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Robust Employment Outcomes for 2025 Law Graduates Mask Persistent Gaps by Race and Parental Education

Washington, DC — The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) today released *Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates — Class of 2025*, revealing that while the Class of 2025 experienced one of the strongest legal employment markets on record, significant disparities in employment outcomes remain by race/ethnicity and first-generation college student status. Drawing on data from 97% of graduates from law schools accredited by the Council of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, NALP's hallmark annual report provides the most comprehensive national picture of employment and salary outcomes for recent law graduates. Employment outcomes were measured as of March 16, 2026, roughly ten months post-graduation.

“A law degree should open doors,” said NALP’s Executive Director, Nikia Gray, “but NALP’s latest report shows that those doors are not equally open to everyone. Graduates of color remain significantly less likely than White graduates to secure employment — and the gap is wider for jobs as practicing attorneys. These persistent disparities demand continued attention from everyone in the legal profession to ensure that all graduates have a fair opportunity to enter and succeed in the legal profession.”

Notably, this is the first year NALP has reported employment outcomes separately for Middle Eastern and North African graduates, reflecting updates to federal race and ethnicity standards issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in 2024. As a result, these findings establish an important baseline for understanding employment outcomes for this graduate population.

Differences Persist Across Employment Sectors

NALP's analysis found that employment patterns varied considerably across demographic groups.

Among employed graduates, Middle Eastern and North African graduates had the highest rate of private practice employment (71.5%). Asian graduates, however, had the highest rate of employment in law firms with more than 500 lawyers, helping explain why they also reported the highest median salaries among racial and ethnic groups. Black or African American graduates were more likely than their peers to work in public interest organizations (12.8%) and business positions (10.1%). Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander graduates had the highest concentration of

government employment (26.9%), while Native American and Alaska Native graduates reported the highest level of judicial clerkship employment (11.9%).

The report also found that graduates with at least one parent holding a JD degree were more likely than first-generation college graduates to work in private practice (66.9% versus 59.3%) and judicial clerkships (11.4% versus 8.3%). Even when first-generation graduates secured positions in private practice or judicial clerkships, they were less likely than their continuing-generation peers to work in large law firms and federal clerkships.

Where Graduates Work Influences What They Earn

Differences in employment sectors were reflected in salary outcomes. The median salary for first-generation college graduates was \$95,000, compared with \$100,000 for continuing-generation college graduates and \$115,000 for continuing-generation JD graduates.

Among racial and ethnic groups, median salaries ranged from \$85,000 for Native American and Alaska Native graduates to \$150,000 for Asian graduates. These differences are closely associated with variations in employment sector destinations, particularly the concentration of graduates within private practice and large law firms.

Key Findings

Among the findings highlighted in the Class of 2025 report:

- White graduates reported an employment rate of 94.4%, compared to 90.8% for graduates of color overall. When further disaggregated by race/ethnicity, employment was lowest among Black or African American graduates (87.0%) and highest among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander graduates (96.3%).
- The employment gap widens when examining attorney positions specifically. While 87.1% of White graduates secured bar admission required/anticipated jobs, the rate was 81.6% for graduates of color overall. Black graduates reported the lowest rate of employment in bar admission required/anticipated positions (72.6%) by race/ethnicity, while Middle Eastern and North African graduates reported the highest rate (87.4%).
- Black, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander graduates were among the racial groups least likely to be employed in private practice, continuing a longstanding pattern of underrepresentation in law firm employment. Middle Eastern and North African graduates reported the highest rate of private practice employment, while Asian graduates, who have historically led racial and ethnic groups in law firm employment, reported the second-highest rate. As this is the first year that outcomes have been reported separately for Middle Eastern and North African graduates, it is too soon to determine whether this represents a longer-term trend.
- Among employed graduates, Middle Eastern or North African (5.8%) and Hispanic or Latino/a/x (7.8%) graduates had the lowest levels of clerkship employment, while Native American or Alaska Native (11.9%) and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander graduates (11.5%) had the highest.
- First-generation college students were less likely to secure attorney positions than continuing-generation college and JD students. The bar admission employment rate was 82.1% for first-generation graduates compared to 89.5% for graduates with at least one parent holding a JD degree.

- Graduates identifying as having a disability reported lower employment outcomes than the class overall, including an 88.9% employment rate and a 78.0% bar admission required employment rate.
- LGBTQ+ graduates had a higher overall employment rate (94.8%) and bar admission required employment rate (86.8%) compared to the class overall. They were also substantially more likely to work in public interest organizations (19.4% compared to 9.0% for the class as a whole).
- Military veterans were less likely to be employed than graduates overall and were significantly less likely to secure bar admission required/anticipated positions. Veterans reported an employment rate of 90.9% and a bar admission required/anticipated employment rate of 78.3%. Among employed veterans, 25.5% worked in government, more than double the rate for the Class of 2025 (12.0%).

Employment Status by Race/Ethnicity and Level of Parental Education for the Class of 2025		
All Graduates	92.8%	84.6%
By Race/Ethnicity	Employment Rate	% Employed in a Bar Admission Required/Anticipated Job
Asian	91.9%	84.3%
Black or African American	87.0%	72.6%
Hispanic or Latina/o/x	91.2%	82.7%
Middle Eastern or North African	91.7%	87.4%
Multiracial	92.4%	85.0%
Native American or Alaska Native	94.4%	81.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	96.3%	85.2%
White	94.4%	87.1%
By Level of Parental Education	Employment Rate	% Employed in a Bar Admission Required/Anticipated Job
First-generation college students	92.3%	82.1%
Continuing-generation college students	94.1%	87.2%
Continuing-generation JD students	95.1%	89.5%

How to Order Your Copy

This year's *Jobs & JDs* report includes over 120 detailed tables and charts with employment and salary data by geography, graduate demographics, and law school characteristics. *Jobs & JDs: Employment and Salaries of New Law Graduates — Class of 2025* is available in NALP's [bookstore](#). For more information on the overall employment outcomes for Class of 2025 law graduates, see NALP's August 5, 2026, media release at www.nalp.org/current. To request an interview, contact media@nalp.org.

About NALP

NALP is an association of more than 3,000 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. NALP believes in fairness, facts, and the power of a diverse community. We work every day to be the best career services, recruitment, and professional development organization in the world because we want the lawyers and law students, we serve to have an ethical recruiting system, employment data they can trust, and expert advisers to guide and support them in every stage of their careers. Visit NALP at www.nalp.org, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.