



1220 19th Street NW, Suite 510

Washington, DC 20036-2405

Phone: (202) 835-1001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2022

Contacts: James G. Leipold, NALP Executive Director, jleipold@nalp.org

Danielle A. Taylor, NALP Director of Research, dtaylor@nalp.org

Phone: (202) 835-1001

Job Market for Class of 2021 Law Graduates Was One of the Strongest on Record

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association for Law Placement, Inc. (NALP) today released its *Employment for the Class of 2021 — 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 2022. This year's Selected Findings, available at: www.nalp.org/classof2021, show that the employment outcomes for the Class of 2021 were some of the strongest that NALP has ever recorded, as the U.S. economy recovered from the COVID-19 related disruptions that impacted the Class of 2020.

“Driven by extraordinary demand for talent at the largest law firms, a healthy private practice market propelled strong, and in some cases record-setting employment and salary outcomes for this class,” writes NALP Executive Director James G. Leipold. He expects that the legal employment market will remain strong for the Classes of 2022 and 2023 due to several factors, including robust summer associate recruiting and relatively flat graduating class sizes.

“We also know that the size of the graduating Class of 2024 will be considerably larger than the six that preceded it. First-year enrollment for that class jumped by more than 4,500, to 42,718, up from the 38,202 starting members of the Class of 2023. Combined, these factors suggest that some of the record employment and salary figures measured for the Class of 2021 will come to be seen as somewhere near the top of a curve that will inevitably trend lower for a period of time, a downward curve that will almost certainly be in place by 2024 if not before.”



1220 19th Street NW, Suite 510

Washington, DC 20036-2405

Phone: (202) 835-1001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Continued from page 1)

Highlights:

- The overall employment rate for the Class of 2021 improved by 3.5 percentage points, to 91.9% of graduates for whom employment status was known, compared to 88.4% for the Class of 2020. This is the highest employment rate since the Class of 2007, when it was also 91.9%, and is a high-water mark for a period dating back more than 30 years to the Class of 1988.
- The percentage of graduates taking jobs for which bar passage is required or anticipated grew by 3.6 percentage points, increasing from 74.6% for the Class of 2020 to 78.2% for the Class of 2021 — reaching a new all-time high for the period since 2001 when NALP began using the current job classifications.
- Overall, 57.0% of employed graduates obtained a job in private practice, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over the previous year, and the highest this percentage has been since the Class of 2003.
- The national median salary for the Class of 2021 grew to a record figure of \$80,000, up 6.7% compared to the median of \$75,000 for the Class of 2020.
- The national median law firm salary for the Class of 2021 was \$131,500, finally surpassing the previous all-time high median salary of \$130,000 that was recorded for the Class of 2009 and that was matched by the Class of 2020 last year.
- Of employed graduates from the Class of 2021, just 8.6% were seeking a different job, an historic low. Except for 2020, this percentage has been declining since reaching an all-time high of 24.6% for the Class of 2011.
- The share of law firm jobs in the largest firms of more than 500 lawyers rose by 1.3 percentage points to 31.8%. The Class of 2021 was the first in which the percentage of jobs taken in the largest firms exceeded the percentage of jobs taken in the smallest firms of 1-10 lawyers (30.7% of all law firm jobs).
- The percentage of jobs that are solo practice was at an all-time low of 1.2% of all law firm jobs and 0.7% of all jobs.



1220 19th Street NW, Suite 510

Washington, DC 20036-2405

Phone: (202) 835-1001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Continued from page 2)

Highlights (Continued):

- Public service jobs, including military and other government jobs, judicial clerkships, and public interest positions, accounted for 30.5% of jobs taken by employed graduates, down from 31.1% for the Class of 2020. While the share of jobs in government and judicial clerkships dipped this year, jobs in public interest were flat at 8.7% of jobs.
- Law school-funded jobs declined for the Class of 2021, accounting for 427 jobs (1.3% of all jobs), compared with 488 jobs (1.7% of jobs) for the Class of 2020.

Read more about the Selected Findings at www.nalp.org/classof2021.

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 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.