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Oct. 21, 2020

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NALP's New Employment and Salary Report Highlights Disparities in Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity

WASHINGTON, D.C. — New employment findings from the National Association for Law Placement, Inc. (NALP) show that Black and Native American law school graduates had the lowest overall employment rates, and Black graduates were employed in bar passage required jobs at a rate 17 percentage points lower than white graduates.

NALP today released its *Jobs & JDs, Employment and Salaries of New Graduates, Class of 2019*, 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 the Class of 2019. 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 and race/ethnicity? *Jobs & JDs* presents the most comprehensive analysis of the types of employment and salaries obtained by the Class of 2019, with data on over 97% of Class of 2019 graduates from ABA-accredited law schools. The publication includes over 110 detailed tables and charts with data by geography, graduate demographics, and law school characteristics.

This year's report shows that the Class of 2019 experienced the highest employment rate in the dozen years since the start of the Great Recession, as the overall employment rate for the Class of 2019 was up 0.9 percentage points to 90.3% of graduates for whom employment status was known, compared to 89.4% for the Class of 2018. This marks the highest employment rate recorded since the 91.9% rate for the Class of 2007.



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“I find it particularly discouraging this year to have to report employment findings that highlight stark disparities by race and ethnicity, among other demographic markers, but this should serve as a wake-up call to everyone involved in legal education and the legal profession,” said NALP Executive Director James Leipold. “In a year when the overall class secured jobs and salaries at higher rates than we have seen since before the Great Recession, many subsets of graduates, but especially Black law school graduates, still meet with lower levels of success in the job market than the rest of the graduate pool.”

New for the Class of 2019: This year’s report includes an expanded demographics section, featuring new employment status breakouts by race/ethnicity and gender, salary data by employment sector and race/ethnicity, as well as new reporting for non-binary graduates.

Key Statistics Based on Graduate Demographics:

- By gender, women had the highest employment rate (90.6%), but men had a higher median salary (\$75,000) than both women (\$70,000) and non-binary graduates (\$67,500).
- Employed non-binary graduates were almost four times as likely to take a job in public interest than employed graduates overall (30.8% vs. 8.0%).
- Disparities in employment outcomes by race/ethnicity were evident. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander graduates and white/Caucasian graduates had the highest employment rates (92.9% and 92.1%, respectively), while Native American or Alaska Native and Black or African American graduates had the lowest employment rates (85.5% and 85.4%, respectively). White/Caucasian graduates had the highest rate of employment in bar passage required/anticipated jobs (79.8%), while the rate was 17 percentage points lower for Black or African American graduates (62.4%).
- Median starting salaries for employed graduates by race/ethnicity ranged from about \$62,000 for Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander graduates to \$125,000 for Asian graduates. The higher median salary for Asian graduates can be at least partially attributed to greater levels of employment in private practice.



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- Graduates who were transfer students also reported higher rates of employment in private practice (61.5%) and had a higher median starting salary (\$85,000) than graduates overall.
- Employed graduates identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were almost twice as likely to be employed in public interest positions than graduates overall (15.7% vs. 8.0%).
- Graduates with disabilities had a lower overall employment rate (84.9%), as well as a lower percentage of graduates employed in bar passage required/anticipated jobs (64.1%).

Other Highlights:

- The percentage of graduates taking jobs for which bar passage is required or anticipated grew by 3.4 percentage points, increasing from 72.8% in 2018 to 76.2% in 2019, following a one percentage point increase in the previous year.
- 74.3% of graduates with known employment status were employed in a full-time, long-term bar passage required job.
- Well over half (55.2%) of employed graduates obtained a job in private practice, a slight increase of 0.4 percentage points over the previous year and the closest the percentage has come to the 55.9% figure for 2009 since then.
- 96.3% of jobs were full-time positions. The percentage of jobs reported as part-time has declined for eight years in row, and now accounts for just 3.7% of jobs, compared with 4.5% for 2018.
- The national median salary for the Class of 2019 based on these reported salaries was \$72,500, up 3.6% compared to the Class of 2018, and finally surpassed the previous all-time high of \$72,000 for the Classes of 2008 and 2009. The national median law firm salary for Class of 2019 graduates was \$125,000, up 4.2% over the previous year. Additionally, 35.0% of all law firm salaries were reported as \$190,000.
- The national mean salary for the Class of 2019 was \$100,540, up 2.4% when compared to \$98,150 for the Class of 2018.



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About NALP

NALP is an association of more than 2,500 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 nearly 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.