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October 2026

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING YOUR DATA TO NALP:

Friday, April 9, 2027

TO: Law School Career Services Offices

FROM: Danielle A. Taylor, Director of Research & Chief Data Strategist

SUBJECT: 2026 NALP Employment Report and Salary Survey (ERSS)

Instructional materials and resources for NALP's Class of 2026 Employment Report and Salary Survey (ERSS) are now available on the NALP website at: www.nalp.org/erssinfo. In addition, NALP has also released the Class of 2027 survey and FAQs document so that schools can begin planning their data collection for the subsequent class year.

Collecting and reporting this consumer information remains one of the most important endeavors that we undertake together each year. As legal career professionals, both individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to provide prospective law students and their families with accurate and comprehensive information about their realistic employment prospects after graduation. That responsibility can only be met by reporting individual student employment outcomes to both the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the ABA (the Council) and NALP on an annual basis. For the Class of 2025, 189 Council-accredited U.S. law schools reported employment outcomes for 35,139 graduates, representing more than 97% of all graduates nationwide. With your help, we again look forward to being able to report similar coverage for the Class of 2026.

Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting employment data for the Class of 2026 is **Friday, April 9, 2027.** This timeline allows schools to submit their data to the Council by its deadline of Wednesday, April 7 and to finalize their NALP submission before attending the Annual Education Conference (AEC) the following week (April 13-16) in Seattle, WA.

The employment status date for the Class of 2026 is **Monday, March 15, 2027**. Per the Council definition of employed, graduates must have commenced their employment by March 15 to be counted as employed. If they have accepted a job offer that will start after March 15, and they are not working in another temporary job in the meantime, then they must be counted as *Employed – Start date after March 15* in both the Council and NALP data sets, with limited exceptions as noted in the Council's Employment Protocols under Data Protocol 201(d).

1220 19th Street NW, Suite 510 • Washington, DC 20036
T (202) 835-1001 • F (202) 835-1112 • E info@nalp.org
www.nalp.org

Updates for the Class of 2026

Below is a summary of the changes that were implemented for the Class of 2026. More detailed information on these updates is included in the *What's New for the Class of 2026* document and in the *Changes for the Class of 2026* video.

- Due to a recent presidential executive order eliminating the program, *the Presidential Management Fellow (PMF)* response option under **Type of Government Job** has been removed.
- A *Prefer not to respond* option was added for the **LGBTQ+ Status** item.
- Under the **Law School Funded** item, graduates are instructed to consult with their career office if they are unsure if their position is funded by the law school.

Updates for the Class of 2027

Below is a summary of the changes that will be implemented beginning with next year's data collection for the Class of 2027. More information about these updates is included in *the Changes for the Class of 2027* video.

- For **unemployed** graduates, the question related to whether they are volunteering has been removed.
- Under **Source of Job**, the *Responded to a career office job posting* category now explicitly includes resume collects.
- Under **Private Practice** employment, the question related to whether the job is part of an incubator program or is a law firm established by the law school has been removed.

NALP and the Council

In a few instances, NALP and Council definitions will continue to diverge. We try to keep these variances to a minimum, but in some cases the differences are unavoidable. Most notably, NALP does not require reporting of information as to the terms of the job — that is, whether it is full-time or part-time and whether it is long-term or short-term for graduates where that information is not known. In cases where this information is truly unknown for a graduate, it can be left blank for NALP reporting purposes. For Council purposes, the lesser value is reported in these circumstances (i.e., part-time and/or short-term).

Secondly, during NALP's review process many law schools will receive a follow-up email with questions about their submission that may result in changes to a graduate record(s). It is a law school's responsibility to reach out to the Council about any changes that also impact their Council reporting. Likewise, any changes identified during the Council's Random Graduate Review, and before NALP's national dataset closes in mid-June, should be communicated to NALP.

General Instructions and Guidelines for the Class of 2026

The Class of 2026 will be the ***53rd*** consecutive law school graduating class documented by NALP's annual employment survey. Throughout this time, law school participation in the ERSS has allowed NALP to provide comprehensive, reliable, and authoritative information on the employment of new law school graduates. We are committed to continuing to provide this vital information and we understand that **you play the most important role in this process**. NALP's extraordinary track record to date has only been possible because of your efforts to track down your graduates and your willingness to provide information — on a confidential basis — to NALP. **Your participation is essential to ensure that the ERSS remains the premier source of information** on the employment experiences of new law school graduates.

Survey results will be published in *Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates — Class of 2026*, in the *NALP Bulletin+*, and on the NALP website. Law schools, legal employers, lawyers, the media, pre-law advisors, and prospective students all utilize this resulting research. Your law school's information will also be available in your school report, which all participating NALP member schools automatically receive. Remember that your information is confidential. No information that identifies schools or individuals is published or released by NALP. To ensure the highest possible quality data:

- *Read the instruction booklet and the separate enclosure, Guidelines for Surveying Your Graduates*, regardless of the format you use to submit your data. The instructional booklet provides important definitions, guidelines, and answers to common questions.

- *Submit a record for each graduate*, even if you have no information beyond demographics. This is vital to determining survey quality and coverage. The only exception is a graduate who is deceased, in which case no record is required.

- *Report employment status as of March 15, 2027*, using the most current information you have. For some graduates, this status will be different than at graduation. A December (or 6-month) survey is highly recommended, preferably for all graduates, but at a minimum for graduates for whom

you have no information, for graduates who were not employed at the time of an earlier survey, and for those known to be in a temporary situation or position and/or seeking a different position than the one held at the time of an earlier survey.

Of course, you may continue to update your internal reports after submitting data to NALP. However, any updates reflecting employment status changes after the March 15 reporting date will result in those reports no longer matching the data submitted to NALP.

- *Review all of the information provided by your graduates and follow up if you have questions*. Your critical review and professional judgment contribute to survey integrity. Also review the final individual records for each graduate for completeness and accuracy before your submission to NALP.

- *Refer to the enclosed data submission information sheet for instructions on how to submit your data.* Return the data submission information sheet regardless of the method used to submit your data. This sheet not only provides NALP with a contact person should we have questions regarding your data, but also helps document survey response and coverage.

- *If you become aware of any changes to a graduate's record after April 9 (for information that was still current as of March 15), contact NALP as soon as possible* and we will do our best to accommodate any changes through **Friday, June 11, 2027**. In order to publish the national results and provide your school-specific report in a timely manner, we are unable to accept any changes after this date.

If you have questions about how to create the file for NALP from your system vendor, contact your vendor for assistance. If your school does not use a vendor product such as Symplicity or 12twenty for your employment reporting, see the *ASCII Specifications* document for additional information on how to create your Class of 2026 file. NALP can also provide a reporting template upon request.

Please help NALP provide timely, comprehensive reporting by submitting your data by April 9. NALP cannot guarantee that submissions received after the reporting deadline will be incorporated into our national dataset.

If you have any questions about the survey, contact research@nalp.org.

The deadline to submit your data to NALP is Friday, April 9, 2027