

---

# NALP Graduate Employment Survey for the Class of 2011

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

Each year NALP and your law school partner to measure the employment outcomes for graduates of your law school and of every ABA-accredited school in the country. This helps us measure the strength of the entry-level legal employment market at the national, regional, and local levels. Your participation in this survey is critical in helping us provide this important information. Your law school and NALP respect your expectations concerning the confidentiality of the information you provide. Your career services office will provide information to NALP with all personally identifiable information removed.

NALP and the ABA measure employment status nine months after graduation to allow for bar passage and licensure. February 15 has been designated as the common date by which all graduates must report their employment status. Although many graduates will report their employment status prior to February 15, you may report it at any point that you secure post-graduate employment. You should also report if you have not secured a job by February 15. Because the time span over which law students may obtain their post-graduate employment is great, your school may request this information as early as the beginning of your final semester of law school and as late as February following graduation, and your school may survey you more than once to be sure that they have the most up-to-date information.

This survey is straightforward and short. You will be asked about your post-graduate employment status — if you have a job (and if so what kind of job you have obtained, your starting salary in that job, and a few other questions); and if you do not whether you are continuing your education full-time, seeking a job or not, and whether you are volunteering. All of this information helps us provide important consumer information to the law students who will follow you.

Following are some frequently asked questions about the survey. If you have any additional questions, please contact your career services office.

### **Who should complete the survey?**

You should. Regardless of your post-graduation employment status, you should complete the survey when requested by your career services office. You should *still* complete the survey even if:

- You have not secured a post-graduate job or if that job is not your “first choice” job; or
- You will be pursuing an LL.M. or another educational program full-time; or
- You do not have paid employment and are looking for work; or
- You do not have paid employment and are not looking for work.

### **What is the definition of employed?**

To be considered as employed as of February 15, 2012, you must be hired for, and actually working in a position where you will receive a salary or a stipend on February 15, 2012. If you are employed, choose the type of job as described below under “How do I choose a job type?”

### **What is the definition of a volunteer?**

A volunteer position pays neither a salary nor a stipend. Volunteer positions include structured volunteer positions that require a commitment of 6 months or more, that may lead to paid employment or may even be required to obtain a paid position with that employer in the future. If you are not employed, you are asked to provide information about volunteer activity, if any, and also to indicate if you are seeking or not seeking employment.

### **What if my employment status changes between graduation and February 15?**

You should report your most current job status. If your employment status changes between graduation and February 15, use the procedures established by your career services office to update your information.

## How do I choose a job type?

Law school graduates take many different kinds of jobs, and not all of them involve the practice of law. The type of job you obtain is one of the most important pieces of information you are asked to provide. Use the definitions below to help you choose the correct job type.

- *Bar admission required/anticipated* — Choose this job type if the job requires that you pass the bar and be licensed to practice law. This category includes judicial clerks and positions that require bar passage after being hired.
- *JD advantage* — Choose this job type if the employer sought an individual with a JD, and perhaps even required a JD, or for which the JD provided a demonstrable advantage in obtaining or performing the job, but the job itself does not require bar passage, an active law license, or involve practicing law. Examples of positions for which a JD is an advantage include a corporate contracts administrator, alternative dispute resolution specialist, government regulatory analyst, FBI agent, and accountant. Also included might be jobs in personnel or human resources, jobs with investment banks, jobs with consulting firms, jobs doing compliance work for business and industry, jobs in law firm professional development, and jobs in law school career services offices, admissions offices, or other law school administrative offices. Doctors or nurses who plan to work in a litigation, insurance, or risk management setting, or as expert witnesses, would fall in this category, as would journalists and teachers (in a higher education setting) of law and law related topics.
- *Other professional* — Choose this job type if the job requires professional skills or training but for which a JD is neither required nor a demonstrable advantage. Examples of jobs in this category include a math or science teacher, business manager, or performing arts specialist. Other examples include professions such as doctors, nurses, engineers, or architects, if a JD was not advantageous in obtaining the position or in performing the duties of the position.
- *Non-professional* — Choose this job type if the job does not require any professional skills or training, or is one that you may not view as part of your career path.

## Are there circumstances under which I should report something other than my status on February 15?

If you have accepted a position with the military JAG Corps but will be starting that job after February 15, you should report that job on the survey. Also report the start date for that job. If you have accepted a job at a law firm but your start date has been deferred beyond February 15, 2012, report what you are actually doing as of February 15, 2012.

## Why should I report my salary?

When you were considering law school, no doubt the job prospects and salary potential available to you with a JD factored into your decision-making. Such information was available to you because students who came before you were willing to provide that information. By itself, your individual salary is of little interest — but taken together with those of your classmates and fellow graduates nationwide, it allows us to provide the information on earnings potential that you sought and expected as a prospective law student.

## How do I report my salary?

Report whether your job pays a salary or a stipend and the amount of that salary or stipend. When reporting your salary, include base compensation only. *Do not include* items such as a bar stipend, a signing bonus, a potential bonus, or contingent income. If you have accepted a judicial clerkship, report the clerkship salary, not the salary you expect to earn after the clerkship. If **your salary increased** between the time you started your job and the time you completed this survey, you should **report your starting salary**. If, however, your salary increase was conditional upon passing the bar, you should report the higher post-bar passage salary.

## How are “long-term” and “short-term” jobs defined for the purposes of this survey?

A **long-term job** lasts for at least a year. A long-term job may also have a fixed or known duration, e.g., 1 year, 2 years, or be project-based and end when the project is completed. Examples of jobs with a fixed or known duration include judicial clerkships, and 1- or 2-year fellowships. A job as an associate at a law firm, or a job that you had prior to and continued to hold during law school are also long-term jobs, but do not have a fixed duration. A **short-term job** has a fixed duration of less than a year, e.g., 6 months. These jobs may be at your

law school or in another setting. Note that a job that *you* consider short-term, while, for example, you continue to seek a different job, may not be a short-term job from the *employer's* perspective, and should not be reported as a short-term job on this survey. If the job has a fixed duration, whether short-term or long-term, please also indicate whether the job is funded in whole or in part by your law school or by an outside organization, e.g., Equal Justice Works.

### **I've got a job but am still looking. How do I report?**

Report the details of the job that you have, and also complete the item on search status to indicate whether or not you continue to seek a job other than the one you currently hold. *Do not* complete this item if you are unemployed.

### **I've got two concurrent jobs. Which one do you want me to report?**

If you hold more than one job, consider which job you define as your primary or main employment and which you consider your secondary work, since the primary job is what will be used when your school, NALP, and the ABA report on graduate employment. In addition to obvious situations of multiple paid jobs, other circumstances for which you need to determine what you consider your primary job include having paid employment in addition to starting your own solo law practice; owning/running a business while being employed by someone else; and being employed in the civilian workforce while also a member of the military reserves. If you have obtained a judicial clerkship, generally you should report that job as the primary job; you do not need to report on a job you may have obtained that will begin after your clerkship. The survey also gives you an opportunity to report your secondary job, and if you hold more than one job, you should also report this second job.

### **I'm working at a firm as a legal temp. Should I report the firm as my employer?**

In most cases, no. If you are working at a firm but are doing so through a legal temporary agency, report your employer as "legal temporary agency" under business and industry. Report the firm as your employer *only if* you were hired directly by the firm and not through a temp agency.

### **I got an offer from my summer employer or as a result of my clinic work. Why are those not choices under "Source of job"?**

You should indicate how you got the summer job or clinic position that led to the post-graduate employment offer. For example you may have gotten that job through a job posting or by means of your school's on-campus interview program.

### **Do I need to report the number of attorneys if my job is not with a law firm?**

No. The firm size question is applicable *only to jobs in law firms*.

### **How do I choose my employer type?**

Use the following definitions to help you. For most employer types you need to complete two or more questions to report complete information.

**LAW FIRM:** This category includes all jobs in private practice, including jobs as an associate, law clerk, paralegal, or other professional or clerical staff.

Private practice includes public interest law firms, which are private and for-profit firms distinguished from other private firms in that a majority of their practice involves clients that are typically under-represented, or groups that advocate for community rather than corporate interests. Sliding fee cases, attorney fee cases, and contingent fee cases are common. Typical areas of practice for public interest law firms include plaintiff's employment discrimination, civil rights, union representation, and environmental law.

Firm size refers to the total number of attorneys firm-wide counting all senior and junior partners, of counsel, staff attorneys, senior and junior associates, and the like. Use the solo practice category *only* if you have established your own solo practice; if you are working for another single lawyer report the firm size as 2-10.

If you have been hired by a firm as an associate prior to passing the bar, you may report your position as associate.

**BUSINESS/INDUSTRY:** This category is broad and includes most employers that are not law firms, schools, or government organizations. These

employers are subdivided into ten categories and *do not* refer to practice areas within law firms. Choose the one type of employer category that best describes your employer. If you have a job with a business that performs a function traditionally performed by government, such as child support enforcement, report the job in the "other" business category. If your job is with a law firm but is on a temporary basis through a staffing agency, report your job in the "legal temporary agency" category. If you are working for a bank, report it in the "investment banking/financial institution" category. The "other" category encompasses a wide range of profit and not-for-profit organizations such as retail establishments, private hospitals, and corporations of all sizes not falling into one of the specific categories listed.

For jobs in business, also indicate the type of job you hold, e.g. management, temporary attorney, in-house legal.

**GOVERNMENT:** For all government positions, you should report both the level of government (e.g., federal, state, or local) and the type of job or employment setting. The "military-other" category includes the Army Corps of Engineers and state National Guard units, in addition to any other non-JAG Corps civilian and uniformed positions. Prosecution encompasses representation or litigation on behalf of government in criminal or civil matters. These positions may be in the US Department of Justice, offices of state attorneys general, or local district attorneys' offices. If your job does not fall into one of the specific categories provided, choose "other." Note that positions in public education at any level are to be reported as academic positions. Public defender or appellate defender jobs should be reported as public interest. Jobs with political campaigns should be reported under business. Jobs with private employers but that involve provision of services sometimes performed by government — e.g., child support enforcement (functions sometimes contracted out) — should be reported using the appropriate private employer category rather than as government positions.

*Local governments* include county, municipal, and city governments, as well as special purpose entities such as local transit authorities and sanitation districts. Report non-court jobs with government in *US Territories* and the *District of Columbia* as state level jobs. Report judicial clerkships (or other court positions) with federal courts in these jurisdictions as

federal level jobs. Report similar positions with lower courts (the equivalent of a state or local court in other jurisdictions) as state level jobs. Use the "other" government level category for jobs with *tribal government*, foreign governments, or the United Nations.

**PUBLIC INTEREST:** This category includes jobs funded by the Legal Services Corporation and other organizations offering civil legal services, jobs as public defender or appellate defender, and jobs with private nonprofit advocacy, religious, social service, fundraising, community resource, or cause-related organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund, United Way, and Red Cross chapters. It also includes nonprofit policy analysis and research organizations such as Brookings and the Heritage Foundation. Jobs with unions should be reported in the "other" category. The public interest category *does not include* jobs with trade associations (which should be reported in the business category) or public interest law firms (which should be reported in the law firm category).

**ACADEMIC:** Positions may be at any level, from elementary to higher education, including at your own law school, and within either the private or public sector, e.g., private colleges, state universities, and local public education.



[www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)