steady, reliable schedule?

This question can be useful for helping select a particular area of the law. While any client-driven business requires immediate response to some problems, certain areas, such as litigation and securities, are much more likely to have frequent "emergencies" than areas such as estate planning.

Do you prefer to seek work out, or would you rather have work assigned to you?

Some firms will assign you to projects, whereas others encourage you to seek out your own projects. Which approach better suits your personality? In an entrepreneurial firm, you are more likely to succeed if you are a self-starter. In a very hierarchical firm, the same traits may rock the boat.

What makes a case or transaction interesting to you? Is it the size of the deal/dispute or the novelty of the issues involved?

Some people would prefer to do a complex transaction for a small client while others prefer any transaction for a marquee name. Some attorneys prefer “bet the company” situations, while others find comfort in lower stress situations.

Questions to Ask the Firm

Stability of the Firm

Almost every lawyer dreams of landing the big client, and having a large client is often very rewarding, both professionally and economically. Focusing on particular industries can be very effective for building a practice. However, if much of a firm's business is dependent on just a few clients or a few industries, the firm faces much higher risk. Any economic downturn affecting the clients or industries will have a large impact on the firm. Firms that depend on just a few clients are particularly at risk because something as simple as a merger or change in executives at one company can undermine the stability of the firm.

Firms that target only one or two industries can suffer if those industries change. The most stable firms have strength in multiple areas so that weaknesses in one sector of the economy are offset by growth in another. For example, when securities slows, bankruptcy may be busier.

Stability of the firm is also affected by who has the bulk of the firm's practice. If just a few lawyers control most of the firm's work, a departure by those lawyers can destroy the firm. By contrast, if most of the firm's shareholders have an independent practice, the firm is much less likely to be impacted by the departure of one lawyer or even a group of lawyers.

Finally, stability can be affected by the relationship between the firm and its most senior or retiring partners. It can seem premature to worry about how the firm addresses retirement before you have even begun employment, but these arrangements can affect your salary as a beginning lawyer. Some firms have large buyouts or offer large guaranteed payments to very senior or retired partners. Such payments can strain the firm's financial health and prevent the firm from properly compensating younger lawyers. (It is not safe to rely on promised payments from your employer as a means of funding your retirement. If anything happens to the company, your retirement fund evaporates.) Most firms permit lawyers to self-fund their retirements using qualified retirement plans such as a 401(k). These self-funded

arrangements present no strain on the firm's finances and enjoy considerable legal protection. However, even if the firm has a qualified retirement plan, determine whether it has any significant obligation to senior or departing attorneys.

Possible Questions:

- Is the firm dependent on a few large clients and/or on a few specialized industries?
- Does the firm have any obligations to make payments to current or former shareholders as they retire?
- How does the firm pay its most senior lawyers?
- What percentage of the firm's work comes from its top ten clients?
- What happened to the firm during the last economic downturn?
- Do most lawyers get work directly from clients or are they dependent on other lawyers for their work?

Approach to Growth

Some firms use a boom/bust approach to growth, growing rapidly when times are good, but laying attorneys off during leaner times. Other firms are more conservative, growing more slowly as client needs demand it. Still other firms grow through acquisition or merger with other law firms. While this latter approach can rapidly increase revenues and firm size/capacity, it can have significant effects on firm culture and camaraderie, as well as more practical matters like overhead costs and client conflicts.

Possible Questions:

- In what areas is the firm growing, and why?
- Has the firm undergone a merger in recent history? If so, how was the integration handled? If not, are they considering growth in this way?

Structure

There are a wide range of ways to structure a law firm in terms of management, delegation, distribution of power and decision-making authority, etc. Some firms operate like a corporation, with one key leader and/or a board making the majority of decisions. Strategy is set at the top and pushed down to departments and individuals. The upside is a single vision and direction; the downside is that there is little opportunity for input from individual firm members. At the other end of the extreme are firms that apply a very decentralized approach, with each individual shareholder having more or less an equal say in the firm's growth. While this allows the lawyers to have more of a voice, it can be a very disjointed approach and frequently results in glacially slow decision-making as the group attempts to reach consensus. Still other organizations utilize a "star" system, with a few key rainmakers influencing decision-making in the firm.

Some firms, including Fredrikson, apply a blended approach. Our Board sets big-picture strategy and delegates power to department chairs to shape and implement it, with input from individual department members. In addition, practice groups and individuals have the ability to approach the Board with ideas about growth opportunities, new clients or areas of practice, etc. Often this input helps us to shape or redirect our strategy, and it allows all firm members to feel like they are part of the process.

Possible Questions:

- Who makes decisions at the firm?
- Does the firm have a Board and Committees? Who decides who serves on them?
- How much information do lawyers get about the firm's operations and finances?
- What does it mean to become a shareholder, i.e., what role does the individual shareholder have in firm strategy and decision-making?
- What information do associates get?
- How many lawyers in the firm have their own practice, and how is that broken down by percentage? Are there a few significant rainmakers or do a wide range of lawyers have large practices?

Leverage

Many firms are organized like a pyramid, with many young associates and comparatively few partners. Other firms have a more vertical structure, with approximately the same number of lawyers at each level. In the business of law firms, this is called "leverage." Firms with lots of associates and few partners are said to have more leverage than those with lots of partners and few associates. Highly leveraged firms often have a high volume of commodity work that needs to be done inexpensively, so it makes sense to have that work done at low rates (i.e., by junior associates). Routine work may get pushed down to those associates who are expected to produce a lot of hours, often with little or no direct contact with the client they are working for. This can lead to low satisfaction and high burnout and turnover.

Possible Questions:

- What types of projects are given to associates, especially during the first three years?
- How much direct access do associates have to clients?
- How do associates learn to do legal projects?
- How much training is necessary to do the projects expected during the first few years?
- What percentage of the firm's associates leave in their first two years?

Compensation Formula

Some firms share salary information internally; others do not. Some use lockstep methods for compensation; others use factors such as hours billed, practice size or seniority. Ask about the method used and consider how it will affect you. For example, will you prefer the predictability of a lock step system or would you prefer a merit-based system? Does the compensation system use “carrots” to encourage certain behavior or “sticks” to discourage it? Which approach do you prefer?

Consider how the compensation formula will affect your behavior and the behavior of others. For example, Fredrikson has a relatively low and flexible par, 1700 – 1775 hours, and has a generous production bonus program. People outside the firm have often asked if this creates pressure on associates, but associates at Fredrikson like the system because it is flexible. If you work the elected par, you have met the firm’s expectations. But if you work harder, either because you choose to or client needs require it, you are rewarded for that effort.

Finally, ask how compensation is handled in a bad year. Some firms borrow money to maintain salaries, which carries obvious risks. Some compensation systems are self-correcting while others require the firm to manually re-adjust compensation if finances are unusually good or bad. During a bad year, such discussions can be quite contentious.

Becoming a Shareholder

All firms have varying expectations about who will become shareholders. Some firms use associates primarily as a source of revenue, with very little expectation that many associates will still be working at the firm after four or five years. Other firms view associates as the future and hire with the expectation that every associate has the potential to become a partner. The philosophy of the firm has a major impact on how associates are treated.

Firms also have a range of expectations on what an associate must do to become a shareholder. Partnership may seem far off, but understanding the firm’s approach to adding partners often reveals a great deal about the work environment.

Possible Questions:

- How does the firm help new lawyers grow into shareholders?
- What percentage of lawyers become partners/shareholders?
- What are the criteria used to decide whether someone becomes a partner?
- How do associates know if they are on track?
- How often are lawyers “voted down” for partner?
- What size practice (if any) is expected to make partner?
- What role does par play in shareholder requirements?

Happiness/Job Satisfaction

One of the most important questions is whether the lawyers at a firm enjoy their work. While stories of unhappy lawyers may be the norm, there are many happy lawyers in the world. As you interview, it is often helpful to determine why people choose to leave a particular firm. Was it something specific to the firm, or a general displeasure with the private practice of law?

Attorneys who have changed firms, often called laterals, can offer unique insight into the differences between firms. Seek them out and ask them to compare firms. Determine which firms draw attorneys from other firms and which do not.

Finally, it is quite common for lawyers to change practice areas over time, either as the lawyer's interests change, or because economic forces require it. Determine whether the firm provides any assistance to lawyers who seek to change the emphasis of their practice.

Possible Questions:

- Why do attorneys leave the firm?
- How many associates have left the firm?
- How many shareholders have left the firm?
- How many lawyers have left to go to other law firms?
- Has the firm had success hiring lateral attorneys?
- If a lawyer has a problem, where can they turn for help?
- Do lawyers ever change departments within the firm?
- What do you wish you had known about the firm before you joined it?