



**2008 National Utilization
and
Compensation Survey Report**

**Section 4
Paralegal Salary
and
Compensation Levels**

March 2008

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NALA
2008 National Utilization and Compensation Survey Report

Section 4
Paralegal Salary & Compensation Levels

Tables and Charts

Table 4.1 Correlations to Salary and Compensation of Factors Relating to Respondents Demographics.....	1
Table 4.2 Compensation, Salary and Bonus Average Values Survey Years 2008-1997	1
Table 4.3 Average Salary and Compensation by Professional Activity	2
Table 4.4 Schedule of Increases.....	2
Table 4.5 Annual Salary Ranges - General Findings	2
Table 4.6 Total Compensation Ranges - General Findings.....	3
Table 4.7 Annual Salary and Compensation by Total Years of Legal Experience	3
Chart 4.1 (4.7) Compensation by Years of Experience 2008 and 2004	4
Table 4.8 Annual Salary and Compensation by Years on Current Job	4
Table 4.9 Annual Salary and Compensation by Type of Paralegal Education.....	5
Table 4.10 Annual Salary and Compensation by Highest Educational Degree	5
Table 4.11 Annual Salary and Compensation by Region	6
Table 4.12 Average Compensation by Region 2008-1997 Data Compared.....	6
Chart 4.2 (4.12) Total Compensation by Region 2008 and 2004	7
Table 4.13 Annual Salary and Compensation by Number of Attorneys.....	7
Table 4.14 Total Compensation by Specialty Area Greater Than 40% of Time Compared with Less Than 40% of Time.....	9
Table 4.15 Employer Provided Benefits Reported by Responses and % of Total	10
Table 4.16 Employer Provided Benefits Reported in Percentage of Responses.....	10
The Participants.....	10

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Section 4 Compensation

This section provides the findings of NALA Utilization and Compensation Survey related to legal assistant salaries and compensation (defined as base salary plus bonus). This section also provides responses to questions regarding benefits available to legal assistants.

In consideration of this, or any data relating to compensation, keep in mind that average, or mean, values are presented. At best, these values only approximate real world situations. Data describing salary and compensation vary by many factors, most notably experience, geographic location, and size of firm. Therefore, the numbers are most useful for charting professional trends and changes rather than for direct comparison to any specific situation or person.

In this report, the data describing compensation is presented in relation to geographic location, educational backgrounds, size of firm, experience and years with current employer. The following table provides information about the relationships of these factors to salary and compensation levels. To understand this table, the highest possible relationship expressed in terms of a correlation coefficient is .99, indicating that a relationship between two factors is almost indistinguishable. Likewise, a correlation coefficient of .00 indicates that two factors are not related at all. A test of statistical significance was not conducted on these correlations.

**Table 4.1
Correlations to Salary and Compensation
of Factors Relating to Respondents Demographics**

Factor	Correlation to Salary	Correlation to Compensation
Population of City	0.211	0.209
Years on Current Job	0.193	0.215
Years of Experience	0.307	0.298
Size of Firm - Number of Attorneys	0.096	0.087
Size of Firm - Number of Legal Assistants	0.102	0.093
CLA/CP Credential	-0.251	-0.232
Advanced Certified Paralegal Credential	0.164	0.163
Level of General Education	0.288	0.272

**Table 4.2
Compensation, and Bonus
Average Values Survey Years 2008-1997**

Year	Total Comp	Salary	Bonus
2008	50,953	48,211	3,808
2004	46,862	44,373	3,393
2002	46,074	43,002	2,909
2000	40,474	37,946	2,449
1997	36,435	33,949	2,062

Table 4.3
Average Salary and Compensation by Professional Activity

Activity	Average Salary	Average Compensation*
NALA Member	\$48694	\$51558
Non Member	\$47175	\$49894
CLA/CP Certification	\$49652	\$52399
Non CLA	\$45256	\$48148
ACP Certification	\$53885	\$57379
Non Advanced Certified	\$47174	\$49885
National Average	\$48211	\$50953

*Compensation is computed by adding salary and bonus amounts.

Table 4.4
Schedule of Increases (N=1399)

Schedule	Responses	Percentage
Every three months	3	0%
Every six months	25	2%
Once a year	1082	77%
No set schedule	257	18%

Table 4.5
Annual Salary Ranges- General Findings

Range	Responses	Percentage
Less than 20,000	26	2%
20,001 - 25,000	27	2%
25,001 - 30,000	69	5%
30,001 - 35,000	107	8%
35,001 - 40,000	208	15%
40,001 - 45,000	203	15%
45,001 - 50,000	202	15%
50,001 - 55,000	152	11%
55,001 - 60,000	138	10%
60,001 - 65,000	107	8%
65,001 - 70,000	59	4%

70,001 - 75,000	34	3%
75,001 - 80,000	23	2%
> 80,000	30	2%

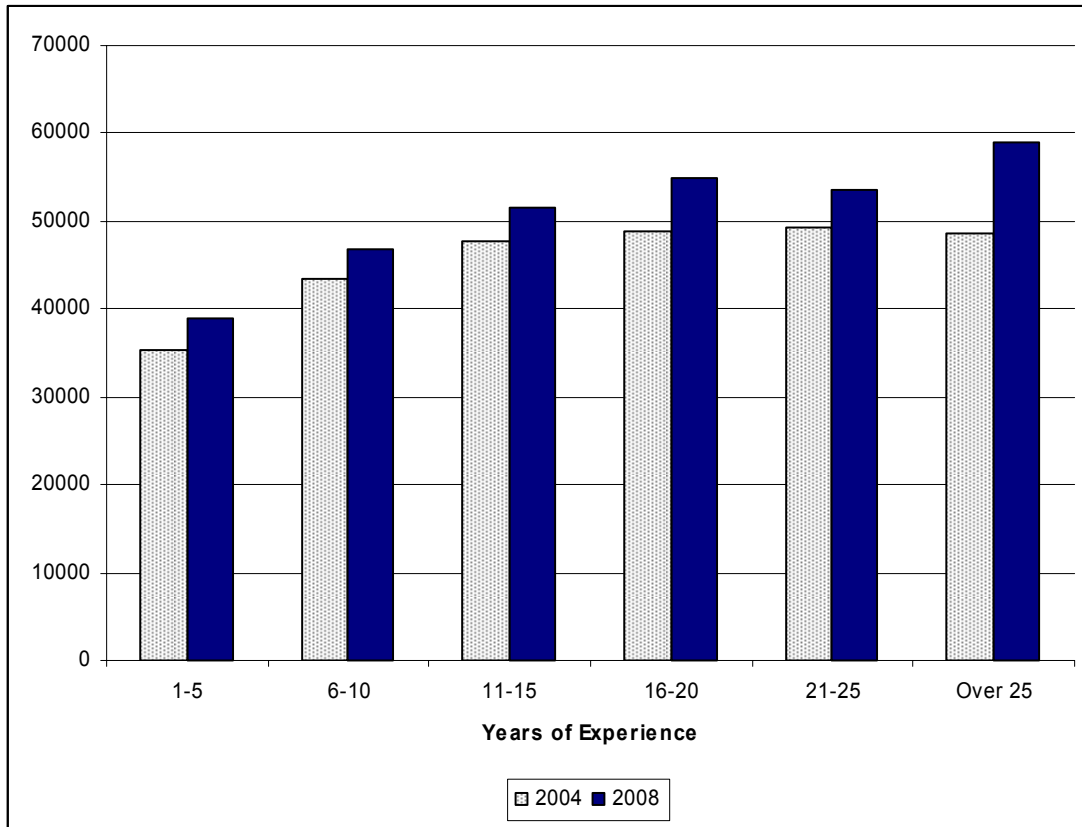
Table 4.6
Total Compensation Ranges- General Findings

Range	Responses	Percentage
Less than 20,000	27	2%
20,001 - 25,000	22	2%
25,001 - 30,000	53	4%
30,001 - 35,000	84	6%
35,001 - 40,000	168	12%
40,001 - 45,000	205	15%
45,001 - 50,000	179	13%
50,001 - 55,000	176	13%
55,001 - 60,000	122	9%
60,001 - 65,000	128	9%
65,001 - 70,000	68	5%
70,001 - 75,000	49	4%
75,001 - 80,000	36	3%
>80,000	70	5%

Table 4.7
Annual Salary and Compensation by Total Years of Legal Experience

Years	2008 Average Salary	2008 Average Compensation	2008 Responses	2004 Average Salary	2004 Average Compensation
1 - 5 Years	\$37511	\$38960	215	33,770	35,434
6 - 10 Years	\$43944	\$46929	237	41,097	43,433
11 - 15 Years	\$48193	\$51580	227	45,252	47,624
16 - 20 Years	\$52100	\$54842	288	46,026	48,752
21 - 25 Years	\$51403	\$53473	172	49,394	51,796
Over 25 Years	\$55142	\$59038	230	48,540	51,985

Chart 4.1 (4.7)
Compensation by Years of Experience 2008 and 2004



**Table 4.8 Annual Salary and Compensation
by Years on Current Job**

Years	2008 Average Salary	2008 Average Compensation	2008 Responses	2004 Average Salary	2004 Average Compensation
1 - 5 Years	\$45487	\$47531	776	42,904	45,402
6 - 10 Years	\$50947	\$54733	310	44,894	47,291
11 - 15 Years	\$50160	\$53247	135	46,488	48,948
16 - 20 Years	\$53844	\$57336	91	47,351	50,229
21-25 Years	\$53183	\$57497	30	46,156	49,120
Over 25 Years	\$57283	\$64174	39	50,319	53,468

Table 4.9
Annual Salary and Compensation by
Type of Paralegal Education

Legal Assistant Education	Average Salary	Average Compensation	Responses
Undergraduate Certificate	\$49674	\$52066	175
Post Baccalareate Certificate	\$50488	\$53651	181
Associate Degree	\$46696	\$49402	459
Bachelor Degree	\$46484	\$49292	109
Master Degree	n/a		
Other	\$49779	\$52409	183
None	\$47827	\$50919	256

Table 4.10
Annual Salary and Compensation by
Highest Educational Degree

Highest Educational Degree	Average Salary	Average Total Compensation	Responses
High School	\$49701	\$53014	220
Associate Degree	\$46568	\$49199	482
Bachelor Degree	\$48387	\$51013	574
Master's Degree	\$51995	\$55661	82
Ph.D.	\$59026	\$63036	6

Table 4.11
Annual Salary and Compensation by Region

Region	2008 Average Salary	2008 Average Compensation	2008 Responses	2004 Average Salary	2004 Average Compensation
Region 1 - New England/East	\$49816	\$52001	53	49,305	51,479
Region 2 - Great Lakes	\$48779	\$51001	63	42,266	44,415
Region 3 - Plains States	\$44017	\$46920	192	40,565	42,694
Region 4 - Southeast	\$46452	\$48995	581	43,168	45,460
Region 5 - Southwest	\$50631	\$54227	288	45,194	47,709
Region 6 - Rocky Mountains	\$41666	\$44175	53	40,558	43,609
Region 7 - Far West	\$56957	\$59787	155	51,993	55,760

Table 4.12
Average Compensation by Region
2008-1997 Data Compared

Region	2008	2004	2002	2000	1997
Region 1 - New England/East	\$52001	51,479	46,268	41,537	38,977
Region 2 - Great Lakes	\$51001	44,415	41,500	38,807	33,903
Region 3 - Plains States	\$46920	42,694	38,333	38,175	33,472
Region 4 - Southeast	\$48995	45,460	42,429	38,821	35,323
Region 5 - Southwest	\$54227	47,709	44,306	39,983	36,962
Region 6 - Rocky Mountains	\$44175	43,609	37,667	33,238	33,405
Region 7 - Far West	\$59787	55,760	55,068	54,335	43,125

Chart 4.2 (4.12)
Total Compensation by Region 2008 and 2004

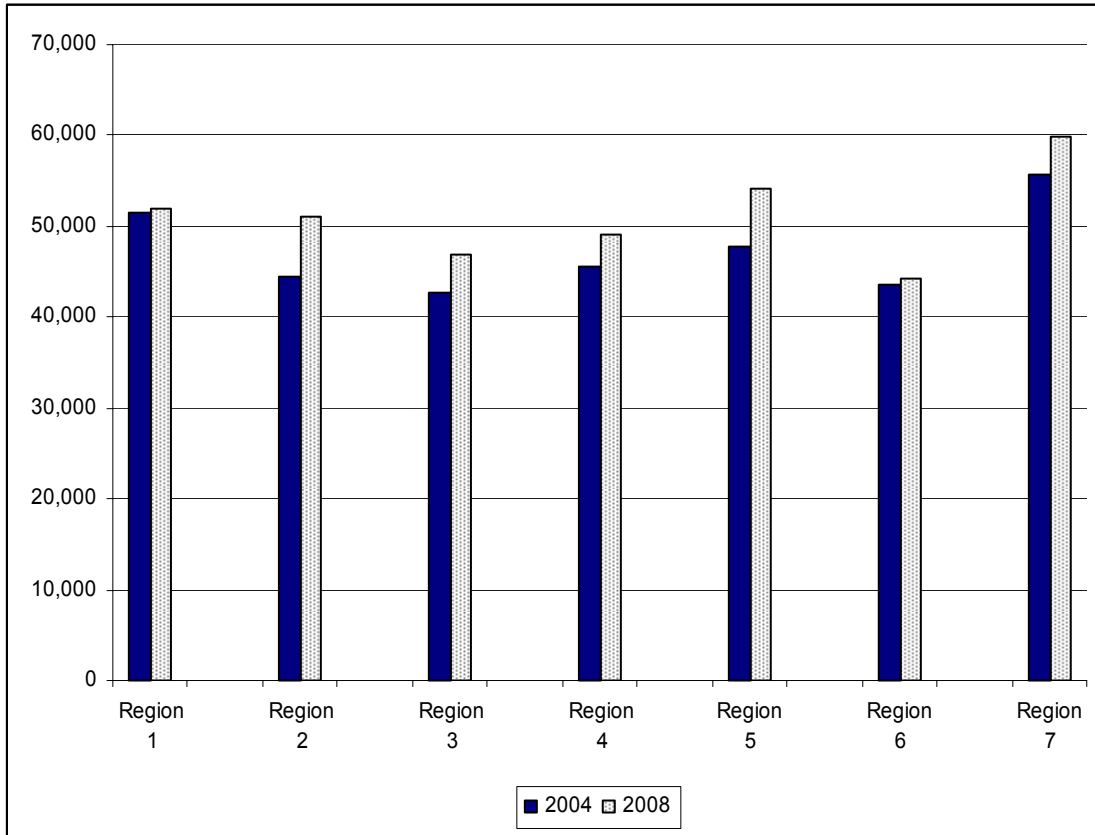


Table 4.13
Annual Salary and Compensation by Number of Attorneys

Number of Attorneys	2008 Average Salary	2008 Average Compensation	2008 Responses	2004 Average Salary	2004 Average Compensation
Sole	\$45481	\$48761	188	42,452	45,569
2-5 Attorneys	\$46914	\$49974	405	43,378	45,893
6 - 10	\$48436	\$51261	246	43,168	45,092
11 - 15	\$47216	\$49671	140	43,631	45,366
16 - 20	\$49190	\$51950	80	45,202	47,088
21 - 25	\$48913	\$51078	43	47,044	48,713
25 - 30	\$52459	\$54251	47	51,724	54,247

Number of Attorneys	2008 Average Salary	2008 Average Compensation	2008 Responses	2004 Average Salary	2004 Average Compensation
31 - 35	\$51174	\$53092	39	42,015	44,941
36 - 40	\$51784	\$54452	35	42,133	44,013
41 - 45	\$55837	\$60869	19	59,250	61,684
46 - 50	\$52594	\$54272	16	43,907	45,632
51 - 55	\$52282	\$55273	11	44,723	46,071
56 - 60	\$50217	\$51387	15	48,743	52,914
61 - 65	\$57627	\$58171	8	48,833	50,167
66 - 70	\$48473	\$51500	15	42,875	44,900
71 - 75	\$52314	\$59314	7	52,220	55,630
76 - 80	\$55470	\$58990	10	51,077	56,796
81 - 85	\$50067	\$51000	3	51,046	57,891
86 - 90	\$58851	\$60801	6	46,272	48,972
91 - 95	n/a	n/a			
96 - 100	\$54632	\$56498	5	45,837	47,795
More than 100	\$48309	\$50605	46	50,718	56,014

The following data provides the average compensation levels for legal assistants based on the specialty areas of practice.

The survey asked respondents to indicate how much time they spend working in a particular specialty area. Respondents were asked to estimate their time in the following categories:

Less than 20% of the time	More than 60% of time; less than 80%
More than 20% of time; less than 40%	From 80% to 100% of the time
More than 40% of time; less than 60%	

The table below compares total compensation within each specialty area on the basis of those who spend less than 40% of their time working in the area, and those who spend more than 40% of their time in the area.

Table 4.14
Total Compensation by Specialty Area Greater Than 40% of Time
Compared with Less Than 40% of Time

Area	Average Compensation Greater than 40% time	Average Compensation Less than 40% time	Number of Responses	Average Compensation Total Group
Administrative/government/public	\$46057	\$49951	133	\$48322
Admiralty/maritime	\$45413	\$47100	8	\$46898
Aviation	\$58697	\$46868	4	\$47631
Banking/finance	\$56526	\$51185	53	\$52675
Bankruptcy	\$49371	\$48906	39	\$49000
Collections	\$44450	\$47549	29	\$47097
Corporate	\$56129	\$51814	157	\$53368
Contract	\$54466	\$50586	116	\$51749
Criminal	\$40916	\$45263	53	\$43976
Elder law	\$44966	\$47833	20	\$47359
Employee benefits	\$53180	\$52390	22	\$52509
Employment/labor law	\$51536	\$50521	74	\$50794
Entertainment	\$46523	\$48994	7	\$48728
Environmental law	\$52292	\$50229	19	\$50543
Energy/utility	\$50511	\$49744	18	\$49900
Family law/domestic relations	\$38758	\$48483	86	\$44149
Immigration	\$48234	\$51942	13	\$51465
Insurance	\$48511	\$49497	116	\$49057
Intellectual property	\$57990	\$52361	56	\$54215
Legislation/lobbying	\$54410	\$47949	7	\$48514
Litigation-civil	\$50906	\$49687	428	\$50442
Medical malpractice	\$49551	\$45758	84	\$47320
Mergers/acquisitions	\$69717	\$53211	24	\$55870
Native American/tribal	\$28400	\$47675	1	\$47378
Office management	\$46071	\$50692	50	\$49725
Oil & gas	\$56510	\$47626	21	\$49549
Personal injury	\$49320	\$46028	158	\$47505
Probate	\$46309	\$45553	74	\$45776
Product liability	\$51528	\$49953	42	\$50322
Real estate	\$55883	\$48515	135	\$51225
Securities/antitrust	\$61173	\$53574	24	\$55107
Social security	\$47446	\$46146	8	\$46283
Tax	\$48690	\$49649	21	\$49484
Telecommunications	\$53340	\$48150	5	\$48590
Trusts & estates	\$50469	\$45122	89	\$47003
Workers compensation	\$42587	\$47768	47	\$46415
Mass tort litigation	\$51030	\$49103	45	\$49741
Multi-state litigation	\$57137	\$49496	13	\$50509

The final portion of this section provides a summary of general findings related to benefits.

Table 4.15
Employer Provided Benefits Reported by Responses and % of Total

Do you participate in any of the following?	Yes	No	N/A
Employers Retirement/Pension Plan	1096 80%	126 9%	154 11%
Employers Profit Sharing	574 44%	360 28%	370 28%
Does your employer contribute to a retirement/pension or profit sharing plan on your behalf?	1142 83%	178 13%	63 4%

Table 4.16
Employer Provided Benefits
Reported in Percentage of Responses

Benefit	Yes	No	Partial
Health Insurance	63%	10%	27%
Life Insurance	65%	23%	12%
Dental Insurance	44%	35%	21%
Disability Insurance	53%	33%	14%
Free Representation	36%	53%	12%
Maternity Benefits	50%	38%	13%
Parking	4%	93%	4%
Child Care	66%	28%	6%
Leased Car	5%	95%	1%
Mileage	65%	32%	4%
Professional Dues	80%	17%	4%
Tuition	50%	39%	12%
For Family: Health Insurance	32%	42%	26%
For Family: Life Insurance	21%	68%	12%
For Family: Dental Insurance	27%	53%	21%
For Family: Free Representation	16%	76%	8%
For Family: Maternity Benefits	16%	77%	7%
Vision Insurance	34%	47%	19%

The Participants

The data is based on analysis of the responses to the 2008 National Utilization and Compensation Survey report which was collected by a web based survey from October 15, 2007-February 15, 2008. There were 1434 responses received and utilized for this report. 5% of the population are males; 95% are females. The average age of survey participants is 45. 66% of the participants are members of NALA; 67% have received the Certified Legal Assistant/ Certified Paralegal credential.

Respondents are from a diverse geographical area. Forty-eight states, the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia are represented by the population. Among the regions of the United States, the Southeast region was represented by 42% of the respondents; Southwest region was represented by 20%; Far West was represented by 11%; Plains States was represented by 14%; Great Lakes was represented by 5%; Rocky Mountain states were represented by 4%; and New England/Mid East was represented by 4% of the respondents. The average population of the cities represented is 544,897. The regions and states are defined in the table below.

The respondents have about 18 years of legal experience; 8 years with the same employer. Most (64%) of respondents work for a private law firm, and, of those, 61% work in firms of 1-10 attorneys; 18% of the respondents

work for corporations. With reference to educational backgrounds, 42 of respondents have a bachelor's degree; 36 have an associate's degree.

The 2008 National Utilization and Compensation Survey presents information concerning the work environment, duties and responsibilities, billing rates and compensation levels of legal assistants. Conducted bi-annually since 1986, the survey analysis includes a review of current findings in comparison with findings of previous surveys. Economic data is presented in terms of such factors as size of city, size of firm, educational backgrounds, years of experience, and specialty area of practice.

Region			Number	Percentage
Region 1 - New England/Mid East			57	4%
Connecticut Maine Massachusetts	Maryland New Hampshire New Jersey	New York Pennsylvania Rhode Island		
Region 2 - Great Lakes			64	5
Illinois Indiana	Michigan Ohio	Wisconsin		
Region 3 - Plains States			197	14
Iowa Kansas	Minnesota Missouri	Nebraska North Dakota South Dakota		
Region 4 - Southeast			605	42%
Alabama Arkansas Florida Georgia	Kentucky Louisiana Mississippi North Carolina	South Carolina Tennessee Virginia West Virginia		
Region 5 - Southwest			289	20
Arizona New Mexico	Oklahoma	Texas		
Region 6 - Rocky Mountains			58	4
Colorado Idaho	Montana Utah	Wyoming		
Region 7 - Far West			157	11%
Alaska California	Hawaii Nevada	Oregon Washington		

-End of Section 4 of 4-