



Topics for Magistrate Judge Interviews

Interest in the position: Why do you want to be a magistrate judge? What part of the job would you most look forward to?

Challenges of the job: What do you think the most difficult part of being a magistrate judge would be? How are you prepared to overcome the challenge?

Managing complex litigation: One of the most critical jobs for a magistrate judge is managing complicated civil cases. What is the most complex piece of litigation in which you have been involved?

Settling cases: Another important task assigned to magistrate judges is resolving civil cases. Describe any experiences you have with mediation or settlement. Describe how your professional background has prepared you to step into the role of mediator.

Learning new areas of the law: How do you approach learning new things, and how will you get up to speed in an area of the law with which you have no experience?

Judicial temperament: Describe what qualities you think are important for a judge. Tell us about a judge you admire, and why.

Research, writing, and editing: Magistrate judges are required to produce high quality written opinions. Describe the research, writing, and editing you do in your current role, and how you will approach those tasks as a judge.

Diverse litigants: As a magistrate judge, you will have parties and attorneys appearing before you from widely diverse backgrounds. What in your professional experience prepares you for the challenges this may present?

Leadership and supervision: Magistrate judges work closely with their chambers staff—generally an assistant and two law clerks. Describe your management experience and style, and how you would work with law clerks and other court staff.

Community service/pro bono work: Describe your pro bono work and community service. Share an example of a particular case or service experience and what you learned from it.

Ethical limitations: Magistrate judges are subject to substantial ethical constraints. For instance, there are restrictions on the use of social media, participation in politics, membership in certain organizations, and the ability to engage in protest or comment publicly on certain issues. Have you considered these limitations? How would you need to change your current activities and practices?

Candidates may be asked questions on these topics, with follow-up. Depending on time constraints, not all topics will be covered.