

Path to Practice

The Law School Survey

FALL 2024

Bloomberg Law surveyed nearly 2,800 individuals in the legal profession—including almost 600 law students, about 2,000 practicing attorneys, and almost 200 other legal professionals (including law school faculty, law librarians, and those in alternative legal careers). This unique survey provides insight into the skills needed for practice and how well law schools prepare individuals for a career in the legal profession. Each group was asked about their experiences and opinions from law school through their professional career, giving Bloomberg Law a unique opportunity to understand and compare a wide swath of the legal industry.

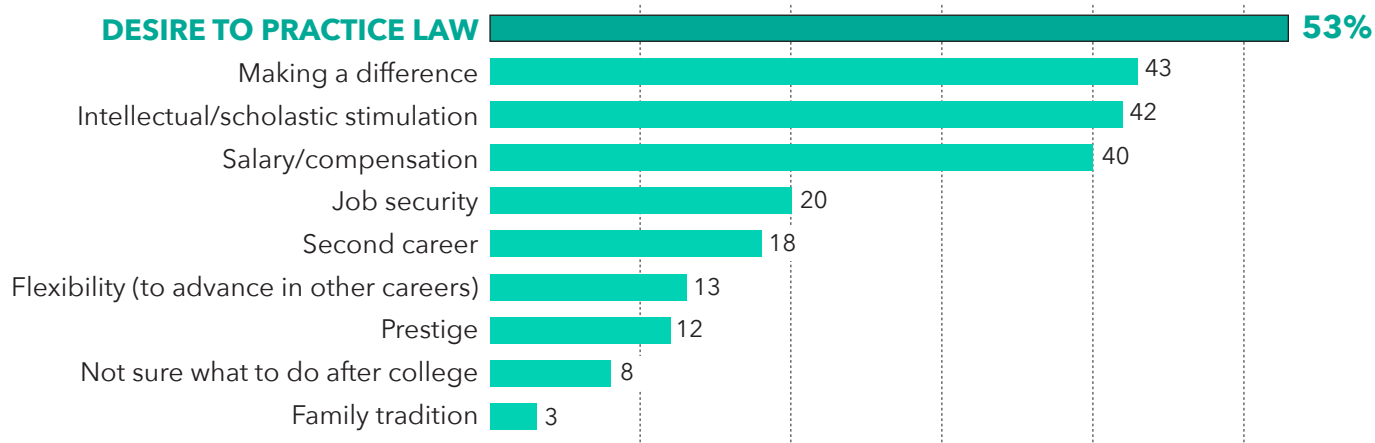
Note: Most results are rounded to the nearest whole number. Throughout this report, "Attorneys" refers to a sample consisting of more than 92% practicing attorneys, 4% in alternative legal careers where most hold JDs, 3% law school faculty, and 1% law librarians where most hold JDs.



The top reason law students enter law school is the desire to practice law. The second-most selected reason is to make a difference, chosen by more than 4 in 10 students, followed closely by intellectual stimulation and salary/compensation. This indicates that while financial stability is important, many students are equally if not more driven by personal and intellectual motivations.

STUDENTS

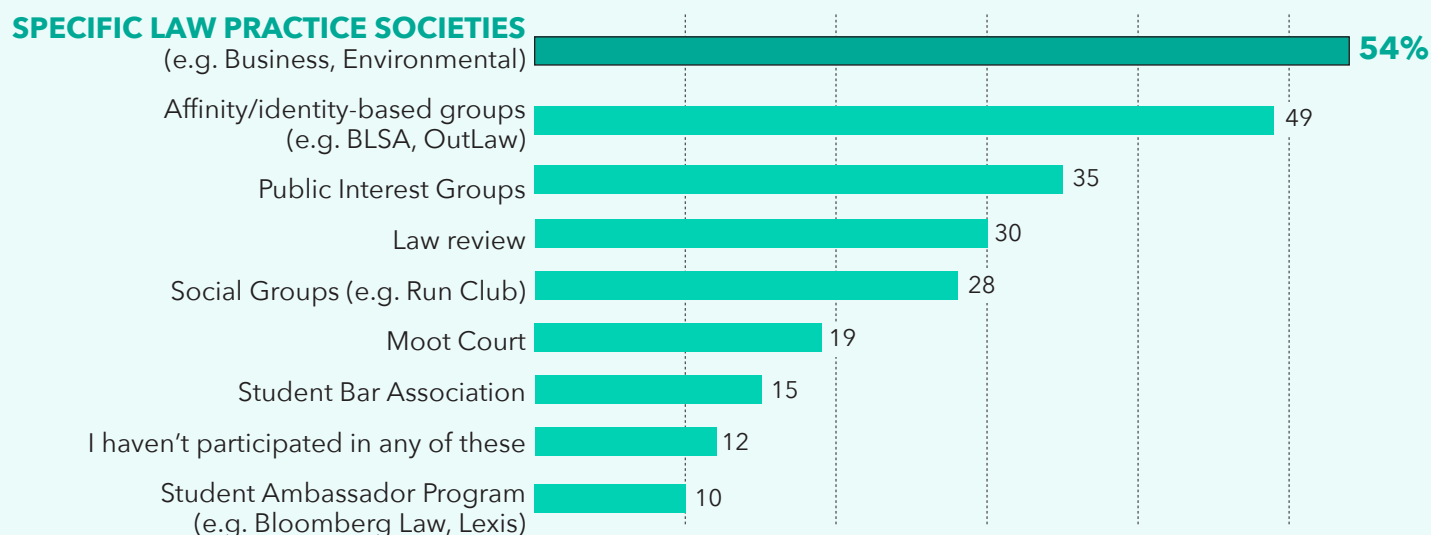
WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE to pursue a law degree? *(Select up to three)*



More than half of law students participate or have participated in specific law practice societies. Additionally, half engage in affinity or identity-based groups, and about a third are involved in public interest groups. Only about 1 in 10 have not participated in any of the programs or groups of interest.

STUDENTS

Which of these activities have you **PARTICIPATED IN** during law school?

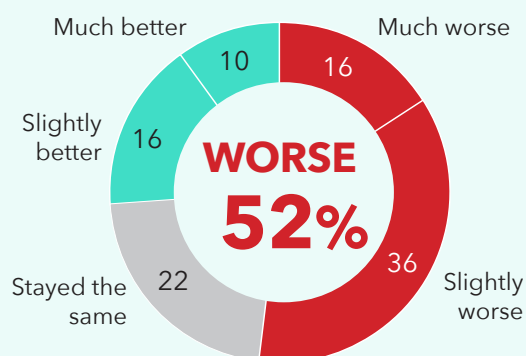


Although external factors can negatively impact overall well-being, most law students report that their well-being has declined since starting law school. The third year seems particularly challenging, with nearly one-quarter of 3Ls indicating that their well-being has gotten much worse since starting law school.

STUDENTS

How has your **OVERALL WELL-BEING** changed since starting law school?

Overall



By Year

	1L	2L	3L
Much better	10	9	8
Slightly better	20	13	16
Stayed the same	23	22	20
SLIGHTLY WORSE	35	43	34
Much worse	12	13	22

Which of the following **HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED** due to issues related to law school?

	1L	2L	3L
ANXIETY	72%	65%	73%
Change in food consumption (significant increase or decrease)	45	37	37
Depression	35	42	52
Disrupted sleep	65	60	70
Increased alcohol use	16	10	19
Increased gambling	2	1	3
Increased recreational drug use	6	4	10
Issues in your personal relationships	26	23	35
None of these	10	12	10
Other	2	1	3
Physical health issues	22	29	45
Prefer not to say	1	3	3
Thoughts of self-harm	10	11	10
Worsened energy or ability to concentrate	43	46	60
Worsened mood	32	43	51

We asked law students what they did to help manage their mental health and well-being. At least 6 in 10 cited hobbies (hiking, puzzles, gaming, TV, etc.), exercise, and family time. A third of law students don't feel that they've needed mental health treatment since starting law school. Thirty percent, however, believe they would benefit but either have not sought treatment or have delayed seeking it. The primary reason for delaying seeking mental health treatment is not having the time.

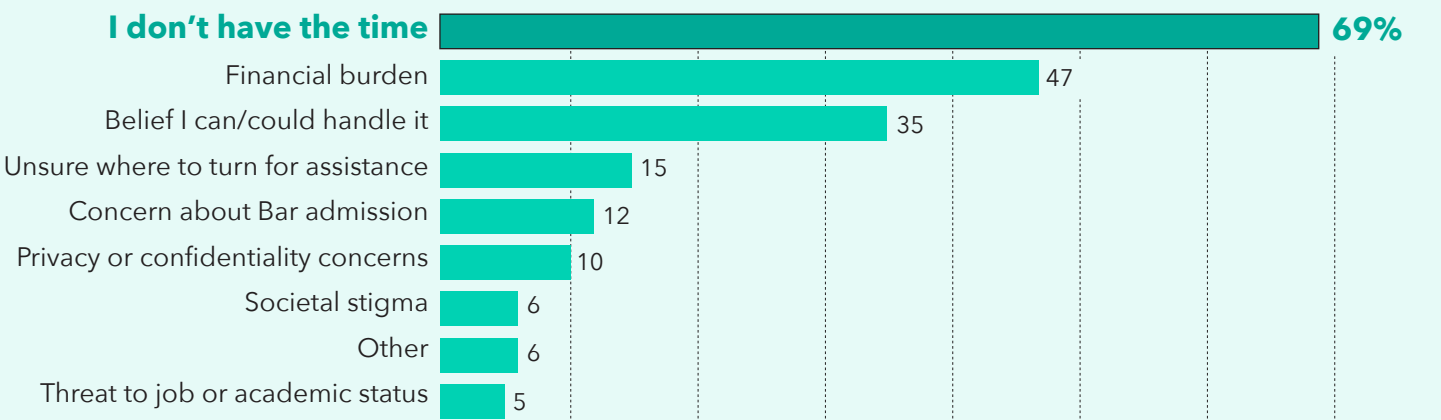
What do you do to support or manage your **MENTAL HEALTH/WELL-BEING**?



Since starting law school, have you **PUT OFF SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT** even though you believed you would benefit from it?

NO, I DID NOT / DO NOT BELIEVE I NEED OR NEEDED TREATMENT	33%
No, I sought mental health treatment immediately	18
Yes, and I still have not sought treatment	17
Yes, but after delaying I am now seeking treatment/did seek treatment	13
Don't know/prefer not to answer	11
No, not since starting law school, but I have delayed or not sought treatment for mental health at some other point	8

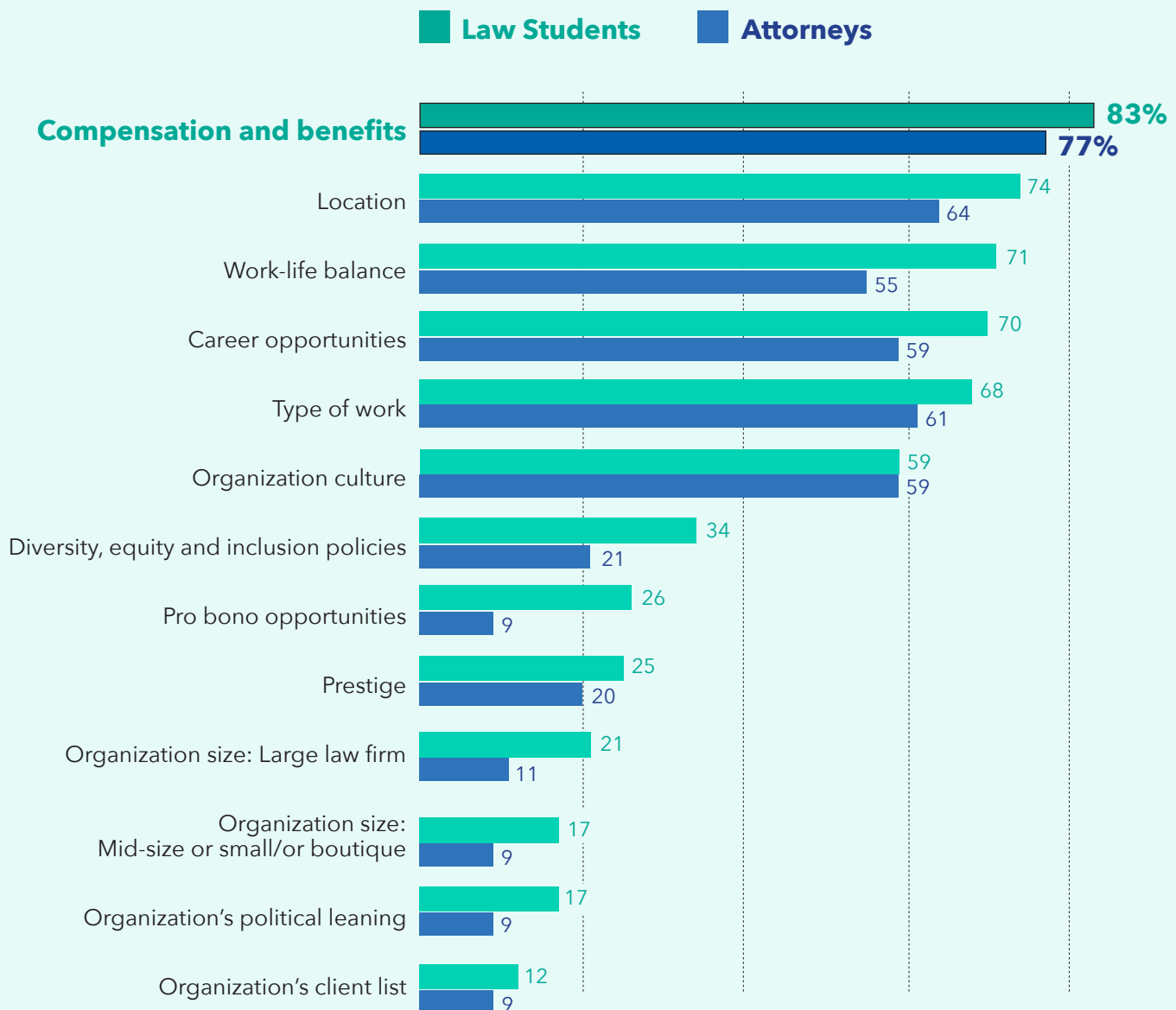
Why **HAVE YOU DELAYED/ARE YOU DELAYING** seeking mental health treatment?



When applying to potential employers, compensation and benefits are the top priorities for both students and attorneys, followed by location for both groups. Work-life balance is the third most important factor for law students, with 7 in 10 of them saying that it mattered—compared to slightly more than half of current attorneys.

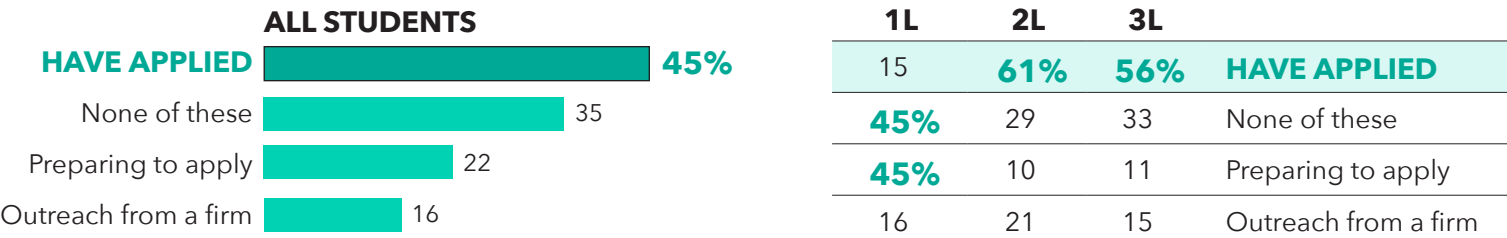
Additionally, a third of law students prioritize DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) policies when considering potential employers, compared to only 2 in 10 attorneys. The biggest gap between student and attorney priorities shown here is regarding pro bono work—26% of students report that pro bono opportunities matter to them when applying to potential employers, which is nearly three times the number of attorneys who say pro bono opportunities matter to them (9%).

Which of the following matter most to you when **APPLYING TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS?**
(Select all that apply)



Law students at every level are moving to secure positions before they graduate. Most 2Ls and 3Ls have already applied to law firms before on-campus interviews, while almost half of 1Ls are preparing to do so. Outreach from firms seems relatively rare but is most common during the second year of law school, with 2 in 10 indicating a law firm has contacted them.

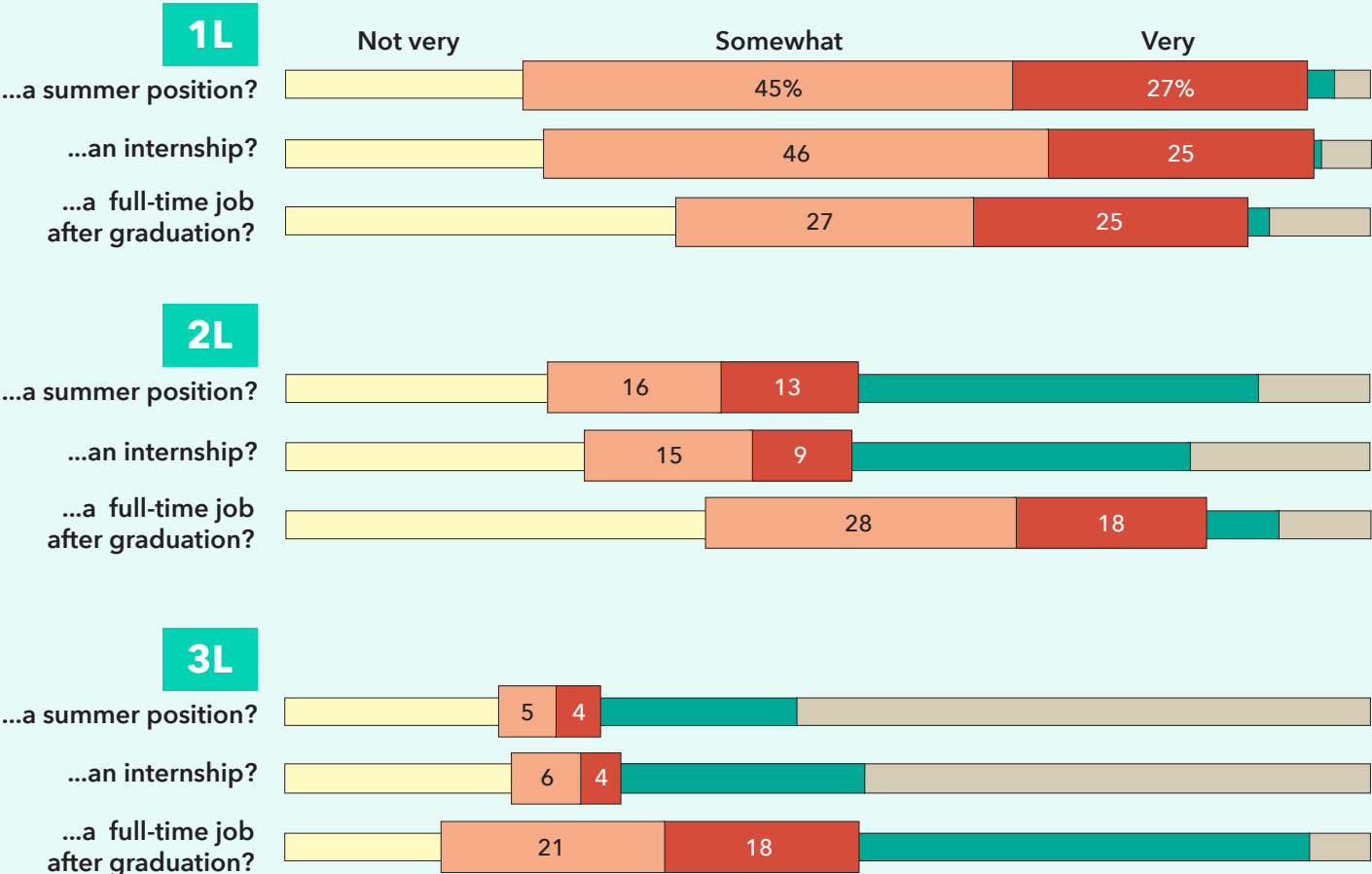
Have you **HAD CONTACT OR APPLIED WITH A FIRM** prior to on-campus interviews?
(Select all that apply)



When it comes to securing positions, anxieties differ depending on the student's year. Over 70% of 1L students are "somewhat" or "very" concerned about getting summer jobs or internships. Not surprisingly, 2Ls and 3Ls are most worried about securing full-time employment after graduation.

HOW CONCERNED are you about your ability to secure...

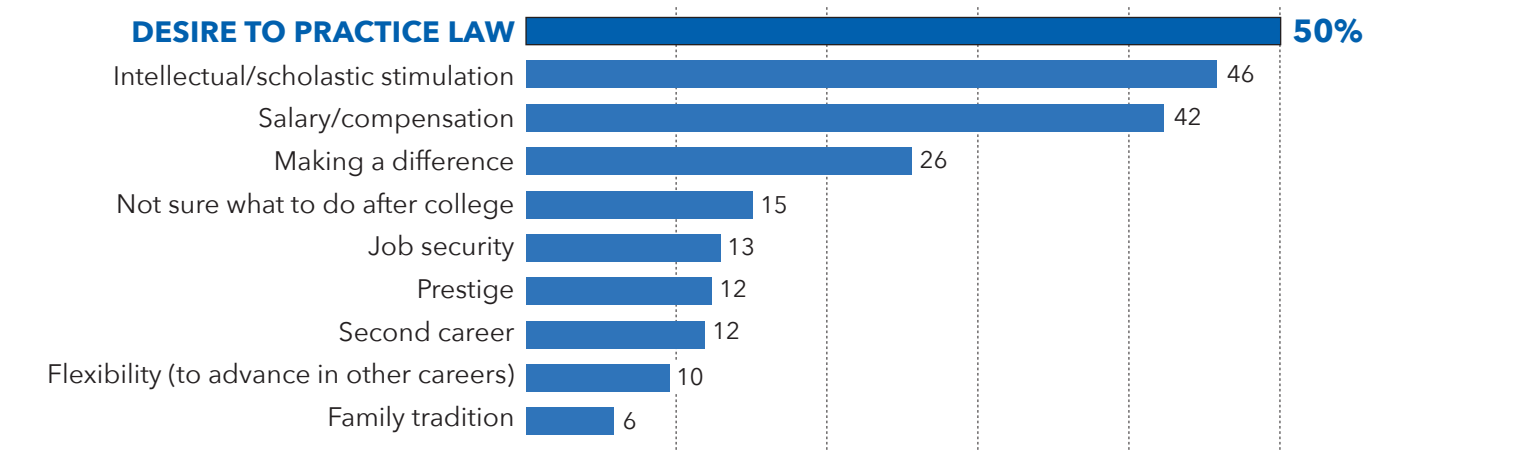
Already secured
Not pursuing; N/A



Attorneys’ primary motivation for attending law school was the desire to practice law. Following closely were the pursuits of intellectual stimulation and financial compensation. Unlike current law students, 43% of whom prioritize “making a difference,” attorneys ranked that reason fourth, with only about a quarter of attorneys selecting it as a significant reason that they chose to study law.

ATTORNEYS

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE to pursue a law degree? (Select up to three)



Two-thirds of attorneys rely on personal networks to discover career opportunities, and about half of them still use their career/alumni centers. Attorneys differ from current students in which school activities they were most involved with. 45% and 37% of attorneys participated in law review and Moot Court, respectively; compared to current students’ 30% and 19%. Conversely, less than one third of attorneys joined specific law practice societies, compared to more than half of law students today.*

ATTORNEYS

WHICH RESOURCES do you use to find out about career opportunities?

PERSONAL NETWORK	66%
Career Center/Alumni Center	48
Online Job Boards	44
Professional Legal Recruitment Services	32
Social Media	23
Bar Association	23
Law Firm Content	16
Publication ratings/rankings	13

Which of these activities have you **PARTICIPATED IN** during law school?

LAW REVIEW	45%
Moot Court	37
Specific Law Practice Societies (e.g. Business Law Society, Environmental)	31
Social Groups (e.g. Run Club)	22
Public Interest Groups	20
Affinity/identity-based groups (e.g. BLSA, OutLaw)	19
Student Bar Association	19
I haven’t participated in any of these	14
Student Ambassador Program	4

*Student responses for law school activities are on page 1.

STUDENTS: 21%

579

ATTORNEYS: 73%

1988

OTHER: 6%

168



What is your current
PRIMARY OCCUPATION?

Practicing Attorney	73%
Law Student	21%
Alternative Legal Career (e.g. legal ops, paralegal)	3
Law School Faculty (Full or part time)	3
Law Librarian	1

ATTORNEYS

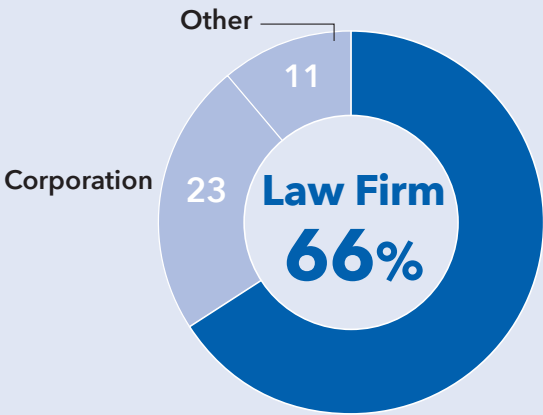
The average attorney respondent
has been in practice **24 YEARS**.

By gender:

Male	28 years
Non-binary	20 years
Female	19 years
Rather not say	18 years

ATTORNEYS

Which best describes your **WORKPLACE?**



Which describes your **PROFESSIONAL TITLE?**

Partner	41%
In-house Counsel	10
Associate/Asst. general counsel	9
General counsel	8
Counsel	8
Other	5
Attorney	5
Mid-level associate	5
Senior associate	5
Junior associate	4

STUDENTS

Female	60.6
Male	34.0
Rather not say	3.6
Non-binary	1.9

White or Caucasian	57.7
Multiracial	11.2
Asian	9.7
Black or African American	6.9
Other/Rather not say	6.1
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish	5.8
Middle Eastern or North African	2.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0

Are you **neurodivergent**?

No	64.6
Yes	24.8
Rather not say	10.6

ATTORNEYS

Male	57.1
Female	39.0
Rather not say	3.6
Non-binary	0.3

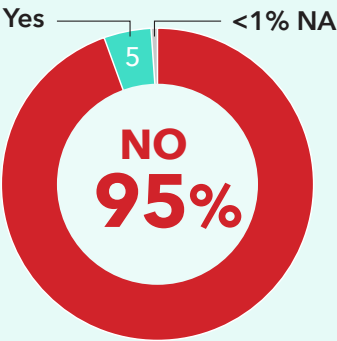
White or Caucasian	77.3
Other/Rather not say	7.3
Multiracial	4.4
Asian	4.2
Black or African American	3.3
Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish	2.8
Middle Eastern or North African	0.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2

Are you **neurodivergent**?

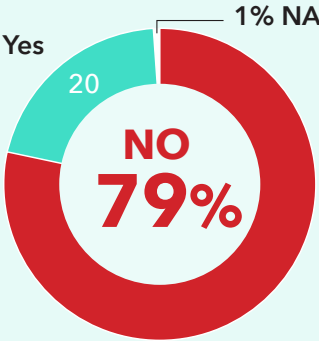
No	86.2
Yes	8.0
Rather not say	5.8

Were you the **FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY** to attend or complete any of the following?

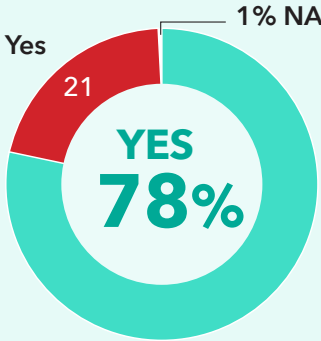
High School Diploma



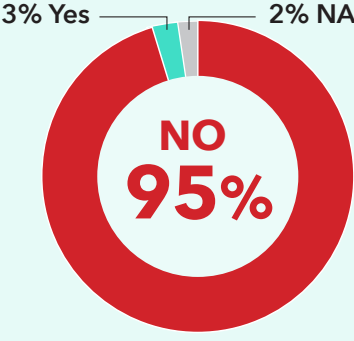
Undergraduate



Law School



Trade or Vocational School



Post-Graduate Degree

