
About the Office of the Solicitor General

The Solicitor General's Office supervises and conducts all federal government litigation in the Supreme Court of the United States. Through the Solicitor General's Office, the United States is involved in about two-thirds of the cases the Court decides on the merits each year.

The Solicitor General selects the cases in which Supreme Court review will be sought by the government and the position the government will take on the merits in that Court. The Solicitor General also determines whether the United States will participate as *amicus curiae* in the Supreme Court in cases in which the United States is not a party. His staff oversees preparation of all of the petitions, briefs, and other papers filed in the Court by the federal government. The Solicitor General also assigns the oral argument of government cases in the Supreme Court; those cases not argued by the Solicitor General personally are assigned either to a lawyer on his staff or, in rare instances, to another government attorney.

The Solicitor General has the additional responsibility of reviewing all cases decided adversely to the federal government in the lower courts in order to determine whether they should be appealed and, if so, what position should be taken on appeal. He also determines whether the government will participate as *amicus curiae* or intervene in cases in any appellate court.

The Solicitor General's Office employs about twenty lawyers and thirty support staff. It operates with an annual budget of approximately \$8 million.

Office of the Solicitor General of the United States One-Year Bristow Fellowship

The Office of the Solicitor General of the United States is interested in receiving applications for its program of one-year Bristow Fellowships in the Solicitor General's Office. Bristow Fellows help draft briefs in opposition to certiorari filed against the government in the Supreme Court of the United States and prepare recommendations to the Solicitor General regarding authorization of government appeals in the lower courts. The Fellows also assist staff lawyers in preparing petitions for certiorari and briefs on the merits in Supreme Court cases, work on special projects, and assist the Solicitor General and other lawyers in the office in the preparation of oral arguments in the Supreme Court. In recent years, four Bristow Fellows have been selected each year.

Qualifications

Applicants must be law school graduates with excellent academic records. They typically come to the Fellowship after completion of a one-year judicial clerkship, most frequently with a federal appellate court judge. The Solicitor General's Office is interested in receiving applications from a diverse group of graduates of law schools throughout the United States.

The Fellowship has a one-year term that cannot lead directly to regular employment in the Solicitor General's Office. The salary is established at the GS-12 level.

Application Process

Fellows are appointed for a one-year period starting in July or August of each year. Applications should be submitted by September 1 of the preceding year. Fellowship selections will be announced in December or early January.

Application Materials Required

- cover letter including a statement of interest in participating in the program;
- current resume including the status of bar membership;
- official law school transcript;
- maximum of three reference letters from those familiar with the applicant's work and abilities (submit in sealed envelope or mail/email directly to the office); and
- a writing sample;

All material should be enclosed in one package, including letters of reference.

Application materials should be sent to:

OSGRecruit@usdoj.gov

OR

Department of Justice
Office of the Solicitor General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Room 5142
Washington, D.C. 20530
ATTN: Bristow Fellow Hiring Panel

The Office of the Solicitor General

2025-2026 Bristow Fellows Program

Benjamin H. Bristow

Benjamin H. Bristow, the first Solicitor General of the United States, was one of the leading lawyers of his generation. A Kentuckian, he served as a colonel during the Civil War. He later became federal District Attorney for Kentucky, where he was renowned for his vigor in enforcing the federal Civil Rights Acts. Before becoming Solicitor General in 1870, he practiced law with his fellow Kentuckian, future Supreme Court Justice John Harlan.

After serving as Solicitor General, Bristow was appointed Secretary of the Treasury by President Grant in 1873. He later attempted to secure the Republican nomination for President but failed after a strong first-ballot showing. In his later years, Bristow conducted a successful law practice in New York.



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