

The BCG Attorney Search 2018 State of the American Lateral Law Firm Legal Market Report

By Harrison Barnes from Los Angeles Office Managing Director

The 2017 legal market was one of the better legal markets on record. We placed 30% more attorneys in 2017 than we placed in 2016—and 2016 was a very good legal market.

While the partner market was healthy, the associate market was far healthier than it has been in a generation. The market is doing well in every part of the country.

Provided there is no crash, the 2018 market should be an even better market than 2017.

Litigation was surprisingly active in smaller to midsized law firms and very slow in the largest law firms.

Large law firms have continued to have reduced hiring in 2017. Large law firms have also started creating more and more staff attorney roles for litigators. We saw numerous law firms do this in 2017 that formerly would have hired regular associates.

Niche practice areas remained very popular and the easiest to get jobs in. The more "niche" an attorney's background, the more marketable they are likely to be. Attorneys in the most niche practice areas that are geographically flexible were almost always able to land positions.

For many niche practice areas, it became easier for attorneys to get hired at top law firms than it has ever been. Large law firms are finding a lack of talent for attorneys in many niche practice areas and hiring more and more of them.

Corporate generalist hiring was much less robust than it was in the previous years; however, corporate finance has gotten busier.

Overall, corporate was extremely competitive to get positions within the largest law firms, but smaller to midsized firms were hungry for attorneys in corporate.

Real estate was very slow. There was hardly any activity in real estate all year, and real estate attorneys had a difficult time.

More and larger law firms are moving away from employment-related work. Many of those that are not are hiring "staff attorneys" to do the day-to-day related employment work. In an interesting twist, many employment-only firms did a lot of hiring in 2017 and were increasingly demanding the best talent.

Trademark is traditionally a "barometer" of a healthy economy with new businesses being started—we saw more trademark jobs in the last month of 2017 than we have ever seen. Many large law firms are hiring staff attorneys to do trademark work, however.

Senior level litigators had a very, very difficult time getting positions in larger markets. Litigation is increasingly becoming a dangerous practice area for large law firm attorneys with few opportunities for advancement.

More and more millennials seem to be interested in smaller law firms and unconcerned about compensation and leaving large law firms than ever before—many are simply quitting.

Diversity has become something that is extremely important to law firms. This has become so important that this year I wrote a book about diversity for law firms and applicants that can be found here: [Law Firm Diversity: How Race, Gender, Age, Social and Economic Divisions Impact the Hiring, Retention and Advancement of Law Firm Attorneys](#)

This annual report from [BCG Attorney Search](#) summarizes the recruitment, placement and job search of thousands of attorneys each year in firms throughout the country. I watch our candidates go through every stage of the job search process--from submitting applications to going to interviews, to accepting offers. By closely observing this process and the trends that reveal themselves we get a profound understanding of the legal market and what is in demand in markets and practice areas across the nation.^[i]

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Introduction

The 2017 legal market was one of the best on record--but it was much different than the previous boom markets of 1999 and 2005-2006. It is the sort of legal market that gives the impression of massive opportunity in the legal sector, which drives people to go to law school. The legal market is in a boom again.*

As a preliminary matter, it is important to note that our legal recruiting firm has historically dealt with the best candidates seeking positions in the best law firms. To some extent, our placement results have typically shown demand at the higher end of the legal market--[the best attorneys seeking positions in the best firms](#). The 2017 calendar year was different in so many respects. The candidates we were able to place were no longer almost exclusively candidates coming from the best law schools and law firms. Across the board, our recruiters made placements of candidates in large and small law firms that almost never would have been made in normal market conditions.

These placements were so notable that I started creating case studies of my placements this year. You can view the evolving list here: [Harrison's Case Studies](#). What was so incredible about 2017 was that I took six months off from legal recruiting during the year to work on [a book on diversity in the legal profession](#) and still had a record year of placements--working half as much. Had I worked the entire year the results would have presumably been two times as good.

Here are some highlights, however, of just some of my placements in 2017 that were unusual and would not have occurred unless the market was doing as well as it is:

A candidate from a third tier law school, with no law firm experience and average performance in law school placed in a major New York City law firm. This would be unheard of in a normal market.

A finance attorney from a top 50 law school, who had four law firm jobs in four years was placed with a major international law firm in another part of the world (their fifth job in five years) after a 45-minute phone interview. This would be unheard of in a normal market.

I placed several very senior (30+ years of experience) patent prosecutors with minimal to no business in new firms around the country. This would be unheard of in a normal market.

I placed at least ten patent prosecution attorneys from third-tier law schools and small law firms into much larger ones--in most cases relocating them. Many of these patent prosecutors had never worked in a law firm of more than ten attorneys. This would never have happened in most normal markets.

I placed several trademark attorneys--including at least one with 8+ years of experience. This would never have happened in a normal market as well.

I placed several federal clerks coming out of clerkships--notably, several out of the United States Court of Appeal who were on their second or third clerkships. What made these placements notable was that most of them had never worked in a law firm--even as a summer associate and a few were in their mid-30s. This would never have happened in a normal market.

I placed several attorneys out of government jobs, with zero law firm experience in major law firms. This would never have happened in a normal market.

I successfully relocated several very senior attorneys with no business in a variety of practice areas to small markets (Salt Lake City, Portland, Milwaukee, Orlando, Long Island, Maine, Vermont, Rochester, Albany, Grand Rapids, Sacramento--and many more). In fact, niche markets were extremely busy. This would never have happened in a normal market.

Numerous senior attorneys in practice areas such as litigation, environmental, executive compensation, bankruptcy, and others were placed in law firms. This would never have happened in a normal market.

Several attorneys were placed from major law firms to very small boutique law firms. Smaller law firms typically never used legal recruiters in the past--now many are doing so.

I worked with three separate solo practitioners attorneys in their 70s (one in his late 70s) that I was able to get offers for with established, larger law firms. This was unusual and never would have happened in a normal market.

Our activity throughout the year was a virtual firestorm of placements with several of our recruiters making multiple placements in a given week. Even during the week before Christmas, we were continually getting interviews and offers (in what is almost always a slow part of the year). In the week between Christmas and New Year's, we even made a few [unexpected] placements and had several interviews scheduled. Law firms sent us numerous jobs the week before Christmas and the week before New Year's as well.

*For the 2017 calendar year, each of our recruiters collectively averaged 30% more placements than in the prior year. I made 40% more placements and took six months off during which I wrote a book about diversity. Read the book here:***[Law Firm Diversity: How Race, Gender, Age, Social and Economic Divisions Impact the Hiring, Retention and Advancement of Law Firm Attorneys](#)**. The market was very hungry for the right sort of attorneys--but with several caveats.

Despite all of this activity, the sorts of placements we were making and the competitive landscape have changed a great deal. Placement activity has been moving away from many of the larger firms to smaller law firms.

The largest law firms have become more competitive places to make placements in. These law firms are more difficult for lateral attorneys to get positions in and have become better at understanding the sorts of attorneys that are likely to be more committed to the practice of law than they were in the past. **See [The #1 Attorney Career Killer That Attorneys Are Never Taught](#)**for more information. The largest law firms in major cities (New York; Washington, DC; and San Francisco) are more difficult to get positions in than they have ever been. The bar continually goes up in regard to how difficult it is to get positions in the largest, most competitive law firms--except for some attorneys in niche practice areas. Attorneys that confine their job searches to the largest law firms do so at their peril because there is a lot more opportunity in smaller to mid-sized law firms.

There is more demand in smaller to mid-sized law firms for attorneys. Smaller to mid-sized firms are becoming very busy. Countless smaller to mid-sized firms are using legal recruiters for the first time. Our phones in our offices were ringing with multiple calls per day from small to mid-sized law firms that were seeking attorneys. This activity was something we have never seen before. Smaller to mid-sized law firms are getting very busy and are seeking talent. As they remain interested in hiring new attorneys, they continue to reach out to us for assistance. This is a welcome development: Many millennials are more interested in smaller law firms, and they are going to these law firms.

Lots of new law firms are starting and becoming very successful out of the gate. Over the past year, I saw several smaller law firms start and become quite successful right out of the gate. I spoke with several law firms that were less than three years old, have fewer than ten attorneys and were already generating tens of millions of dollars a year. While I have certainly seen this sort of thing in the past, there seems to be much more entrepreneurial activity with more law firm start-ups in the market than there have ever been.

Markets outside of major cities are also becoming far busier than they have ever been. We have seen a lot of activity in smaller to mid-sized cities--particularly those outside of large cities. This is an indicator that there is not enough talent in these markets as well. In slow legal markets, there is traditionally plenty of talent to go around even in smaller markets. In good legal markets, there is not enough talent in smaller markets, and law firms hire from outside of the market. In 2017, we placed several attorneys in new markets, and this indicates that the overall market is getting much better.

Corporate activity in major markets is slowing down going into 2018 and there are not a lot of openings.

Concerning corporate, the slowdown was substantial enough towards the end of 2018--and the absence of new openings in many major markets (outside of Silicon Valley) notable enough, that there are some indications that there might be an overall market correction and slowdown in 2018. The presence of a robust corporate market has traditionally been an indicator of a healthy legal market overall. Here, the slowdown is meaningful because it does not show an expansion of this sector but, instead, indicates that it appears to be slowing down--or at least leveling off. Whenever I have seen this before, an overall slowdown in the market has followed shortly after that. While the market for corporate attorneys typically tracks a rising stock market (which we saw throughout 2017), something is going on that is driving a slowdown in corporate positions in major law firms and I am not sure what this is.

Litigation has increased significantly. Litigation had its best year on record. There was significant demand for litigators. Most of this demand, however, was not from major law firms. [Major law firms have not been actively hiring litigators](#)--most of the activity appears to be occurring with smaller to mid-sized law firms. All across the country, our recruiters were busy making placements in smaller law firms. One area where there was not a lot of placement activity for attorneys who are litigators was in New York City. The West Coast, Chicago, and other areas of the country were busy.

This report relies heavily upon data and statistics compiled by BCG Attorney Search. We discuss specific data concerning interviews and placements in various practice areas below. For more detailed information on the data discussed in this article, please see the following links:

[Percentage of BCG Placements by Practice Area with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Percentage of BCG Interviews by Practice Areas with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Placement-Based Chart for Pacific States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Placement-Based Chart for Central/Mountain States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Placement-Based Chart for Eastern States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Interview-Based Chart for Pacific States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#)
[Interview-Based Chart for Central/Mountain States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017;](#) and
[Interview-Based Chart for Eastern States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017.](#)

2018 Placement and Market Demand Is Increasing for Mainstream and Nontraditional Niche Practice Areas: 2018 Placement and Market Demand Is Decreasing for Mainstream Niche Practice Areas
Mainstream practice areas for large law firms are [litigation](#) and [corporate](#). Many large law firms will consider [real estate](#) as part of a mainstream practice area as well. These are considered "mainstream" practice areas because this is where most of the revenue from the largest, full-service law firms comes from.

Niche practice areas for large law firms are [employment](#), [healthcare](#), [ERISA](#), [executive compensation](#), [bankruptcy](#), [immigration](#), [tax](#), and [trust and estates](#). These practice areas are done by most large law firms, but they are not their "bread and butter" typically, and most law firms have much smaller teams of attorneys tasked with working in these practice areas. These practice areas are done by the majority of larger law firms--but not all. These are "niche" practice areas because these practice areas typically supplement the revenue of the largest, full-service law firms.

Nontraditional niche practice areas for large law firms are: [intellectual property litigation](#), [white collar crime](#), [energy and oil and gas law](#), [environmental law](#), [antitrust](#), [international trade](#), [data privacy](#), [project finance](#), [government law](#), [insurance coverage](#), [all forms of patent law](#), [trademark and copyright](#), [government contracts](#), [telecommunications](#), and [food and drug law](#). These are practice areas that are practiced by some large, prestigious law firms--but not all. These are "nontraditional" niche practice areas because these typically generate even a lower percentage of the revenue for large, full-service law firms.

Mainstream Practice Area Activity in 2017

In 2016, the demand for attorneys in mainstream practice areas was decreasing throughout most of the year. In 2017, the market was strong in all respects, mainstream practice areas were also busier, and demand increased. This is a sign of a healthy and expanding legal market in all respects.

Litigation and corporate are considered "bread and butter" mainstream practice areas and everything else a niche practice area. As mentioned above, most law firms have the majority of their activity in these two practice areas.

Concerning both placements and interviews in corporate and litigation, the number of interviews and placements increased all year--in 2016 the situation was the opposite. While litigators and corporate attorneys comprise the majority of attorneys, the demand for them inside of law firms at the lateral level is strengthening.

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation, Corporate	38.40%	39.61%	3.15%
Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation, Corporate	36.96%	39.16%	8.90%

Real estate for most large law firms also would be considered a mainstream practice area that comprises a substantial portion of their revenue. If you look at the placement activity for real estate, together with corporate and litigation, real estate seems to indicate slightly less hiring but more interviews. Real estate was slow all throughout 2017. Real estate was also slow in 2016.

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation, Corporate, Real Estate	45.92%	44.75%	-2.56%
Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation, Corporate, Real Estate	43.41%	45.19%	4.10%

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The Data Indicates the Market Is Healthy and Expanding

The need for generalists is important to understand regarding its significance to the health of the overall market. Legal recruiting is always something that is active for law firms seeking specialists because specialists are difficult for law firms to find on their own. In contrast, most markets are teeming with generalists who email their resumes without any solicitation to major law firms all day long, obviating the need to advertise positions or hire legal recruiters to track them down.

However, when there is a high demand for generalists, this means that law firms are having a difficult time locating these attorneys on their own in a slow legal market, as there are usually tons of generalists looking for jobs bombarding law firms with resumes. When generalists are in high demand, this means there is a shortage of attorneys in the open market and they are not contacting law firms looking for positions. This is very good for the legal market and means that the best attorneys are gainfully employed.

2018 Placement and Interview Activity Is Decreasing for Mainstream "Niche" Practice Areas

The demand for attorneys in mainstream niche practice areas is mixed. In 2016, we noted that it was "taking off like crazy"; however, in 2017 it did not seem nearly as strong in mainstream "niche" practice areas and the market was decreasing.

From placements to interviews, there was far less activity in mainstream niche practice areas in 2017 than there was in 2016. The decrease in this activity seems to indicate that more placements may be occurring in mainstream practice areas than niche ones--and more nontraditional niche practice areas as well. This should not indicate major changes in the market. What it may signify is our recruiters are working with more mainstream practice area candidates because they are now easier to place since the market is improving. More insight may be gained from a discussion and review of each niche practice area later in this report.

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment, Health Care, ERISA/Executive Compensation, Bankruptcy, Immigration, Trusts and Estates, Tax	26.68%	20.96%	-26.93%

Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment, Health Care, ERISA/Executive Compensation, Bankruptcy, Immigration, Trusts and Estates, Tax	26.25%	21.40%	-18.46%

As you can see, these decreases in activity were fairly significant.

2018 Placement Activity Has Increased for Nontraditional Niche Practice Areas

There was, surprisingly, an increase in the number of placements that occurred in nontraditional niche practice areas.

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Litigation, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Antitrust and Competition, International Trade, Data Privacy, Finance, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, Intellectual Property - Patent, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright, Government Contracts, Telecommunications, Food & Drug Administration	21.52%	27.31%	26.93%

Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Patent, Antitrust and Competition, Data Privacy, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Government Contracts, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, Intellectual Property - Litigation, International Trade, Finance, Telecommunications, Food & Drug Administration, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	22.06%	26.17%	18.60%

Continuing a trend that occurred in 2016 as well, there has been a continued slowdown in most forms of patent work and patent litigation, which traditionally have made up a lot of interviews (patent attorneys perform notoriously poor during interviews leaving them to participate in many interviews before they are placed). Patent Litigation attorneys did have a slight increase in placements in 2017, but not enough to make a big difference in the overall trend. If you take these out of the equation, the results show that there is growth in nonmainstream practice areas--besides IP litigation and all forms of patent law. IP and patent law are decreasing in their activity massively and have been for the past few years. Removing this outlier shows that nontraditional niche practice areas are growing substantially.

Nontraditional Niche Practice Area Placement Percentages without IP Litigation and All Forms of Patent Law	2016	2017	% of Growth
Antitrust and Competition, Data Privacy, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Food & Drug Administration, Government Contracts, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, International Trade, Finance, Telecommunications, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	7.81%	17.22%	120.62%
Nontraditional Niche Practice Area Interview Percentages without IP Litigation and All Forms of Patent Law	2016	2017	% of Growth
Antitrust and Competition, Data Privacy, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Food & Drug Administration, Government Contracts, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, International Trade, Finance, Telecommunications, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	9.15%	15.86%	73.41%

Some of the reasons nontraditional niche practice areas seem to do well are:

They are highly specialized, and it takes time to learn how to do them. Anytime a practice area is difficult to learn, and it takes time to do so, the law firm cannot train its generalist attorneys to do the work, and they need to hire someone who knows how to do the work. If you are in a practice area like this, you are less of a "commodity" than if you are simply a generalist. This makes you more marketable to the law firms that have work. There are fewer of you, and because of this your educational qualifications and experience become even less important. It may also be more difficult to find these sorts of positions--but if you are in a niche practice area, you are benefitted in that there are fewer of you.

Law firms hiring in these practice areas tend to have steady, recurring work from institutional clients. You will have the most success as a lateral attorney if you are doing work that is recurring in nature and is unlikely to go away. The problem with many practice areas is that the work can go away. Litigation cases can settle, real estate can slow down when interest rates change--and so forth. When law firms have recurring work, this means there is no risk when hiring you and they can even profitably ease you into being a service partner or counsel role to service these clients as you get more senior. If an attorney is in healthcare, the firm may have existing hospitals and managed care organizations that consistently send it work. If the attorney is in a practice area like ERISA, the law firm may have some strong institutional clients that send it work. The same goes for a practice area like immigration. Major practice areas (corporate and litigation) get busy during boom markets. In strong economies, there tends to be a glut of litigators in the market. In weak economies, there tends to be a glut of corporate attorneys in the market. Many of these openings go unadvertised because many attorneys in large law firms know other attorneys who are slow or out of work when these practice areas are slow, and hiring is done more informally. Unless the litigator or corporate attorney is very specialized, the position may go unadvertised and be filled informally.

Law firms are less concerned with what law firm you are coming from or what law school you went to than they are with your exact skill set--**and they are emphasizing the most niche of skills more and more in every practice area.**

Concerning practice areas like environmental, trademark, and food and drug work, we saw many law firms hire people you normally would not expect in 2017. Food and drug law was also quite busy, despite the fact that there are few law firms and attorneys that do this work. Our available attorneys in the market were snapped up pretty quickly.

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Statistics for Mainstream Niche Practice Areas and Nontraditional Niche Practice Areas

Accounting for activity in all niche practice areas (niche and nontraditional) you can see the following.

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment, Health Care, ERISA/Executive Compensation, Bankruptcy, Immigration, Trusts and Estates, Tax, Intellectual Property - Litigation, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Antitrust and Competition, International Trade, Data Privacy, Finance, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, Intellectual Property - Patent, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright, Government Contracts, Telecommunications, Food & Drug Administration	50.20%	48.27%	-3.84%

Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment, Health Care, ERISA/Executive Compensation, Bankruptcy, Immigration, Trust & Estates, Tax, Intellectual Property - Litigation, White Collar Crime, Energy and Oil and Gas Law, Environmental Law, Antitrust, International Trade, Data Privacy, Project Finance, Government Law, Insurance Coverage, All Forms of Patent Law, Trademark and Copyright, Government Contracts, Telecommunications and Food and Drug Law	48.90%	52.47%	7.30%

Placements	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Litigation, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Antitrust and Competition, International Trade, Data Privacy, Finance, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, Intellectual Property - Patent, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright, Government Contracts, Telecommunications, Food & Drug Administration	21.52%	27.31%	26.93%

Interviews	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Patent, Antitrust and Competition, Data Privacy, Energy and Oil & Gas, Environmental and Land Use, Government Contracts, Government and Government Relations, Insurance Coverage, Intellectual Property - Litigation, International Trade, Finance, Telecommunications, Food & Drug Administration, Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	22.06%	26.17%	18.60%

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How and Why Law Firms Hire Lateral Attorneys through Legal Recruiters

To put this data and these trends in context, it is important to review why law firms hire lateral attorneys through recruiters. The role of legal recruiters as agents in the recruiting process for law firms has traditionally been confined to the "high end" law firms in the country. The most striking thing that happened in 2017 was that this pattern has appeared to change. Many less prestigious law firms started using legal recruiters in 2017.

Law firms hire lateral attorneys through recruiters when: (1) they are confident they have profitable ongoing work to give the attorney, (2) there is a shortage of readily available people in the market that complete the work attorneys do, and (3) when the candidate is someone that will impress the law firm's clients and result in

ongoing work being given to the firm.

Law Firms Hire Lateral Attorneys through Legal Recruiters When They Are Confident They Have Profitable Ongoing Work to Give the Attorney to Do

Law firms hire laterally through legal recruiters when they are succeeding and confident about the future. Law firms that use recruiters are almost always doing work on behalf of stable companies that (within reason) can afford to write an endless series of checks for having their legal work done. This typically means that the attorney will be mainly working for companies that are large enough and have sufficient revenue that legal bills of even hundreds of thousands of dollars a month (or more) do not affect them.

In large cities, these companies may be giant public corporations. In smaller cities, they may be hospitals, local banks, divisions of large national companies, local universities, governments, and other local organizations with healthy revenues and growth. Law firms that service these sorts of institutions are the clients of legal recruiters. In contrast, law firms that do "piecemeal" work that is unpredictable, or who work for individuals (as opposed to companies) tend to rarely, if ever, use legal recruiters.

Law firms that use legal recruiters have "good legal jobs." A good legal job might pay two or even three times as much in New York City compared to Albany, New York--but the position is still a good one in Albany. A good law firm job typically offers the prospect of stability, a good income, and upward advancement. Law firms with good legal jobs will typically not do a lot of work for individuals and be somewhat "class-conscious" regarding the pedigrees of the attorneys they are hiring. They want to hire people they can "sell" to their clients (and clients expect their law firm's attorneys to look good on paper).

Law firms that have profitable, ongoing work make a lot of money from their attorneys. They have money to spend on salaries, are unconcerned about temporary slowdowns in the legal market and are also unconcerned about nominal legal recruiter fees that are most often less than even 5% of the revenue that an attorney generates in a year. In fact, because law firms that use legal recruiters have confidence in their hires and the money to support them, we have found that attorneys typically last longer and have better careers with law firms that hire them through legal recruiters than those that do not. A law firm that has confidence in its future and is well managed has no issues with a recruiter's involvement in a placement and only wants to hire the best people that it can.

Because of how delicate a legal career is and because attorneys want to protect themselves from the risk that a firm without sufficient work will hire them--only to discard them a short time later--most highly qualified candidates typically want a legal recruiter involved in their placement. Legal recruiters have "good legal jobs," and law firms that use legal recruiters have profitable work and are confident about their futures.

This discussion would not be complete without us noting that many smaller and midsized law firms used our services this year. This was an indicator that profitable, ongoing legal work has been moving downstream to a greater extent than in the past. This is a good sign for the legal market and seems to imply that there is more profitable work out there.

Law Firms Hire Lateral Attorneys through Legal Recruiters When There Is a Shortage of People in the Market They Can Hire and Locate Informally

Law firms hire lateral attorneys when there is a shortage of people in the market they have immediate access to. As mentioned earlier, law firms are typically bombarded with unsolicited resumes from attorneys--even highly qualified ones--when the market is not healthy. Due to this, law firms often do not even need to advertise their positions or use recruiters because the applicants for their positions are right in front of them. Attorneys inside of law firms, recruiting personnel, and others typically have all sorts of "contacts" in the market they can draw from when they are hiring. When a law firm hires this way, they typically recognize and feel comfortable with the person. A proven, known commodity is considered better than one that is not

known.

Also, before law firms will go out in the market seeking people--whether it is posting ads on their website, external job boards, or contacting legal recruiters--the law firm will see if there is anyone they already know who they can invite to interview for the job. Many law firm jobs are filled informally like this. This is one reason, for example, that in-house positions with corporations are so difficult for attorneys to find--most of these positions are filled informally because they are in demand from associates with no business at risk of losing their jobs, or attorneys wanting fewer hours, for example. Once an attorney is in-house and in charge of hiring, they will often hire attorneys they are already working with at an outside law firm, or recruit former colleagues they worked with before, or people they knew from law school.

When law firms do not know of attorneys they can bring in to assist them, they contact recruiters, put positions on their websites and start advertising these positions. (Recruiters have access to so few in-house positions, for example, because there is so much demand for them). This indicates that there is a shortage of attorneys in the market and law firms take action and hire this way when they cannot find qualified people through informal channels.

One of the reasons that niche practice areas are so popular for lateral hiring is that there are just not many attorneys with niche skills in the market compared to attorneys in mainstream practice areas. Law firms do not have contacts or resumes, or mainstream attorneys to draw from and hire and therefore need to promote these positions by posting advertisements and contacting legal recruiters.

Law Firms Use Legal Recruiters to Find the Sorts of Candidates Their Clients Will Approve of

Law firms work for clients and, as such, they want to hire attorneys that are acceptable to their clients. This means they look for attorneys who have the pedigrees and background the law firm can "sell" to its clients. In general, large companies and others with lots of legal work are concerned about the pedigree of the attorneys their law firm uses.

For a law firm to hire laterally, the clients of the law firm need to approve of the hire as well. This means that the person hired should have the sorts of qualifications that the client will pay for. If it is a large, prestigious law firm, the prior law firm the attorney worked in, and their law school, as well as other pedigree information, will be important.

However, a new calculus that has become notable over the past year has been the need for diversity inside of law firms. Corporations and the clients of major law firms are increasingly requesting that law firms hire a more diverse subset of the population. Clients serve a diverse country and expect that their attorneys mirror this diversity as well. Because of this, law firms are increasingly looking to increase their diversity.

Because of the importance of diversity to the hiring of attorneys, I spent several months in 2017 doing an extended study and book about diversity which can be found here: [**Law Firm Diversity: How Race, Gender, Age, Social and Economic Divisions Impact the Hiring, Retention and Advancement of Law Firm Attorneys**](#)

We also hired a [diversity director](#) in 2017 and built out a [section of our website](#) to focus on diversity as well.

State of Individual Practice Areas in 2018

Below we discuss the trends within the various practice areas. In addition to setting out the interview and placement data, we give each practice area an informal health status in terms of what we expect the health of that practice area to be in 2018. The statuses are: 1) Dying, (2) Sick, (3) Stable, (4) Vibrant, or (5) Very

Vibrant. Use the images in the key below to quickly identify the health of a practice area.

Practice Area Health Status Key

One note on the charts: To calculate the % of Growth column in the charts found in each practice area, we used the following formula. We subtracted the 2016 percentage from the 2017 percentage, then divided the result by the 2016 percentage and multiplied it by 100, which provided the percentage of growth or decline in a particular practice area from 2016 to 2017.

Practice Area	Percentage of BCG's 2017 Placements
Litigation	29.26%
Corporate	10.35%
Intellectual Property - Patent	6.37%
Finance	6.22%
Labor & Employment	5.63%
Real Estate	5.13%
Health Care	4.60%
Intellectual Property - Litigation	3.73%
ERISA/Executive Compensation	3.48%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	3.35%
Bankruptcy	2.52%
Technology Transactions	1.89%
Antitrust and Competition	1.74%
Trusts and Estates	1.74%
Intellectual Property - General	1.70%
Immigration	1.49%
Tax	1.49%
Other	1.21%
Environmental and Land Use	1.12%
Construction	0.93%
Government Contracts	0.93%
Government and Government Relations	0.81%
Data Privacy	0.75%
Insurance Coverage	0.62%
Insurance Defense	0.62%
Energy and Oil & Gas	0.56%
Food & Drug Administration	0.37%
International Trade	0.37%
Telecommunications	0.37%
Municipal Law	0.25%
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.25%
Electric Power	0.12%
Alcohol Beverage Law	0.00%
Education	0.00%
Entertainment and New Media	0.00%
Family Law	0.00%
Maritime and Transportation	0.00%

Workers' Compensation

Practice Area

Percentage of BCG's 2017 Placements

Go here to find out what the State of the Individual Practice Areas were in 2017.

Corporate (including Corporate Finance): The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Corporate Attorneys 2018 Corporate Health: Sick

Percentage of Corporate Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Corporate	17.86%	10.35%	-42.02%	1	2

Percentage of Corporate Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Corporate	15.52%	12.84%	-17.30%	2	2

Read a Broader Description of the Corporate Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047678/Corporate-Attorney-General/>

In most of the previous good economies, corporate was the strongest practice area by far and did very well in all respects. For the past few years, the percentage of corporate placements our firm has been making has decreased.

Corporate has always been the leading practice area for attorney placement firms to place lateral attorneys. The work is specialized, requires specialized skills only learned in large law firms, and takes time to learn. Finally, corporate work is done on behalf of corporations "doing deals" and other forms of business where the cost of hiring expensive corporate attorneys is somewhat of an afterthought. Despite the fact that corporate attorneys do not make up the majority of attorneys in the United States, in all but the most recessionary environments, they will constitute the majority of placements made by most legal recruiting firms.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Corporate Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Corporate	Central / Mountain States	6.57%	3.11%	-52.71%
Corporate	Eastern States	9.68%	4.23%	-56.31%
Corporate	Non USA	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Corporate	Pacific States	1.61%	2.83%	76.24%

Percentage of Corporate Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Corporate	Central / Mountain States	3.63%	3.43%	-5.31%
Corporate	Eastern States	8.77%	6.00%	-31.61%
Corporate	Non USA	0.14%	0.13%	-12.27%
Corporate	Pacific States	2.98%	3.27%	10.03%

The only region of the United States that saw any growth in the hiring of corporate attorneys seemed to be the Pacific region. The California Bay Area in particular was very busy regarding its 2017 corporate-related hiring. Nevertheless, despite this fact, corporate hiring still was nowhere near the level it was in the previous year.

Going into the end of 2017, there were fewer openings in most major cities for corporate attorneys. Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and most major cities were very slow. Texas was especially slow. Despite what was a very healthy market in all respects, the slowdown in corporate-related work may not bode well for the overall economy. There is a possibility that the slowdown is due to a lack of deal-making activity, or, the issue could be that the market has simply reached an equilibrium where there are enough corporate attorneys that have entered the market to absorb the capacity.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Corporate Attorney?

Corporate is a very competitive practice area--particularly in the largest markets. Attorneys in the largest markets are facing a great deal of competition for corporate positions and the qualifications needed are high. The market for corporate attorneys is not "hot", and there appears to be a large supply of them in the market. When the economy is good, corporate attorneys are often in strong demand. The economy seems to be very good in 2018, but there appears to be many corporate attorneys chasing a limited number of jobs. The best opportunities for corporate attorneys tend to be in mid-sized markets where they are more in demand than in the largest markets.

Regarding the ability to lateral between states, cities, and even countries, corporate is probably the best practice area to be in. Corporate attorneys can relocate to different states without a lot of difficulty. We relocated numerous corporate attorneys in 2017.

Corporate is also a good practice area for attorneys interested in business and making a lot of money. Many corporate attorneys end up working inside of companies as in-house counsel or building books of business at their next firms.

When the economy is slow, it can become more difficult for corporate attorneys to move laterally and there are a lot of layoffs. Corporate work tends to mirror the strength of the larger economy and number of deals going on there.

Corporate is a very difficult practice area to start a career in. This is because attorneys can get laid off and lose their jobs early in their careers and never get the training needed to become seasoned.

Corporate is the best practice area for attorneys interested in building a book of business. Because corporate attorneys tend to advise their clients on an ongoing basis about a variety of issues, they typically can get spin-off work (litigation, real estate, tax, and so forth) that they can send to other attorneys in their firm.

The majority of placements we are making are for attorneys with specialized corporate skills--specialists as opposed to generalists. Large law firms increasingly have all sorts of specialist corporate attorneys who do aspects of finance, securities, mergers, and other work. In the largest markets, corporate attorneys are extremely specialized and in demand for niche and not generalist skills.

Read More about Practicing Corporate and Corporate Finance Law Here:

[Banking and Finance](#)

[Corporate Practice](#)

[BCG Attorney Search's Guide to Corporate and Finance Practice Areas](#)

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Litigation: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Litigation Attorneys 2018 Litigation Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Litigation Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Litigation	20.54%	29.26%	42.42%	2	1

Percentage of Litigation Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Litigation	20.44%	26.32%	28.78%	2	1

Read a Broader Description of the Litigation Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047686/Litigation-Attorney/>

Litigation was busy in 2017. In fact, regarding the number of placements we made in this practice area, we had a record year for the placement of litigators.

The majority of attorneys in the market are litigators. Approximately 40% of all attorneys inside law firms are litigators--and the percentage is probably much higher (my guess is over 50%) if you count solo practitioners, government attorneys, and other attorneys around the country. The majority of attorneys out there are litigators, and the total likely exceeds 50%. With so many litigators in the legal market, the fact that recruiters place many of them should not be a surprise. You would think that if more than 50% of attorneys are litigators that our percentage of placements would track that percentage, but that is not the case because there is an oversupply of litigators for the amount of demand.

As it was in 2016, the majority of litigators we placed in 2017 were with smaller to mid-sized law firms. For law firms that do not pay the top of the market rates, there was a major demand for litigators all around the country--particularly in areas outside of major American cities. Law firms outside of major cities were hungry for junior to mid-level litigators and eager to hire. Our offices around the country typically received multiple phone calls each day from smaller to mid-sized law firms seeking litigators. Law firms were hungry for litigators all year.

Regarding demand, there is plenty of demand for litigators in all but the largest law firms. Law firms that are not charging top of market billing rates seem to be going through a "growth phase" around the country. Many of these law firms are finding that they are getting more work and need to hire more attorneys.

The larger law firm, in contrast, remained very competitive for getting positions at in 2017. The requirements that they seek tend to be extremely high. The requirements for lateralizing into the largest law firms are much

higher for litigators than they are for attorneys in most other practice areas. The largest and most respected firms are interested in attorneys with the best grades, from the best law schools, coming from the best law firms, and with the most prestigious clerkships. The emphasis on qualifications for litigators tends to be higher than it is for attorneys in other practice areas in the largest law firms. Attorneys from large law firms did not do as well in the market as they might have done in previous years--it just seems to be getting harder and harder for them.

Some observations I made in 2016 repeated themselves in 2017:

Litigation generalists with stellar qualifications (the cream of the crop from top law schools and law firms) in New York; Washington, DC; and the Bay Area got few--if any interviews. Washington, DC and New York were what I would term "bloodbaths." In contrast, attorneys with these same qualifications in previous years would have numerous interviews. These markets continued to be very slow.

I came across countless senior attorneys throughout the year who were laid off or fired from large law firms--there was just no demand for them, and they were left groveling for anything. Some of these attorneys took jobs in public service and other roles that paid a fraction of what they had been making working for major law firms.

I saw many attorneys from top Ivy League law schools lose their jobs and go to work as solo practitioners and take other jobs you normally would not associate with attorneys with top credentials, including work as insurance defense attorneys and the like. This is not something I was happy seeing. It was sad watching these attorneys reduced to this.

Litigation has become a very difficult practice area for attorneys to succeed in. There are so many litigators out there that only the very best litigators can successfully lateral to "good firms." Unlike corporate, patent, real estate, and other practice areas, it is difficult for an attorney to [go in-house](#) and have other options available when the attorney becomes more senior. Without substantial portable business, the path of [many large law firm litigators is to become solo practitioners and do other sorts of similar jobs](#) after leaving large law firms if they do not become partners. It is very sad, and with an oversupply of litigators in the market, far too many talented litigators are ill-advised trusting the large law firm route in large cities.

Top law firms are much more pedigree-conscious with litigators than they are with other sorts of attorneys. They expect their litigators to have clerkships, be on law review, the order of the coif, and so forth--from top law schools. Even litigators with these sorts of qualifications, though, are experiencing a certain level of hardship moving laterally. Incredibly, in major cities there is an actual oversupply of litigators who clerked for federal circuit judges, attended top law schools, and were at the top of their classes. In previous years, these attorneys would see many doors open for them. This is just not the case anymore.

The litigators who have had the most success have often been those coming directly out of federal circuit court clerkships.

The market has gotten so tight that the largest and most prestigious law firms hiring lateral litigators do not even view federal district court clerkships very highly anymore--but there is still interest in federal district court clerks from the Eastern District of New York and a few other select jurisdictions.

The market for litigators has become so status conscious that clerking for a federal magistrate is something that seems equivalent to attending a fourth-tier law school--permanently barring all but the luckiest attorneys from the most prestigious law firms.

An explanation for the slowdown in lateral hiring is largely due to the laws of supply and demand discussed earlier. There are too many lateral litigators seeking jobs, and this has set the bar very high for attorneys getting hired. There are just not a lot of positions for litigators with "good law firms" at the moment. Every litigator out there is having serious issues getting a position. The economy has been relatively good, which has decreased to some extent the amount of litigation work available, as people tend to be less litigious in good times than in bad.

See this article for more information about the high demand of litigators:

Why Most Attorneys Have No Business Being Litigators: Fifteen Reasons Why You Should Not Be a Litigator

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Litigation Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation	Central / Mountain States	3.36%	5.91%	75.63%
Litigation	Eastern States	5.80%	12.94%	122.85%
Litigation	Pacific States	11.38%	10.42%	-8.43%
Litigation	Non USA			

Percentage of Litigation Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Litigation	Central / Mountain States	3.36%	5.39%	60.51%
Litigation	Eastern States	8.27%	9.21%	11.26%
Litigation	Pacific States	8.77%	11.72%	33.71%
Litigation	Non USA	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Litigation Attorney?

Litigation is doing very well for attorneys seeking positions in small to mid-sized law firms: There are plenty of positions available.

Litigation is expanding outside of major cities and doing well in smaller to mid-sized markets.

To be attractive to large law firms in major cities, litigators need to have exceptional qualifications (grades, schools, clerkships, and firm experience). This is because there are so many litigators out there (and litigation is by far the most popular practice group) that credentials help sort the "best" from the "good."

Because litigators need the bar to go to court and sign pleadings, it is also more difficult for them to move laterally and get positions in other states.

The market for litigation has never been stronger than it was in 2017. It is doing well in many respects.

Read More about Being a Litigator Here:

[Why Does Litigation Hiring Seem to Take So Much Longer Than Hiring for Other Practice Areas?](#)

[Is Contract Work the New Normal for Litigators?](#)

[Top 39 Tips for New Litigation Associates and Trial Lawyers: How to Be a Good Litigation Attorney](#)

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Employment: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Employment Attorneys 2018 Employment Health: Stable

Percentage of Employment Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Labor & Employment	8.36%	5.63%	-32.65%	4	5

Percentage of Employment Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Labor & Employment	7.32%	5.94%	-18.95%	5	5

Read a Broader Description of the Labor & Employment Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047679/Employment-Attorney/>

Employment was not as busy in 2017 as it was in 2016 and slowed down a great deal. There were a couple of major trends that we noticed in 2017 that seemed to be gaining more momentum.

First, firms that do mainly labor and employment seemed to be busy and growing. These law firms seem to be doing well and across the board are hiring and healthy. Almost every employment-only law firm seems busy and to be doing well. These employment law firms are using recruiters to seek out and bring them the best talent. Employment-only law firms seem to be thriving in the current market. Despite this fact, these law firms are a small slice of the market and cannot do all of the hiring in the market.

Second, major law firms seem to be retrenching to some extent with their hiring of employment attorneys. A strong source of placements in previous years involved attorneys moving from employment-only law firms to work in the employment practice groups of higher paying major law firms. This is not occurring as much anymore. In fact, many major law firms seem to be viewing employment as an unprofitable practice area and are moving away from it.

In the employment field, billing rates tend to be lower because clients simply will not pay high billing rates for employment attorneys. As a consequence of this, many large law firms are moving away from doing this work, and when they are not, they are often hiring attorneys as "staff attorneys" to do the work rather than associates. This seems to be occurring with a great deal of regularity, and more and more law firms are moving toward this. This accounted for a lot of the decrease in hiring.

Third, there seemed to be less hiring of employment litigators in the market in 2017 than there has been in previous years. This likely contributed to less hiring as well. Employment class actions and litigation constituted a lot of hiring in previous years, and we saw a lot less of this hiring this year. This was especially so with larger law firms.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Employment Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment	Central / Mountain States	1.38%	0.757%	-45.77%
Labor & Employment	Eastern States	2.55%	1.37%	-46.27%
Labor & Employment	Pacific States	4.43%	3.51%	-20.76%

Percentage of Employment Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Labor & Employment	Central / Mountain States	1.39%	1.27%	-9.06%
Labor & Employment	Eastern States	1.60%	1.59%	-0.50%
Labor & Employment	Pacific States	4.31%	3.08%	-28.50%
Labor & Employment	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Employment Attorney?

The prospects for moving laterally as an employment attorney are strong. An employment attorney can almost always find a good position.

The observations made about employment in 2017 apply to 2018 as well.

Employment is a strong practice area for lateral attorneys, and employment attorneys are generally in demand at all points in time.

Employment is a good practice area because there is a barrier to entry to some extent and employment attorneys are specialists to some extent.

There is a high demand for attorneys of color, women, and gay and lesbian attorneys in this practice area. One problem with this practice area, however, is that it is not that profitable for most major law firms (except wage-hour class actions) because the billing rates that firms charge for this work tend to be lower (since much of it is routine and not that complex).

Employment is a safe practice area for attorneys to be in and there are opportunities for strong employment attorneys at all points in time.

The one drawback is that the compensation attorneys make in this practice area tends to be lower.

Read More about Employment Law Here:

[Labor & Employment Law](#)

[What It's Like Practicing Employment Law](#)

[The Truth about Employment Law Attorneys](#)

Search for [Employment Law AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Employment law in 2018](#)

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ERISA/Executive Compensation: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for ERISA/Executive Compensation Attorneys

2018 ERISA/Executive Compensation Health: Vibrant

Percentage of ERISA/Executive Compensation Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
ERISA/Executive Compensation	6.60%	3.48%	-47.22%	9	9

Percentage of ERISA/Executive Compensation Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
ERISA/Executive Compensation	4.09%	1.63%	-60.03%	7	14

Read a Broader Description of the ERISA/Executive Compensation Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047583/ERISA-Executive-Compensation-Attorney/>

This was an active practice area in 2017 but not as active as it was in 2016. In 2016, just about any attorney with ERISA and executive compensation was attractive in the market - regardless of their level of experience. While this year was also quite active, the activity levels were nothing like what we saw in 2016.

Despite the fact that this practice area slowed down, it was still quite active. For example, we were able to place attorneys in this practice area coming out of accounting firms - this is typically not possible in many practice areas. Also, we placed several senior attorneys with limited business and also relocated several of them as well.

Over the past several years, I have placed a substantial number of attorneys in this practice area each year, and it shows no signs of slowing down that much--however, much of the demand does seem to be slowing down a little.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of ERISA / Executive Compensation Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Central / Mountain States	2.29%	0.75%	-67.46%
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Eastern States	1.40%	2.61%	86.61%
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Pacific States	2.91%	0.12%	-95.72

Percentage of ERISA / Executive Compensation Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Central / Mountain States	0.57%	0.17%	-70.32%
ERISA/Executive Compensation				

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Eastern States	1.20%	1.20%	0.00%
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Pacific States	2.11%	0.20%	-90.65%
ERISA/Executive Compensation	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an ERISA/Executive Compensation Attorney?

The observations about this practice area from 2017 are similar for 2018 as well.

ERISA/Executive Compensation is a very popular practice area for attorneys to lateral in, and there are typically a fair number of opportunities in most major markets at all points in time.

This practice area has the added benefit that even lateral attorneys who are more senior (and do not have a book of business) can change firms, or find positions if they are flexible geographically.

Many law firms have "institutional" clients, and this makes the requirement that an attorney have portable business less important than in other practice areas.

This practice area has always had a fairly healthy lateral market because the expertise that attorneys have here is so rare.

There are not a lot of openings in this practice area, and law firms traditionally do not receive a lot of applicants for most positions.

Read More about ERISA/Executive Compensation Law Here:
[What Is an ERISA Lawyer?](#)

Search for [ERISA/Executive Compensation Attorney Jobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of ERISA/Executive Compensation law in 2018](#)

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Real Estate: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Real Estate Attorneys

2018 Real Estate Health: Dying

Percentage of Real Estate Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Real Estate	7.52%	5.13%%	-31.74%	5	6

Percentage of Real Estate Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Real Estate	7.45%	6.03%	-19.06%	4	4

Read a Broader Description of the Real Estate Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047687/Real-Estate-Attorney/>

Real estate was bad in 2016 and it continued to get worse in 2017. Real estate is also likely to get worse in 2018.

From New York to Los Angeles, real estate attorneys saw less work than they had the previous year and had a difficult time getting interviews and offers. The market was not in good shape at all.

There was a lot of real estate work in 2014 and 2016, and this seems to have been driven largely by low-interest rates. As 2016 came to a close, interest rates increased. The increase in interest rates added further tension to the market and seemed to have further decreased the amount of work available in the market.

Real estate is a more active practice area when interest rates are low and less popular when they are high. It also is less active when the stock market is doing well as opposed to when the market is not doing well. Because interest rates have increased, real estate will likely continue to slow down in 2018.

These conditions toward the end of 2017 (increasing interest rates and a high-performing stock market) have created a "perfect storm" that has made the lateral real estate market perform poorly in 2017 and perhaps for some time to come. Real estate attorneys (especially at the senior level) have flooded the market, but law firms are not biting. The prognosis for this practice area for 2018 is poor.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Real Estate Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Real Estate	Central / Mountain States	0.31%	1.37%	347.39%
Real Estate	Eastern States	3.69%	2.74%	-25.91%
Real Estate	Pacific States	3.52%	1.03%	-70.82%

Percentage of Real Estate Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Real Estate	Central / Mountain States	1.67%	1.13%	-32.71%
Real Estate	Eastern States	2.56%	3.01%	17.45%
Real Estate	Non US	0.03%	0.08%	231.42%
Real Estate	Pacific States	3.19%	1.81%	-43.27%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Real Estate Attorney?

This is not a healthy market for attorneys when interest rates are rising or the stock market is performing well. These two conditions exist right now, which is making any movement more difficult.

It has a high enough barrier to entry that when firms get busy, they need people to do the work.

This practice area is one where it is not very difficult for attorneys to attract clients and build books of business once they know developers and others.

Attorneys with this experience can also more easily move between firms as senior attorneys (without books of business) than they can in other practice areas.

Read More about Real Estate Law Here:

[How Corporate Attorneys Can Market Themselves for Real Estate Positions](#)

[Today's Hot Property: Real Estate Associates](#)

[New York Recruiter Margaret Gilleran: Why Real Estate Law Is a Hot Market](#)

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Intellectual Property--Patent: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Intellectual Property--Patent Attorneys

2018 Intellectual Property--Patent Health: Stable

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Patent Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	11.35%	6.37%	-43.89%	3	3

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Patent--Hard and Life Sciences Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	9.09%	6.84%	-24.75	3	3

Read Broader Descriptions of the Hard and Life Science Aspects of This Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047683/Intellectual-Property-Patent-Hard-Sciences-Attorney/>
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047684/Intellectual-Property-Patent-Life-Sciences-Attorney/>

Patent prosecution improved in 2017 and is likely to continue doing well in 2018. Despite this activity, many patent attorneys we worked with were only able to experience success in the market by looking at multiple geographic areas.

Many large law firms are having issues maintaining their patent prosecution practices and staying busy. Because a lot of patent prosecution work is now being done for flat fees, this is making it more difficult for large law firms to be competitive. Many are doing less and less patent work. This is creating more work for smaller law firms, and this is where a lot of the work is going.

See [Top 10 Reasons Most General Practice Firms Have No Idea How to Hire Patent Attorneys](#) for more information.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Patent--Hard and Life Sciences Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Central / Mountain States	2.44%	2.84%	16.61%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Eastern States	4.37%	6.52%	49.27%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Pacific States	1.58%	1.99%	26.19%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Non US	0.61%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Patent--Hard and Life Sciences Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
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Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Central / Mountain States	2.03%	2.25%	10.84%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Eastern States	4.87%	2.98%	-38.80%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Pacific States	2.19%	1.61%	-26.69%
Intellectual Property - Patent General / Hard and Life Sciences	Non US	0.00%	0.00%	00.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Intellectual Property--Patent--Hard and Life Sciences Attorney?

Patent prosecution traditionally has been a very healthy lateral market for attorneys--but it is not as healthy in large law firms as it has been in the past.

From the mid-1990s until 2012, it was the most consistently active practice area for attorneys to lateral in--especially for people with hard science backgrounds.

Post-2010, the market began to slow significantly as more and more attorneys started going into this practice area and the number of highly qualified attorneys willing to do the work significantly outweighed the number of positions in the market.

One benefit of this practice area is that in addition to major law firms that do this work, there are countless small boutique law firms that also do the work.

Due to the number of small firms that do patent prosecution, it is never much of a problem for attorneys to locate positions in the market.

Read More about Intellectual Property - Patent - Hard and Life Science Law Here:

[Intellectual Property Law Practice Areas Explained: The Differences Between Patent Law, Trademark Law, Copyright Law, Trade Secret Law and Licensing Law Explained](#)

[The Four Types of Intellectual Property Law Careers: Practicing Intellectual Property Law Careers in Intellectual Property Law](#)

Search for [All Intellectual Property - Patent AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent - General AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Hard Sciences AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Hard Sciences - Computer Engineering AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Hard Sciences - Computer Science AttorneyJobs](#)

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Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Biology AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Biomechanics AttorneyJobs](#)

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[Search for Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Neuroscience AttorneyJobs](#)
[Search for Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Oncology AttorneyJobs](#)
[Search for Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Organic Chemistry AttorneyJobs](#)
[Search for Intellectual Property - Patent Attorney - Life Sciences - Pharmacology AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Intellectual Property - Patent law in 2018](#)

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Bankruptcy: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Bankruptcy Attorneys

2018 Bankruptcy Health: Sick

Percentage of Bankruptcy Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Bankruptcy	4.30%	2.52%	-41.49%	7	11

Percentage of Bankruptcy Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Bankruptcy	5.05%	3.28%	-35.15%	6	10

Read a Broader Description of the Bankruptcy Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047677/Bankruptcy-Attorney/>

Bankruptcy was very slow in 2017, and there are few signs that it will pick up in 2018. The market is slow. We worked on several isolated searches for bankruptcy attorneys in 2017, but the majority of our searches were for firms that had discrete needs for attorneys. Markets in New York and Los Angeles, as well as other major markets rarely had more than a few searches occurring at any one time. It was difficult to be a bankruptcy attorney looking for a job in 2017, and there are few signs things will improve in 2018.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Bankruptcy Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Bankruptcy	Central / Mountain States	0.31%	0.75%	144.03%
Bankruptcy	Eastern States	3.08%	1.49%	-51.57%
Bankruptcy	Pacific States	0.92%	0.28%	-69.50%

Percentage of Bankruptcy Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Bankruptcy	Central / Mountain States	0.97%	0.61%	-37.50%

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Bankruptcy	Eastern States	0.70%	0.81%	15.52%
Bankruptcy	Pacific States	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%
Bankruptcy	Non US			

The majority of this work is done in New York.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Bankruptcy Attorney?

Bankruptcy is a good practice area because it is a relatively small. In addition to major law firms, there are also smaller and well-regarded boutiques that do this work.

Bankruptcy is a countercyclical practice area, and this means that when the economy is good, it can be difficult for these attorneys to find work. In fact, in all but the best economies, bankruptcy attorneys worry about work. In 2018, it looks like this practice area may slow down even further if the economy continues to improve.

A major drawback of this practice area is that there are consistently very few jobs in the market and it tends to be very difficult for attorneys to move laterally. Searches often take some time.

On the flip side, most bankruptcy attorneys end up getting jobs, because while firms may move slowly, there is always a law firm that will hire them.

Most large, general practice law firms maintain at least one or two bankruptcy attorneys in most of their offices when they get over 100 attorneys--because work comes in and they could always get a big case.

At the senior level, there is some stability that attorneys get in larger law firms because they always want to have someone around. Larger law firms hired a lot of senior people in 2016, in New York in particular.

Most of the significant bankruptcy work is in New York, and smaller markets are more difficult to get jobs in.

Read More about Bankruptcy Law Here:

[Transitioning to Bankruptcy](#)

[The Benefits of Practicing Bankruptcy Law](#)

[Bankruptcy Law's Ancient Origins and Current Trends](#)

[What Does It Mean to Be a Bankruptcy Lawyer?](#)

[A Career in Bankruptcy Law](#)

[The Diverse Skillset of the Bankruptcy Lawyer](#)

[The Basics of Bankruptcy Law](#)

Search for [Bankruptcy AttorneyJobs](#)

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Healthcare: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Healthcare Attorneys

2018 Healthcare Health: Very Vibrant

Percentage of Healthcare Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Healthcare	3.85%	4.60%	19.65%	8	7

Percentage of Healthcare Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Healthcare	3.41%	4.12%	20.81%	10	6

[Read a Broader Description of the Healthcare Practice Area Here:](#)

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047591/Health-Care-Attorney/>

Healthcare was active in 2017, and it shows no signs of letting up in 2018 either. This is a hot practice group, and attorneys who do healthcare law are in demand. An added benefit of this practice area for attorneys is that there are many smaller law firms that are busy as well.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Healthcare Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Healthcare	Central / Mountain States	3.67%	0.25%	-93.22%
Healthcare	Eastern States	0.02%	1.74%	7302.24%
Healthcare	Pacific States	0.15%	2.61%	1608.21%

Percentage of Healthcare Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Healthcare	Central / Mountain States	1.51%	0.79%	-47.87%
Healthcare	Eastern States	1.15%	1.75%	52.42%
Healthcare	Pacific States	0.75%	1.58%	111.12%

Healthcare was active all over the country.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Healthcare Attorney?

This was a very healthy lateral practice area in 2017, and its popularity is likely to increase. There are opportunities for healthcare attorneys in most major cities and even many smaller ones. This practice area requires a level of training and expertise that relatively few attorneys have. Attorneys at all levels find the market quite receptive to them. It is not uncommon for attorneys to move from the government to law firms and from in-house to law firms. Even senior attorneys with 20 or more years of experience can find a warm reception from law firms if they are geographically flexible enough.

Read More about Healthcare Law Here:

[What Is a Healthcare Lawyer?](#)

[Choosing a Career as a Healthcare Attorney](#)

[Search for Healthcare Attorney Jobs](#)

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Antitrust and Competition: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Antitrust and Competition Attorneys

2018 Antitrust and Competition Health: Stable

Percentage of Antitrust and Competition Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Antitrust and Competition	1.17%	1.74%	48.79%	17	13

Percentage of Antitrust and Competition Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Antitrust and Competition	0.82%	1.45%	75.59%	23	17

Read a Broader Description of the Antitrust and Competition Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047579/Antitrust-and-Competition-Attorney/>

This has traditionally not been that active of a practice area for legal recruiters; however, there were positions in New York and Washington, DC in 2017. There were also some openings in the Bay Area in 2017 as well.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Antitrust and Competition Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Antitrust and Competition	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Antitrust and Competition	Eastern States	0.94%	0.75%	-20.69%
Antitrust and Competition	Pacific States	0.23%	0.75%	225.37%

Percentage of Antitrust and Competition Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Antitrust and Competition	Central / Mountain States	0.02%	0.14%	-30.95%
Antitrust and Competition	Eastern States	0.37%	0.70%	86.75%
Antitrust and Competition	Pacific States	0.22%	0.61%	175.33%
Antitrust and Competition	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

Many of the jobs in this practice area are in New York and Washington, DC.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Antitrust and Competition Attorney?

There is some demand for lateral attorneys in this practice area, but it tends to be very high-end and in the largest markets (Washington, DC and New York).

Unless you are very intelligent and have an excellent background, you are going to have a tough time succeeding in this practice area. This is a practice area for the "big boys" because it is so intellectual and the stakes are so high for big companies with a lot of money to spend.

To succeed in this practice area, you need to make a name for yourself inside of a very prestigious firm early in your career.

You need to impress people inside the firm and get them to take you under their wing.

As a partner, you need to stick out from all the rest and be seen as brilliant by companies and your peers.

Very few attorneys succeed in this practice area, and almost all are located in Washington, DC or New York City.

Read More about Antitrust and Competition Law Here:

[What Does It Mean to Work as an Antitrust Lawyer?](#)

Search for [Antitrust and Competition AttorneyJobs](#)

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Construction: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Construction Attorneys 2018 Construction Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Construction Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Construction	0.21%	0.93%	350.62%	27	20

Percentage of Construction Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Construction	1.37%	0.95%	-30.73%	18	22

Read a Broader Description of the Construction Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047580/Construction-Attorney/>

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Construction Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Construction	Eastern States	0.02%	0.62%	2543.66%
Construction	Pacific States	0.18%	0.31%	69.47%

Percentage of Construction Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Construction	Central / Mountain States	0.03%	0.14%	314.27%
Construction	Eastern States	1.18%	0.38%	-67.99%
Construction	Pacific States	0.13%	0.43%	234.10%
Construction	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

This practice area is active wherever there is a construction boom happening.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Construction Attorney?

There is a healthy lateral market for construction attorneys, but this is not one where recruiters tend to be as involved.

The issue with this practice area is that the salaries and the quality of the attorneys are not as important as they are in many other practice areas, which means that there is a large supply of people willing to do the work. Law firms can be quite selective.

The practice area is popular in areas of the country where there is a lot of construction activity.

Most of the work that construction attorneys are involved in tends to be residential and not commercial-related work, and this keeps fees low.

Read More about Construction Law Here: What Do You Need to Do to Get Construction Law Jobs?

Search for [Construction AttorneyJobs](#)

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Data Privacy: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Data Privacy Attorneys 2018 Data Privacy Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Data Privacy Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Data Privacy	0.41%	0.75%	83.91%	22	23

Percentage of Data Privacy Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Data Privacy	0.24%	1.06%	335.66%	28	20

Read a Broader Description of the Data Privacy Practice Area Here: <https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047689/Data-Privacy-Attorney/>

This practice area has remained active. There were several openings in 2017 for attorneys with this experience. Almost all of the openings were in major markets and with large law firms. While we do not do in-house placements, this practice area is also in demand inside of many companies as well. Attorneys that get good experience doing this inside of law firms are very marketable to in-house positions.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Data Privacy Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Data Privacy	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Data Privacy	Pacific States	0.38%	0.37%	-2.39%
Data Privacy	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Data Privacy Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Data Privacy	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Data Privacy	Eastern States	0.18%	0.22%	17.48%
Data Privacy	Pacific States	0.06%	0.59%	896.96%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Data Privacy Attorney?

This is a good practice area for attorneys to lateral in if they have strong qualifications (top school and major firm experience).

This practice area tends to go in fits and starts and is busiest when the economy is expanding and then slows down (often to a complete standstill) when the economy slows down. The economy did well in 2017 and is forecast to perform well in 2018.

Although this practice area is developing, it is a fairly risky practice area for attorneys because there are not a lot of partnership opportunities. However, there is not a high barrier to entry, and it is not too difficult to learn how to do the work.

The projects for clients also tend to be smaller, and this means that it is difficult for law firms to scale up the practice area (with several attorneys) for various matters and generate large bills. Attorneys that do this work in large law firms tend to be "niche" players and work for partners that likely do not exclusively perform data privacy-related work.

This practice area is limited and a difficult one for attorneys to make a name for themselves in. It is also hard for attorneys to become financially successful while practicing in this area.

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Energy and Oil & Gas: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Energy and Oil & Gas Attorneys 2018 Energy and Oil & Gas Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Energy and Oil & Gas Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Energy and Oil & Gas	1.40%	0.56%	-60.01%	15	26

Percentage of Energy and Oil & Gas Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Energy and Oil & Gas	1.28%	1.38%	7.31%	21	19

Read a Broader Description of the Energy and Oil & Gas Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047581/Energy-and-Oil-Gas-Attorney/>

This practice area did not do well in 2016, and it was in serious trouble in 2017 as well. Despite a lackluster year, at the end of 2017 gas prices increased. Numerous new openings occurred at that same time, giving the appearance that this practice area is ready to take off in 2018, bringing itself out of a slump that has lasted for the past few years.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Energy and Oil & Gas Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Energy and Oil & Gas	Eastern States	0.48%	0.37%	-22.62%
Energy and Oil & Gas	Pacific States	0.46%	0.19%	-59.33%
Energy and Oil & Gas	Central / Mountain States	0.46%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Energy and Oil & Gas Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Energy and Oil & Gas	Central / Mountain States	0.28%	0.23%	-17.65%
Energy and Oil & Gas	Eastern States	0.51%	0.72%	41.17%
Energy and Oil & Gas	Pacific States	0.46%	0.42%	-9.06%
Energy and Oil & Gas	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Energy and Oil & Gas Attorney?

The market in 2018 shows signs of improving. While this has historically been a difficult practice area for attorneys to move in, for those who were able to "hang on" during the past few slow years there are opportunities in the market.

While it is difficult for attorneys to lateral in this practice area, it tends to be easier for them to build a book of business than in many other practice areas.

In fact, when energy prices are high, there is a lot of work to go around, and attorneys pick up a lot of work. Energy prices are higher than they have been for some time at the end of 2017, which is very good.

This is a developing field, and there are opportunities for people attracted to it. From the standpoint of a career choice, though, it is very risky because attorneys are tying their futures to markets that can change on a whim.

When the energy market is not doing well, many attorneys in this practice area lose their jobs. Work can dry up for partners as well. Many attorneys have lost their jobs over the past few years.

Few major law firms have large energy practices--or can sustain them as well as they might other sorts of practices.

The market in Texas has been getting busy.

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Environmental and Land Use: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Environmental and Land Use Attorneys 2018 Environmental and Land Use Health: Sick

Percentage of Environmental and Land Use Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Environmental and Land Use	0.94%	1.12%	18.96%	19	19

Percentage of Environmental and Land Use Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Environmental and Land Use	1.38%	1.85%	33.65%	17	13

Read a Broader Description of the Environmental and Land Use Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047582/Environmental-and-Land-Use-Attorney/>

Environmental attorneys had a difficult time in 2017. Going into 2018 it seems like it will be slow as well. While there is a smattering of environmental jobs around the country, very few firms were eager to hire even when they had openings. Also, we witnessed numerous attorneys get laid off in this practice area--even some with stellar qualifications. Getting laid off in a healthy legal market is not something that many attorneys may have expected to occur.

Land use is a popular practice area, and there does seem to be some activity there. Land use attorneys--while not in high demand--are still in need and do get hired by firms (especially those with robust real estate practices).

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Environmental and Land Use Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Environmental and Land Use	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Environmental and Land Use	Eastern States	0.48%	0.00%	-100.00%
Environmental and Land Use	Pacific States	0.46%	1.12%	144.03%

Percentage of Environmental and Land Use Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Environmental and Land Use	Central / Mountain States	0.03%	0.09%	253.51%
Environmental and Land Use	Eastern States	0.22%	0.42%	89.34%
Environmental and Land Use	Pacific States	1.11%	1.34%	20.48%
Environmental and Land Use	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Environmental and Land Use Attorney?

This has typically been a dying practice area and very difficult for attorneys to lateral into law firms in. There was a time when this was a booming practice area in the late 1970s through the 1980s, but the work that drove this boom has largely gone away.

Very few large law firms do significant work here anymore, and the practice area is a difficult one for attorneys to stay employed in.

There are some midsized to smaller firms that have ongoing practices doing this that are successful--but not many.

There are not a lot of opportunities to lateral into major law firms and have not been for some time.

There are some pockets of success in major law firms, but these tend to be small pockets of attorneys, and these attorneys are often concerned about their futures.

From a lateral perspective, when there are opportunities, there are often only a few attorneys who are qualified for them.

This can make getting these jobs less difficult for a qualified candidate than it could be in other practice areas.

Notwithstanding, there are far more attorneys who would like to practice environmental law than there are attorneys who can find jobs inside of law firms doing the work.

This is an exceptionally difficult practice area to get into, stay employed in, and lateral in.

Read More about Environmental and Land Use Law Here:

[What Does It Mean to Work as an Environmental Law Attorney?](#)

[Choosing a Career as an Environment Attorney](#)

Finding an Environmental Lawyer Job

Environmental Lawyers

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Family Law: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Family Law Attorneys

2018 Family Law Health: Stable

Percentage of Family Law Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Family Law	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%	31	33

Percentage of Family Law Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Family Law	0.09%	0.18%	97.22%	33	34

Read a Broader Description of the Family Law Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047585/Family-Law-Attorney/>

Due to the consumer-facing nature of this practice area, recruiters are not that active in placing family law attorneys. We do work with family law attorneys from time to time, but not frequently.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Family Law Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Family Law	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.00%	00.00%
Family Law	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Family Law Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Family Law	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.10%	100.00%
Family Law	Eastern States	0.09%	0.00%	-100.00%
Family Law	Pacific States	0.00%	0.08%	100.00%

While there is always a certain demand for family law attorneys in every area of the country, it is not a busy practice area for recruiters.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Family Law Attorney?

There are lateral positions in this practice area--some even filled by legal recruiters--but due to the intimate size of these practice groups and the firms that do this work, recruiters are not frequently used.

The quality of an attorney's academics and current firm is not important for most firms doing this work and therefore law firms often do not require the sourcing of high-end attorneys.

The experience that good family law attorneys get is transferable quite easily to other family law firms. This is a relatively easy practice area for attorneys to build a client base in.

Read More about Family Law Here:

[Advantages and Disadvantages of Family Law](#)

[Legal Subspecialties in Family Law](#)

[Is Being a Family Lawyer the Right Choice for You?](#)

[Family Law Jobs: Legal Services for the Family](#)

[Looking for Family Law Jobs?](#)

Search for [Family Law AttorneyJobs on BCG Attorney Search](#)

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Finance: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Finance Attorneys

2018 Finance Health: Stable

Percentage of Finance Placement

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Finance	0.33%	6.22%	1788.33%	21	4

Percentage of Finance Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Finance	0.70%	3.90%	456.94%	24	7

This practice area took off and became extremely busy in 2017 compared to 2016.

Finance does well when the economy is doing well. The economy was doing well throughout 2017 and confidence increased in the market, which brought about more hiring in this practice area.

Read a Broader Description of the Finance Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047587/Finance-Attorney/>

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Finance Placement by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Finance	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	2.49%	100.00%
Finance	Eastern States	0.33%	2.61%	693.10%
Finance	Non US	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Finance	Pacific States	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%

Percentage of Finance Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
	Central / Mountain			

Practice Area	States/Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Finance	Eastern States	0.47%	2.26%	381.20%
Finance	Pacific States	0.03%	0.31%	811.40%
Finance	Non US	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%

Banking law is most in demand in major cities, especially New York City.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Finance Attorney?

This is an active practice area at the junior to the mid-level range for attorneys, but it becomes more difficult for attorneys to lateral into firms as they get more senior.

Attorneys in this practice area typically can find positions (in a good economy) quite easily, provided they have less than eight years of experience.

The majority of attorneys who go into this practice area go in-house later in their careers.

The majority of activity is traditionally in the New York legal market.

Read More about Finance--Banking Law Here:

[What Does It Mean to Be a Banking and Commercial Finance Attorney?](#)

[BCG Attorney Search's Guide to Corporate and Finance Practice Areas](#)

[Banking and Finance](#)

[Finance - Banking Attorney](#)

Search for [All Finance AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Banking Finance AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [General Finance AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Structured Finance AttorneyJobs](#)

Search for [Transportation Finance AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Finance law in 2018](#)

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Food & Drug Administration: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Food & Drug Administration Attorneys

2018 Food & Drug Administration Health: Stable

Percentage of Food & Drug Administration Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Food & Drug Administration	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%	32	27

Percentage of Food & Drug Administration Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Food & Drug Administration	0.26%	0.54%	108.29%	29	28

Read a Broader Description of the Food & Drug Administration Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047588/Food-Drug-Administration-Attorney/>

This is not an active market for legal recruiters--but food and drug attorneys are marketable when there are

opportunities. Given the low number of positions in the market and the relatively small size of the bar, opportunities are few and far between. There are typically at least a few openings nationally at all times, but never a ton of them.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Food & Drug Administration Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Food & Drug Administration	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Food & Drug Administration	Pacific States	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Food & Drug Administration	Non USA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Percentage of Food & Drug Administration Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Food & Drug Administration	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.06%	100.00%
Food & Drug Administration	Eastern States	0.21%	0.29%	38.98%
Food & Drug Administration	Pacific States	0.05%	0.19%	278.76%

Most of this work is done in Washington, DC.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Food & Drug Administration Attorney?

This is a difficult practice area for attorneys outside of Washington, DC.

There is not a healthy market for attorneys with this expertise; however, there is a market.

Since this is a relatively small bar, many of the attorneys know each other and attorneys may enjoy the sense of camaraderie and cooperation that comes from working in this practice area.

Because of the narrowness of this practice and the few number of attorneys doing the work, it is not overly difficult to build a book of business.

Many of the attorneys that are in this practice area have formerly worked for the Food and Drug Administration.

Read More about Food & Drug Administration Law Here:

[Attorney Job Opportunities at the Office of the Food and Drug Administration](#)

Search for [Food & Drug Administration Law Attorney Jobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Food & Drug Administration law in 2018](#)

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Government and Government Relations: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Government and Government Relations Attorneys

2018 Government and Government Relations Health: Sick

Percentage of Government and Government Relations Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Government and Government Relations	0.33%	0.81%	145.48%	23	22

Percentage of Government and Government Relations Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Government and Government Relations	0.62%	1.04%	68.80%	27	21

Read a Broader Description of the Government and Government Relations Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047589/Government-and-Government-Relations-Attorney/>

This is not an active market for legal recruiters.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Government and Government Relations Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Government and Government Relations	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Government and Government Relations	Eastern States	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%
Government and Government Relations	Non US	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Government and Government Relations	Pacific States	0.31%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Government and Government Relations Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Government and Government Relations	Central / Mountain States	0.25%	0.13%	-48.08%
Government and Government Relations	Eastern States	0.29%	0.51%	75.85%
Government and Government Relations	Non US	0.00%	0.04%	100.00%
Government and Government Relations	Pacific States	0.08%	0.36%	379.23%

Much of this work is done in Washington, DC, or in state capitals across the country, but this is not an active market for recruiters.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Government and Government Relations Attorney?

This is not a healthy lateral practice area because it tends to be driven by individuals and not large teams of attorneys.

This practice area tends to be focused in state capitals and in Washington, DC, which limits where you can move to.

Read More about Government and Government Relations Law Here:
[Government Relations/Public Affairs/Consumer Affairs/Public Relations Jobs for Lawyers](#)
[Things You Must Know If You Want to Get into Government Law Practice](#)
[A Legal Career in Government Practice](#)

Law Job Opportunities for Legal Professionals in Government

Consider Becoming a Government Attorney

The Career Path to Becoming a Government Attorney

Search for **Government and Government Relations Law AttorneyJobs**

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Government and Government Relations law in 2018](#)

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Government Contracts: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Government Contracts Attorneys

2018 Government Contracts Health: Stable

Percentage of Government Contracts Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Government Contracts	0.02%	0.93%	3865.49%	33	21

Percentage of Government Contracts Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Government Contracts	0.10%	0.60%	491.34%	25	22

Read a Broader Description of the Government Contracts Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047590/Government-Contracts-Attorney/>

This practice area has not been particularly busy at the associate level. Almost all of the activity we have seen over the past several years has been at the partner level, and we tend to move at least a few partners in this practice area each year.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Government Contracts Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Government Contracts	Non US	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Government Contracts	Pacific States	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Government Contracts	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Government Contracts Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Government Contracts	Eastern States	0.10%	0.21%	101.16%
Government Contracts	Non US	0.00%	0.04%	100.00%
Government Contracts	Pacific States	0.00%	0.35%	100.00%

Most of this work is done in Washington, DC.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Government Contracts Attorney?

The majority of the work tends to be in Washington, DC and it is very difficult for attorneys to lateral to other

markets.

Despite this, attorneys who become experts in this area of law are in demand, and if they cannot lateral to another law firm, are often well received by large in-house companies.

Almost all of our activity has been at the partner level in this practice area.

Read More about Government Contracts Law Here:

[Things You Must Know If You Want to Get into Government Law Practice](#)

[A Legal Career in Government Practice](#)

[Law Job Opportunities for Legal Professionals in Government](#)

[Consider Becoming a Government Attorney](#)

[The Career Path to Becoming a Government Attorney](#)

Search for [Government Contracts Law AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Government Contracts law in 2018](#)

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Immigration: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Immigration Attorneys

2018 Immigration Health: Sick

Percentage of Immigration Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Immigration	1.86%	1.49%	-19.69%	13	16

Percentage of Immigration Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Immigration	1.49%	0.93%	-37.48%	15	23

Read a Broader Description of the Immigration Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047592/Immigration-Attorney/>

Immigration slowed down a great deal in 2017 compared to the previous year. While 2016 was a very active year, the market seemed to stagnate in all respects in 2017. Many candidates who would have received multiple interviews and a lot of activity in 2016 did not see anywhere near the same levels of activity in 2017.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Immigration Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Immigration	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Immigration	Eastern States	0.94%	0.75%	-20.69%
Immigration	Pacific States	0.92%	0.75%	-18.66%

Percentage of Immigration Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Immigration	Central / Mountain States	0.41%	0.00%	-100.00%

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Immigration	Eastern States	0.00%	0.00%	-32.38%
Immigration	Pacific States	0.34%	0.34%	65.71%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Immigration Attorney?

There were fewer opportunities in 2017 than there were in 2016.

The lateral market seems to have slowed down to a large extent.

Immigration law is dependent to some extent on whether legislation out of Washington is welcoming or hostile toward immigration.

Attorneys in this practice area can also often build large books of business through referrals and be marketable from this as well.

Read More about Immigration Law Here:

[Career in Immigration Law](#)

[What Does an Immigration Lawyer Do?](#)

[The Job Functions and Profile of an Immigration Attorney](#)

Search for [Immigration Attorney Jobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Immigration law in 2018](#)

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Insurance Coverage: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Insurance Coverage Attorneys 2018 Insurance Coverage Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Insurance Coverage Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Insurance Coverage	0.25%	0.62%	145.92%	25	24

Percentage of Insurance Coverage Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Insurance Coverage	0.86%	1.38%	60.41%	22	18

Read a Broader Description of the Insurance Coverage Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047604/Insurance-Coverage-Attorney/>

We did not see a lot of activity in this practice area in 2017. The attorneys we did see move tended to be more senior and have books of business. There was not a lot of activity at the associate level.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Insurance Coverage Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Insurance Coverage	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.44%	100.00%
Insurance Coverage	Pacific States	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Insurance Coverage	Eastern States	0.25%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Insurance Coverage Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Insurance Coverage	Central / Mountain States	0.25%	0.44%	77.14%
Insurance Coverage	Eastern States	0.26%	0.46%	79.26%
Insurance Coverage	Pacific States	0.36%	0.48%	35.18%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Insurance Coverage Attorney?

This is a healthy practice area for attorneys to lateral in.

There is a high barrier to entry in this practice area because it takes some time to learn.

Attorneys who do this work can often lateral as more senior attorneys (with more than ten years of experience) without a lot of business, due to the nature of the work and demand for attorneys with this expertise.

Read More about Insurance Coverage Law Here:

[The Marketability of Insurance Attorneys](#)
[Insurance Attorneys](#)

Search for [Insurance Coverage AttorneyJobs](#)

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Insurance Defense: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Insurance Defense Attorneys 2018 Insurance Defense Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Insurance Defense Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Insurance Defense	0.25%	0.62%	145.92%	26	25

Percentage of Insurance Defense Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Insurance Defense	0.76%	0.55%	-27.96%	25	27

Read a Broader Description of the Insurance Defense Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047605/Insurance-Defense-Attorney/>

Because insurance companies typically negotiate rates down a great deal for law firms doing insurance defense work, there does not tend to be a lot of work for legal recruiters making insurance defense placements.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Insurance Defense Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Insurance Defense	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.44%	100.00%
Insurance Defense	Pacific States	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%

Insurance Defense	Eastern States	2016	2017	% of Growth
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Percentage of Insurance Defense Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Insurance Defense	Central / Mountain States	0.14%	0.14%	-55.21%
Insurance Defense	Eastern States	0.24%	0.14%	-40.66%
Insurance Defense	Pacific States	0.21%	0.26%	28.08%

There is insurance defense work in most of the country, but this is not an active area for recruiters in any particular area of the country.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Insurance Defense Attorney?

The lateral market for attorneys (at the low end) is typically very healthy.

At the high end, the practice area is not typically all that healthy for lateral attorneys.

Read More about Insurance Defense Law Here:

[The Marketability of Insurance Attorneys Insurance Attorneys](#)

Search for [Insurance Defense AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Insurance Defense law in 2018](#)

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Intellectual Property--Litigation: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Intellectual Property--Litigation Attorneys

2018 Intellectual Property--Litigation Health: Sick

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Litigation Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property--Litigation	2.36%	3.73%	57.65%	10	8

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Litigation Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property--Litigation	3.83%	3.47%	-9.41%	8	8

Read a Broader Description of the Intellectual Property--Litigation Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047681/Intellectual-Property-Litigation-Attorney/>

Patent litigation has had a bad run the past several years. Five years ago it was among the hottest practice areas we were working in, and now it has slowed considerably. While there is work out there, the overall market enthusiasm for this practice area was low.

A great deal of the slowdown has come as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Alice Corp. v. CLS Bank International* (2014), which held "that certain business methods, previously thought to be patentable, are not."

This has slowed the work of patent trolls significantly, led to layoffs, reduced work, and created tremendous competition for the few jobs that there are.

There are a lot of sad stories I am hearing about intellectual property litigators losing their jobs--both partners and associates. The market is poor, there is an oversupply of attorneys, and there is not enough work. While there are certain firms that have managed to stay busy, this has become the exception and not the rule. Intellectual property litigators with Ph.D.'s in electrical engineering who are graduates of top law schools and coming from top firms with one to six years of experience are marketable. Other than that, there are few opportunities for attorneys without business. Even some attorneys with good sized books of business have had some difficulties finding work. Many law firms that hired intellectual property litigation partners when the market was good seem to have gotten burned when it slowed down and have turned more cautious.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Litigation Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Central / Mountain States	0.18%	1.24%	577.86%
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Eastern States	1.77%	1.46%	-17.63%
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Pacific States	0.41%	1.03%	148.55%

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Litigation Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Central / Mountain States	1.70%	0.90%	-47.08%
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Eastern States	1.13%	1.16%	2.57%
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Pacific States	1.00%	1.41%	41.41
Intellectual Property - Litigation	Non US	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Intellectual Property--Litigation Attorney?

This practice area has slowed dramatically since a series of Supreme Court decisions starting in 2011 and then 2013 that have made life very difficult for patent trolls and slowed a great deal of the patent litigation.

Since this decision, the litigation landscape with patent litigation has slowed dramatically, and patent litigation has become more of a dying practice area than a growing one.

In prior years, patent litigation was among the busiest practice area there was for the largest law firms.

Read More about Intellectual Property Law Here:

[Intellectual Property Law Practice Areas Explained: The Differences Between Patent Law, Trademark Law, Copyright Law, Trade Secret Law and Licensing Law Explained](#)

[The Four Types of Intellectual Property Law Careers: Practicing Intellectual Property Law Careers in Intellectual Property Law](#)

[Go Here to Search for Intellectual Property-Litigation AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Intellectual Property - Litigation law in 2018](#)

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[Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Intellectual Property--](#)

Trademark/Copyright Attorneys

2018 Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Health: Vibrant

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright	1.97%	3.35%	70.55%	11	10

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright	1.96%	1.98%	0.59%	13	12

Read a Broader Description of the Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047685/Intellectual-Property-Trademark-Copyright-Attorney/>

Towards the end of 2017, trademark law got busy, and many new positions popped up around the United States. In fact, at the end of 2017, there were more positions than I had seen in a long time. Trademark tends to get busy when the economy is doing well and there is a lot of new business activity. This was the case in 2017.

One note about trademark law, however, is that many large law firms have started hiring staff attorneys to do this work.

First, they may be doing this because they are hesitant to hire full associates to do this sort of work since they have been through many periods of boom and bust where trademark attorneys are let go when the economy slows down. Because this work is so strongly tied to new businesses starting, it tends to get busy when the economy is "buzzing". The second things slow down many law firms let their trademark attorneys go.

Second, they may also be doing this because trademark is perceived to be a "light" form of intellectual property-related work that does not require a ton of training to learn. This means that much of the routine work is not complex and there is a perception that the attorneys do not need to be as highly qualified either.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	1.99%	-100.00%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Eastern States	0.33%	1.27%	285.22%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Pacific States	1.64%	0.09%	-94.30%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Non US	0.00%	0.00%	00.00%

Percentage of Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
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Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Central/Mountain States	0.41%	0.47%	15.56%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Eastern States	0.72%	0.83%	15.94%
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	Pacific States	0.60%	0.52%	-13.38%

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright Attorney?

The market for trademark attorneys was good through 2017 with the practice area's strongest showing emerging toward the end of 2017. At the end of 2017, there were more trademark jobs than there have been in the past 15 years.

Read More about Intellectual Property Law Here:

[Intellectual Property Law Practice Areas Explained: The Differences Between Patent Law, Trademark Law, Copyright Law, Trade Secret Law and Licensing Law Explained](#)

[The Four Types of Intellectual Property Law Careers: Practicing Intellectual Property Law Careers in Intellectual Property Law](#)

Search for [Intellectual Property--Trademark/Copyright AttorneyJobs](#)

Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright law in 2018

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International Trade: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for International Trade Attorneys 2018 International Trade Health: Sick

Percentage of International Trade Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
International Trade	0.94%	0.37%	-60.35%	19	27

Percentage of International Trade Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
International Trade	0.82%	0.49%	-40.16%	22	29

Read a Broader Description of the International Trade Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047593/International-Trade-Attorney/>

This is traditionally not an active practice area for legal recruiters.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of International Trade Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
International Trade	Non US	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
International Trade	Pacific States	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
International Trade	Eastern States	0.94%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of International Trade Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
International Trade	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.17%	100.00%
International Trade	Eastern States	0.72%	0.24%	-66.83%
International Trade	Non US	0.00%	0.04%	100.00%
International Trade	Pacific States	0.10%	0.04%	-58.57%

The positions tend to be on the East Coast, especially in Washington, DC.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as an International Trade Attorney?

This is a difficult position for most attorneys to lateral in.

There tend not to be a lot of positions, and almost all of these are centered in Washington, DC.

Search for [International Trade Law AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of International Trade law in 2018](#)

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Municipal Law: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Municipal Law Attorneys

2018 Municipal Law Health: Stable

Percentage of Municipal Law Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Municipal Law	0.00%	0.25	100.00%	31	30

Percentage of Municipal Law Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Municipal Law	0.11%	0.44%	296.31%	29	30

Read a Broader Description of the Municipal Law Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047595/Municipal-Law-Attorney/>

Because the work is done on behalf of cities, there tends to be downward pressure on billable hours and the work tends to be done by smaller, specialist firms that do not care as much about an attorney's qualifications and do not pay market salaries. Accordingly, legal recruiters typically are not that involved in municipal law-related work.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Municipal Law Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Municipal Law	Pacific States	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%

Percentage of Municipal Law Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
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Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Municipal Law	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Municipal Law	Eastern States	0.00%	0.08%	100.00%
Municipal Law	Pacific States	0.08%	0.31%	266.07%

There is work in municipal law in every major city, but this is not typically an active area for recruiters (except at the high end).

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Municipal Law Attorney?

This is a relatively safe practice area to lateral in because there tends to be a steady demand for attorneys with this expertise.

At the upper end, this is a healthy lateral market, and recruiters play an integral role.

Many attorneys in this practice area are also frequently able to generate respectable books of business when they have one or more significant municipal clients.

Read More about Municipal Law Here:

[Living for the City: Michael J. Mais On Working as a Municipal Attorney](#)

Search for [Municipal Law Attorney Jobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Municipal Law law in 2018](#)

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Patent Agents/Technical Specialists: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists

2018 Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Health: Stable

Percentage of Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.08%	0.25%	210.95%	28	31

Percentage of Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Interviews

Practice Area	2016	20167	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	1.36%	0.56	-58.60%	19	26

Read a Broader Description of the Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047596/Patent-Agent-Technical-Specialist-Attorney/>

We did not see a lot of activity for patent agents in 2017. Due to an abundance of patent agents in the market, most law firms did not have much difficulty finding patent agents to assist them with work.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Patent Agents/Technical	Central / Mountain	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Practice Area	State/Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	Eastern States	0.07%	0.25%	252.49%
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	Pacific States	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Percentage of Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	Central / Mountain States	0.75%	0.17%	-77.40%
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	Eastern States	0.05%	0.14%	187.23%
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	Pacific States	0.56%	0.25%	-58.81%

Most of this work is done in Boston and Silicon Valley.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Patent Agent/Technical Specialist?

This is not an active practice area in the legal recruiting realm because there tends to be far more qualified technical specialists and patent agents than there are jobs.

Nevertheless, there is a lateral market for patent agents, but legal recruiters are not frequently used because there is not a lot of demand.

The busiest areas for this work tend to be in Boston and Silicon Valley.

Read More about Patent Agents/Technical Specialists Here:

[What Makes a Strong Patent Agent Candidate?](#)

[Do I Need to Meet the Patent Experience Requirements for Patent Agent Opportunities at Major Law Firms?](#)

[I'm a Patent Agent, When Should I Start Searching for a Job?](#)

[Gaining Experience as a Patent Agent: Tips by BCG Attorney Search](#)

[What Advice Do You Have if I Want to Be a Patent Agent?](#)

[How to Become a Patent Lawyer](#)

[Search for All Patent Agents/Technical Specialist Jobs](#)

[Search for All Patent Agents/Technical Specialist - Hard Sciences Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Computer Engineering Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Computer Science Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Electrical Engineering Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Hardware Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - General Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Mechanical Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Hard Sciences - Physics Jobs](#)

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[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Biology Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Biomechanics Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Biophysics Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Biotechnology Jobs](#)

[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Cellular Technology Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Chemistry Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Endocrinology Jobs](#)
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[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Molecular Biology Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Neuroscience Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Oncology Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Organic Chemistry Jobs](#)
[Search for Patent Agents/Technical Specialists - Life Sciences - Pharmacology Jobs](#)

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Tax: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Tax Attorneys

2018 Tax Health: Sick

Percentage of Tax Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Tax	2.78%	1.49%	-46.23%	9	17

Percentage of Tax Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Tax	3.43%	3.33%	-3.02%	9	9

Read a Broader Description of the Tax Practice Area Here:
<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047688/Tax-Attorney/>

The tax practice area has not been active for the past several years. There are just too many tax attorneys in the market for the number of available positions. I have profound respect for tax attorneys because they connect with their subject matter. Most go to expensive LL.M. programs, and many take jobs in accounting firms and try and transition into law firms. Most never make it into law firms. This intellectually challenging and interesting practice area has far too many attorneys in it competing for far too few jobs.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Tax Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Tax	Central / Mountain States	1.38%	0.75%	-45.77%
Tax	Eastern States	1.40%	0.37%	-73.34%
Tax	Pacific States	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%

Percentage of Tax Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
	Central / Mountain			

Tax	Practice Area	States	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Tax		Eastern States		2.17%	0.96%	-55.80%
Tax		Pacific States		0.44%	1.09%	146.65%

Most of this work is done in major markets, especially in New York City.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Tax Attorney?

This has traditionally been a very difficult area for attorneys to lateral in.

There are typically numerous applicants for each position in the market.

There are a high number of tax LL.M's and attorneys in accounting firms who are hungry for most positions.

Since tax lawyers typically are in a supporting role for corporate attorneys and tend to be introverted, they often do not generate business, and all but a few get weeded out when they get more senior (this is a very difficult practice area to make partner in).

Also, because the work is so specialized, the majority of the positions tend to be in major markets (New York City, in particular) and tax attorneys generally cannot move to smaller markets.

Read More about Tax Law Here:

[What It Is Like to Be a Tax Law Attorney - Tax Attorney Careers](#)

[The Benefits of Choosing a Career as a Tax Attorney](#)

[What Is a Tax Attorney?](#)

[Taxes: No Longer Just for Accountants](#)

[How to Start a Career as a Tax Attorney](#)

Search for [All Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [Controversy and Dispute Resolution Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [Federal Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [General Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [International Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [M&A and Transactions Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

Search for [State & Local Tax Law Attorney Jobs](#)

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Technology Transactions: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Technology Transactions Attorneys

2018 Technology Transactions Health: Stable

Percentage of Technology Transactions Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Technology Transactions	1.93%	1.89%	-2.29%	12	12

Percentage of Technology Transactions Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Technology Transactions	2.73%	1.56%	-42.81%	11	15

Read a Broader Description of the Technology Transactions Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047599/Technology-Transactions-Attorney/>

This practice area saw declines in both interviews and placements in 2017. While there was work in this

practice area, it appears to have slowed down quite a bit.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Technology Transactions Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Technology Transactions	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Technology Transactions	Eastern States	0.33%	0.96%	190.81%
Technology Transactions	Pacific States	1.61%	0.19%	-88.38%

Percentage of Technology Transactions Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Technology Transactions	Central / Mountain States	0.13%	0.48%	275.61%
Technology Transactions	Eastern States	1.35%	0.79%	-41.56%
Technology Transactions	Pacific States	1.24%	0.29%	-76.79%

Much of this work is done in Silicon Valley.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Technology Transactions Attorney?

This has become an increasingly popular practice area in the lateral market. Attorneys in this practice area coming from large law firms generally can get interviews all over the country if the economy is growing and the conditions are right. It can be among the "hottest" practice areas there is. Nevertheless, there are not a lot of attorneys that specialize in this practice area, and due to this, there are not a lot of interviews and other activity in this practice area.

However, when the economy slows down and this work is not popular the inverse is true: The work comes to a complete stop, and there is not a lot of work out there.

This work tends to move in fits and starts, and layoffs are common when the economy slows.

This is a difficult career for attorneys who want to work in law firms for their entire careers.

It is also a difficult practice area for law firms to scale because clients are often cost-conscious of this sort of work. Much of the work tends to be smaller projects and not ongoing work.

Search for Technology Transactions AttorneyJobs

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Technology Transactions law in 2018](#)

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Telecommunications: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Telecommunications Attorneys 2018 Telecommunications Health: Sick

Percentage of Telecommunications Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Telecommunications	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%	30	29

Percentage of Telecommunications Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Telecommunications	0.09%	0.20%	130.52%	34	32

Read a Broader Description of the Telecommunications Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047600/Telecommunications-Attorney/>

This practice area has been sliding downhill since 2001. It just keeps getting worse. There are not many opportunities for attorneys in this practice area. 2017 saw a slight increase in placements compared to 2016, but it was not a large enough increase to make much of a difference.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Telecommunications Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Telecommunications	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Telecommunications	Eastern States	0.02%	0.25%	957.46%
Telecommunications	Pacific States	0.00%	0.12%	100.00%

Percentage of Telecommunications Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Telecommunications	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.12%	100.00%
Telecommunications	Eastern States	0.06%	0.06%	-9.84%
Telecommunications	Pacific States	0.03%	0.03%	10.47%

Many, but not all positions in this practice area are in Washington, DC.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Telecommunications Attorney?

This has not been an active lateral market for some time.

There was a period in the 1990s when this practice area was extremely active, but since that time it has slowed down a great deal, and there are not a lot of lateral opportunities for attorneys in this practice area. Most of the positions in this practice area are in Washington, DC; however, there are typically positions in other markets as well.

Read More about Telecommunications Law Here:

[The Job Functions and Profile of a Telecommunications Attorney](#)

[What Is a Telecommunications Attorney?](#)

[Choosing a Career as a Telecommunication Attorney](#)

Search for [Telecommunications Law AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Telecommunications law in 2018](#)

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Trusts and Estates: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Trusts and Estates Attorneys

2018 Trusts and Estates Health: Very Vibrant

Percentage of Trust and Estates Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Trust and Estates	0.94%	1.74%	86.06%	19	14

Percentage of Trusts and Estates Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Trust and Estates	1.77%	2.18%	49.82%	16	11

Read a Broader Description of the Trusts and Estates Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047601/Trusts-and-Estates-Attorney/>

This is traditionally not a practice area where legal recruiters do their best due to the consumer-facing nature of the work trusts and estates attorneys do. The work is often cost sensitive, and this makes it difficult for attorneys in this practice area to bill lots of hours for large clients for an extended period.

While associate placements are not common in trust and estates, there are a great number of partners with large books of business. Most of the activity we had in this practice area was for partners with books of business.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Trusts and Estates Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Trust and Estates	Central / Mountain States	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Trust and Estates	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Trust and Estates	Pacific States	0.92%	1.00%	8.46%

Percentage of Trusts and Estates Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Trust and Estates	Central / Mountain States	0.42%	0.31%	-25.60%
Trust and Estates	Eastern States	0.59%	0.48%	-17.93%
Trust and Estates	Pacific States	0.45%	1.39%	208.39%

Markets in both the East and West Coasts have positions in this practice area.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Trusts and Estates Attorney?

Because this is not a particularly profitable practice area for most law firms, there tends not to be many lateral opportunities in trusts and estates.

Most of the opportunities for laterals tend to be midlevel to senior trusts and estates attorneys who are taking over and assisting with "legacy practices" of attorneys who are getting senior and ready to retire at law firms around the country.

One nice thing about this practice area is it is quite conducive to building a book of business since attorneys tend to interact with people like themselves to whom they refer work.

Read More about Trusts and Estates Law Here:

[Choosing a Career as a Trusts and Estates Attorney](#)

Search for [Trust and Estates AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Trusts and Estates law in 2018](#)

Workers' Compensation: The 2018 Lateral Legal Market for Workers' Compensation Attorneys

2018 Workers' Compensation Health: Stable

Percentage of Workers' Compensation Placements

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Workers' Compensation	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%	32	34

Percentage of Workers' Compensation Interviews

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Workers' Compensation	0.04%	0.10%	135.62%	33	35

Read a Broader Description of the Workers' Compensation Practice Area Here:

<https://www.bcgsearch.com/article/900047603/Workers-Compensation-Attorney/>

Because this is more of a consumer-facing branch of law, legal recruiters typically do not place a lot of Workers' Compensation attorneys.

Geographic Observations

Percentage of Workers' Compensation Placements by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Workers' Compensation	Eastern States	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%

Percentage of Workers' Compensation Interviews by Geographic Region

Practice Area	Time Zone	2016	2017	% of Growth
Workers' Compensation	Central / Mountain States	0.03%	0.00%	-100.00%
Workers' Compensation	Eastern States	0.01%	0.00%	-100.00%
Workers' Compensation	Pacific States	0.00%	0.10%	100.00%

While you can find attorneys practicing this type of law throughout the country, this is not a busy practice area for recruiters.

In 2018, What Are the Prospects for Moving Laterally as a Workers' Compensation Attorney?

This is a fairly easy practice area for attorneys to lateral to other firms in.

Since the quality of the attorneys and the salaries tend not to be the highest, legal recruiters are rarely involved in these placements. There is also an oversupply of attorneys interested in doing the work.

Read More about Workers' Compensation Law Here:

[How to Become a Workers' Compensation Lawyer](#)

[How to Become a Compensation Lawyer](#)

Search for [Workers' Compensation Law AttorneyJobs](#)

[Go here to view a standalone report on the health of Workers' Compensation law in 2018](#)

Conclusions

The legal market going into 2018 shows every indication that it will continue to be very strong. The indications that the market is strong are (1) the growth in hiring in many mainstream practice areas and (2) the increasing use of legal recruiters by small to mid-sized law firms. This indicates there is more work being done outside of large law firms. Regardless of the reasons, it appears that the smaller to mid-sized law firms are getting an increasing amount of work from larger clients. This is making them more confident about the future.

From my standpoint, the most interesting development of 2017 was the increasing importance of diversity to law firms doing hiring. Law firms have become committed to diversifying their ranks and becoming more inclusive organizations. This means that law firms are moving beyond pedigrees to some extent and more and more using other factors to judge the suitability of an attorney for a given law firm.

The emphasis on diversity is a reflection of the climate of the larger society that is changing and becoming more inclusive. These are welcome developments and something that is opening the doors to many attorneys that may have formerly been excluded by large law firms.

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[i] I run a national legal recruiting firm with recruiters reporting to me from all over the United States. I manage these recruiters and also am a legal recruiter myself--the only recruiter in our company who recruits nationally and works with attorneys all over the United States.

Frankly, I love recruiting and am extremely dedicated to it. I am deeply invested in this profession, and my observations come from the vantage point of someone who has thrown himself into this completely. When I am working full-time, I typically make at least one placement per week and have multiple people interviewing most days. BCG's other recruiters also are very busy and make placements each week as well. BCG as a company typically makes at least one placement per day. I closely monitor everything that happens in our company and with our candidates and pay close attention to what law firms will pay in every type of market.

I also operate a legal job site, [LawCrossing](#), which monitors the hiring needs of every law firm and corporation in the United States. This company has over 100 employees and is the most trafficked legal job site in the world. This gives me a unique insight into the legal market, as well, because I can see the openings, demand from employers, and demand from job seekers at all levels.

As a general matter, I do not spend a lot of time attending conferences, giving talks, or writing papers because most of my time is consumed by recruiting. Just like a doctor is available at all times for his or her patients, as a legal recruiter, I am available at all times for my candidates. Nevertheless, as a result of my work, I am in the center of things relating to the legal market, and I truly believe I have a solid understanding of the state of that market. To share this information with those who can benefit from it, I make the time to write articles and reports such as this one.

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[ii] For more information about how one assesses the strength of the legal market, and about Law Firm Hiring Paradigms and the Market, please see [The BCG Attorney Search 2017 State of the American Lateral Law Firm Legal Market Report](#) and [State of the American Legal Job Market 2016: Hot and Weak Practice Areas of 2016](#).

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*See this article for more information about legal market predictions based on 2017-2018 law school

application trends: www.usnews.com/education/blogs/law-admissions-lowdown/articles/2017-09-04/check-out-predictions-about-2017-2018-law-school-application-trends

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Statistical Data Related to BCG's 2018 State of the Market Report

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Percentage of BCG Placements by Practice Area with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Workers' Compensation	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%	32	34
Trusts and Estates	0.94%	1.74%	85.06%	17	14
Telecommunications	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%	30	29
Technology Transactions	1.93%	1.89%	-2.29%	12	12
Tax	2.78%	1.49%	-46.23%	9	16
Real Estate	7.52%	5.13%	-31.74%	5	6
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.08%	0.25%	210.95%	26	30
Other	0.02%	1.21%	5055.13%	27	18
Municipal Law	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%	33	31
Maritime and Transportation	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	38	38
Litigation	20.54%	29.26%	42.42%	1	1
Labor & Employment	8.36%	5.63%	-32.65%	4	5
International Trade	0.94%	0.37%	-60.35%	19	27
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	1.97%	3.35%	70.55%	11	10
Intellectual Property - Patent	11.35%	6.37%	-43.89%	3	3
Intellectual Property - Litigation	2.36%	3.73%	57.65%	10	8
Intellectual Property - General	1.34%	1.70%	27.30%	15	15
Insurance Defense	0.25%	0.62%	145.92%	24	25
Insurance Coverage	0.25%	0.62%	145.92%	23	24
Immigration	1.86%	1.49%	-19.69%	13	17
Health Care	3.85%	4.60%	19.65%	8	7
Government Contracts	0.02%	0.93%	3865.49%	28	21
Government and Government Relations	0.33%	0.81%	145.48%	22	22
Food & Drug Administration	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%	29	28
Finance	0.33%	6.22%	1788.33%	21	4
Family Law	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%	31	33
ERISA/Executive Compensation	6.60%	3.48%	-47.22%	6	9
Environmental and Land Use	0.94%	1.12%	18.96%	18	19
Entertainment and New Media	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	37	37
Energy and Oil & Gas	1.40%	0.56%	-60.01%	14	26
Electric Power	0.00%	0.12%	100.00%	34	32
Education	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	36	36
Data Privacy	0.41%	0.75%	83.91%	20	23
Corporate	17.86%	10.35%	-42.02%	2	2

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Construction	0.21%	0.93%	350.62%	25	11
Bankruptcy	4.30%	2.52%	-41.49%	7	13
Antitrust and Competition	1.17%	1.74%	48.79%	16	35
Alcohol Beverage Law	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35	

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Percentage of BCG Interviews by Practice Areas with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Alcohol Beverage Law	0.00%	0.00%	00.00%	38	38
Antitrust and Competition	0.82%	1.45%	75.59%	21	17
Bankruptcy	5.05%	3.28%	-35.15%	6	10
Construction	1.37%	0.95%	-30.73%	17	22
Corporate	15.52%	12.84%	-17.30%	2	2
Data Privacy	0.24%	1.06%	335.66%	28	20
Education	0.00%	0.06%	100.00%	37	37
Electric Power	0.00%	0.20%	100.00%	35	33
Energy and Oil & Gas	1.28%	1.38%	7.31%	19	19
Entertainment and New Media	0.00%	0.24%	100.00%	34	31
Environmental and Land Use	1.38%	1.85%	33.65%	15	13
ERISA/Executive Compensation	4.09%	1.63%	-60.07%	7	14
Family Law	0.09%	0.18%	97.22%	31	34
Finance	0.70%	3.90%	456.49%	24	7
Food & Drug Administration	0.26%	0.54%	108.29%	27	28
Government and Government Relations	0.62%	1.04%	68.80%	25	21
Government Contracts	0.10%	0.60%	491.34%	30	25
Health Care	3.41%	4.12%	20.81%	10	6
Immigration	1.49%	0.93%	-37.48%	13	23
Insurance Coverage	0.86%	1.38%	60.41%	20	18
Insurance Defense	0.76%	0.55%	-27.96%	23	27
Intellectual Property - General	1.37%	1.53%	11.39%	16	16
Intellectual Property - Litigation	3.83%	3.47%	-9.41%	8	8
Intellectual Property - Patent	9.09%	6.84%	-24.75%	3	3
Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	1.96%	1.98%	0.59%	12	12
International Trade	0.82%	0.49%	-40.16%	22	29
Labor & Employment	7.32%	5.94%	-18.95%	5	5
Litigation	20.44%	26.32%	28.78%	1	1
Maritime and Transportation	0.00%	0.08%	100.00%	36	36
Municipal Law	0.11%	0.44%	296.31%	29	30
Other	0.45%	0.80%	76.83%	26	24
Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	1.36%	0.56%	-58.60%	18	26
Real Estate	7.45%	6.03%	-19.06%	4	4

Tax	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth	2016 Rank	2017 Rank
Technology Transactions		2.73%	1.56%	-42.81%	11	15
Telecommunications		0.09%	0.20%	130.52%	32	32
Trusts and Estates		1.45%	2.18%	49.82%	14	11
Workers' Compensation		0.04%	0.10%	135.62%	33	35

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Placement-Based Chart for Pacific States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Pacific States	Antitrust and Competition	0.23%	0.75%	225.37%
Pacific States	Bankruptcy	0.92%	0.28%	-69.50%
Pacific States	Construction	0.18%	0.31%	69.47%
Pacific States	Corporate	1.61%	2.83%	76.24%
Pacific States	Data Privacy	0.38%	0.37%	-2.39%
Pacific States	Electric Power	0.00%	0.12%	100.00%
Pacific States	Energy and Oil & Gas	0.46%	0.19%	-59.33%
Pacific States	Environmental and Land Use	0.46%	1.12%	144.03%
Pacific States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	2.91%	0.12%	-95.72%
Pacific States	Finance	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Pacific States	Food & Drug Administration	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Pacific States	Government Contracts	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Pacific States	Health Care	0.15%	2.61%	1608.21%
Pacific States	Immigration	0.92%	0.75%	-18.66%
Pacific States	Insurance Coverage	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Pacific States	Insurance Defense	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - General	0.46%	0.19%	-59.33%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	0.41%	1.03%	148.55%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - Patent	1.99%	1.74%	-12.40%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	1.64%	0.09%	-94.30%
Pacific States	International Trade	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Pacific States	Labor & Employment	4.43%	3.51%	-20.76%
Pacific States	Litigation	11.38%	10.42%	-8.43%
Pacific States	Municipal Law	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Pacific States	Other	0.00%	0.65%	100.00%
Pacific States	Real Estate	3.52%	1.03%	-70.82%
Pacific States	Tax	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Pacific States	Technology Transactions	1.61%	0.19%	-88.38%
Pacific States	Telecommunications	0.00%	0.12%	100.00%
Pacific States	Trusts and Estates	0.92%	1.00%	8.46%

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Placement-Based Chart for Central/Mountain States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
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Central / Mountain States	Antitrust and Competition	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Bankruptcy	0.31%	0.75%	144.03%
Central / Mountain States	Corporate	6.57%	3.11%	-52.71%
Central / Mountain States	Data Privacy	0.00%	0.37%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	2.29%	0.75%	-67.46%
Central / Mountain States	Finance	0.00%	2.49%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Government and Government Relations	0.00%	0.25%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Health Care	3.67%	0.25%	-93.22%
Central / Mountain States	Insurance Coverage	0.00%	0.44%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Insurance Defense	0.00%	0.44%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	0.18%	1.24%	577.86%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Patent	2.84%	1.87%	-34.40%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	0.00%	1.99%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Labor & Employment	1.38%	0.75%	-45.77%
Central / Mountain States	Litigation	3.36%	5.91%	75.63%
Central / Mountain States	Other	0.00%	0.19%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Real Estate	0.31%	1.37%	347.39%
Central / Mountain States	Tax	1.38%	0.75%	-45.77%
Central / Mountain States	Technology Transactions	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%
Central / Mountain States	Trusts and Estates	0.00%	0.75%	100.00%

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Placement-Based Chart for Eastern States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Eastern States	Antitrust and Competition	0.94%	0.75%	-20.69%
Eastern States	Bankruptcy	3.08%	1.49%	-51.57%
Eastern States	Construction	0.02%	0.62%	2543.66%
Eastern States	Corporate	9.68%	4.23%	-56.31%
Eastern States	Energy and Oil & Gas	0.48%	0.37%	-22.62%
Eastern States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	1.40%	2.61%	86.61%
Eastern States	Finance	0.33%	2.61%	693.10%
Eastern States	Government and Government Relations	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%
Eastern States	Health Care	0.02%	1.74%	7302.24%
Eastern States	Immigration	0.94%	0.75%	-20.69%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - General	0.70%	1.52%	117.92%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	1.77%	1.46%	-17.63%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Patent	6.52%	2.76%	-57.67%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	0.33%	1.27%	285.22%
Eastern States	Labor & Employment	2.55%	1.37%	-46.27%
Eastern States	Litigation	5.80%	12.94%	122.85%
Eastern States	Other	0.02%	0.37%	1486.19%

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Eastern States	Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.07%	0.25%	252.49%
Eastern States	Real Estate	3.69%	2.74%	-25.91%
Eastern States	Tax	1.40%	0.37%	-73.34%
Eastern States	Technology Transactions	0.33%	0.96%	190.80%
Eastern States	Telecommunications	0.02%	0.25%	957.46%
Eastern States	Data Privacy	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Environmental and Land Use	0.48%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Family Law	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Food & Drug Administration	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Government Contracts	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Insurance Coverage	0.25%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Insurance Defense	0.25%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	International Trade	0.94%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Trusts and Estates	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%
Eastern States	Workers' Compensation	0.02%	0.00%	-100.00%

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Interview-Based Chart for Pacific States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Pacific States	Antitrust and Competition	0.22%	0.61%	175%
Pacific States	Bankruptcy	0.70%	0.81%	16%
Pacific States	Construction	0.13%	0.43%	234%
Pacific States	Corporate	2.98%	3.27%	10%
Pacific States	Data Privacy	0.06%	0.59%	897%
Pacific States	Electric Power	0.00%	0.11%	100%
Pacific States	Energy and Oil & Gas	0.46%	0.42%	-9%
Pacific States	Entertainment and New Media	0.00%	0.12%	100%
Pacific States	Environmental and Land Use	1.11%	1.34%	20%
Pacific States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	2.11%	0.20%	-91%
Pacific States	Family Law	0.00%	0.08%	100%
Pacific States	Finance	0.03%	0.31%	811%
Pacific States	Food & Drug Administration	0.05%	0.19%	279%
Pacific States	Government and Government Relations	0.08%	0.36%	379%
Pacific States	Government Contracts	0.00%	0.35%	100%
Pacific States	Health Care	0.75%	1.58%	111%
Pacific States	Immigration	0.20%	0.34%	66%
Pacific States	Insurance Coverage	0.36%	0.48%	35%
Pacific States	Insurance Defense	0.21%	0.26%	28%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - General	0.45%	0.47%	4%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	1.00%	1.41%	41%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property - Patent	2.19%	1.61%	-27%
Pacific States	Intellectual Property -			

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Pacific States	Trademark/Copyright	0.60%	0.52%	-13%
Pacific States	International Trade	0.10%	0.04%	-59%
Pacific States	Labor & Employment	4.31%	3.08%	-29%
Pacific States	Litigation	8.78%	11.72%	34%
Pacific States	Municipal Law	0.08%	0.31%	266%
Pacific States	Other	0.07%	0.51%	610%
Pacific States	Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.56%	0.25%	-55%
Pacific States	Real Estate	3.19%	1.81%	-43%
Pacific States	Tax	0.44%	1.09%	147%
Pacific States	Technology Transactions	1.24%	0.29%	-77%
Pacific States	Telecommunications	0.03%	0.03%	10%
Pacific States	Trusts and Estates	0.45%	1.39%	208%
Pacific States	Workers' Compensation	0.00%	0.10%	100%

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Interview-Based Chart for Central/Mountain States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Central / Mountain States	Antitrust and Competition	0.20%	0.14%	-31%
Central / Mountain States	Bankruptcy	0.97%	0.61%	-37%
Central / Mountain States	Construction	0.03%	0.14%	314%
Central / Mountain States	Corporate	3.63%	3.43%	-5%
Central / Mountain States	Data Privacy	0.00%	0.25%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Electric Power	0.00%	0.08%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Energy and Oil & Gas	0.28%	0.23%	-18%
Central / Mountain States	Environmental and Land Use	0.03%	0.09%	254%
Central / Mountain States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	0.57%	0.17%	-70%
Central / Mountain States	Family Law	0.00%	0.10%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Finance	0.17%	1.32%	679%
Central / Mountain States	Food & Drug Administration	0.00%	0.06%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Government and Government Relations	0.25%	0.13%	-48%
Central / Mountain States	Health Care	1.51%	0.79%	-48%
Central / Mountain States	Immigration	0.41%	0.00%	-100%
Central / Mountain States	Insurance Coverage	0.25%	0.44%	77%
Central / Mountain States	Insurance Defense	0.31%	0.14%	-55%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - General	0.18%	0.48%	163%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	1.70%	0.90%	-47%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Patent	2.03%	2.25%	11%
Central / Mountain States	Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	0.64%	0.62%	-4%
Central / Mountain States	International Trade	0.00%	0.17%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Labor & Employment	1.39%	1.27%	-9%
Central / Mountain States	Litigation	3.36%	5.39%	60%

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Central / Mountain States	Municipal	0.03%	0.04%	66%
Central / Mountain States	Other	0.14%	0.08%	-47%
Central / Mountain States	Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.75%	0.17%	-77%
Central / Mountain States	Real Estate	1.67%	1.13%	-33%
Central / Mountain States	Tax	0.82%	1.28%	55%
Central / Mountain States	Technology Transactions	0.13%	0.48%	276%
Central / Mountain States	Telecommunications	0.00%	0.12%	100%
Central / Mountain States	Trusts and Estates	0.42%	0.31%	-26%
Central / Mountain States	Workers' Compensation	0.03%	0.00%	-100%

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Interview-Based Chart for Eastern States with Comparison between 2016 and 2017

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Eastern States	Antitrust and Competition	0.37%	0.70%	87%
Eastern States	Bankruptcy	3.35%	1.86%	-45%
Eastern States	Construction	1.18%	0.38%	-68%
Eastern States	Corporate	8.77%	6.00%	-32%
Eastern States	Data Privacy	0.18%	0.22%	17%
Eastern States	Education	0.00%	0.06%	100%
Eastern States	Energy and Oil & Gas	0.51%	0.72%	41%
Eastern States	Entertainment and New Media	0.00%	0.12%	100%
Eastern States	Environmental and Land Use	0.22%	0.42%	89%
Eastern States	ERISA/Executive Compensation	1.39%	1.27%	-9%
Eastern States	Family Law	0.09%	0.00%	-100%
Eastern States	Finance	0.47%	2.26%	381%
Eastern States	Food & Drug Administration	0.21%	0.29%	39%
Eastern States	Government and Government Relations	0.29%	0.51%	76%
Eastern States	Government Contracts	0.10%	0.21%	106%
Eastern States	Health Care	1.15%	1.75%	52%
Eastern States	Immigration	0.87%	0.59%	-32%
Eastern States	Insurance Coverage	0.26%	0.46%	79%
Eastern States	Insurance Defense	0.24%	0.14%	-41%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - General	0.74%	0.58%	-22%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Litigation	1.13%	1.16%	3%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Patent	4.87%	2.98%	-39%
Eastern States	Intellectual Property - Trademark/Copyright	0.72%	0.83%	16%
Eastern States	International Trade	0.72%	0.24%	-67%
Eastern States	Labor & Employment	1.60%	1.59%	-1%
Eastern States	Litigation	8.27%	9.21%	11%
Eastern States	Maritime and Transportation	0.00%	0.08%	100%
Eastern States	Municipal Law	0.00%	0.08%	100%

Time Zone	Practice Area	2016	2017	% of Growth
Eastern States	Other	0.24%	0.22%	-8%
Eastern States	Patent Agents/Technical Specialists	0.05%	0.14%	187%
Eastern States	Real Estate	2.56%	3.01%	17%
Eastern States	Tax	2.17%	0.96%	-56%
Eastern States	Technology Transactions	1.35%	0.79%	-42%
Eastern States	Telecommunications	0.06%	0.06%	-10%
Eastern States	Trusts and Estates	0.59%	0.48%	-18%
Eastern States	Workers' Compensation	0.01%	0.00%	-100%