

Thinking of a Lateral Move? BCG's Salary Guide Shows Where You'll Earn More

The newly released **BigLaw Lateral Salary Guide: Compensation Increases by Practice Area** breaks down which specialties are commanding the biggest pay jumps, how timing impacts your earning potential, and why certain practice areas are outpacing others. For attorneys looking to maximize both salary and career trajectory, this guide delivers the insider data you need before making your next move.

Read the full report here:

BigLaw Lateral Salary Guide: Compensation Increases by Practice Area



Key Insights from the Report

- Highest Premiums Rewarded to Corporate M&A, Private Equity & IP**
 Corporate attorneys — especially those specializing in M&A and private equity — receive the largest lateral pay boosts, averaging **15-20%**, with senior laterals commanding **up to 25-30%** premiums in top markets. Intellectual property specialists also see strong gains of **14-18%**, particularly those with technical or advanced degrees. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)
- Moderate Gains in Litigation and Regulatory Practice Areas**
 Traditional litigation lateral moves yield **8-12%** pay increases, though specialized fields like securities or white-collar defense can capture **12-15%**. Financial regulatory attorneys often enjoy **15-18%** gains, whereas general regulatory, environmental, and labor & employment attorneys see more modest premiums ranging between **7-11%**. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)
- Optimal Timing Varies by Specialty**
 - Corporate:** Best lateral window at years **3-4**
 - Litigation:** Peak timing at years **4-5**
 - Specialized practices** (like tax or regulatory): Highest premiums at years **5-6** [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)
- Regional and Firm-Type Influences Matter**
 Major legal markets offer **20-35%** higher compensation on average compared to secondary locations. AmLaw 50 firms typically offer higher base salaries, while boutique and niche firms may bridge gaps through tailored bonus structures and equity-like incentives, especially in IP or tax specialties. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)
- Specialization Continues to Pay Off**
 Attorneys in highly niche areas earn **25-40%** more in lateral moves compared to generalist peers — a critical consideration when planning a strategic career move. [BCG ATTORNEY SEARCH+1](#)

Why This Should Matter to You

- Timing is Everything**
 Identify your career sweet spot — when your experience is valued, but you're not yet deemed too expensive — to command maximum lateral compensation.
- Specialize Strategically**
 Building expertise in specialized fields translates directly into tangible financial rewards and bargaining strength.
- Leverage Regional Opportunities & Firm Type**
 Consider geographic arbitrage or firm structure tailored incentives to optimize total compensation—moving to or negotiating within high-demand markets can significantly impact pay.

Conclusion

BCG Attorney Search's new guide is a must-read tool for attorneys contemplating lateral moves. It reveals how practice area, timing, and specialization influence compensation in a competitive BigLaw environment. Whether you're aiming for a financial uplift or strategic career advancement, this guide offers the insights to weigh your options wisely.

□ Considering a lateral move?

Don't leave money on the table. BCG Attorney Search's *BigLaw Lateral Salary Guide* breaks down compensation

increases by practice area—revealing where attorneys are earning the biggest pay jumps and how to maximize your career move.

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