

MARKET TRENDS IN LEGAL RECRUITING

BY EVA WISNIK

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Legal recruiting is a full-time industry today, and the results of a recent survey bore this out. Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc., has surveyed the legal recruiting industry for the past 12 years in order to provide career information and market analysis to the legal recruiting community. Our most recent survey collected information from over 380 legal recruiting professionals from Chicago, Dallas, Houston, New York, and Washington, DC through the city groups in those areas. The survey results show how our industry has been impacted by the challenges law firms experienced in 2009.

Ninety-five percent of survey respondents work 40+ hours a week. Across all the cities surveyed, the average work week is 47 hours. The summer and fall are still the busiest times for legal recruiting, and respondents reported working an average of more than 50 hours a week during those peak seasons.

Results surrounding tenure at firms were one of our most positive findings. Across all cities surveyed, 29% of respondents have been with their current firm for four to five years. Even more positive is that about 55% of those with four to five years of tenure have received an internal promotion with a title change. This demonstrates that legal recruiters are not only staying at firms longer but that many are being offered career development opportunities.

I am also pleased to report that across the cities and job titles that we surveyed, salaries have generally increased. Salaries for directors, managers, coordinators, and assistants have increased 8%, 1%, 11% and 7%, respectively. Chicago saw the greatest increase in salaries last year. This is likely due to the fact that in

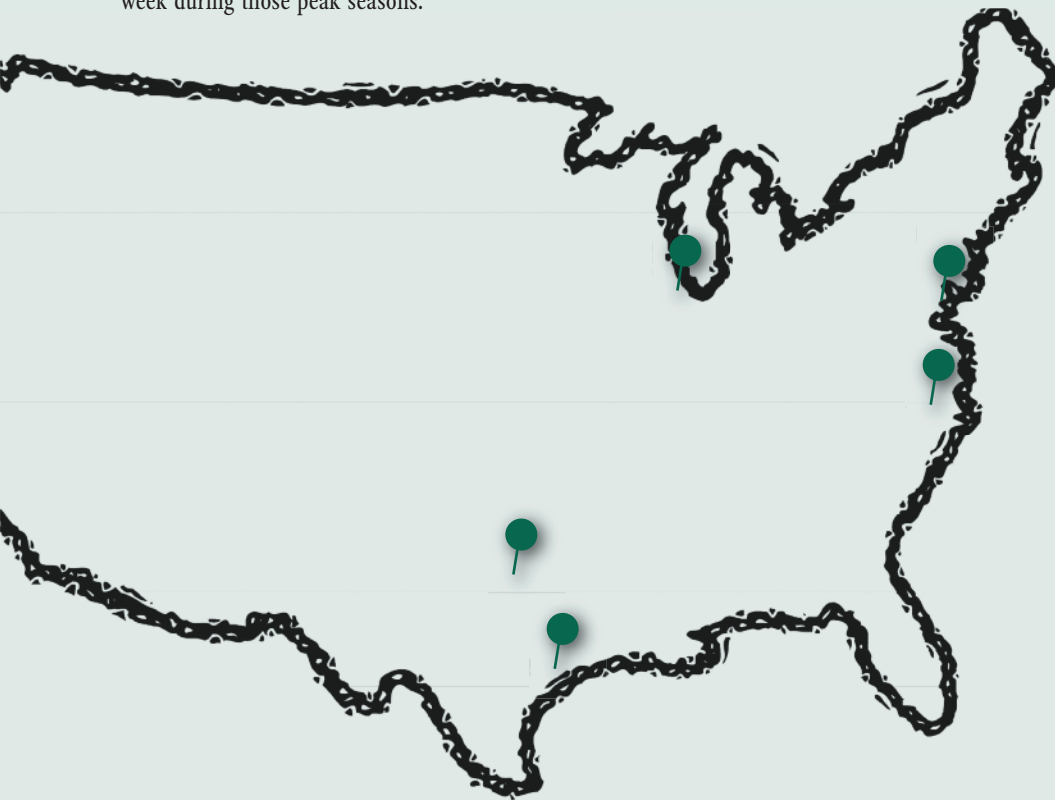
the past Chicago has had the lowest salaries when compared to the very similar New York and Washington, DC markets. In addition to an increase in salaries, we found that 74% of those surveyed had received bonuses. While salary increases and bonuses are promising signs for our industry, our results show that over half of respondents are dissatisfied with their current compensation.

The most significant change our market is experiencing is the decrease in summer associate hires, the effect of which is trickling down to various areas of the industry. According to our respondents, summer associate classes have shrunk by approximately 40%. Because summer associate classes are shrinking, recruiting departments are also shrinking. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said that in the past two years their department size decreased.

In addition to smaller departments, a 32% decrease in overtime was reported by those respondents eligible for overtime. With fewer summer associate hires, it is not surprising that the volume of recruiting work is down, requiring fewer overtime hours.

Another finding that may be consistent with shrinking summer associate classes is less investment by firms in the professional development of their recruiting professionals. For example, only 28% of respondents were able to attend the NALP Annual Education Conference in 2009; however, in the Washington Area Legal Recruiters Association city group, which is the only market where we surveyed career services members, 78% of those career services members were able to attend.

With worries about limited job opportunities, some have expressed concern that law firms are seeking JDs to fill the openings that do exist in the legal recruiting field. Our findings



show there is no need to fear that the positions in our industry are being filled solely by JDs. We analyzed our market data from the New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC markets and compared the number of JD respondents in 2008 and 2010. In our 2008 surveys, 14.6%

of respondents held JDs, while in our most recent surveys of the same markets, only 10.5% of respondents held JDs.

Although we only surveyed one market that included law school professionals, we found

some interesting differences between law school and law firm respondents. Those working in law school career services work slightly longer hours and are more dissatisfied with their current compensation than those working in law firms. However, 60% of career services respondents reported that their department sizes have increased. We suspect that because firms are hiring fewer new lawyers, law schools have hired more career services professionals to help their law students secure jobs in this difficult market.

Our survey results depict an industry that has clearly been impacted by the economy. While the number of positions available in the legal recruiting field has diminished for the foreseeable future, I believe that tenure, salary increases, and bonuses are indicative of how valued recruitment professionals are to their firms.

These and other survey results are available in detail on Wisnik Career Enterprises, Inc.'s website at www.wisnik.com.

Ed. note: NALP conducts a biennial Survey of Legal Career Professionals in Law Firms and Employer Organizations. The resulting report features information on salaries, bonuses, tenure, and responsibilities of NALP members with recruiting and professional development responsibilities. The 57-page report resulting from the 2010 Survey of Legal Career Professionals is available to members free of charge at www.nalp.org > Research & Statistics > Legal Career Professionals > Member Salary Surveys (log-in required) and can be purchased by non-members through the NALP online bookstore.

FINDINGS OF 2010 SURVEY OF LEGAL RECRUITING PROFESSIONALS IN CHICAGO, DALLAS, HOUSTON, NEW YORK CITY, AND WASHINGTON, DC

SALARIES			
Title	Average Salary	Median	Salary Range
Directors	\$143,485	\$144,000	\$66,000 - \$300,000
Managers	89,689	88,060	51,000 - 200,000
Coordinators	59,468	59,500	30,000 - 105,000
Assistants	43,033	45,000	30,000 - 60,000

AVERAGE SUMMER CLASS SIZES	
Average Summer Class Size for 2010	16
Average Summer Class Size for 2009	24

DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE BEING FAIRLY COMPENSATED FOR YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?	
Chicago	
Yes	49.2%
No	50.8%
New York City	
Yes	40.5%
No	59.5%
Texas (Dallas and Houston)	
Yes	47.6%
No	41.4%
No comment	9.5%
Washington, DC Law Firm Recruiting Professionals	
Yes	52.3%
No	47.7%
Washington, DC Law School Career Services Professionals	
Yes	40%
No	60%

Wisnik Career Enterprises surveyed members of CALPA (Chicago), RADS (Dallas), HALRA (Houston), NYCRA (New York City), and WALRA (Washington, DC). A total of 380 legal recruiting professionals from these five city groups responded to the survey. The Washington, DC group (WALRA) was the only group that included law school career services professionals. For additional survey results, see www.wisnik.com.