



MPF FEATURED RESOURCE

**2018 SALARY GUIDE
FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS**

by

Special Counsel

January 25, 2019



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2018 | Salary Guide |
for Legal Professionals



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The pulse of the current economy is stronger than in previous years — and we're seeing a unique effect in the legal field. Associate salaries are regularly increasing, making the market competitive year-over-year for top talent. We are consistently seeing firms offer new incentives and increased base pay to match their competitors. This changing landscape has meant that retention is also a consistent concern. To combat an ongoing need for talent, many firms are augmenting their teams by engaging in selective outsourcing.

The result? Finding the right candidates and consultants to strengthen your legal support staff is more challenging than ever.

That's where we come in.

To hire the best talent — and to retain your current staff attorneys and support team — you need to offer fulfilling opportunities that include work-life balance, community involvement, recognition, and, most importantly, proper compensation.

Fortunately, our 2018 Salary Guide provides you exactly what you need to offer the right salaries to employ the right legal professionals. Up-to-date salary data combined with detailed job descriptions arm you with the information you need to attract, hire and retain the perfect team.

We're confident our Salary Guide — and our partnership — will help you and your legal team succeed now, and far into the future.

– Laurie Chamberlin, President

Contents	
Industry insights for 2018	2
About the salaries in this guide	3
Attorney	4
Non-Attorney	4
Legal Technology	5
Job descriptions	6

Industry insights for 2018

A decade of fundamental change.

The global economic downturn brought an end to a long period of uninterrupted growth in demand, revenues and profits for law firms. Corporate clients are under intense pressure to reduce the overall costs of legal services and are taking a closer look at the work being handled by their outside firm.

This shift in client attitude and economic climate have created fundamental changes in the legal market, with law firms needing to adapt to new demands and client expectations. The 2017 Report on the State of the Legal Market from Thomson Reuters highlights some of these trends and what firms should keep a close watch on.

Clients looking for cost-effective solutions.

Over the last ten years, clients have been more willing to parcel out different legal services to find the most cost-effective solution. This could mean moving certain functions in-house, outsourcing tasks like document review, or moving other responsibilities to smaller firms.

This shift requires law firms to ‘sell’ their value and get clients to view them as a trusted partner instead of just an ‘ad hoc’ transactional relationship.

Pressure on law school performance is mounting.

Law schools are closing. The average score on the multistate bar exam in February 2017 dropped again, reaching the lowest level since the exam was first administered in 1972. While the ABA rejected the proposal that would tie law school accreditation to a 75% bar passage rate within two years of graduation, the pressure to monitor legal education continues to mount.

However, a revision has been approved that would require law schools to “adopt, publish and adhere” to stricter admissions policies, only admitting students who appear capable of finishing law school and passing the bar.

These changes and regulations could significantly impact the supply of qualified lawyers, making this an important trend to watch in 2018 and beyond.

Technology is here to stay.

Recent amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure make electronically stored information such as emails, voicemails, instant messages, etc. on handheld devices discoverable in litigation. The discovery of electronically stored information (ESI) is known as electronic discovery (e-discovery). This \$2B+ industry is poised to grow 16% over the next 5 years, and the explosive growth of ESI has created new roles in litigation support, e-discovery and trial technology.

As technology continues to advance, lawyers will need to keep a pulse on the latest trends, and how their organizations can implement these time and cost-saving measures.

About the salaries in this guide

The figures in this 2018 Salary Guide are based on survey results collected first-hand by Special Counsel. Law firm employees nationwide provided insight into their current base salary and total compensation figures.

The national averages in this guide are based on over 5,000 respondents in various law firm positions from 38 major cities across the country. Responses were an even distribution between small, medium and large firms.

To further validate the data, each office in the Special Counsel branch network thoroughly reviewed the data to ensure local accuracy.

This comprehensive approach results in more regionally accurate data than the public data that is found in other salary guides. Salaries may be affected by many factors, including the firm size, benefits offered, location, educational requirements and local supply/demand trends.



The accurate, up-to-date data in our guide is broken into the following categories:

Average salary by firm size

Small

Based on law firms with 50 or fewer attorneys. This figure represents the national average.

Medium

Based on law firms with 51-250 attorneys. This figure represents the national average.

Large

Based on law firms with more than 251 attorneys. This figure represents the national average.

Base salary

Based on all firm sizes. This figure represents the national average.

Total cash compensation

Based on all firm sizes. Includes annual cash incentives. This figure represents the national average.

Salaries for 2018

Attorney

	Average salary by firm size			Average base salary	Average total compensation
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE		
Junior Associate	107,049	123,588	168,643	141,355	150,721
Mid-Level Associate	107,240	138,703	188,488	153,473	170,911
Senior Associate	126,761	153,793	219,208	178,537	199,427
Staff Attorney	72,702	95,001	114,260	101,167	107,113
Counsel	154,560	172,967	232,344	199,193	216,963
Nonequity Partner	160,517	201,774	283,660	226,668	266,641
Equity Partner	218,464	395,821	721,176	461,696	585,407

Non-Attorney

	Average salary by firm size			Average base salary	Average total compensation
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE		
Attorney Recruiting Manager	93,003	107,443	110,854	108,943	113,073
Case Assistant	37,241	45,045	54,338	45,676	52,605
Conflicts Analyst	N/A	58,072	72,192	71,230	77,477
Conflicts Manager	53,086	88,070	103,211	92,299	97,009
Docketing Clerk	40,215	46,078	55,025	47,021	47,912
Executive Director/COO	141,946	162,582	168,094	144,753	167,075
Human Resources Manager	81,901	95,038	96,793	91,750	97,948
IP Docket Specialist	N/A	40,087	78,807	69,102	70,733
Legal Assistant/Secretary – Junior	39,802	46,360	50,799	43,822	44,930
Legal Assistant/Secretary – Senior	54,442	60,652	76,099	62,351	66,419
Librarian/Competitive Intelligence	N/A	80,543	87,920	85,042	91,569
Office Administrator	85,292	100,260	120,830	94,029	101,676

	Average salary by firm size			Average base salary	Average total compensation
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE		
Paralegal – Junior	41,528	46,524	56,266	44,814	46,552
Paralegal – Mid-Level	47,968	49,158	65,668	50,786	53,992
Paralegal – Senior	58,667	69,260	83,832	68,852	71,284
Paralegal Manager	68,996	73,269	94,709	71,057	79,029
Patent Agent	102,296	121,248	127,662	119,724	129,458
Receptionist	31,959	36,043	40,392	33,595	35,002
Records Clerk	34,894	39,303	44,525	39,083	41,165
Records Manager	N/A	70,090	102,883	99,838	106,416

Legal Technology

	Average salary by firm size			Average base salary	Average total compensation
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE		
IT Manager	85,514	98,047	111,657	107,089	111,947
IT Director	134,071	145,034	158,003	152,551	163,861
Help Desk/Desktop Support Specialist	68,063	72,036	76,346	74,873	78,172
Legal Application/Software Support Specialist	60,097	71,984	85,062	71,230	79,436
Litigation Support Specialist	59,404	65,487	77,437	66,101	68,306
Litigation Support Manager	90,156	117,089	150,481	122,803	141,637
Network Engineer	75,031	87,605	93,742	93,750	104,342
Trainer/eLearning Specialist	70,076	79,536	109,340	85,504	90,657

Job descriptions

Attorney

Junior Associate

Assists with preparation for closings, hearings, trials and corporate meetings. Juris doctor, state bar admission and 1-3 years of law firm experience required.

Mid-Level Associate

Assists with preparation for hearings and trials, and personal practice planning of the law firm. Juris doctor, state bar admission and 3-5 years of law firm experience required.

Senior Associate

Provides senior level expertise, as well as coaching and mentoring of junior associates. Assists with personal practice planning and risk management of the law firm. Juris doctor, state bar admission and at least 6 years of law firm experience required.

Staff Attorney

Provides legal services to clients and supervising attorneys. Provides factual and legal research and analysis. Juris doctor, state bar admission and 3 years of prior associate-level experience in a particular area of expertise required.

Counsel

Practices law on behalf of the firm. Assists with the preparation and management of a specific case. Is not a partner or associate. Juris doctor, state bar admission and a minimum of 5 years of experience required.

Nonequity Partner

Senior-level lawyers that do not have ownership interests in the firm and are paid a salary. May have limited voting rights in firm matters. Often an intermediary step toward full equity partner. Juris doctor, state bar admission and extensive firm experience required.

Equity Partner

Senior-level lawyers that have ownership interests in the firm and share in the firm's profits and losses. Juris doctor, state bar admission and extensive firm experience required.

Non-Attorney

Attorney Recruiting Manager

Screens resumes, schedules and coordinates interviews. Includes developing, implementing and executing recruiting programs and strategies to fill open positions. Also creates onboarding program for new attorneys. Bachelor's degree and 3 years of experience required.

Case Assistant

Provides legal and administrative support to attorneys and paralegals. Includes filing with the court and assistance with research. Bachelor's degree and 3 years experience required.

Conflicts Analyst

Provides research service to determine client conflicts of interest. Facilitates resolution of conflicts of interest and business sensitivity issues related to new business and new hires. Bachelor's degree and at least 2 years of experience required.

Conflicts Manager

Provides subject matter guidance in connection with general firm-wide new business clearance and ethical conflicts-of-interest projects. Bachelor's degree and 5-7 years of experience required.

Docketing Clerk

Performs a variety of clerical and administrative tasks for various individuals in the court, judges or lawyers. Duties include preparing the schedule of cases for the court, calling and contacting witnesses and lawyers, preparing issue orders for the court, and examining and processing hearing applications. Previous experience in clerical work is preferred.

Executive Director/COO

Manages the day-to-day operations of the firm in the areas of accounting, personnel and technology. Responsibilities may include compensation, recruiting, hiring and staff development. Requires a bachelor's degree and extensive experience in business and operations with an emphasis on communications.

Human Resources Manager

Designs, plans and implements human resources programs and policies for staffing, compensation, benefits, visa/green card processing, employee relations, training and health and safety. Requires a bachelor's degree and 7 years of relevant experience. Typically reports to a department head.

IP Docket Specialist

Maintains and organizes all documents and mail related to a patent application. Responsible for noting and alerting attorneys of important information like due dates or fees. Keeps all documents organized, easily accessible and forwards between firms. May require a bachelor's degree, and a good understanding of patents is preferred.

Legal Assistant/Secretary – Junior

Prepares, formats and revises briefs, subpoenas and other correspondence. Organizes and manages calendars, billing, files and travel logistics. Performs other general secretarial duties, including drafting/formatting legal documents, research, fielding phone calls and other correspondence, tracking records and transcribing dictations. May require an associate degree or legal secretary certificate and 0-3 years of experience.

Legal Assistant/Secretary – Senior

Prepares, formats and revises briefs, subpoenas and other correspondence. Organizes and manages calendars, billing, files and travel logistics. Performs other general secretarial duties, including drafting/formatting legal documents, research, fielding phone calls and other correspondence, tracking records and transcribing dictations. May require an associate degree or legal secretary certificate and 4 years of experience.

Librarian/Competitive Intelligence

Manages library resources and performs research services. Responsible for selecting, purchasing, cataloging, circulating and maintaining library materials. Serves as a liaison between internal customers and external suppliers. May require a master's degree in library science or library and information science.

Office Administrator

Supervises the administrative and paralegal staff. Handles billing, accounts payable/receivables, vendors and HR. May require a bachelor's degree and at least 10 years of experience in the field or in a related area. Leads and directs the work of others.

Paralegal – Junior

Researches and analyzes statutes, case law, articles and treaties. Prepares legal documents such as pleadings, briefs, wills and contracts. Assists with depositions and trial preparation. Typically requires an associate degree or certificate in paralegal studies and at least 1 year of related experience.

Paralegal – Mid-Level

Researches and analyzes statutes, case law, articles and treaties. Prepares legal documents such as pleadings, briefs, wills and contracts. Assists with depositions and trial preparation. Typically requires an associate degree or certificate in paralegal studies and at least 3 years of related experience.

Paralegal – Senior

Researches and analyzes statutes, case law, articles and treaties. Prepares legal documents such as pleadings, briefs, wills and contracts. Assists with depositions and trial preparation. Typically requires an associate degree or certificate in paralegal studies and at least 6 years of related experience.

Paralegal Manager

Recruits, manages and trains paralegals, disseminating workload and overseeing the preparation of legal documents. May require a bachelor's degree and 8 years of experience in the field. Leads and directs the work of others.

Patent Agent

Assists with the patent application process, reviews technical documents, prepares substantive documents related to prosecution and supports prosecution strategy. Educates and advises the legal team on scientific data and technology, providing verbal and written analysis. May require an advanced degree in engineering or science and at least 3 years of related experience.

Receptionist

Responsible for scheduling client visits, maintaining and scheduling conference rooms, answering and routing incoming calls, filing documents and collecting mail. Formal office education or training, as well as previous experience in a law office, is preferred.

Records Clerk

Maintains records in accordance with records management practices. Aids in the creation of new files, prepares documents for off-site storage and responds to document requests as needed. Additional responsibilities include conducting inventory and processing boxes for storage. At least 1 year of experience required.

Records Manager

Trains and supervises staff in filing and records management. Responsible for documenting the life cycle of electronic and physical files and preserving archival material. Bachelor's degree and 5-7 years of experience required.

Legal Technology

IT Manager

Manages the IT department. Develops and executes plans that support the organization's IT needs. Ensures proper functioning of the information processing system and oversees necessary upgrades. Requires a bachelor's degree and at least 5 years of relevant experience.

IT Director

Plans and implements additions, deletions and major modifications in pursuit of IT and business goals. Assesses needs to determine strategies for meeting business objectives. Requires a bachelor's degree in a related area with at least 8 years of field experience.

Help Desk/Desktop Support Specialist

Provides technical support related to computer software, systems or hardware. Runs diagnostic utilities to identify problems and determines and implements solutions. Requires a high school diploma or equivalent, 1-2 years of experience in computer/network operations and excellent customer service skills.

Legal Application/Software Support Specialist

Analyzes and resolves incoming technical and operational software issues. Monitors resolution process and communicates status. Requires a high school diploma or higher, and 1-3 years of experience working in a software support or customer service role. May require familiarity with industry-specific applications.

Litigation Support Specialist

Provides technical support for the design, application and implementation of databases used for document reviews, production and eDiscovery projects. May require a bachelor's degree and at least 3-5 years of experience in the field.

Litigation Support Manager

Oversees the support provided to the organization's litigation efforts through the use of technology. Responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining litigation databases. Provides training to the end users on database use and document management. Confirms the accuracy of the documents and exhibits for trial. Requires a bachelor's degree and at least 5-7 years in the field.

Network Engineer

Oversees the installation, configuration and ongoing maintenance of networked information systems. Uses knowledge of LAN/WAN systems to help design and install internal and external networks. Tests and evaluates network systems to make improvements. Requires a bachelor's degree in area of specialty and 2-5 years of relevant experience.

Trainer/eLearning Specialist

Designs, develops and evaluates online training content. Conveys learning concepts to those being trained. Must possess strong technical knowledge to identify problems as they arise and recommend possible solutions based on their expertise with e-learning tools. A bachelor's degree in communication, information technology, education or a related field is typically required for this position.



For additional guidance on developing the most effective hiring and retention strategy, visit specialcounsel.com/salaryguide.



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