

YEAR ONE

ASSOCIATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This fall Ford & Harrison LLP is launching a cutting-edge associate development program for our first year lawyers. Details of this unique and intense program are described below.

What is the Ford & Harrison “Year One” Associate Development Program?

The Year One Program is a unique solution to an important issue at law firms today – associate development. The program is a 15-month, on-the-job training program for a new generation of lawyers – training through mentoring, firsthand work experience, and frequent client contact.

What makes Year One different from other law firm training programs?

Year One associates do not have a traditional minimum billable hours requirement. Instead, they will have a clinical hours requirement. Similar to the medical internship model, the primary purpose of clinical hours is to learn through hands-on work assignments and direct observation.

Why is Ford & Harrison doing something different?

- To close the gap between what law schools teach and what clients demand by providing new lawyers one year of intense, closely supervised, clinical and classroom legal training.
- To increase the value we provide our clients by investing in highly skilled associates who are prepared to handle sophisticated legal matters earlier in their careers.
- To accelerate the time within which new associates are capable of handling sophisticated matters with minimal supervision.
- To attract and retain the best new lawyers graduating from law school by offering a valuable, innovative training experience and the promise of greater responsibility and more engaging work earlier in their legal career.
- To promote firm cohesion and preserve institutional knowledge by investing in the cultivation of new generations of firm leaders.

What are “clinical hours”?

Clinical hours are the hours spent learning through hands-on work assignments and direct observation. Year One associates will be immediately engaged in our practice — preparing for and observing collective bargaining sessions, depositions, trials, hearings, labor or other arbitration cases, EEOC on-site investigations, client meetings related to union representation cases and organization campaigns, and settlement negotiations. Clinical hours will allow associates to gain invaluable hands-on experience very early in their careers. These hours are an investment in the future success of Ford & Harrison attorneys, and while some clinical hours will generate work product of immediate value to our clients, clinical hours will not necessarily be billed to any client. For example, a client would not be billed for time spent shadowing another more experienced lawyer during an expert deposition or time spent touring a client’s manufacturing facility and doing industry research in order to better understand the context of the client’s business.

How will clinical hours be assigned?

Each associate will be assigned to a specific Resource Partner in his or her office who will be responsible for coordinating the associate’s clinical hours requirements. The Resource Partner will directly supervise some, but not all, work assignments and evaluate the overall educational value of all work assigned.

What other training will Year One associates receive?

In addition to clinical hours, Year One associates will complete a minimum of 100 hours of classroom instruction and an approved independent self-study research project on a relevant legal or industry topic. Self-study projects give associates an opportunity to become well-rounded, subject-matter experts, rather than mere legal technicians.

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