
Findings from the NALP Workplace Questionnaire

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The NALP Workplace Questionnaire (WQ) is designed to provide information about some of the policies and practices of legal employers that contribute to the quality of life and the atmosphere of the workplace. While some version of the WQ has been in place since 1990, until recently it was not possible to use WQ information to benchmark law firm practices across the industry.

Now, however, NALP is able to provide a tabulation of most of the items on the WQ, based on the 637 offices that had completed the WQ online as of mid-June 2005.

Some background and methodological notes should be kept in mind when reviewing these findings.

■ Although a few schools require completion of the WQ in order to interview on campus, the WQ has been and remains a largely optional informational piece that legal employers can choose to complete and file with schools at which they interview and/or as part of their listing on *www.nalpdirectory.com*. Employers completing the form tend to be larger firms, often with multiple offices.

■ An online version of the WQ first became available in August 2002. (If an employer has completed an online WQ, it can be accessed from their listing in *www.nalpdirectory.com*.) The information presented here is based on WQs

completed since that time. Approximately 40% of the offices included in the 2005 results completed the form prior to 2005, and therefore some information may not be current. However, it should be noted that employers are not required to resubmit this information every year but are instead encouraged to update their WQs when information changes. Thus information provided prior to 2005 is not necessarily stale, as it may not have changed.

■ The findings presented here are based on private law offices only. WQs completed by corporate, government, and public interest organizations are excluded.

The information presented here provides a useful benchmark against which to compare an individual office's response, as well as an assessment of practices at these firms on a variety of programs and policies. However, whether the information captured on the WQ represents the most meaningful lines of inquiry is a question that can be debated, and one that NALP's Recruitment Practices Committee continues to weigh. In addition, while an organization's WQ provides a useful starting point from which to learn about a firm, it cannot adequately capture the many intangibles, unwritten policies, or specifics of written policies that contribute to a workplace environment. Additional research on specific policies and programs of interest is always appropriate.

NALP Workplace Questionnaire

(percentages based on 637 law offices unless otherwise noted)

Size of Office Completing Questionnaire (Figures based on 614 offices)	
2-10 lawyers	2.3%
11-25 lawyers	7.6
26-50 lawyers	11.2
51-100 lawyers	15.2
101-250 lawyers	20.5
251-500 lawyers	15.0
501+ lawyers	28.2

Associate Training, Development, and Diversity

What types of training and professional development opportunities does your organization offer?

In-house training programs	96.9%
External firm-paid seminars	95.8
CLE	99.2
Organized/formal mentor program	86.0
Trial advocacy training	79.1
Observation opportunities	93.2
Practice group training	90.1
Retreats	75.7

What roles do partners/senior attorneys play in the training of attorneys?

Presenters	93.1%
Develop/design training programs	90.7
Mentoring	96.9
Supervise projects	99.2
One-on-one training	91.7

	Yes	No	Did Not Answer (DNA)
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Does your organization have a formal evaluation program in place?	96.7%	2.8%	0.5%
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Program described as:

Annual	73.9%
Semi-annual	42.7
Top down	62.6
Bottom up	11.3
Attorney self-evaluation	54.3
Peer review	8.0
Partner review	57.6
360 Degree	6.8

Activities to increase presence and retention of under-represented groups:

Participation in minority job fairs	79.0%
Outreach to law student groups	71.7
Directed mentoring efforts	49.0
Recruitment at schools with large minority enrollment	63.6
Participation in bar-sponsored programs	74.1
Involvement of employer committees	58.9

Associate Compensation and Benefits

Associate base salary (excluding bonuses) is determined by:

(Figures based on 628 offices)

A set lock-step system	42.8%
A combination lock-step and merit system	28.7
A lock-step system with variable component	16.1
A merit system	8.4

If not strictly a lock-step system, what criteria are used to determine associate base salaries? (Figures based on 359 offices that checked other than set lock-step option above)

Hours billed	90.3%
Quality of work	83.5
Overall contribution	82.1
Pro bono hours	65.3
Business development	64.5

	Yes	No	DNA
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Has your organization offered annual bonuses to eligible associates in the past five years?

97.2%	1.7%	1.1%
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What factors are used to determine the amount of an associate's bonus?

(Figures based on 619 offices that indicated "yes" above)

Hours billed	87.6%
Quality of work	83.5
Overall contribution	82.1
Pro bono hours	65.3
Business development	64.5

	Yes	No	DNA
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Are same sex domestic partners afforded the same benefits as spouses of attorneys?

66.7%	26.8%	6.4%
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Are opposite sex domestic partners afforded the same benefits as spouses of attorneys?

49.8	43.3	6.9
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Parental Leave/Family Care (Benefits in Addition to Those Provided by FMLA)

	Yes	No	DNA
Does your organization have a written parental leave or family care policy?	86.5%	12.4%	1.1%
Have one or more attorneys made use of your policy in the past 12 months?*	94.9	4.5	0.5
Are attorneys currently using this benefit?*	92.0	7.4	0.5
Does your policy include adoptions?*	90.7	6.7	2.5
Does your policy cover children/dependents of:			
Same sex domestic partners?*	74.2	18.3	7.4
Opposite sex domestic partners?*	66.4	26.7	6.9

* Figures based on 551 offices that reported having a written policy.

	Yes	No	NA or DNA
Does your organization offer a flexible spending account for:			
Dependent care	91.2%	5.3%	3.5%
Health care	92.2	4.2	3.6
Does your organization offer use of a childcare facility?	45.7%	52.0%	2.3%
Of those who said yes (291):			
Is facility for emergency use only?	87.3	12.0	0.7
Is facility on-site?	19.6	77.0	3.4

Alternative Work Options

	Yes	No	DNA
Does your organization have a written alternative work option policy?	71.3%	25.3%	3.4%

	Yes	No	Case-by-Case	DNA
Does your organization allow:				
Job sharing	1.6%	73.3%	18.4%	6.7%
Flex-time	28.3	27.3	38.6	5.8
Telecommuting	32.0	25.9	36.0	6.1
Part-time schedule	70.6	2.5	25.6	1.3

What determines eligibility for alternative work status? (Figures based on 624 offices that offer at least one option above)				
Case-by-case			96.5%	
Minimum time with employer			19.2	
Level of legal experience			8.5	

	Yes	No	Case-by-Case	DNA
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Is there a minimum percentage of full-time hours that a part-time attorney must work? (Figures based on 613 offices allowing part-time schedule either affirmatively or on a case-by-case basis)				
	28.1%	22.3%	45.2%	4.4%

Are attorneys who work part-time and exceed their agreed upon part-time hours compensated in some manner for the additional hours? (Figures based on 613 offices)				
	54.6	5.2	33.8	6.4

If so, how are they compensated? (Figures based on 542 offices that said yes or case-by-case to compensation)				
Salary adjustment			33.0%	
Bonus consideration			61.4	

	Yes	No	Case-by-Case	DNA
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Are attorneys who work alternative schedules given bonus consideration? (Figures based on offices that allow the alternative on an affirmative and case-by-case basis. Number of offices is shown in parentheses.)				
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Job sharing (127)	17.3%	3.9%	58.3%	20.5%
Flex-time (426)	50.0	3.5	27.7	18.8
Telecommuting (433)	58.2	2.5	26.8	12.5
Part-time schedule (613)	58.7	9.3	25.1	6.9

	Yes	No	No One Eligible	DNA
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In the past 5 years, have attorneys made partner who have worked or are currently working an alternative schedule? (Figures based on 624 offices offering at least one option: job sharing, telecommuting, flex-time, or part-time work)				
	60.6%	17.3%	17.1%	5.0%

Pro Bono Policies and Practices

Through what internal means do attorneys learn about and/or are assigned pro bono cases?

Circulated memorandum	38.0%
Circulated e-mail	68.4
Pro bono coordinator	71.1
Pro bono committee	56.8
Random assignment	27.6

	Yes	No	DNA
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If an associate is interested in a particular kind of pro bono in which your organization is not currently engaged, is the associate free to bring in the work for consideration for possible representation by the firm?

	96.4%	0.9%	2.7%
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	Yes	No	NA or DNA
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Is billable hour credit given for pro bono work?

	79.7%	13.0%	7.2%
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Is there a maximum that will be credited?
(Figures based on 508 who give credit)

	36.4	48.0	15.6
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For bonus consideration, is a pro bono hour equivalent to a billable hour?

	66.2	16.2	17.6
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