



**JACOB DARR**

— ASSOCIATES —

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**2020 In-House Legal Counsel**  
**SALARY GUIDE**

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# Introduction

Studies show that more than 62% of in-house legal counsels are unlikely to look for a new job, while 60% of lawyers believe that their compensation is appropriate when compared to their peers.

For the past years, the legal function has been evolving, particularly in the general and managing counsel levels. Small, mid-sized, and large organizations, on the other hand, have provided more compelling compensation packages to their deserving team members. Some even offer incentives and rewards to retain talented and capable lawyers.

Generally, in-house legal counsels are well-paid, giving them the opportunity to appreciate a unique law department culture, address a variety of business challenges, and enjoy a fun-filled workplace environment.

Before, the legal world was not candidate-driven. Things have changed today. This 2020, experienced and highly capable attorneys have a wide array of career options.

Aside from higher salaries, law firms and businesses have offered a work-life balance and intensive monitoring opportunities for continuous professional development. This takes career satisfaction to a different level and levels up employee retention.

Since most organizations have attempted to provide high salaries, the compensation for the best in-house counsel has increased. Legal professionals have seen this dramatic change since 2018, and it is expected to continue this year in the U.S.

New, mid-sized, and large law departments started finding ways to entice talented legal experts to join their firms, enabling the organization to provide the highest quality of legal advice among different clients.

The gender pay gap has been an issue in the legal profession for decades. Fortunately, the U.S. has enacted strict regulations to alleviate and eliminate the gender pay gap. As a result, individuals of any gender can now enjoy equal and fair compensation.

The strong demand for diversity has led to reasonable payment for women. It's all about the level of expertise, knowledge, and performance, after all.

For human resource departments in law firms who look for ways to attract and retain top legal professionals, this 2020 In-House Legal Counsel Salary Guide from Jacob Darr Associates got everyon

# 2020 In-House Legal Counsel SALARY IN THE U.S.

The compensation for In-house legal counsel in law firms/ businesses of any size, practice area, and nature varies.

In this 2020 In-House Legal Counsel Salary Guide, Jacob Darr Associates attempts to provide compensation for general counsel, managing counsel, and senior counsel.

Jacob Darr Associates strives to present compensation trends in these in-house legal counsel categories. This guide divides compensation according to organization revenue, industry, and gender. So, without further ado, let's get started!

## GENERAL COUNSEL

General counsels are responsible for advising the board and senior management on legal rights, existing & new laws, and other various matters. They specialize in managing legal aspects of an organization despite the size, nature, niche, and organizational revenues. They have expertise in examining or creating draft agreements, including vendor and employment agreement. They also have experience in conducting legal research and reviewing the litigation strategy of small, medium-sized, and large companies in the U.S.

Creating directives of corporate decisions, preserving corporate records, handling licensing forms & statutory filings, liaising with other lawyers about a specific assignment, creating new entities, and managing the intellectual property of an organization are the other essential roles of a general counsel.

To become a general counsel, one must be a graduate of a Juris Doctor degree from accredited law schools in the U.S., has practiced law for four years in a well-established law firm, and should have proficient legal experience in venture capital financing, fund investments, and other areas of law.

Excellent written & verbal communication skills, knowledge of rules & regulations about businesses, and experience in company sensitivities & confidentiality are a prerequisite requirement.

Before a person can become a general counsel, there are many requirements to pass. While it can be a long process, the salary for a general counsel, whether private or public, is compelling and lucrative.

### COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

## Industry

General counsels can play a critical role in providing legal advice in different industries, including Consumer, Technology, Energy, Professional Services, Financial, Life Sciences, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Industrial.

When it comes to salaries, the industry makes a great impact. See the table below:

Industry	Private	Public
Consumer	\$440,000	\$732,500
Technology	\$405,000	\$919,000
Energy	\$480,000	\$760,344
Professional Services	\$360,000	\$912,500
Financial	\$540,000	\$810,750
Life Sciences	\$450,750	\$717,240
Healthcare	332,500	\$657,000
Manufacturing and Industrial	\$360,647	\$830,000

General counsels in the public sector receive higher compensation than those who work in private legal departments.

In the private sector, the industry with the highest salary is Financial. In public firms, general counsels who specialize in Technology got the best compensation.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

**Organization Revenue**

Private organizations with total revenue of \$500M provide general counsels with \$375,000 salary, while professionals in the public sector with the same revenue receive \$610,000.

Organizational Revenue	\$500M	\$500M - \$1B	\$1B - \$5B	\$5B +
Private	\$375,000	\$439,000	\$465,613	\$911,000
Public	\$610,000	\$680,000	\$1,001,500	\$1,336,150

Private legal and public companies with a revenue of \$500M or \$1B pay professionals with \$439,000 and \$680,000.

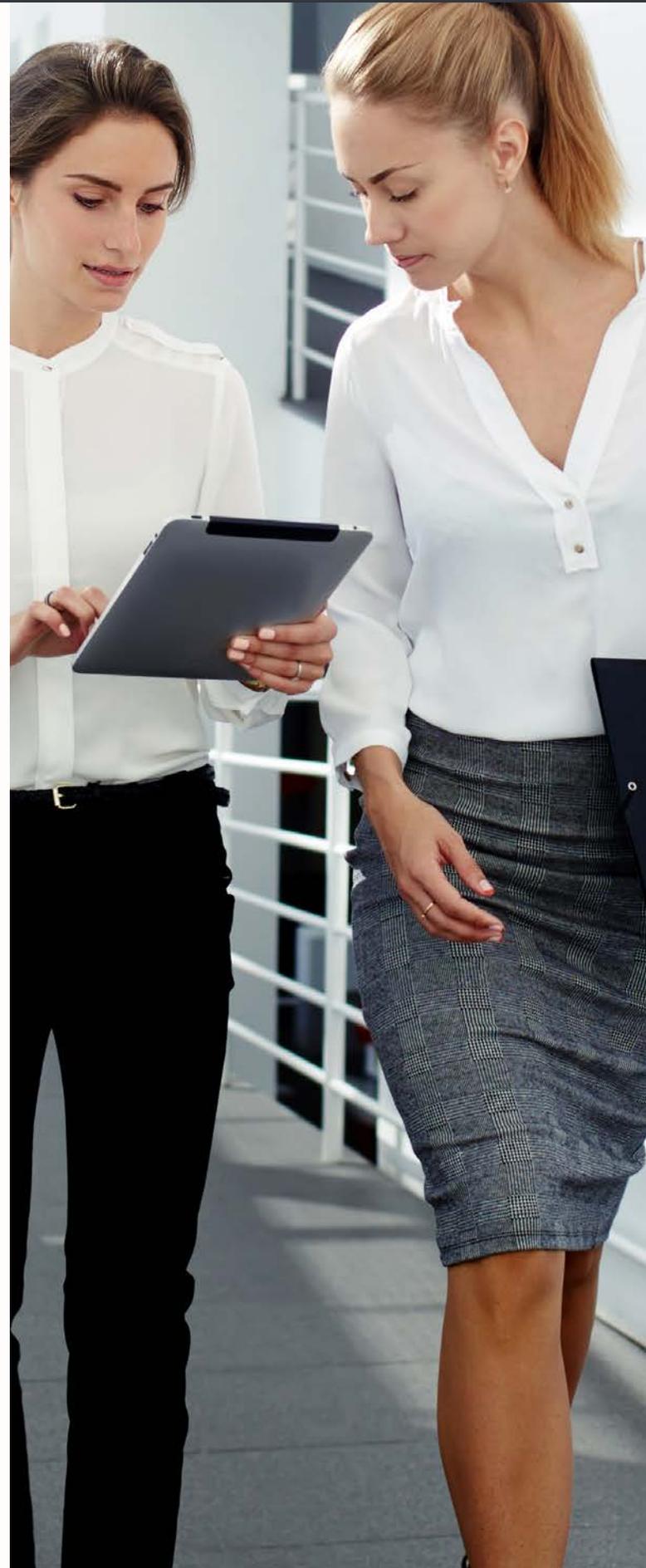
As the revenue skyrockets, the compensation for general counsel also increases.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

**Gender**

	Base Salary	Bonus	Long-Term Incentive	Total Compensation
Female General Counsel	\$260,000	\$67,500	\$200,000	\$537,500
Male General Counsel	\$286,500	\$104,500	\$200,000	\$630,000

The compensation by gender indicates that male general counsel has a higher base salary and bonus. In long-term incentives, both female and male general counsels generally receive an amount of \$200,000 according to recent surveys and studies.



## MANAGING COUNSEL

Managing counsels help run a law firm. They usually have spent time as lawyers in a firm before handling a supervisory position. They are often called as partners. While other managing attorneys handle any legal issues, they are also responsible for hiring, supervising lawyers, and advising the team of associates. For that reason, they are one of the highest-paid legal professionals in the U.S. this 2020.

Managing counsels handle a small firm's cash flow and accounting, motivate other partners, and conduct trials or settlements.

On the contrary, managing counsels in larger firms have greater responsibilities. They recruit top talents in the field, advise important clients, and assign attorneys to different cases. But their major duty is to run a law firm just like a business owner.

Similar to general attorneys, managing counsels must be well-driven, organized, professional, analytical, and confident. They must possess extraordinary oral and written communication skills as they usually interact with different people, from associates to judges. Mathematical skills are critical, too. These help managing attorneys keep track of profitability. Finding ways to enhance finances will be as easy as possible.

To be a managing attorney, an individual must have a four-year bachelor's degree, must be a graduate of law, and must pass the board exam to practice their profession.

### COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO Organization Revenue

In organizational revenue, total compensation is presented. The total compensation comes from base salary, bonus, and long-term incentive. Private and public sectors are compared.

Organizational Revenues	\$500M	\$500M - \$1B	\$1B - \$5B	\$5B+
Private	\$302,000	\$318,000	\$363,000	\$379,500
Public	\$275,000	\$284,000	\$373,903	\$400,500

As organizational revenue increases, the compensation rate for managing counsel increases as well. Managing counsels from both private and public industries experience a great change in their salaries.



### COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO Industry

Lawyers do not only work in a specific industry, but also in other fields. These include Consumer, Technology, Energy, Professional Services, Financial, Life Sciences, Healthcare, and Industrial & Manufacturing.

Industry	Private	Public
Consumer	\$320,000	\$350,000
Technology	\$330,000	\$407,000
Energy	\$340,000	\$322,327
Professional Services	\$277,000	\$270,106
Financial	\$390,000	\$335,400
Life Sciences	\$381,250	\$379,000
Healthcare	\$300,000	\$373,700
Industrial & Manufacturing	\$330,000	\$408,400

In the private sector, the managing counsel who works in the Financial Industry has the highest compensation rate. It is followed by Life Sciences and Energy.

In the public sector, the managing counsel who works in Industrial & Manufacturing enjoys the highest compensation. It is followed by Technology and Life Sciences.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO  
**Gender**

	Base Salary	Bonus	Long Term Incentive	Total Compensation
Female General Counsel	\$229,123	\$64,750	\$50,000	\$355,500
Male General Counsel	\$230,000	\$70,000	\$50,000	\$375,000

For base salary and bonus, male managing counsel has a higher compensation than female managing counsel. Jacob Darr Associates hopes that the U.S. provides equal compensation opportunities to both men and women. Gender should not be a major basis for salaries. The level of expertise and experience should be the prime factor.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO  
**Practice Area**

The law is very broad. It consists of banking/finance, real estate, compliance, litigation, corporate, labor & employment, energy, intellectual property, life science/healthcare, and insurance.

Practice Area	Salary
Banking / Finance	\$363,000
Real Estate	\$294,000
Compliance	\$342,000
Litigation	\$348,000
Corporate	\$375,000
Labor & Employment	\$372,500
Energy	\$364,997
Intellectual Property	\$401,000
Life Sciences & Healthcare	\$358,000
Insurance	\$294,000

Managing counsel who practices intellectual property has a salary of \$401,000. It is followed by managing counsels who specialize in Corporate, Labor & Employment, Energy, and Banking & Finance.

Note, this compensation, according to the practice area, also covers the managing counsels from both the private and public sectors.



## SENIOR COUNSEL

While the duties and responsibilities may vary, senior counsel is generally responsible for implementing the strategic direction of a team through leadership and mentoring. They may also handle a caseload of challenging files.

Senior counsels typically conduct short-term planning and monitoring of daily operations of the legal team. They assist in corporate contracting and even policy development. They offer legal services in an effective and equitable manner, manage reports, assign cases/work projects, approved reports, supervise team effectiveness, support case management, conduct internal education or staff training, and negotiate with concerned parties.

To qualify as a senior counsel, you must have a law degree and are licensed to practice your profession. Legal applicants with years of experience in various areas of law have an advantage, too. Senior counsels must be proficient in both written and oral communications.

Senior attorneys must have a wide experience in handling the administrative investigation, supporting a team, developing staff skills, and assessing the applicability of any legal principles.

Senior counsels with excellent organizational/time management skills, strong interpersonal ability, written communication skills, and paramount research skills always have an advantage over the others.

Proficiency in using email applications, word processing, and the internet is also a prerequisite.



### COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

## Industry

Industry	Private	Public
Consumer	\$202,500	\$237,500
Technology	\$227,750	\$258,900
Energy	\$219,793	\$282,995
Professional Services	\$196,500	\$239,000
Financial	\$289,250	\$250,322
Life Sciences	\$214,000	\$295,000
Healthcare	\$176,000	\$265,736
Manufacturing and Industrial	\$213,885	\$248,628

Senior counsel who works in the financial industry in a private sector has a salary of \$289,250. On the other hand, senior counsel in Life Sciences from a public industry receives \$295,000.

### COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

## Organization Revenue

In organizational revenue, total compensation is presented. The total compensation comes from base salary, bonus, and long-term incentive. Private and public sectors are compared.

Organizational Revenues	\$500M	\$500M - \$1B	\$1B - \$5B	\$5B+
Private	\$208,000	\$234,250	\$222,500	\$246,600
Public	\$246,000	\$277,500	\$260,000	\$297,000

A Senior counsel who works in a private sector with \$500M organizational revenue has a salary of \$208,000. Senior counsel in a public sector has a compensation rate of \$246,000.

Similar to managing counsel, the salary of senior counsel according to organizational revenue, also increases.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

**Gender**

There's a slight difference in the compensation of in-house legal counsel by gender. Look at the table below:

	Base Salary	Bonus	Long Term Incentive	Total Compensation
Female General Counsel	\$185,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$235,000
Male General Counsel	\$185,250	\$42,000	\$12,920	\$250,750

The base salary for female senior counsel is around \$185,000, while the male senior counsel typically receives \$185,250. For the bonuses, the former has \$30,000. The latter has \$42,000. For the long-term incentive, female senior counsel doesn't have LTI. The male senior counsel usually has \$12,920 LTI.

COMPENSATION ACCORDING TO

**Practice Area**

The practice area of senior counsels is another determining factor of their salary. Some specific areas of law expertise are discussed below:

Practice Area	Salary
Finance & Banking	\$281,000
Tax	\$257,750
Compliance	\$253,250
Real Estate	\$220,500
Corporate	\$231,000
Litigation	\$264,500
Energy	\$276,000
Employment & Labor	\$235,500
Life Sciences and Healthcare	\$244,500
Intellectual Property	\$250,150
Insurance	\$240,000

Senior counsels with specialization in finance and banking got the highest salary among the other areas of expertise. For those who encounter some trouble deciding on what type of law to practice, finance and banking should be on top of your mind.

Energy got the second spot with a salary of \$276,000. Litigation is next and followed by Tax.





## FACTORS AFFECTING THE SALARY OF **In-House Legal Counsel**

Law is among the highest-paid professions in the U.S. and other parts of the world. The salaries, however, differ based on numerous factors. The location, for instance, affects the compensation of in-house lawyers.

In fact, attorneys in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago are among the highest-paid because of the location, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in America.

Apart from geographic location, here are the other factors that affect the salary of an in-house legal counsel.

### **Legal Aid versus For-Profit: Which Can Lead to Good Compensation?**

Experienced in-house lawyers commonly enjoy six-figure salaries. But first-year associates in a few biggest law firms in the country can command the same compensation.

How about attorneys who serve in small, mid-sized, or large non-profit entities? According to Jonathan M. Smith, Legal Aid Society executive director in Washington D.C., they only receive around \$40,000 in their first year.

Therefore, attorneys who work in a For-Profit organization can acquire more compensation than lawyers who work in legal aid and other non-profit causes.

### **Employment Sector**

Another factor that affects the salary of lawyers in the employment sector. For example, an in-house legal counsel who works in a private sector can expect a different compensation compared to those who serve in public agencies.

Generally, working in the private industry as an attorney can be more lucrative than you have imagined. This is the reason why the federal government reviews and increases the salary of public servants through the implementation of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990.

However, the legal jobs in the public sector are not as high-paid as private employment. But it depends.

### **Representation**

In-house legal counsel's salaries vary based on who they represent. Attorneys with clients that initiate a lawsuit can earn compensation based on contingency fees and hourly rate.

What is a contingency fee? It is a percentage of what attorneys recover on behalf of their clients. Usually, it ranges from 25% to 35% of the settlement.

On the contrary, legal counsels who represent defendants may also base their salaries on a retainer or hourly rate.



## Position: High Positions, High Salaries

Law firms consist of equity partners, junior partners, senior associates, and junior associates.

An equity partner is a shareholder in a private or public law firm. He/she is the one who receives a portion of the organization's revenue aside from his/her annual salary.

Senior attorneys with the medium-sized legal company can earn around \$132,500 or \$218,750, according to the Internet Legal Research Group in 2011. This year, the rate will be surprisingly high.

Junior partners, on the other hand, are not qualified to receive the equity share payment. They only receive a salary that's lower than what a senior partner obtains.

Junior associate salaries are given to new graduates or those who practice the profession for the first time.

## Industry

Licensed lawyers working in-house acquired at least \$178,250 per year, according to Internet Legal Research in 2011.

Attorneys employed by university and colleges as assistant professors receive salaries are similar to other instructors. But, their earnings are lower than practicing the law.

## Experience and Expertise

Newly registered lawyers don't get as much as experienced in-house counsels acquire per year. It's no surprise as they are proficient, capable, and expert in the field.

For lawyers to increase their salaries, deep credentials can come into play. Be sure to attend international seminars and training to level up your professional and personal competencies. Taking up an M.A. and Ph.D. degree is worthwhile.

Lawyers start with a specific law area of specialization. But they don't just focus on a single field. They devote their time to studying other categories of law.

If your expertise is only real estate, try to explore compliance, corporate, litigation, intellectual property, insurance, healthcare, labor & employment, and life science. For that reason, you can get well-paid.



## Legal Hiring Trends in the US

Steady hiring activity in the legal field is expected in 2020. The demand would remain strong for top talents with knowledge in high-growth specialty areas. Job seekers with a few years of legal experience are no exception.

With a simple delay in hiring decisions, employers or law firms have a higher risk of losing strong and capable candidates to their competitors.

Now, here are the legal hiring trends in the U.S. this 2020:

### **Staffing Flexibility: Maximize Success**

Since then, staffing flexibility has been the top priority of most law firms in the country and other corners of the world.

But it is easier said than done. Studies indicated that some legal organizations encounter some trouble finding professionals with the specialization and skills they require.

So, they significantly rely on legal staffing firms to make the hiring process easier than ever. As a result, firms find/evaluate the right talent, turn staffing flexibility into a reality, meet seasonal/project workload demands, and assess candidates thoroughly.

### **The Tide of Turnover**

Attrition rates in corporate legal departments and law firms continue to rise over the past decades.

Hiring managers strive hard to identify whether or not a candidate is a perfect fit for their workplace culture before getting hired. They also conduct an intensive pre-employment assessment to be confident with their hiring decisions. This reduces the costs of replacing top professionals over time.

### **Expansion of Legal Departments**

Today's corporate legal departments add to their legal team to provide the highest quality of services to valued clients and stand out from the competition. They now seek candidates with experience in business growth, employment disputes, executive compensation, and other legal matters. Aside from in-house legal counsels, corporate transactional paralegals and contract administrators are also getting high demand.

## Higher Compensation Rates and Expectations for Lawyers

Many legal departments have attempted to improve their retention rates. Some strive to create a fun, interactive, and light working environment. Others try to increase the salaries for newly hired lawyers. The expectations, however, are higher than ever. But, they receive the payment they deserve.

It's also a trend for firms or employers to seek associates with deep credentials. But others use the opposite approach. They hire lawyers with 2 or 3 years of experience. Then, they train them to become a competitive and capable professional.

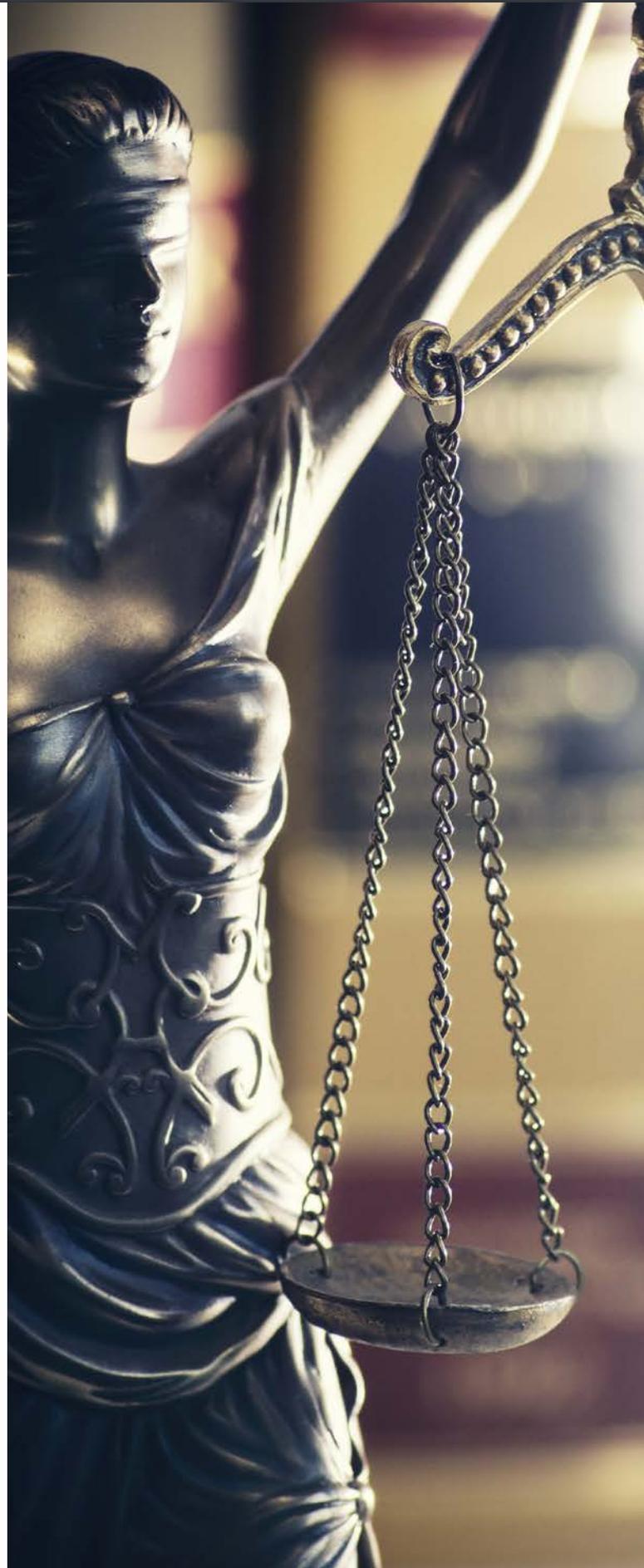
## Tech-Savvy Support Staff

Similar to businesses, law firms/companies experience a hard time meeting and exceeding client's requests, so they hire paralegals. These professionals are usually responsible for performing multiple duties and providing quality work at a lower billing rate than the services of attorneys. They also help businesses focus on what's really important, maximizing client satisfaction and ensuring immediate results.

## Strategic Hiring of In-House Legal Counsels

Another common practice for employers is that they prioritize and take advantage of new business opportunities. Then, they make targeted hiring decisions to deliver individualized legal services in intellectual property, commercial law, real estate, litigation, and other areas.

Law firms and employers are now hiring associates with four or more years of experience who can assist them in different legal matters.



## IN-DEMAND PRACTICE AREAS FOR **In-House Legal Counsels**

Law has a variety of practice areas. Some lead to competitive salaries, while others are not. In this chapter, let us discover a few high-growth practice areas that in-house legal counsels should study.

### **Real Estate**

As the residential and commercial real estate expands, businesses of any niche are looking for in-house legal counsels who can help them navigate both local and state laws in the country. Real estate companies or organizations may not have knowledge of zoning issues, title research, and lease administration. Legal counsels with expertise in real estate can play a critical role.

### **Litigation**

Aside from real estate lawyers, the demand for legal professionals with experience in litigation is high and steady. This is especially true for experts with knowledge in commercial litigation.

Of course, the hiring process varies according to geographic locations. But candidates with an unmatched background in employment litigation, insurance defense, and personal injury are worth the cost and effort.

### **Compliance**

In the U.S., there are new state and federal regulations that are why companies are hiring in-house legal counsels to help them remain compliant and avoid other potential issues in the future. As a business owner, you have a lot of responsibilities to handle. With your hectic schedule, you might not have time to meet current and new compliance regulations. Legal counsels with a compliance background can come into play.

### **Commercial and Business Law**

Market expansion, mergers, and acquisitions, and new product development drive opportunities for legal counsels who have expertise in contract administration law, compliance, and corporate transactional.

If you have interests and prior experience in business and commercial law, you can specialize in this practice area, too.

### **Healthcare**

Apart from law firms, government agencies, medical providers, and other businesses are seeking legal professionals with expertise in different healthcare-related matters. These include Medicare fraud, medical research, federal healthcare policy, and healthcare implementation.

### **Banking and Finance**

Another area of law you can specialize in is banking and finance. In the past decades, loan transactions have been popular. However, the financing and banking sector is tricky to understand for startups and other mid-sized businesses. This encourages them to rely on in-house legal counsel with a background in banking and finance.

Other practice areas to pursue include employment, energy, insurance, intellectual property, and more.

Before making a decision, identify your unique needs, interests, and requirements. It really helps.

## Jacob Darr Associates

Jacob Darr Associates is a recruiting firm recognized by CEOs, executives, firms, boards, and other businesses of any sizes. They specialize in quality, fast, and reliable recruitment of top talents, including in-house legal counsels, the board of directors, and human resource professionals for companies, organizations, and firms in North Carolina and other corners of the world.

Jacob Darr Associates has been serving the industry for years now. As an expert on individualized and effective recruitment, the company is the most sought-after expert for businesses, firms, and other folks. They are committed to helping clients locate qualified candidates for job vacancies among small, mid-sized, and large companies out there.

What makes Jacob Darr Associates different from others is that they perform thorough research before identifying prospects for open in-house legal counsels. The experts at Jacob Darr Associates provides ongoing support and employee retention solutions.

The company is the go-to recruitment expert in the U.S. with a reputation of providing individualized services. What sets them apart from their competitors is that they believe businesses are different, so they work intently with every client to determine their needs. Then, they modify the solution according to business requirements and goals. Also, finding qualified in-house legal counsels will be a reality.

In businesses of any nature, the job of an in-house legal counsel should not be overlooked. Legal professionals are responsible for developing non-disclosure with confidentiality agreements, identifying risks, drafting transactional documents, collaborating with other departments, preparing corporate procedures/programs, ensuring compliance with existing laws, and delivering legal training.

When you are on the lookout for the best legal counsels in North Carolina and other parts of the U.S., the experienced, creative, and diverse team at Jacob Darr Associates got you covered. The experts at the company ensure quality recruitment results that are available at the most competitive rate.

For further details, feel free to contact Jacob Darr Associates at 336-739-3106 today. They are just a call away! From an accommodating team to a competitive rate, the company has them all.

**For more information about the 2020 In-House Legal Counsel Salary Guide, do not hesitate to call 336-739-3106.**