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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Overall Median Salaries Rise and Private Practice Employment Remains Strong for the Class of 2020, Even as Other Key Employment Metrics Decline Due to the Pandemic**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association for Law Placement, Inc. (NALP) today released its *Employment for the Class of 2020 — Selected Findings*, a synopsis of key findings from the upcoming annual *Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Law School Graduates*. The release of the full *Jobs & JDs* report is anticipated in October 2021. This year's Selected Findings, available at [www.nalp.org/classof2020](http://www.nalp.org/classof2020), show that despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment and salary outcomes remained strong for the Class of 2020, although in many cases they fell short of the highwater marks set by the Class of 2019.

The Class of 2020 faced innumerable hurdles due to the pandemic, including virtual classes and bar exams, as well as a shifting landscape around legal employment opportunities. “The good news is that despite all of that, the employment outcomes and salary findings for members of the Class of 2020 are remarkably strong, and although in many cases they fall short of the highwater marks notched by the Class of 2019, they showcase a resilient job market for new law school graduates,” explained NALP Executive Director James G. Leipold. “To the extent that the employment profile is somewhat weaker than that of the previous class, it is not likely to mark the beginning of a downward trend in the numbers, but instead is likely to be a pandemic-related blip, with stronger numbers following for the Classes of 2021 and 2022 as the economy around us generally and the legal economy specifically have been booming as the pent-up demand from the pandemic-lockdown’s end has been unleashed.”



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Leipold pointed out that the largest law firms have added more than 2,200 jobs over the past nine years. “Fueled by overall private practice growth, students from the Class of 2020 were able to secure jobs at a higher rate than many had predicted. That is good news for law schools, law school graduates, and the legal profession as a whole, and barring any unforeseen bumps in the road, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic for the employment outcomes for the Class of 2021.”

### **Highlights:**

- The overall employment rate for the Class of 2020 fell by nearly two percentage points, to 88.4% of graduates for whom employment status was known, compared with 90.3% for the Class of 2019 — halting a pattern of four consecutive years of employment rate growth for the classes of 2016-2019.
- The percentage of graduates taking jobs for which bar passage is required or anticipated declined by 1.6 percentage points, decreasing from 76.2% in 2019 to 74.6% in 2020; however, the figure remains above the rates observed in the prior ten class years through 2018.
- Nearly 57% (56.8%) of employed graduates obtained a job in private practice, an increase of 1.6 percentage points over the previous year, and the highest this percentage has been since 2003.
- The national median salary for the Class of 2020 grew to an all-time high of \$75,000, up 3.4% compared to the Class of 2019.
- The national median law firm salary for the Class of 2020 was \$130,000, an improvement of 4.0% in comparison to the Class of 2019, and finally again reached the all-time high median law firm starting salary measured for the Class of 2009.
- The share of law firm jobs in the smallest firms of 1-10 lawyers and the largest firms of more than 500 lawyers both rose this year. The percentage of jobs in firms of 1-10 lawyers grew to 32.8% of all law firm jobs compared to 31.5% for the Class of 2019. Jobs in firms of more than 500 lawyers increased by 0.3 percentage points to 30.5% of all law firm jobs.



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### **Highlights:**

- Public service jobs, including military and other government jobs, judicial clerkships, and public interest positions, accounted for 31.1% of jobs taken by employed graduates, down one percentage point from 2019 when they comprised 32.1% of all jobs. While the share of jobs in government and judicial clerkships was down this year, public interest organizations, including public defenders, accounted for 8.7% of jobs, up from 8.0% in 2019.
- Law school-funded jobs were up for the Class of 2020, accounting for 488 jobs (1.7% of all jobs), compared with 408 jobs (1.4% of jobs) for the Class of 2019, but the 2020 figure is still less than one-third of the number of law school-funded jobs reported for the Class of 2013.
- Of employed graduates from the Class of 2020, 11.5% were seeking a different job, up slightly from 11.3% last year.

**Read more about the Selected Findings at [www.nalp.org/classof2020](http://www.nalp.org/classof2020).**

### **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 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](http://www.nalp.org/pressreleases). For additional information, contact NALP at [info@nalp.org](mailto:info@nalp.org) or call (202) 835-1001.