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# Young Lawyers

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## THE YOUNG LAWYERS COMPENSATION SURVEY

In the two years since the Young Lawyers Section conducted its last survey, little appears to have changed in terms of young lawyer compensation. The results of the 2013 Young Lawyers Compensation Survey showed that the median base salary of Nevada young lawyers in 2012, was \$80,001- \$85,000, down slightly from \$85,000 - \$90,000 in 2010. However, the median salaries for men and women did not change from 2010. As in 2010, female respondents reported a median base salary of \$80,001 - \$85,000 in 2012. Similarly, male respondents reported a median base salary of \$85,001 - \$90,000 in 2012, just as they had in 2010.<sup>1</sup>

The Young Lawyers Section (YLS) is comprised of attorneys who have been licensed for fewer than five years or are under the age of 36. Any respondents who did not fall within this definition were screened out. Of the 157 lawyers who responded to the survey, 72 percent worked in law firms, 15 percent in government, and 9 percent in judicial clerkships. Smaller percentages (2 percent of respondents or fewer) worked in public interest as in-house counsel, in corporate settings or in academia.

Firm size played a significant role in young lawyers' salaries. Those in firms with two-to-nine attorneys reported a median salary of \$80,000. Attorneys in firms with 10-19 attorneys reported a median salary of \$90,000. Those in firms of 20-29 attorneys reported a median salary of \$100,000, and young lawyers in firms of 30 or more attorneys reported a median salary of \$110,001 - \$115,000. Only a small number of solo practitioners, six in total, responded to the survey; of those, the median salary was \$82,500.<sup>2</sup>

Attorneys with a billable hour requirement reported a median minimum requirement of 1801-1900, which has

not changed since 2010. Forty-two percent of respondents reported no minimum billable requirement at all. Thirty-nine percent of respondents did not receive a bonus in 2012. Of those who did, the median bonus was \$5,000 - \$10,000.

Although salaries as a whole remained flat, the survey results did show growth in the careers of young lawyers over time. The median starting salary for respondents licensed less than one year was \$60,001 - \$65,000 in 2012, while the median salary for attorneys practicing for five or more years was \$105,001 - \$110,000. Also, most respondents are hopeful of receiving raises in 2013 – the median projected base salary for 2013 is \$85,001 - \$90,000.

As was the case in 2010, young lawyers in northern Nevada reported higher salaries than their counterparts in the south. Reno lawyers reported a median salary of \$95,000, while Las Vegas lawyers reported a median of \$85,001 - \$90,000. Rural lawyers reported a median base salary of \$70,001 - \$75,000 in 2012.

This year's survey asked for detailed information regarding benefits and parental leave. The results showed that most employers pay for professional liability insurance, state bar dues and continuing legal education credits. With respect to medical, dental and vision insurance, the most popular response was that the employer and attorney share costs, with the second most popular response being that the employer covers insurance costs.

The vast majority of respondents did not know their employer's policies regarding parental leave. The median paid leave reported was 11-12 weeks for maternity, 11-12 weeks for adoptive parents, and 3 - 4 weeks for paternity. Although "none" was not an option, a handful of respondents wrote in the comments section that their firms have no paid parental leave. Some women reported that their firms do not provide



paid leave, but female attorneys use short-term disability to supplement their income. One respondent noted with respect to paternity leave, “It is not culturally acceptable in the firm for a man to take paternity leave. No one has ever done it.” With respect to work schedules, only 2 percent of young lawyers worked a part-time or reduced hour schedule, while 98 percent worked full-time.

Finally, the survey asked respondents about their law school debt. The median amount of debt at the time of graduation, not counting undergraduate or other educational debt, was \$70,001 - \$75,000. Six-and-a-half percent reported no debt at all, while 3.9 percent reported debt of more than \$200,000. Young lawyers were pretty evenly split when asked whether or not they were concerned about their law school debt, with slightly more than half of respondents reporting that they were moderately or very concerned, and slightly fewer than half somewhat or not concerned at all. Respondents attended a variety of law schools, with the most represented being William S. Boyd School of Law and University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

To see the full results of this survey, please visit [www.nvbar.org](http://www.nvbar.org) > For Lawyers > Sections & Committees > Young Lawyers Section > Compensation Survey. ■

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- 1 The lower overall median salary reported in 2012 may be the result of a higher percentage of female respondents (52 percent) than male (48 percent) in 2012, whereas in 2010, men comprised 54 percent of respondents and women only 46 percent.
  - 2 The salary results for solos showed a cluster of salaries at the lower end, between \$25,000 - \$55,000, and a cluster around \$115,000 - \$130,000. One solo practitioner respondent reported a salary of more than \$200,000.
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