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NALP Unveils Inaugural Salary Report for Canadian Law Firms

NALP released its first-ever *Canadian Associate Salary Survey Report* today, available in NALP's bookstore. This comprehensive survey sheds light on associate salaries and bonuses by year called to the bar, in addition to articling and summer student compensation across Canadian law offices as of January 1, 2025. The findings reveal national median associate salaries ranged from \$115,000 CDN for those called to the bar in 2024 to \$222,500 for those called in 2017, with articling and summer students earning a median weekly salary of \$1,538. A total of 66 law offices participated in this foundational study, offering key insights into the evolving legal landscape.

“This inaugural study provides the Canadian legal industry for the first time with detailed insight into private practice compensation levels across the country,” explained NALP’s Executive Director, Nikia Gray. “Salary is a key factor in most career decisions and yet there is often a lack of reliable data available for comparison. This report will enable law students and lawyers to better evaluate offers and will allow law firms to assess employee remuneration against industry benchmarks.”

By city, median first-year base salaries (associates called to the bar in 2024) ranged from \$97,000 in Ottawa to \$130,000 in Toronto. Median first-year salaries were also higher in law offices of more than 100 lawyers (\$130,000) and boutique law firms (\$127,500). In terms of performance compensation, most junior associates received smaller bonuses, with the median ranging from \$7,925 for those called to the bar in 2024 to \$30,000 for those called in 2017.

Key Insights:

- The median first-year associate base salary was \$115,000. By firm size the median salary ranged from \$115,000 in firms of more than 300 lawyers to \$122,500 in firms of 100 or fewer lawyers.

- Regionally, the median first-year base salary was higher in Central Canada (\$122,500) as compared to Western Canada (\$115,000). By city, the median ranged from \$97,000 in Ottawa to \$130,000 in Toronto.
- Across all law offices, a \$130,000 salary was the modal, or most frequently reported, first-year salary, accounting for 26% of all salaries.
- The median weekly salary for summer students (first- and second-year) and articling students was \$1,538, although summer student salaries were about \$100-200 higher in smaller firms of 100 or fewer lawyers.
- Median associate performance bonuses for calendar year 2024 ranged from \$7,925 for those called to the bar in 2024 to \$30,000 for those called in 2017.
- For lawyers who are not associates or partners (e.g., staff lawyers and counsel), median base salaries ranged from \$222,000 for those called to the bar in 2015-2017, up to \$248,875 for those called to the bar prior to 2011.

Median Associate and Summer/Articling Student Salaries by Year and Firm Size

(in \$ per year unless otherwise noted, as of January 1, 2025)

Year Called to Bar	Firm Size — Number of Lawyers in Canada							
	100 or Fewer		101-300		301+		All Sizes	
	Median	# Rept.	Median	# Rept.	Median	# Rept.	Median	# Rept.
2025	\$110,000	11	\$115,000	19	\$110,000	23	\$110,000	53
2024	122,500	14	117,000	19	115,000	28	115,000	61
2023	133,500	14	135,000	20	132,500	29	135,000	63
2022	143,500	14	153,500	18	150,875	29	150,000	61
2021	162,000	14	166,500	18	171,750	29	170,000	61
2020	187,500	12	175,000	20	188,525	28	184,425	60
2019	200,500	12	185,325	14	209,275	26	201,500	52
2018	187,500	9	186,675	12	220,000	21	214,325	42
2017	176,500	10	192,500	9	233,750	24	222,500	43
Summer Student and Articling Student (\$/week)								
1Ls (Class of 2027)	\$1,725	6	—	—	\$1,550	17	\$1,550	31
2Ls (Class of 2026)	1,625	15	1,550	18	1,550	23	1,550	56
Articling students (2024-25)	1,550	13	1,625	20	1,550	27	1,550	60

Note: All figures are based on average salaries reported by law offices. Salaries were reported as of January 1, 2025 or fiscal year 2025 if the firm set compensation slightly after this date. Associates are reported by year called to the bar, summer students are reported by class year, and articling students are reported by articling year. The "# Rept." column indicates the number of offices reporting. For purposes of this summary report, medians have been rounded to the nearest \$25. A dash indicates that fewer than five unique firms reported salary data.

Detailed Data on Associate and Student Salaries

The *2025 Canadian Associate Salary Survey Report* provides information about associate and summer/articling student salaries by year called to the bar, firm size, office size, firm type, and region; detailed salary analyses for five major markets; performance bonuses for associates; salaries for lawyers who are not partners/associates; and more. Purchase your copy of the report at nalp.org/bookstore.

To request an interview, contact media@nalp.org.

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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.