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Despite a Record Job Market for Class of 2022 Law Graduates, Outcomes Remain Unequal for Graduates of Color, First-Gen College Students

WASHINGTON, D.C. — New employment findings from the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) reveal that despite a record shattering employment market for Class of 2022 law graduates — including the highest employment rate in 35 years — disparities in employment outcomes by race/ethnicity and level of parental education persist, with graduates of color and first-generation college students experiencing lower levels of employment in bar admission required/anticipated positions.

Graduates of color were also less likely to be employed in judicial clerkships as compared to white graduates, and employment rates within private practice continued to be lower for Black, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander graduates. Likewise, first-generation college students were employed in judicial clerkships and private practice at lower rates than their continuing-generation college and JD student peers.

NALP today released the 49th consecutive edition of its *Jobs & JDs, Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates, Class of 2022*, available at www.nalp.org/bookstore. *Jobs & JDs* is NALP's hallmark annual research report that presents a comprehensive analysis of the types of employment and salaries obtained by recent graduates, with data on more than 97% of Class of 2022 graduates from ABA-accredited law schools.

“The persistent disparities we see in the employment outcomes for graduates of color underscores the need for all legal employers to stand firm on their DEI commitments,” said Nikia Gray, NALP’s Executive Director. “Despite the recent backlash against such initiatives, the fact that year after year Black, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander graduates fare significantly worse in the job market compared to their peers demonstrates the need to continue working towards a more equitable and inclusive legal industry.”

Highlights Based on Graduate Demographics

By Race/Ethnicity

- Disparities in employment outcomes by race/ethnicity continued this year. White graduates had the highest employment rate (93.4%), while Native American and Alaska Native graduates had the lowest employment rate (86.5%), followed by Black graduates (89.2%). White graduates also had the highest level of employment in bar admission required/anticipated jobs (82.7%), while the rate was more than 12 percentage points lower for Black graduates (70.6%), nearly 18 points lower for Native American and Alaska Native graduates (65.1%), and nearly 22 percentage points lower for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander graduates (60.8%).
- Employment rates within private practice continue to be lower for Native American and Alaska Native (42.2% of employed graduates), Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (44.7%), and Black graduates (51.8%). Private practice employment was highest for Asian graduates (65.7% of employed graduates).
- Latinx graduates were among the least represented within judicial clerkships — making up 11.2% of the Class of 2022 but obtaining only 7.5% of all clerkships and 7.4% of federal clerkships. Overall, graduates of color comprised 32.5% of the Class of 2022, but obtained just 24.2% of all judicial clerkships.
- Median starting salaries for employed graduates by race/ethnicity ranged from \$75,000 for Native American and Alaska graduates to \$170,000 for Asian graduates. The national median salary for all Class of 2022 law graduates was \$85,000. The higher median salary for Asian graduates can be partially attributed to greater levels of private practice employment, particularly within large firms.

Employment Status by Race/Ethnicity for the Class of 2022		
Race/Ethnicity	Employment Rate	% Employed in a Bar Admission/ Required Job
All Graduates	92.1%	79.9%
Asian	90.1%	78.0%
Black or African American	89.2%	70.6%
Latinx	91.6%	79.0%
Multiracial	89.8%	76.8%
Native American or Alaska Native	86.5%	65.1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	92.2%	60.8%
White/Caucasian	93.4%	82.7%

By Level of Parental Education

- The employment rate was more than three percentage points higher (95.5% vs. 92.1%) and the rate of employment in bar admission required/anticipated jobs was more than nine points greater (87.6% vs. 78.5%) for continuing-generation JD students in comparison to first-generation college students.
- Employed continuing-generation JD students were more likely to secure jobs in private practice (63.4%) and judicial clerkships (12.4%) as compared to first-generation college students (57.1% and 8.8%, respectively).
- Continuing-generation JD students were employed in federal clerkships (5.5% of employed graduates) at more than twice the rate of first-generation college students (2.4%).

Other Demographics

- Employed gender non-binary graduates were more than four times as likely to obtain a public interest position as compared to graduates overall (38.9% vs. 9.2%). LGBTQ graduates were more than twice as likely to be employed in public interest (20.1%).
- Graduates who identified as having a disability, gender non-binary, LGBTQ, and/or a military veteran were less likely to be employed in private practice as compared to graduates overall.
- Graduates with disabilities had a lower overall employment rate (88.5%), as well as a lower percentage of graduates employed in bar passage admission required/anticipated jobs (73.4%).

How are law firm opportunities changing for new law graduates? Which geographic markets provided the most jobs? Where did the graduates who are not practicing law find jobs? How do employment findings vary by gender, race/ethnicity, level of parental education, and other graduate demographics? The publication includes over 120 detailed tables and charts with data by geography, graduate demographics, and law school characteristics in order to answer these questions. *Jobs & JDs, Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates, Class of 2022* is now available for purchase at www.nalp.org/bookstore.

For more information on the overall employment outcomes for Class of 2022 law graduates, see NALP's August 2, 2023, press release at: www.nalp.org/pressreleases.

About NALP

NALP is an association of more than 3,000 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. What brings NALP members together is a common belief in three fundamental things. First, all law students and lawyers should benefit from a fair and ethical hiring process. Second, law students and lawyers are more successful when supported by professional development and legal career professionals. Third, a diverse and inclusive legal profession best serves clients and our communities. That's why NALP members work together every day to collect and publish accurate legal employment data and information, and champion education and ethical principles for recruiting, professional and career development, and diversity and inclusion. For more than 50 years, NALP has played an essential role in the success of our members and the lawyers and law students they serve. NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at www.nalp.org/pressreleases. For additional information, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.