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NALP Employment Report and Salary Survey Data Collection Overview

Introduction

Introduction and Overview of Video Topics

- We share a **collective professional responsibility** to collect and report law school employment outcomes.
- Longstanding collaborative venture between schools/students & schools/NALP – more than **50 years**!

Our video series will cover:

- Survey changes for the next two reporting class years
- Navigating the Council* Protocols & differences between NALP and Council datasets
- Tips for a clean data submission
- Preparing to submit
- Additional resources

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**Council refers to the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the ABA*

Survey Changes for the Class of 2026

Overview of Major Updates for the Class of 2026

- 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 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.

Council* Protocols, Differences Between NALP & the Council

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Questions? Contact research@nalp.org

Council Employment Reporting

- Participation is **compulsory** in order to provide public consumer information.
- Governed by **Employment Protocols** for each class year.
- All schools subject to random graduate review for records validation and documentation review.

  www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/employment-questionnaire-resources/
- NALP **cannot speak for the Council** or say whether something will pass muster in an audit.
- Contact Daniel Becker (Daniel.becker@americanbar.org) with questions regarding Council reporting and documentation.

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Council Data Points

Key Items:

- Employment Status
- Full-time or Part-time
- Long-term or Short-term
- Employment Type
- Employment Start Date
- Employer Name & Contact Information
- Law School Funded Positions

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NALP Employment Report and Salary Survey (ERSS)

- Also serves as important source of **public consumer information**, but primary purpose is **research/public good.**
  - NALP provides long-standing research and in-depth analyses of employment outcomes and salaries, including how they vary by graduate demographics.
- School participation is **voluntary, but nearly universal.**
- Schools receive extensive and detailed report & data analysis in exchange for participation.
  - At school's discretion whether to share any or all of that report publicly.
- Data submitted is reviewed for internal consistency, but **not subject to audit.**

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NALP Data Points

Demographic Information:

- Gender & LGBTQ+ Status
- Race/Ethnicity
- Age
- Disability Status
- Veteran Status
- Transfer Student
- Program Type
- Parental/Guardian Education

Job Information:

- **Employment Status, Type of Job, and Full-time/Part-time Job Status**
- Timing of Job Offer
- **Job Start Date**
- Source of Job
- Search Status of Employed Graduates
- **Job Duration for Employed Graduates**
- **Law School Funding**
- Additional Job Detail – Law Firm, Business, Government, Public Interest, and Education Employment
- **Geographic Location***
- Salaries and Stipends

Note: Blue/bolded items are also collected by the Council.
* Indicates that there are slight differences in the information collected.

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Differences Between NALP and the Council

- The Council submission deadline is typically **7-10 days** earlier than the NALP deadline. Check each organization's website for this year's dates.
  - *Can be longer gap depending on AEC dates. Of course, you can submit early!*

An individual school's NALP and Council datasets are unlikely to match exactly because:

- The Council requires a data value for **short-term/long-term** & **full-time/part-time** for every job, but NALP does not. If the value is truly unknown NALP allows you to leave these fields blank.

Differences Between NALP and the Council

- NALP undertakes a Quality Control process to check and **verify individual school/graduate data** and the Council does not (they do conduct a high-level look at the national data prior to publication).
  - Most schools will receive a follow up email from NALP after we review your file. This is normal and will often result in some changes to your file. It is unusual to hear from the Council until after your school's Random Graduate Review.
  - Schools should notify the Council about any NALP-identified changes that also impact your Council reporting. Likewise, notify NALP of any changes identified in your Council review (if prior to our **mid-June** data freeze date each year).

Note: NALP and the Council's definitions of **Law School Funded** positions are now in alignment. Prior to the Class of 2025, the organizations maintained different definitions.

Meeting Your Professional Responsibility

How to balance student-reported info against more accurate information?

- Use the information the graduate provided **unless it is wrong or directly at odds with Council or NALP definitions**.
- Exercise your professional judgment! Review the ERSS instructions and Protocols.
  - Council Protocols have created some safe harbors (presumption lists).
- Document any changes you make, and the reasons for making the change.
- When in doubt, use the lesser value that is supported by the facts at hand.
- Email NALP's research team and/or the Council with questions not covered in the ERSS instructional materials and Employment Protocols.

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Meeting Your Professional Responsibility

How to manage reporting graduate outcomes when the NALP and Council definitions/reporting requirements differ for some of your graduates?

- Keep an archive copy of each exported reporting file.
- Make the necessary changes in the graduate record to comply with the definitions/reporting requirements provided by Council and NALP.
- If you use Symplicity—don't try to edit the XML file!

How much surveying is enough?

- A reasonable amount! We recommend at least one pre-graduation survey and one post-graduation survey.
- Use the last known information.

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – The Basics

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- One record for every graduate, even if employment status is not known.
- Submit the **10-month survey** from Symplicity or 12twenty, not the at-graduation survey.
- Double check that all graduates belong to the **appropriate graduating class.**
- Collect and report the NALP-specific employment questions from grads.
  - Without your participation, we cannot provide vital national research on employment outcomes! **This includes demographic information.**
- Always refer to the instructional materials provided by NALP.
  - These materials are available now on the NALP website at www.nalp.org/erssinfo

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – The Basics

- Unemployed-Seeking should be used if a graduate is not employed because they are studying for the bar exam.
- Employer Type Unknown should **rarely be used.** Schools should look up and classify the employer type appropriately and/or consult the Council and NALP for guidance.
- Graduates working **entirely remotely** should be reported with the employment location for the employer's office the graduate would otherwise report to or the main office of the employer.
- Program type, that is whether a graduate earned their degree in a part-time or full-time program, should be reported for every grad.
- Transfer status should also be reported for every grad.

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – The Basics

Job type and **Employer type** are the two most important pieces of information and should be completed for every graduate for whom that data is known, and the two should not be at odds with one another (e.g., local government prosecutor paired with JD Advantage).

Job Type:
Bar Admission Required/Anticipated
JD Advantage
Other Professional
Other Position

Employer Type:
Private Practice
Business
Government
Judicial Clerkships
Public Interest
Education

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission - New Information

Pay close attention to any information received from graduates in between the Council and NALP reporting deadline

- If a graduate reports new information to you in between the reporting dates (such as a new job), make sure that the job started **on or prior to the employment status date** if reporting the graduate as employed. Otherwise report the prior employment status (e.g., unemployed-seeking) or employed-start date after March 15*, if applicable.
- If the start date for the new job is after the employment status date, employed-start date after March 15* is only applicable if the graduate **accepted the offer on or prior to the employment status date.**
- Notify the Council about changes that impact your Council reporting.

**The employment status date is March 15 unless this date falls on a weekend. In this case, the employment status date will be the following Monday (e.g., March 16 or March 17) and the employed-start date after category will reference these dates instead of March 15.*

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission - Salaries

- Hourly wages can and should be annualized to calculate salaries for graduates working full-time in long-term jobs, but don't calculate full-time equivalent salaries for part-time jobs.
- Stipends, if any, should be reported primarily for **short-term or part-time law school-funded jobs and for fellowships**.
  - Most full-time, long-term funded jobs should be reported with salaries.
  - A part-time hourly wage is not a stipend.
- Do not report salaries paid in currencies other than U.S. dollars. Do not convert salaries paid in other than U.S. dollars.
- Report the salary the graduate was making as of the employment status date, which may not be the salary they were originally offered.
- It is not necessary to report salary data for part-time jobs or for jobs lasting less than one year.

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Specific Employer & Job Types

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Types of Jobs

- All judicial clerkships should be reported as **bar admission required/anticipated** jobs even if the graduate reports it differently.
- Most entry-level attorney jobs with a law firm should be reported as **associate jobs/entry-level attorney positions.**
- The **prosecutor**, **public defender**, **JAG Corps** and **in-house lawyer** categories are for those jobs specifically, and not for graduates who may be working in the office but in another capacity, e.g., as a law clerk or paralegal.
  - If a graduate reports one of the job types above and the job is not also reported as bar admission required, they may have been hired for a different role within the office. Follow up with graduates as necessary to make sure you have the correct job details!

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Staff Attorneys

- **The staff attorney** category describes jobs where the firm hires both partnership-track and non-partnership-track attorneys. A staff attorney position is a non-partnership-track position regardless of the actual title used. It can also include instances where the firm hires attorneys on a project or fixed-duration basis.
- The staff attorney category is often **overused by schools in the small firm setting**.
  - Most entry-level positions in small firms should be reported as entry-level attorney/associate positions unless the facts support the staff attorney designation.

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Solo Practitioners

Solo Practitioners:

- Solos should be reported as associates/entry-level attorneys even though they are likely doing some admin work.
  - The same is true for two grads starting their own practice together, unless one of them is doing strictly admin work.
- Timing of the job offer for a solo **must** be after bar admission.
- It is not necessary to report salary information for a solo practitioner.

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Law Clerks

What about law clerks at law firms and with government agencies? Are they best classified as Bar Admission Required/Anticipated or JD Advantage?

- They are presumed to be JD Advantage jobs unless the graduate is hired with the specific expectation of automatically becoming an attorney with bar admission (as with firms in New York).
- They are presumed to remain JD Advantage even with bar admission unless there is a title change prior to/on the employment status date.
- Cannot assume bar admission converts job to Bar Admission Required/Anticipated.
- Again, a case-by-case fact-specific determination is required.

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Firm Size

Firm Size:

- Law firm **office size should not exceed law firm size** (this seems obvious, but we get conflicting data here every year). For NALP purposes only law firm size matters. If your vendor system collects both, make sure these fields are reported accurately and figures are not switched. *This is more common for Symplicity submissions.*
- Law firm size should not be reported for non-law firm jobs. *This is more common for 12twenty submissions.*

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Public Interest

Public Interest Jobs:

- A graduate cannot start a public defender office.
  - A graduate who is a solo practitioner (Law Firm employer) may take public defender work on a contract basis.
- Lo Bono firms are generally categorized as a public interest law firm (Law Firm).
- All public defenders should be classified under Public Interest (not Government).

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Government/Clerkships

Some government and clerkship jobs are categorized incorrectly

- Jobs with non-U.S. courts or governments or with the UN or NATO are international. This includes jobs in **Canada**.
- County governments are local governments.
- Government jobs in DC or U.S. territories like Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands should be reported as state level jobs (unless they are federal government jobs).
- Judicial clerkships with federal courts in DC or U.S. territories should be reported as federal jobs and jobs with other lower courts as state level jobs.
- Be on the lookout for judicial clerkships that may have been miscategorized as other Government jobs or Public Interest employment.

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – Employer Type

- The **Education** employer type includes a variety of job roles and functions. These include, but are not limited to, job roles such as faculty/teachers, research assistants, librarians, general counsel, and development officers. It also includes professional/administrative staff positions in career services, admissions, student services, HR, IT, and other departments. Check the ERSS instructional booklet for more info on reporting grads working at university hospitals - they should be reported as **Government** or **Business**.
- Jobs with political campaigns are not Government jobs, they are jobs in **Business**.
- Clerks hired by courts who perform largely administrative functions, like the temporary assistant clerks in CT, are not Judicial Clerks. They are **Government-Judicial, Other**.
- For legal temp agency jobs, the employer is **Business & Industry** even if the placement is with a law firm.

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Vendor Specific Tips

Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission – 12twenty

12twenty Tips:

- Make sure to complete all of the relevant employer type information. The **Employment Type**, **Type of Job**, and **Detailed Employment Type** fields in 12twenty should be completed (as applicable). If not, your NALP Employer Type code will not fully populate and NALP staff will need to follow up with you.
- Judicial Clerkships are **reported separately** from other jobs in 12twenty. Make sure you use the correct reporting option and look for grads who may have misreported.
- Make certain your demographic questions are enabled (e.g., parental education items, LGBTQ+ status).
  - Consider using the "**Survey on Log-in**" for Attributes feature to prompt students/grads to answer a particular question the next time they log-in.

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Tips for a Clean NALP Data Submission - Symplicity

Symplicity Tips:

- You **must assign a survey year** when you create a survey (e.g., 2026). If you do not, or you assign an old survey year, you may see outdated response options and/or questions.
- Enter a **complete employer address**. Without complete address information, the NALP ERSS city code may not populate correctly. Also, make sure the city name is spelled accurately (e.g., Philadelphia not Philly).
- If updating or verifying your **race/ethnicity picklist**, refer to the instructions provided by your Symplicity rep. This is vital to ensuring that your race/ethnicity options and related codes populate in the file correctly and in a usable format.
- Be on the lookout for graduates working as **public defenders** who may have misreported their job under Government-Other. All PDs should be reported under Public Interest.

Preparing to Submit/Post-Submission

Ready to Submit?

- Not a 12twenty/Symplicity user? Use the instructions on the NALP website or request an Excel template to enter your data.
- If using a vendor system, download your file in the correct file format.
  - Make sure to select your **NALP** report and **10-month** data!
  - Symplicity users – download the **XML** file, not an Excel file.
  - 12twenty users submit an **Excel** file.
- Complete the **Data Submission sheet** from the NALP website and email it with your file to research@nalp.org.
- Submit your NALP data by the deadline posted on the NALP website.

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Posting Employment Data

- The NALP school reports that you receive with your school's aggregate data are confidential. These are typically distributed to law schools in August.
- NALP ***never*** posts, publishes, or releases any school-specific employment data.*
- NALP does not require any school to post its NALP school report.
- The Council requires that schools post their Council employment summary report.
- Other entities may encourage schools to post their NALP school summary report, but this is ***always*** discretionary.

*Except as required by law or subpoena from a court of law.

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Survey Changes for the Class of 2027

Overview of Major Updates for the Class of 2027

- **Volunteer status** is no longer collected for graduates who are not employed.
- Under the **Law Firm** employment, the survey no longer collects whether the job is part of an incubator program or is at a firm established by the law school.
- Under **Source of Job**, the **Responded to a career office job posting** item is now labeled **Responded to a career office job posting (includes resume collects)**

Additional Resources

Additional Resources

NALP ERSS Instructional Materials: www.nalp.org/erssinfo

Council Employment Protocols:
www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/employment-questionnaire-resources/

12twenty Resource Hub: 12twenty.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/4413562315539-12twenty-ABA-NALP-Resource-Hub

Symplicity Help Center: https://support.symplicity.com/hc/en-us/articles/360003268733-Graduate-Employment-Survey-
(Symplicity clients must be logged into the Help Center to access this link. Reach out to the Symplicity Help Desk if you need assistance accessing this resource.)

Also check with your vendor systems about any additional employment reporting resources and/or webinars!

The Fruits of our Collective Labor

50th EDITION

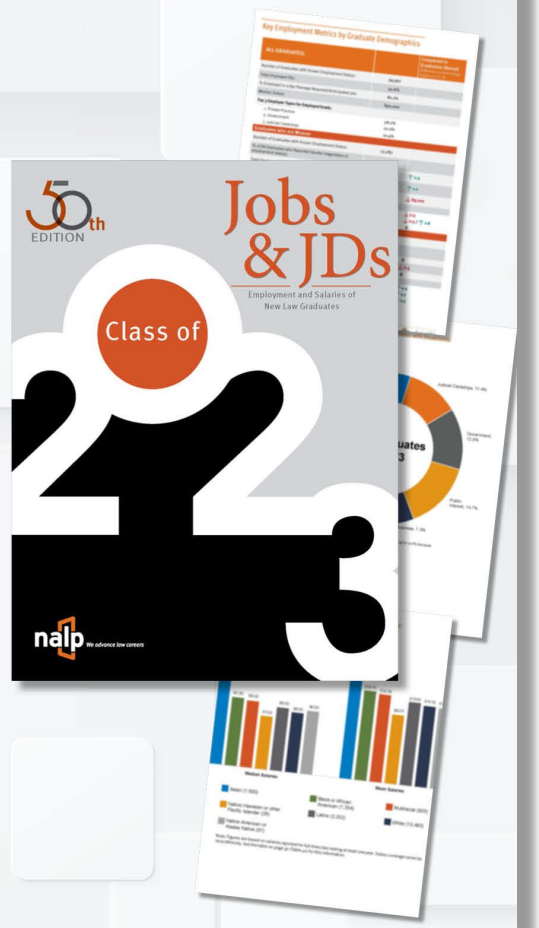
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Questions?

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