

Revealed: The Complete 2025-2026 Attorney Salary Guide Every Lawyer Needs to Read

BCG Attorney Search has released its most comprehensive salary guide yet: ***The Complete Attorney Compensation Report 2025-2026 - Definitive U.S. Legal Salary Guide***. This groundbreaking analysis provides up-to-date insights into compensation trends across all attorney career levels, firm sizes, geographic regions, and practice areas.

Read full guide here: [BCG Attorney Search's Complete Attorney Compensation Report 2025-2026](#)



Why This Report Matters

- BigLaw Premiums and Base Salaries**
 BigLaw first-year associates now start at **\$225,000** with annual bonuses around **\$20,000**, while top equity partners earn well into the millions.
- Massive Earnings Disparity Across Firm Sizes**
 Attorneys at BigLaw firms earn up to **340% more** than peers at small firms. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH](#) [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)
- Geographic Compensation Gaps**
 Salaries vary significantly by region—mean attorney salaries in Washington D.C. reach approximately **\$238,990**, outpacing many secondary markets. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH](#)
- Practice Area Premiums**
 Specialization pays. Attorneys in antitrust, securities, and IP litigation enjoy compensation premiums of **+25%, +22%, and +20%**, respectively, compared to general practice. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+3](#) [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+3](#) [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+3](#)
- Gains Beyond Law Firms**
 In-house counsel now earn about **75% of BigLaw levels**, offering a competitive alternative. Public sector roles lag behind at around **27%**, but may offer other professional and lifestyle advantages.
- Historic Compensation Growth**
 First-year associate salaries surged **21% between 2021 and 2023**, marking the sharpest increase in modern history. Bonuses, benefits, and remote work premiums have also expanded.

Know your worth in today's legal market. Whether you're an associate, partner, or considering a lateral move, [BCG Attorney Search's Complete Attorney Compensation Report 2025-2026](#) gives you the definitive breakdown of salaries across firm sizes, regions, and practice areas.