

The NALP Foundation and NALP Release Joint Study of Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction for the Class of 2022

Boston, MA and Washington, DC – July 7, 2026 – The NALP Foundation and NALP today released their 13th joint study, *Law School Alumni Employment and Satisfaction*, covering the Class of 2022. This annual study examines recent U.S. graduates’ employment status, compensation, and mobility, and their assessment of how well their legal education prepared them for practice.

This year's study debuts new queries on graduates' use of and preparation in AI during law school, as well as utilization in their current roles. The study also examines timing and drivers for career aspiration shifts during law school, student debt and loan forgiveness, professional identity formation, the timing of post-graduate recruitment, and engagement preferences. Among this year’s findings:

Artificial Intelligence: The vast majority of alumni reported currently using AI tools in some way: 48% do so “frequently” or “occasionally” as either an essential part of their daily work or for specific tasks or projects, while 30% reported they “rarely” do so, despite having access to AI tools. Only 22% reported they “never” use AI tools in their current roles.

Mobility: Mobility continues to be high, with roughly two thirds (63%) of alumni reporting they’ve already held two or more positions, but the lowest ever level of graduates reported they were actively seeking a new job, falling to 11% from 13% for the Classes of 2019-2021 (this has historically ranged from 17% to 24%).

Work Location: More employed graduates reported working fully in the office (42%) than in the Class of 2021 (35%), but over one half (58%) worked remotely (either fully remotely or a hybrid model), and those working hybrid schedules decreased to 50% from the prior classes’ 57%. Notably, the rates of hybrid schedules increased in line with firm size. Class of 2022 graduates continued to report high overall job satisfaction across all three work locations.

Debt & Compensation: Graduates’ average debt load decreased for the third consecutive year, but remains substantial at this mark three years after graduation, at \$81,876 (down from the Class of 2021’s \$88,669 and the Class of 2020’s \$95,286). Graduates’ debt impacts their job choices, major life decisions, as well as their personal

lives and mental health and well-being, with impact increasing measurably with debt load. This is particularly notable, given the marked stratification of compensation alumni reported, with 82% of those working in the largest firms reporting annual compensation over \$200,000 while only 59% of those in mid-sized (251-500 lawyers) and a minor 12% of those working in the smallest firms did so.

“The study’s data illuminates an evolving career path for recent graduates, characterized by high mobility, adoption of AI, and hybrid work environments, but also affected professionally and personally by the significant debt they’ve incurred to attend law school,” noted NALP Foundation President & CEO Fiona Trevelyan.

NALP Executive Director Nikia Gray emphasized “The continued high mobility of recent graduates is one of the report’s most significant findings. Early-career lawyers are changing jobs at unprecedented rates, making the ability to practice in different jurisdictions an increasingly important component of long-term career success. As the legal profession continues to examine accreditation and licensure, these findings underscore the importance of maintaining a national accreditation system that supports reciprocity and enables lawyers to pursue opportunities wherever their careers take them.”

This year’s study reflects data collected from 1,302 Class of 2022 alumni from 26 U.S. law schools. Data collection took place between November 2025 and January 2026. All Council-accredited law schools were invited to participate. The NALP Foundation and NALP received an extended grant from the AccessLex Institute® to support the participation of HBCU law schools and law schools with significant levels of students and alumni from groups underrepresented in the legal profession for an additional three-year period; this year marks the first year of this new cycle.

In addition to the topics noted above, the report also contains detailed information, segmented by demographic cohorts, work setting, and law school rank, on:

- Employment Status
- Compensation
- Work Setting and Career Track
- Efficacy of Law School Preparation
- Post-Graduate Job Offer Timing
- Experiential Education
- Key Skills for Practice
- Post-Graduate Law School Engagement

The full PDF report for U.S. law schools is available for purchase from The NALP Foundation at www.nalpfoundation.org/bookstore. We will be releasing a separate Canadian report later this summer.

About The NALP Foundation

The NALP Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research organization, works to improve the legal profession through independent research, programming, and partnerships that drive meaningful

change. We enable organizations to make actionable progress in legal education, preparation for practice, recruitment, retention, professional development, and career progression. For 30 years, The NALP Foundation has conducted unique benchmark research and delivered exceptional educational programming and publications based on this research. Learn more about The NALP Foundation at www.nalpfoundation.org.

About NALP

NALP is an association of over 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 standards 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. To learn more about NALP, visit www.nalp.org.

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