
2016 Survey of Canadian Legal Career Professionals



© 2016 NALP — www.nalp.org

Introduction

In April 2016, with guidance from NALP's Canadian Section and its Data Collection Work Group, NALP administered the first-ever Survey of Canadian Legal Career Professionals. The survey was sent to all Canadian legal employer NALP members and — analogous to the survey that has been administered in the United States for many years — sought information about salaries, bonuses, and respondent demographics, including education and industry experience for individuals, and lawyer headcount and geography for the law firms at which the individuals work. A total of 43 individuals responded to the survey, which was available online for a period of about four weeks from April through May 2016.

Respondents represented firms ranging in size from fewer than 50 to more than 1,000 lawyers, and from one to eleven offices. The median and average number of lawyers are 400 and 460 lawyers, respectively. (Four respondents did not provide this information.) The average and median number of offices is five. (Four respondents did not provide this information.) Two-thirds of respondents are from Toronto.

Respondents are relatively evenly split between those whose scope of responsibility is for a single office, for regional offices, or for all offices nationwide. Global responsibility is uncommon among respondents. Most respondents reported that their job involves a mix of recruiting, professional development, diversity, and lawyer personnel duties. Very few could be categorized as largely recruiting, or largely professional development, thus precluding analyses based on this dimension. Respondents also take on a variety of “other” duties. Most frequently mentioned were organizing social events other than for a summer program (33%); practice management (23%); and paralegal hiring/supervision (19%).

Most respondents have an LLB/JD degree or an LLM in addition to the LLB. A paralegal certificate in addition is not typical. Over half of respondents indicated that an advanced degree was required for their job; an additional 16% indicated that an advanced degree was preferred. The advanced degree required or preferred was overwhelmingly an LLB/JD. The other mentioned was HR certification.

Findings on Salaries and Bonuses

Table 1 reports salaries and raises as of April 1, 2016. All salary and bonus figures are reported in Canadian dollars. Where fewer than five salaries were reported for a particular category, no findings are reported. Table 2 reports bonuses as of April 1, 2016.

Table 1. Salaries and Percent Raises as of April 1, 2016

	Median	Average	Half of Salaries Fall in the Range:	# of Salaries Reported	Median % Increase from April 2015
Department heads	\$190,000	\$185,947	\$150,000 - 225,000	19	2.0%
First-level professionals below department head	141,200	141,406	112,500 - 172,500	16	3.0
Second-level professionals below department head	60,000	81,917	*	6	**

* Only the average and median are shown since fewer than 10 salaries were reported.

** Fewer than 5 raise percentages were reported.

Note: Respondents who reported being the department head all report to the managing partner, COO/CEO, or Executive/Professionals Committee. For the most part their titles include the term “Director.” Respondents who reported being the first professional below the department head showed more variation in titles and lines of reporting. Titles included Director and Senior Director, Assistant Director, Manager, Head, and Coordinator. Most report to a Director or Chief, but some respondents indicated that they report directly to a partner or managing partner/committee. Respondents who reported being the second professional below the department head provided titles ranging from Coordinator to Director, and reporting to a Manager or Director/Head.

Table 2. Bonuses as of April 1, 2016

	Median	Average	Half of Bonuses Fall in the Range:	# of Bonuses Reported	% Receiving No Bonus
Department heads	\$12,500	\$16,227	\$10,000 - 25,000	11	39%
First-level professionals below department head	14,000	16,682	6,000 - 20,000	11	21%
Second-level professionals below department head	— insufficient responses for analysis —				

Note: Bonuses are most frequently based on merit (63%) and/or firm profitability (26%).

Respondent Demographics

Table 3 reports on the industry experience of respondents.

Table 3. Respondent Demographics—Years of Experience

	All Respondents	Department Heads	First-level Professionals Below Department Head	Second-level Professionals Below Department Head
Median # of years in NALP-related positions	10 years	13 years	7 years	8 years
Average # of years in NALP-related positions	10 years	12.9 years	7.7 years	7.6 years
Middle range of years reported	6-14 years	8-15 years	3-11 years	*
Number of respondents	43	19	17	7
Median # of years in current job	6 years	7.5 years	6 years	4 years
Average # of years in current job	6.7 years	8.7 years	5.4 years	5.0 years
Middle range of years reported	3-8 years	4-13 years	3-7 years	*
Number of respondents	42	18	17	7

Note: Most respondents — 88% — have not worked at a law school in a NALP-related position. About one-third of respondents reported having worked with a previous employer in a NALP-related position(s). Among those who did the median number of years was 5.

Most respondents — 81% — have not worked in a related job such as human resources or at a search firm.

Among respondents with an LLB/JD, and answering the question as to the number of years spent in private practice (30 of 32 respondents with a LLB/JD), all reported having spent time in private practice. Overall the median number of years is 5.5; the average is 7.7 years. For department heads the respective figures were 10 and 9.5 years; for professionals at the first level below the department head, the figures were 3 and 5.2, respectively.

* The middle range is not shown for fewer than 10 responses.

Additional Survey Findings

The survey asked respondents to identify tools and perquisites provided by their employer. Table 4 reports these findings in rank order from most frequently identified to least frequently identified.

Table 4. Perquisites Provided – in Order of Mention

	% of Respondents
Paid association memberships	91%
Attendance at industry conferences	77
Mobile device, e.g., smartphone, Blackberry	74
Laptop	44
Cell phone	37
Corporate credit card	26
Broadband remote access	19
Paid parking	14
Tablet	5

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because more than one item could be checked. Percentages are based on all 43 respondents. Association memberships frequently mentioned include NALP, bar associations, and the PDC.