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State of the Law Firm Hiring Market

Summer-Fall 2018



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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

State of the Market Report: San Francisco

by **Lorie Ball**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

**Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach | Technology transactions | Corporate |
Litigation | Labor and Employment | Patent Prosecution/Patent Agents |
Patent/IP Litigation | Real Estate/Land Use**

Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach

As with Silicon Valley, there has been a significant rise in demand from (mostly) large firms looking for candidates with privacy, cybersecurity and a mix of technology transaction experience. There appears to be a particular need for mid to senior level candidates with large firm or sophisticated in-house experience. Experience with compliance programs across domestic (federal and state) and global privacy laws and regulations, including cybersecurity, data protection, data retention and data breach as well as investigations and data breach response experience are all in high demand. Firms are consistently looking for candidates with proper certifications such as CIPP (all regions) and candidates that are admitted to the CA Bar. Experience with Technology Transactions and Mergers & Acquisitions are a strong advantage here.

Technology transactions

While there is less of a demand for technology transactions here than in Silicon Valley, there does appear to be a growing need in San Francisco for technology transactions associates, with particular strengths in M&A transactions, joint ventures arrangements, emerging companies involving technology industries as well as experience with related licensing, outsourcing and tech services agreements. Experience in privacy and data security is also a strong advantage here.

Corporate

As is typical of Northern California, there continues to be a high demand for corporate associates. Candidates having experience with start-ups, emerging companies, venture capital, blockchain/cryptocurrency, private equity, M&A, securities and finance are in particularly high demand. Candidates with corporate formation and governance and restructuring experience also enjoy a number of opportunities. Candidates with 2 plus years

of experience and that have the California bar are ideally situated, though in many instances firms will make exceptions for stellar candidates barred in other states.

Litigation

Demand for litigators has increased substantially since the last report and existing need nearly triples the need in nearby Silicon Valley. While primarily seeking junior to mid-level candidates, a few firms are also seeking senior candidates. Defense attorneys with experience in commercial litigation, construction, insurance, antitrust, securities, and tort/civil litigation (personal injury, products liability and mass torts) are in highest demand. Trial experience is highly sought after and, because there are always a healthy number of litigators in the market, firms are looking for highly credentialed candidates (top academics, AMLAW 100 experience and clerkships). Admission to the California bar is almost always required before a firm will even look at your resume.

Labor and Employment

Opportunities for employment attorneys in San Francisco have increased over the last period, with firms seeking associates at all levels but particularly mid to senior level. Firms consistently seek candidates with counseling (handbooks, investigations, advising on terminations, leaves of absence and wage/hour) and litigation experience (discrimination, wrongful termination, retaliation, labor agreements and class actions). There is a particularly high need for candidates with wage and hour and PAGA experience as well as trial experience. California bar is almost always a prerequisite for litigation positions and foreign language skills are a plus.

Patent Prosecution/Patent Agents

Patent Prosecution hiring has increased in the life science field (molecular biology, biochemistry, immunology, large molecule/biologics, and bioinformatics). Firms also continue to seek candidates with electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer engineering, computer science, optics and applied physics degrees and experience. The most sought after and competitive candidates will have advanced degrees. Experience with portfolio development and client counseling is a plus. USPTO admission is almost always required. There is also a strong demand for patent agents with degrees in all of the above areas. While many firms are looking for candidates with prior experience and a USPTO registration number, a small number of firms appear to be seeking or open to entry level candidates at this time.

Patent/IP Litigation

Firms are hiring patent litigators at a steady pace, with firms seeking strong junior and mid-level

associates with both hard science and life science backgrounds. There are also a number of openings for candidates with soft IP experience, including Copyrights, Trademarks, Lanham Act and Trade Secrets experience. CA bar is almost always a prerequisite in this area.

Real Estate/Land Use

Real estate demands for both transactional and litigation associates have increased over the last reporting period with firms seeking candidates at all levels with acquisitions, finance, leasing, joint ventures, dispositions and development experience in the general commercial, retail, wine and hospitality sectors. Land Use candidates are always in demand as candidates with true land use experience are hard to come by.

Steady Practice Areas

Immigration | Tax

Immigration

Immigration needs have leveled off, with firms primarily seeking associates with business immigration experience.

Tax

While a niche area of law, we continue to see a steady number of openings for candidates with tax expertise. Sophisticated prior law firm experience and LLM degrees are almost always required (especially BigLaw experience). There are opportunities in a variety of areas, including tax controversy, domestic, international/cross-border, M&A, renewable energy and non-profit.

Slower Practice Areas

Environmental

Although slower, we continue to see demand for environmental attorneys, both in regulatory/transactional and litigation roles. Firms, however, are highly selective, with many positions remaining open for extended periods. Ideal candidates will have top qualifications and generally must have California experience and licenses.

Demand has been slower for positions in health care, trusts and estates, trademark and bankruptcy.



Explore law firm jobs in San Francisco by practice area:

- [Corporate](#)
- [Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach](#)
- [Environmental](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Labor and Employment](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Patent/IP Litigation](#)
- [Patent Prosecution/Patent Agents](#)
- [Technology transactions](#)
- [Real Estate/Land Use](#)
- [Tax](#)

State of the Market Report: Silicon Valley

by **Lorie Ball**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

**Corporate | Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach/Technology Transactions |
Patent Prosecution | Patent/IP Litigation**

Corporate

Corporate demand dominates the market in Silicon Valley, especially for mid to senior level candidates. M&A, start-up and emerging growth, venture capital, private equity, and securities experience is highly sought, with finance (corporate, leveraged, and commercial) also in demand. Experience with technology companies is a plus in this region.

Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach/Technology Transactions

2018 has seen a dramatic rise in demand from large firms looking for candidates with data privacy, cybersecurity and a mix of technology transaction experience. Firms are generally looking for very sophisticated experience with compliance programs across domestic (federal and state) and global privacy laws and regulations, including data protection, data retention and data breach as well as actual data breach response experience. Firms are consistently looking for candidates with M&A, corporate due diligence, rep and warranty drafting and licensing experience in the technology sector. Firms also appear to be increasingly open to candidates with sophisticated, senior in-house experience. Proper certifications such as CIPP (all regions) and prior admission to the CA Bar are highly preferred.

Patent Prosecution

As is typical in this geographic area, Patent Prosecution hiring is extremely strong in hard science (electrical engineering, computer science, and mechanical engineering). However, a growing area seems to be life science practices with an emphasis on molecular biology, biochemistry, immunology, large molecule/biologics, and bioinformatics. Junior attorneys and attorneys with advanced degrees are in particularly high demand.

Patent/IP Litigation

Demand for patent litigators also remains significant in the Electrical Engineering and

Computer Science/Engineering specialties. Similar to Patent Prosecution, there is a growing need for undergraduate and/or graduate training in molecular biology, pharmacology, immunology, virology and related field. While junior and mid-level attorneys are in highest demand, we are seeing a real opportunity for more senior attorneys in the life science areas. Other desired degrees include Physics and Mechanical Engineering. USPTO and Hatch Waxman experience are a definite plus here.

Steady Practice Areas

Labor and Employment/ERISA | Litigation

Labor and Employment/ERISA

Demand for employment associates has decreased since the last reporting period, but remains an area of opportunity in the Silicon Valley. Ideal candidates will bring (1) strong counseling experience with public and/or private clients and (2) litigation experience with class actions, wage and hour, discrimination and PAGA. There also continue to be opportunities for candidates with traditional labor experience. Firms are seeking all levels of attorneys, with an unusually high number of firms seeking more senior candidates. Opportunities for ERISA and employment compensation lawyers are on the rise, with some firms seeking both transactional experience and litigation experience. For litigators, the CA bar is a must and foreign language skills are a plus.

Litigation

Litigation needs are fairly steady, with opportunities for all levels of attorneys. Overall, firms remain highly selective with ideal candidates having stellar academics (law review, clerkships), AMLAW 100 experience, and excellent hands-on skills such as chairing a trial, arbitration, and deposition work. One area that is particularly hot right now is construction litigation. While a healthy number of firms are seeking general commercial litigation experience, there are also needs for securities and antitrust litigators, as well as civil litigators such as insurance, personal injury, liability, malpractice, mass tort and class action specialists. Admission to the California bar is an absolute necessity for litigators.

Slower Practice Areas

Demand has been slower for positions in real estate and real estate finance, health care, trusts and estates, environmental, trademark, tax and bankruptcy.



Explore law firm jobs in Silicon Valley by practice area:

- [Corporate](#)
- [Data Privacy/Cybersecurity/Data Breach](#)
- [ERISA](#)
- [Labor and Employment](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Patent/IP Litigation](#)
- [Patent Prosecution](#)
- [Technology Transactions](#)



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

State of the Market Report: San Diego

by **Romina L. Filippou**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

San Diego is a very appealing market for candidates looking to make a lateral move either within the state of California or from out-of-state. Its climate, distance to the ocean, and lower prices compared to the rest of California make San Diego unique as compared to other destinations in California and elsewhere, and as a result, the competition within the legal market in San Diego is high. Besides requiring an outstanding pedigree and strong practical legal experience, the California bar is (generally) required, and ties to the San Diego Area should be demonstrated. San Diego is also a small market. This means there aren't as many positions as in the Los Angeles Area and Bay Area, and the salaries are lower than in its larger metropolitan counterparts like San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation

As the demand for corporate legal jobs goes up, Litigation openings generally go down (and vice versa). There are a lot of Litigation openings right now and fewer corporate openings in San Diego. While there is a good amount of Litigation opportunities at Big Law, mid-sized, and small law firms, hiring is slow and selective.

As a result, candidates should have a strong pedigree and robust practical law firm and/or clerkship experience, such as appearances in court, taking and defending depositions, significant client contact, and robust legal research and writing experience. The most desirable candidates are those with around two to seven years of experience, although more senior litigators will find opportunities in general commercial litigation, insurance defense, construction defects, and general and professional liability.

Steady Practice Areas

Patent Prosecution | Corporate

Patent Prosecution

Intellectual Property has been robust in San Diego recently, particularly (but not exclusively) in the areas of hard sciences and life sciences for Patent Prosecution attorneys, patent

agents, and technical specialists. Candidates should ideally already be members of the USPTO, should have a degree in the hard sciences or life sciences (ideally a masters or PhD degree), have a strong pedigree, and for attorneys, should have the CA Bar.

Corporate

Corporate demand is steady right now in San Diego – it has picked up over the last couple of months, but is not as strong as the demand for Litigation. The demand there is right now is in the areas of corporate finance, private equity, VC, M&A, securities, tech transactions, and emerging growth companies. Desired experience ranges from around two to eight or more years, although mostly in the two to seven year range, and even though most firms require the CA state bar, the rare firm will consider candidates licensed in other jurisdictions with otherwise outstanding credentials.

Slower Practice Areas

Labor & Employment

The market for Labor and Employment is somewhat weak in San Diego right now. This is in contrast to other areas of the state like the Los Angeles Area and the Bay Area. The candidates that are most marketable are litigators with class action, wage and hour, discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, and retaliation experience, with counseling experience considered a gold star.

Some other slower practice areas in San Diego include Trusts and Estates, Tax, Health Care, Family Law, and Immigration, although there are some listings available. Attorneys with outstanding qualifications in any practice area can nearly always find opportunities, particularly if an attorney has a large enough portable book of business.

Explore law firm jobs in San Diego by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**

State of the Market Report: Los Angeles

by **Romina L. Filippou**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Corporate | Labor & Employment | Litigation | Real Estate | Patent Prosecution

Corporate

Law firms in Los Angeles, especially Big Law firms, are seeking strong General Corporate and General Finance Associates. The most marketable candidates will have around two to seven years of experience in private equity, VC, M&A, securities, and emerging growth companies. Firms are also seeking finance associates with debt finance, structured finance, banking, and corporate finance (including high yield transactions) experience.

Labor & Employment

Employment Litigation Associates of all class years (including 2016 graduates and more senior Labor & Employment attorneys) are highly marketable in Los Angeles. Firms are seeking candidates with experience in all areas of employment law, including class action, wage and hour, discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, and retaliation experience, and counseling experience in particular is considered a strong attribute. Boutique defense-side firms as well as plaintiff-side firms are currently actively searching for wage and hour class action litigation experience. Being a member of the CA Bar is required for almost every firm. Employment attorneys who want to move to the Los Angeles Area should be ready to take the next available bar exam, and they will likely only be seriously considered by firms if they have registered for the bar and are about to sit for it within the next month or two, have already sat for the bar and are awaiting their results, or have passed the bar and/or have been sworn in.

Litigation

Litigation is the most marketable and most desirable practice area in California (with Labor & Employment a not-too-distant second), and is also the most marketable practice area in the Los Angeles Area. Firms of all sizes – Big Law, mid-sized, and boutique – are very actively seeking litigators, in particular at the junior and mid-level. Still, lateral candidates must have solid academic and professional credentials, and candidates without the California Bar will likely not be considered (unless they are about to sit for the bar, or have already sat for it).

Candidates with trial experience are also very desirable, and clerkships (particularly federal and state Supreme Court clerkships) are a gold star on the resume as well. The hottest practice areas are General Commercial Litigation, Insurance Defense, Insurance Coverage, and ERISA.

Real Estate

Los Angeles firms continue to search for and recruit Real Estate attorneys at every class year level, in particular at the junior to mid-level, but usually with around two to seven years of experience. Many firms are also seeking Real Estate partners, although a strong book of portable business (ideally \$500K or more) is almost always necessary. Candidates should have experience in any of these practice areas: purchase & sales, leasing, joint ventures, and finance (including CMBS). Real Estate Finance openings have also been popping up recently. Specifically, firms are looking for candidates with experience in mortgage/mezzanine debt and joint-venture equity work.

Patent Prosecution

Los Angeles firms continue to search for Patent Prosecutors, Patent Agents, and Technical Specialists. Candidates should ideally already be members of the USPTO, have a degree in the hard sciences or life sciences (ideally a masters or PhD degree), have a strong pedigree, and for attorneys, have the CA Bar. IP Litigation, in contrast, has slowed over the last several months.

Steady Practice Areas

Environmental | Health Care

Environmental

The need for Environmental attorneys is small but steady in Los Angeles. Several top firms are seeking candidates with land use, water, CEQA, and NEPA experience. Boutique and mid-sized firms are also searching as well, but only a few.

Health Care

Health care is a small but strong practice area in LA. Candidates with experience in corporate, transactional, and regulatory matters for healthcare clients are very desirable, but there are also occasionally in-house opportunities for healthcare litigators as well. Those with three to ten or more years of experience will have the most success in obtaining interviews.



Slower Practice Areas

There is little to no activity for attorneys in Bankruptcy, Tax, and Energy at the moment.

Explore law firm jobs in Los Angeles by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Environmental**
- **Health Care**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**
- **Real Estate**

State of the Market Report: Orange County

by **Romina L. Filippou**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation

Litigation is a very robust practice area in Orange County, with firms (boutique, mid-sized, as well as Big Law firms) seeking attorneys with around two to ten or more years of law firm experience. Since positions in Orange County are few and far between (because the OC is a smaller market), those with strong pedigrees and practical courtroom and deposition experience are most likely to be successful in their search. Orange County firms also generally want to see ties to and a real interest in the area, as they would prefer that their candidates live in Orange County rather than commute from the Los Angeles Area or the San Diego Area. However, candidates that are willing to look for opportunities in Orange County rather than solely in Los Angeles or the San Diego area will have a leg up, as the applicant pool that is interested in the OC is smaller.

Steady Practice Areas

Patent Prosecution | Corporate | Labor & Employment

Patent Prosecution

Patent Prosecution is a steady practice area in Orange County, with several strong firms searching for patent prosecutors, patent agents, and technical specialists with two or more years of experience. Candidates must be members of the USPTO already, have a degree in the hard sciences or life sciences (ideally a masters or PhD degree), have a strong pedigree, and for attorneys, have the CA Bar. IP Litigation, in contract, has slowed over the last several months.

Corporate

Corporate demand remains strong in Orange County, similar to how it is in Los Angeles. When the demand for corporate attorneys is high, other related practice areas, such as Real Estate, do very well as well. Candidates with two to seven years of experience in private equity, VC, M&A, securities, and emerging growth companies, as well as general corporate

experience, will likely be successful in their search in Orange County as well as in the Los Angeles Area.

Labor & Employment

There is an incredible amount of demand for Labor & Employment attorneys across California, and this includes Orange County. Labor & Employment attorneys, from the very junior (2016 graduates) to the very senior (even 2008 graduates) will likely be successful in their search.

Slower Practice Areas

Besides in the above practice areas, there have been some postings in Bankruptcy, Environmental, Family Law, and Trusts & Estates. However, these practice areas are, for the most part, in low demand currently.

Explore law firm jobs in Irvine, Orange County, California by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**



NORTHWEST

State of the Market Report: Seattle

by **Paul Danielson**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

If you pay attention to national trends (and every good legal recruiter should), you might know that Seattle has had the highest number of construction cranes “in the air” for three years running. Seattle has also led the nation in home price increases for the last 21 months in a row, which is the United States’ 2nd longest streak on record. In other words, Seattle is absolutely booming right now, thanks to a larger scale trend of increased in-migration to cities, the popularity of the West coast generally and the Pacific Northwest specifically (Portland has also been booming, at a slightly slower pace), and the continued success of the technology sector, which has an increasingly prominent place in the Seattle business landscape thanks to established major companies (think Amazon and Microsoft), as well as proliferating start-ups. The Seattle legal market has been doing very well lately, though firms who recall the market crash of a decade ago remain very selective and cautious in their hiring even in response to the business boom. As a result, candidates with backgrounds and skill sets that are in demand can expect a lot of interest, but also a lot of competition, for available spots.

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation | Corporate | Patent Prosecution | Labor & Employment

Litigation

In our last report, the litigation practice market in Seattle utterly dominated any other practice group in terms of both the number of listings and the number of hires. While it remains the hottest practice area in the region, a couple other areas are also hiring at a rapid clip. That being said, demand is still very healthy for litigation attorneys, but the competition on the candidate side is equally as healthy. Litigators with top credentials and solid experience will garner a number of interviews, if not a number of offers, while candidates with lesser credentials or an experience level that is too junior or too senior (without portable business) will need to be as aggressive as possible to give themselves an opportunity with Seattle firms. Specific skills within the litigation universe that are currently in high demand in the Seattle market include insurance coverage, construction, complex commercial, and securities/white collar litigation. Priority will be given to attorneys with solid deposition and trial experience.

Corporate

Corporate attorney hiring in Seattle saw a small downturn towards the latter part of 2017 and

the first two quarters of 2018 (likely due to the major hiring in this practice area in 2016 and early 2017), but with the economy still going strong, firms are now looking to bolster their ranks of associates (and, as always, partners with portable business), particularly in the areas of mergers & acquisitions, finance, emerging companies, private equity, and project finance. Priority will be given to candidates with local ties, and particularly those with large deal experience from Am Law firms.

Patent Prosecution

While patent prosecution has been generally steady or strong on average in the Seattle market over the past 2-3 years, it does tend to fluctuate, with firms seeming to all be looking to hire at once, and then a pause as firms work to have new hires settle in before looking to expand their ranks further. Following a bit of a dip in the latter half of 2017 and the early part of 2018, demand for patent prosecution attorneys has come back in force heading into the fall quarter. While the demand for patent prosecution attorneys and agents is strong, the caveat (which is almost always true for the Seattle market) is that the demand is almost exclusively for attorneys and agents with an actual degree in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, or Computer Engineering. Attorneys and agents with life sciences backgrounds who are looking to be competitive in the market will at least need a Masters level degree, and ideally a Ph.D.

Labor & Employment

Another practice area that has been fairly consistently in demand the past few market cycles in Seattle, Labor & Employment looks to be quite strong heading into the latter half of 2018, with the vast majority of the demand focused on attorneys with employment litigation experience, including class action, wage & hour, discrimination, and other work. There is still demand, though quite a bit lower, for attorneys with employment counseling and traditional labor experience, and in those particular niche areas, attorneys will need to have senior-level experience and, ideally, a solid book of portable business to be competitive in the Seattle market.

Steady Practice Areas

**Real Estate | Technology Transactions & Data Privacy |
Immigration | Trademark & Copyright**

Real Estate

The real estate market in Seattle continues to boom, with the city seeing both the highest number of cranes in the air of any city in the country, as well as a long streak of the fastest rising residential real estate prices in the country. While firms hired real estate attorneys

rapidly in late 2016/early 2017, they may have felt they had enough experience on hand to service the sector in anticipation of what is typically an inevitable correction late in the development cycle, however we have seen demand come back up after a 6-9 month lull, and firms are looking to hire again at the mid-to-senior level for attorneys with solid real estate and land use experience. Experience from top firms is always a plus, as well as attorneys with experience in affordable housing credits given the current political climate.

Technology Transactions & Data Privacy

With major changes internationally in data privacy laws, and with data privacy increasingly becoming an issue consumers are aware of domestically, it is no surprise to see steady demand in this sector, and therefore steady demand in the Seattle market where a large number of top technology and internet consumer companies are headquartered. Candidates looking to get hired in Seattle will still need to show top credentials and sophisticated experience, either with Am Law firms or Fortune 500 companies (or significant start-ups).

Immigration

With the technology sector booming, where every technology company from start-ups to a company near the top of the Fortune 100 list is competing for skilled workers, demand for immigration attorneys is nearing an all-time high along the West coast, and Seattle is no exception, particularly with major recent shifts in U.S. immigration policy. Attorneys with solid experience in business and family immigration matters, especially those with a track record of success, will see multiple opportunities with medium to large size Seattle firms in the current market.

Trademark & Copyright

Seattle has seen a steady demand for attorneys with solid experience in trademark matters, and to some extent copyright matters, heading into the latter half of 2018. While not a huge sector of the market, attorneys with mid-level to senior-level experience in these areas, especially attorneys with solid credentials and large firm backgrounds, should find this to be an ideal time to be looking at a potential lateral move.

Slow to Dead Practice Areas

We have seen some small demand in the Seattle market, though not consistent or very active, for attorneys with experience in: Taxation, Trusts & Estates (LL.M.s in tax with large firm experience being the exception – they will still do well), Health Care (both litigation and transactional), Environmental & Energy (energy attorneys can still find opportunities, and this is a particularly interesting sector given national and global market forces), and to a smaller



extent Patent Litigation. All other practice areas not mentioned above can be considered fairly dead or dormant in the current Seattle market, but that being said any attorney in any practice area with a decent amount of portable business can always generate some interest from a variety of firms, and it is never a bad time to be testing the market by reaching out to a good recruiter.

Explore law firm jobs in Seattle by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**
- **Real Estate**
- **Technology Transactions & Data Privacy**
- **Trademark & Copyright**

State of the Market Report: Portland

by **Paul Danielson**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Portland continues to feel like a city in transition, with a large number of new apartments coming online, neighborhoods that were once considered “fringe” now turning into destination spots, and even electric scooters beginning to dot the city sidewalks as people search for new alternative modes of transit to help ease the city’s growing pains. Amongst all this, the city’s legal market continues to be healthy, though we have not seen the surge of demand and hiring in Portland similar to other major West coast cities – it is steady, but still extremely competitive, with would-be lateral candidates finding their job search taking longer than expected.

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation | Corporate | Taxation, Trusts & Estates

Litigation

Litigation remains a strong practice area in Portland, just like it is in every major city on the West coast, although the number of litigation openings is not nearly as high as many other cities, so would-be laterals should expect very heavy competition for each spot. Firms have an extremely strong preference for deposition and trial experience, which you will especially need if you do not have top law school credentials and/or a solid Am Law firm background. Insurance defense and construction litigation are two niche areas where, if you have solid experience in either or both, you will see a lot more interview interest from Portland firms.

Corporate

Corporate hiring has remained strong in the Portland market, though firms are very selective and the hiring process can frequently span multiple months as firms interview a number of candidates for each opening. M&A remains the top skill set that is in demand, although we are increasingly seeing interest from Portland firms for candidates with venture capital and private equity experience, as Portland’s technology sector continues to grow and expand. If you are a transactional attorney with experience counseling start-ups and emerging companies, it would be a particularly good time to test the Portland lateral market.

Taxation, Trusts & Estates

As mentioned in previous Portland market reports, Tax, Trusts & Estates has been

reasonably strong in Portland for the last couple years, as is typical towards the end of a long-term market cycle as those with newfound gains in wealth due to a hot economy seek to find ways to navigate and protect their new earnings. This trend continues in the second half of 2018, with hiring in this area targeted at candidates in the mid-to-senior level range, and particularly those who have LL.M.s in Taxation and significant experience with handling matters for high net worth individuals, with slightly less emphasis on corporate tax experience. Firms still have a strong bias in favor of candidates with prior law firm experience, rather than accounting firm and/or public sector experience.

Steady Practice Areas

Labor & Employment | Real Estate | Patent Prosecution

Labor & Employment

Labor & Employment attorneys are generally in demand in a strong economy, and given Portland's economy has been booming for a number of years in a row now, with the unemployment rate near historic lows, it's no surprise there has been steady hiring in this sector as firms look to increase their capacity to service existing and new businesses of all sizes. Employment litigators are in particular demand, but there is also a reasonably healthy demand for ERISA and Employee Benefits experience, as well as some small demand for traditional labor and collective bargaining experience.

Real Estate

Portland is definitely not the sixth most populous city in the country, not even close, but it ranks at number six in terms of the number of construction cranes in the air, and development has been booming for quite some time now (although the brakes were pumped following the passage of an inclusionary zoning ordinance). While not as white hot as prior years, demand for real estate attorneys continues to remain solid in Portland, with emphasis on mid-level real estate associates with solid credentials and medium-to-large firm transactional experience.

Patent Prosecution

Patent law hiring swings regularly in Portland between steady to fairly dead, with the cycle running about every 4-6 months or so. This is because it's still a relatively small market for patent work (though growing with the proliferation of Portland's tech economy), especially when compared with major technology hubs like Seattle and the Bay Area. That being said, diligent candidates on a job search in Portland should still find fairly steady opportunities in the next couple months if they have solid technical backgrounds in electrical engineering,

computer science, and occasionally the life sciences (chemistry being tops, and at least a masters, if not a Ph.D., is typically required of life science patent candidates). Candidates should also be prepared to demonstrate significant patent drafting experience, with a couple published patents as writing samples.

Slow to Dead Practice Areas

There have been a handful of listings in the following practice areas in Portland in the past couple months, with no particular signs of a near-term increase in hiring demand: Immigration, Bankruptcy, Technology Transactions & Data Privacy, Environmental, and Trademark law. All other practice areas not mentioned above can be considered currently dead or dormant in the Portland market, but that being said any candidate with at least a modest amount of portable business and/or truly stellar credentials can generally get a look from top firms.

Explore law firm jobs in Portland by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**
- **Real Estate**
- **Taxation**
- **Trusts & Estates**



SOUTHWEST

State of the Market Report: Phoenix

by **Christina Brown**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Candidates seeking to lateral west without encountering the sticker shock of California housing prices may find that Phoenix offers a great alternative (so long as you're prepared for the heat).

Although the market is highly competitive in Phoenix, and candidates should offer exceptional skills and firm experience, Phoenix has great local culture, beautiful communities, and much that larger cities do in terms of sporting and recreational features. It is therefore an excellent city to consider. An added advantage of Phoenix over California or Nevada is that candidates are often able to waive into the Arizona bar based on reciprocity or UBE scores. We find that Phoenix consistently has a solid set of good job opportunities for attorneys, so if you're interested in making a move here, please let us know.

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation | **Real Estate** | **Corporate**

Litigation

Opportunities for strong litigators in Phoenix is at a very strong pace, with firms seeking candidates having experience in insurance, real estate, construction, and professional liability, as well as general commercial litigation. Associates with 2-8 years of experience and partners (generally with at least 250K or more in business) are in demand, particularly those from very strong firms and top academics with trial, deposition, and experience in the courtroom. Bilingual skills are a strong plus, particularly Spanish.

Real Estate

Our clients are clamoring throughout the west for real estate attorneys, and this is true also in Phoenix, where firms have need for lending, finance, sales and acquisition, leasing, and capital markets expertise. The demand ranges from 2-6 years (or more for candidates with portable business, or particularly strong experience).

Corporate

Corporate nearly ties with real estate this season in demand, with opportunities in finance,

M&A, securities, private equity, venture capital, and governance. We are (happily) seeing positions including emerging growth and tech.

Steady Practice Areas

Labor & Employment | **Trust and Estate Planning** | **Patent Prosecution**

Labor & Employment

Although the labor and employment market had leveled off a bit here, back is the demand for candidates with 2-8 years of experience. Firms are seeking experience in wage & hour class action, single plaintiff, discrimination, retaliation, harassment, and non-compete. Bilingual ability is a strong plus, as is counseling experience.

Trust and Estate Planning

Sharply up from past quarters, we've seen a surge in the need for estate and trust planning in Phoenix and surrounding areas. Our clients are seeking experience in trust administration, estate tax return preparation, and some probate.

Patent Prosecution

Back from a few slow seasons is patent prosecution, although we note that demand here is more warm than "on fire." Candidates with electrical engineering, computer science, and mechanical backgrounds are being sought, with Arizona licensure and the USPTO generally required.

Other Practice Areas

There is some need in bankruptcy, immigration, healthcare, and family law, though not as consistent as for the areas noted above.

Firms continue to seek partners with portables at 250K or more in areas including litigation, labor and employment, health care, insurance and intellectual property.



Explore law firm jobs in Phoenix by practice area:

- [Bankruptcy](#)
- [Corporate](#)
- [Family Law](#)
- [Healthcare](#)
- [Labor & Employment](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Patent Prosecution](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Trust and Estate Planning](#)

State of the Market Report: Colorado

by **Brie Mills**, General Manager, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Litigation / Labor & Employment | Corporate & Finance | Intellectual Property

Litigation / Labor & Employment

By far, the most opportunities in the Denver area are still in litigation. Many firms are looking for general practitioners with broad litigation skills and experience. However, there is a steady, if not growing, demand for adept insurance litigators across the market. Also among the litigation openings are several positions with top firms who are looking for skilled labor and employment attorneys – both associate and partner level.

Corporate & Finance

Many firms are looking for a jack-of-all-trades kind of corporate attorney, who can do broad-based transactional work. The big firms are looking for mid-to-senior level attorneys with sophisticated experience in debt financing, mergers & acquisitions, venture capital and emerging growth markets, and securities law.

Intellectual Property

There is a constant flow of opportunities for Intellectual Property attorneys throughout Colorado – especially in the hard sciences. Firms are looking for everything from patent litigators to patent prosecutors to patent agents. The IP work also spills over into IP licensing needs (technology transactions) and skilled data privacy attorneys.

Steady Practice Areas

Real Estate | Environmental & Land Use / Energy & Oil and Gas

Real Estate

A handful of big firms are seeking sophisticated real estate attorneys with loan origination, leasing and financing, and sales and acquisitions backgrounds. Smaller firms are looking

for attorneys with real estate know-how as just one facet of a more rounded transactional portfolio.

Environmental & Land Use / Energy & Oil and Gas

Though the market is not as hot as it once was, there is still a steady need for attorneys with experience in the natural resources fields. Firms are looking for candidates with the expertise to navigate complex land records, state and federal environmental regulations, oil and gas title issues, and energy-related financing.

Slower Practice Areas

The lateral opportunities for tax, trusts and estates, and bankruptcy attorneys are minimal throughout Colorado.

Explore law firm jobs in Colorado by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Energy & Oil and Gas**
- **Environmental & Land Use**
- **Finance**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**

State of the Market Report: Las Vegas

by **Christina Brown**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Although the hiring market throughout California, and even in the comparatively more relaxed Pacific Northwest, has been unrelentingly strong, Las Vegas by comparison has seen “slow to steady” growth. But as the housing market and influx of new residents continues to boom, we expect to see a more dynamic market as the customary sluggish summer legal hiring months end and fall begins. Candidates seeking to lateral into (or within) the market here should know that Nevada licensure is generally a must have, and the most attractive candidates bring something “exceptional,” such as outstanding grades (and clerkships), highly developed practice skills, or niche expertise. Portable business is always welcome and firms are more relaxed in their demands of the amount of business required than larger markets expect.

Strong Practice Areas

Litigation

Litigation continues to dominate the market, with many firms seeking associates with 2-8 years of experience in insurance, construction, consumer finance, and general commercial disputes. A few national, and many regional and local firms, are seeking candidates with trial and strong deposition experience.

Steady Practice Areas

Corporate and Real Estate | Trust and Estate Planning | Family Law

Corporate and Real Estate

Despite the economic boom, and strength in residential and commercial development, the call for corporate and real estate transactional attorneys is best described as “steady.” Candidates with 3-6 years of M&A, public and private finance, securities, leasing, and development expertise will find opportunity to make a lateral move. We expect this to grow stronger in the coming months.

Trust and Estate Planning

We are seeing an unusually steady demand for 1-10 year attorneys with experience in estate, trust, and gift planning. Firms favor an LL.M. in tax or estate planning or CPA or accounting backgrounds. Although there have been some positions for experience in probate, most needed are candidates who focus on planning.

Family Law

Though tourists flock to Las Vegas to marry (or get the idea once they've arrived), Nevada has always maintained a strong divorce and custody law practice and this season has seen firms hiring in higher numbers than in seasons past. Candidates should be ready to hit the ground running, with the ability to manage a high volume of files and court appearances, motions practice, discovery management and depositions, and well-developed negotiation skills.

Slower Practice Areas

There have been a handful of opportunities in employment, patent prosecution and litigation (hard science), and immigration.

Explore law firm jobs in Las Vegas by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Family Law**
- **Immigration**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution and Litigation (Hard Science)**
- **Real Estate**
- **Trust and Estate Planning**



MIDWEST

State of the Market Report: Chicago

by **Brie Mills**, General Manager, BCG Attorney Search

Healthy Practice Areas

Corporate | Litigation | Intellectual Property

Corporate

The hunt for talented corporate attorneys in Chicago is almost at a fever pitch. There is a lot of competition for candidates with at least 3 years of sophisticated transactional work. The biggest need in the top firms is for experienced (4-6 year) mergers and acquisitions attorneys, but there are also several opportunities for fund formation, securities and capital markets, and venture capital attorneys. The demand for finance and banking associates and partners is not as fevered, but there is a strong need across the city for attorneys who can handle deals on their own involving leveraged buyouts, credit facilities transactions, structured finance, and commercial lending.

Litigation

Litigation hiring needs remain strong in Chicago. General litigators will have many options, but mid-level (3-5 year) insurance coverage and insurance defense litigators are in the highest demand. Chicago is also a particularly good market for attorneys with consumer financial services/class action experience, and such candidates will be able to find several interesting lateral opportunities in this area. There are a handful of opportunities for securities and white collar litigators, but the best markets for those attorneys are still New York and DC.

Intellectual Property

Chicago is a great market for Intellectual Property attorneys looking to get sophisticated experience. While technical backgrounds in hard sciences such as electrical engineering and computer science are the most sought after, attorneys with advanced degrees in biotech and pharmacology—especially attorneys with Hatch-Waxman experience—and even soft IP attorneys with trademark and copyright experience will find several lateral opportunities in the current market. Under the broader IP umbrella, there are also a few opportunities in technology transactions and data privacy, though it seems many firms are interviewing experienced candidates in this area, but are reluctant to pull the trigger to actually hire.

Steady Practice Areas

Real Estate | ERISA/Executive Compensation & Tax

Real Estate

The need for commercial real estate attorneys has gone up slightly compared to previous reports. At the associate level, several top firms are seeking candidates with 2-4 years' experience in acquisitions and dispositions, joint venture financing, and/or commercial leasing and development. At the partner level, many firms are looking to expand their real estate practices by bringing on experienced real estate partners with at least \$500k in portable business.

ERISA/Executive Compensation & Tax

Though not as hot as in recent quarters, there are still several firms looking for qualified tax and ERISA/Executive Compensation attorneys to support their booming corporate practices. The needs in this practice area span from junior to senior level associates. Firms are looking for various molds of attorneys experienced in this area, from the nitty gritty tax attorneys to employee health and welfare benefit plan counselors to ERISA litigators.

Slow to Dead Practice Areas

We have seen a handful of listings in Chicago for attorneys with experience in: Labor & Employment, Trusts & Estates, Bankruptcy, Family Law and Health Care. All other practice areas not listed above can be considered all but dormant in the current Chicago market.

Explore law firm jobs in Chicago by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **ERISA/Executive Compensation**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**
- **Tax**

State of the Market Report: Michigan

by **Julie Lehrman**, Senior Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search - Chicago

Hot Practice Areas

Corporate | Litigation | Intellectual Property

Corporate

Law firms all around Michigan are looking for experienced (3-7 year) corporate attorneys. The need varies from solid general corporate practitioners to sophisticated attorneys with expertise in mergers and acquisitions, capital markets, and securities offerings. From these trends, it looks like Michigan attorneys with transactional backgrounds will have many lateral options available to them throughout the fall of 2018, whether they want to go to an Am Law 100 firm to do highly specialized work, or to a smaller firm to settle into a broader corporate practice.

Litigation

Litigators are in demand across Michigan. Most firms are looking for attorneys who can come in and hit the ground running and manage a case from inception through trial. Though for most firms, any general litigation background will do, the insurance defense litigation space remains very competitive and the need for this specific experience dominates.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property practices are growing and thriving in Michigan. Several firms are looking for IP attorneys in both patent prosecution and litigation. Most openings are seeking candidates with strong technical backgrounds in the hard sciences, almost exclusively. In particular, attorneys with degrees in electrical or mechanical engineering and computer science are hot commodities in the current market.

Steady Practice Areas

Real Estate

The opportunities for real estate attorneys are steady, but not nearly as high as other

markets nationwide. Sophisticated real estate finance attorneys are needed at big law firms, and many small firms are looking for multi-faceted attorneys with some broad real estate experience.

Slower Practice Areas

The lateral opportunities in law firms for labor and employment, ERISA, and trusts and estates attorneys is very slow – especially compared to other national markets. Tax and bankruptcy are almost completely dead, which does line up with the more national trend in these practice areas, but may be poised to come back over the next few months.

Explore law firm jobs in Michigan by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**

State of the Market Report: Minnesota

by **Karen Wenzel**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Minnesota, and most notably the Twin Cities, continues to be home to a sophisticated and diverse legal market. The arrival of local offices of national firms in the past 2+ years has increased competition for associates at the largest firms. Increased movement among firms as well as corporations (in-house) has contributed to a general increase in hiring activity across the region. This market values local connections, but is also happy to recruit newcomers to the area who are drawn to the values and culture of the Midwest and sophisticated Twin Cities business community.

Hot Practice Areas

Business/Corporate | Real Estate | Litigation | Family Law

Business/Corporate

There has been a significant uptick in movement and hiring for associate attorneys with general transactional, business/corporate, M&A, and securities experience. This includes private equity/venture capital offerings, financings, corporate governance, commercial transactions, and work with emerging growth companies. Transactional focus areas such as Compliance and Health Care are also valued in this market.

Real Estate

Similarly to general corporate, real estate practices are also seeing increases in hiring. Relevant experience sought includes commercial lending, commercial contracts, financing, representation of owners/developers/investors, and construction.

Litigation

After picking up over the last 2+ years, general commercial litigation needs continue to surge in the Twin Cities. Large and small firms are generating needs for both specialized and generalized commercial litigators. In addition to general civil business litigation and insurance defense litigation focuses, the market has seen needs for mass torts, products liability, labor and employment, and other areas of litigation emphasis.

Family Law

Larger firms as well as many smaller (including outstate) firms are seeking attorneys with experience in all aspects of family law/probate. Many of these positions reflect opportunities for the right attorney to grow and establish a somewhat more independent practice in a particular geographic market with support from a regional firm.

Steady Practice Areas

Labor & Employment | Bankruptcy | Trusts & Estates | Intellectual Property

Labor & Employment

Labor and employment work – both management-side and plaintiff-side – continues to be a staple of comprehensive legal practices in the Twin Cities. Opportunities reflect openings with existing sophisticated practices, with plaintiff's firms (class action, wage and hour, discrimination), and with corporations.

Bankruptcy

Needs for bankruptcy and refinancing roles remain steady, without high growth but with continued openings reflecting existing sophisticated practices in the area.

Trusts & Estates

Needs in the trusts & estates arena remain steady – reflecting openings with long-standing sophisticated practices – and are also bolstered by the increase in demand for general Family Law expertise and family planning needs.

Intellectual Property

Hard IP/ patent law needs reflect a continued emphasis on technical backgrounds in Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering and Computer Science. High credentials/ qualifications remain required, including admittance with the USPTO. Further specialized experience/technical backgrounds are often sought after (e.g. specific scientific fields of expertise; advanced degrees). Soft IP (trademark/copyright) also remains a staple offering of many firms, and Privacy expertise is continuing to gain traction as well.

Slower Practice Areas

There is a minimal amount of activity for attorneys in the Environmental and Energy spaces, as well as general Tax (outside of estate planning).

Explore law firm jobs in Minnesota by practice area:

- **Bankruptcy**
- **Business/Corporate**
- **Energy**
- **Environmental**
- **Family Law**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Labor & Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**
- **Trusts & Estates**

State of the Market Report: Ohio

by **Brie Mills**, General Manager, BCG Attorney Search

Hot/Steady Practice Areas

Statewide, the market still has a steady flow of jobs in traditional practice areas of litigation (commercial) and corporate/transactional work. There has been a higher demand recently for tax attorneys, especially tax work related to high net-worth estate planning. Intellectual property jobs are cropping up across the market, and attorneys with backgrounds in electrical engineering or computer science should have many lateral options.

Slower Practice Areas

Real estate needs are still somewhat slow but picking up, and there are some (not many) opportunities for experienced real estate attorneys and partners. There is not much demand for junior or mid-level labor and employment attorneys, though many firms are looking for L&E partners with at least \$400k in portable business to help grow their practices. Like much of the country, there is almost no demand for bankruptcy attorneys.

Explore law firm jobs in Ohio by practice area:

- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**
- **Tax**



NORTHEAST

State of the Market Report: Boston/New England

by **Kimberly Ginsburg**, Legal Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Patent Prosecution | **Corporate** | **Real Estate** | **Litigation**

Patent Prosecution

Demand for patent prosecution (domestic and foreign) attorneys at all levels dominates the market in Boston, particularly in the life sciences, with health care, biopharma and biotech experience preferred. Almost all firms require registration with the USPTO, and prefer candidates with patent office or industry experience. Many firms also require candidates with advanced degrees in the corresponding life or hard science.

Corporate

There is strong demand for mid-level corporate candidates with experience in private placements, fund formation, venture capital, corporate financings, and M&A. Most firms prefer candidates with knowledge of securities laws and the Investment Company Act, Investment Advisers Act and other regulatory requirements.

Real Estate

There is decent demand for real estate candidates who have experience in complex commercial real estate transactions, especially leasing. Many firms are also asking that laterals have a book of business of at least \$300,000.

Litigation

There is very strong demand for general litigation candidates, with an emphasis on those who have case management experience and can take cases from start to finish in state and federal court without much observation.

Steady Practice Areas

Labor & Employment | Technology Transactions

Labor & Employment

There is a steady demand for labor and employment associates at all levels, with experience in wage and hour, wrongful termination, and discrimination experience preferred.

Technology Transactions

Firms continue to seek mostly mid-level technology transactions candidates with experience in licensing agreements, compliance strategies, data privacy, and due diligence in venture capital transactions.

Slower Practice Areas

Demand has been slow for trusts and estates, tax and bankruptcy attorneys.

Explore law firm jobs in Boston by practice area:

- Corporate
- Labor & Employment
- Litigation
- Patent Prosecution
- Real Estate
- Technology Transactions

State of the Market Report: Washington, D.C.

by **Katy Anderman**, Managing Director - East Coast, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Corporate | **Real Estate** | **Patent Prosecution** | **Patent Litigation** | **Litigation** | **Data Privacy** | **International Trade**

The D.C. legal market is busy and getting busier! However, certain practice areas – like corporate, real estate, intellectual property, litigation, data privacy and international trade – are definitely leading the charge.

Corporate

Corporate and finance demand dominates the market in D.C., with law firms seeking candidates at the mid-level that have experience. M&A, private equity, capital markets, and investment management experience is highly sought, with finance (corporate, leveraged, and commercial) also in demand.

While it is true now (and traditionally has always been true) that firms are primarily seeking junior and midlevel associates, the good news is that senior candidates (i.e., corporate candidates with 7+ years of experience) with special skills (i.e. derivatives) also can get interviews and even get hired due to the current demand.

Real Estate

There have been several more openings recently for real estate associates with skills in leasing, sales, acquisitions, and dispositions. The demand is primarily for mid-level candidates with local experience.

Patent Prosecution

Patent Prosecution hiring is extremely strong and the candidates who are the most in demand are those with 2 to 5 years of experience who have hard sciences backgrounds, such as Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Physics, and Mechanical Engineering backgrounds. There is some demand for Patent Prosecution candidates with life science backgrounds, but the demand is significantly less than for the aforementioned “technology” disciplines. Moreover, when it comes to life sciences, firms generally require advanced

degrees, which is almost never a requirement for Electrical Engineering or Computer Science positions.

Patent Litigation

The demand for patent litigators is significant. The need for mid-level hard science litigators with electrical engineering or computer science backgrounds (preferably with USPTO registration) remains steady here, with Hatch Waxman experience preferred.

Litigation

Litigation is busy in D.C., although firms are highly selective with ideal candidates having stellar academics (law review, clerkships), BigLaw experience, and excellent skills such as trial, arbitration, and deposition work. The candidates who will be successful here are those with 2 to 5 years of experience and who are truly stellar as the competition is fierce in D.C. for litigation positions. Requirements are top grades from a top law school, membership in the Order of the Coif, law review participation, and a federal clerkship, preferably appellate.

Many of the opportunities are for general commercial litigation associates; however, an equal number of litigation positions in D.C. focus more on subspecialty areas like white collar defense and international arbitration. With respect to international arbitration, candidates must generally speak at least one foreign language. Interestingly, Portuguese is in far more demand than Spanish.

Data Privacy

There is a healthy demand for privacy and cybersecurity attorneys with one or more years of experience. Candidates should have experience advising clients on data privacy and security laws, including HIPAA, GLBA, consumer protection, ECPA as well as similar state laws and regulations. Understanding related to compliance regimes, enforcement trends and privacy policies is ideal.

International Trade

There are a significant amount of openings in the international trade market. Mid-level candidates with large firm experience in U.S. Customs compliance and export control work are especially appealing.

Steady Practice Areas

Project Development | Government Contracts | ERISA | Trademark and Copyright | Labor and Employment | Health Care

The following areas are steady in D.C.: antitrust, project development, government contracts, health care, ERISA, and trademark and copyright.

Antitrust

Here the demand is for junior to mid-level associates with both merger review experience as well as with counseling and litigation matters.

Project Development

The energy and project development market is strong in D.C. right now. Project development and finance attorneys with a handful of years' experience with both transactional and regulatory matters are in demand.

Government Contracts

The market for junior to mid-level candidates with experience in federal procurement matters, including areas such as bid protests, claims counseling, FAR and DFARS counseling, IP rights, subcontracting, and/or False Claims Act issues is steady.

ERISA

There is a healthy demand for mid-level ERISA/Employee Benefits candidates who have experience working on executive compensation matters for publicly-traded and privately-held companies.

Trademark and Copyright

There are a number of openings for junior to mid-level candidates with experience in trademark, advertising, and copyright counseling in the areas of prosecution and clearance, enforcement, and litigation.

Labor and Employment

Demand for employment associates remains steady, and there is no indication that this trend will slow in the coming months. Ideal candidates will bring strong class action, wage and hour, and counseling experience.

Health Care

While not hot, there is continued need for health care attorneys in the mid-level range. Firms are seeking candidates with both transactional and regulatory experience.

Slower Practice Areas

Although not completely dormant, demand has been slower for attorneys in the following practice areas: FDA, government relations, tax, bankruptcy, and environmental.

Explore law firm jobs in Washington, D.C. by practice area:

- **Antitrust**
- **Corporate**
- **Data Privacy**
- **ERISA**
- **Government Contracts**
- **Health Care**
- **International Trade**
- **Labor and Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Patent Litigation**
- **Patent Prosecution**
- **Real Estate**
- **Trademark and Copyright**

State of the Market Report: New York

by **Becca Levine**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

**Litigation | Corporate | Real Estate | Intellectual Property |
ERISA/Employment and Tax/Trusts and Estates**

The New York market has remained relatively consistent quarter to quarter. We are continuing to see a large number of large firms looking for corporate associates. There is also a continued need for candidates with niche finance experience especially as it relates to leveraged finance and debt financing issues. Litigation remains an extremely slow market in New York with only a handful of large firms looking for a general litigator, and very few new openings coming out as the weeks continue. If you are in the market for a small firm (20 or under attorneys), there are many more litigation openings at this level. Employment law and tax/T&E is having a slowdown period in New York, but these practice groups tend to be cyclical so hopefully we will see an upswing soon, but there are extremely few openings at any major firms. Corporate restructuring openings remain steady, and a strong corporate restructuring associate coming from a large firm should have a relatively smooth lateral move experience. Technology transactional and privacy experience continues to be attractive, but firms are not interested in candidates looking to transition from other practice groups to this area even with science backgrounds – a very attractive and marketable candidate would be someone with firm technology transactional experience including IP aspects of M&A deals, and the market is strong for this candidate.

Litigation

As noted above, the litigation market in New York is very slow right now. In particular, employment litigation is at a severe slowdown in New York, but we hope that it will begin to pick up soon. There are very few major firms looking for litigation associates right now, but the couple of openings out there are targeting top firm candidates with 2-5 years of experience. Thus, a mid-level attorney at a well-known large firm looking to lateral to another large firm can have success in the current market. Securities litigation openings are extremely slow right now, and white collar/investigations openings have also slowed in recent months. There is very little need for senior level litigators without business, but candidates with business at 500k or over can be very attractive to some firms. Insurance defense and medical malpractice continues to be a strong practice area at smaller firms. We are seeing a large number of litigation openings for smaller firms, mainly in this space.

Corporate

Corporate has remained strong in New York. A mid-level corporate associate at a large firm looking to make a lateral move would be wise to start his or her search now. Openings are coming out routinely, and firms are moving on current openings. There is also a need for banking and finance experience especially as it relates to leveraged finance and debt financing issues, on both the borrower and lender side. Although most of the interest is in junior/mid-level, we have been seeing some senior positions sprout up in the area at exciting firms, especially of interest if the attorney has some flexibility on class year. There is less of a corporate market at smaller firms, although some firms are looking.

Real Estate

Real estate continues to hold steady, with a handful of firms looking for strong real estate associates. The openings seemed to have slowed down in the recent quarter, but we expect real estate to continue to pick up steam, especially going into the end of the year. Real estate interest is almost all on the transactional side, as well as real estate finance, with less interest in real estate litigators.

Intellectual Property

As noted above, technology transactional and data privacy continues to be a strong market. There are continuous openings coming out. However, firms are generally not looking for candidates interested in a practice group switch from patent litigation to technology transactional, or related. The hot candidate is the one who has been working in technology transactions, preferably with IP related provisions of M&A deals, and is looking to make a lateral move to another large firm. Data privacy, similarly, is looking for candidates with true data privacy experience.

On the patent side, patent litigation and prosecution has remained steady in New York.

ERISA/Employment and Tax/Trusts and Estates

Trusts & Estates is extremely slow right now in New York, and has been for a long-time now. We predict that we will start seeing some more openings in the near future given the slowdown has been so long now. Tax is steady with large firms looking for strong tax associates, ideally with firm experience. ERISA and exec comp and employment benefits remains steady as well – a candidate with a strong background in this work on the corporate side can do very well in the market now, especially if a mid-level attorney (2-5 years out of school).



Explore law firm jobs in New York by practice area:

- [Corporate](#)
- [ERISA/Employment](#)
- [Intellectual Property](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Tax](#)
- [Trusts and Estates](#)
- [Real Estate](#)

State of the Market Report: Philadelphia

by **Amanda Mindlin**, Recruiter - East Coast, BCG Attorney Search

Although a smaller and relatively more competitive market, Philadelphia continues to be an attractive city for lateral attorneys.

Hot Practice Areas

Labor and Employment | Insurance Defense

Insurance Defense

Insurance defense is by far the hottest practice area in Philadelphia at the moment, with law firms seeking candidates with all levels of experience, but particularly those with 2-6 years of experience.

Labor and Employment

There has been an increased demand for labor and employment attorneys in Philadelphia this quarter. Demand is strongest for employment litigation associates with 3-6 years of experience.

Steady Practice Areas

General Corporate | Real Estate | Intellectual Property | Litigation

Litigation

The litigation market in Philadelphia remains flat, although there has been a recent increase in demand for attorneys with experience in real estate and construction litigation.

Additionally, while litigation openings at large firms remain hard to come by, there is steady demand at smaller firms in the area. As we've said previously, if you are considering making a switch to a smaller firm, Philadelphia may be an interesting market for you.

Most firms are looking for mid-level associates with 2-5 years of experience.

Intellectual Property

Overall, the intellectual property market remains steady, although demand for patent prosecution attorneys is picking up slightly. Firms are particularly interested in patent prosecution associates with 2-6 years of life sciences experience, and associates with electrical engineering backgrounds.

Real Estate

The need for real estate attorneys (both litigators and transactional attorneys) also remains steady in Philadelphia. While it's not exactly a hot practice area, firms continue to seek attorneys with all levels of experience in residential real estate, commercial real estate, construction, and real estate development.

General Corporate

Finally, the corporate market in Philadelphia continues to be flat. As usual, demand is strongest for mid-level (2nd – 6th year) associates with corporate and securities experience.

Slower Practice Areas

Demand has been slow for Tax and Trusts & Estates attorneys. We continue to see little need in Philadelphia for attorneys with this type of expertise.

Explore law firm jobs in Philadelphia by practice area:

- **General Corporate**
- **Insurance Defense**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Labor and Employment**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**
- **Tax**
- **Trusts & Estates**



SOUTH

State of the Market Report: Atlanta

by **Jennifer McNeil**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Healthy Practice Areas

Corporate | **Real Estate**

Corporate

Corporate law is by far the hottest practice area in Atlanta. Firms are looking for corporate associates with a wide range of experience, including public and private M&A, debt finance, public securities, and traditional corporate. Most of the current postings are for associates with 1 to 4 years of corporate law experience. Firms are willing to consider candidates who are not currently located in Atlanta, especially if they are relocating from a larger market.

Real Estate

Real estate associate hiring has finally picked up after a lull for the past year or so. Firms with top real estate practices are looking for associates with real estate transactions, financings, fund formation, equity investment, and management experience.

Steady Practice Areas

Intellectual Property

Several top Atlanta intellectual property firms are looking for patent prosecution associates with at least 2 years of experience. All of the current openings are for associates with hard science backgrounds, including electrical engineering, computer engineering, computer science, or physics. Strong candidates will have experience with some or all of the following technologies: computers, wireless, cloud computing, software, artificial intelligence, consumer electronics, network engineering, etc. USPTO registration, or ability to quickly take the USPTO exam, is essential.

Litigation

Litigation has been slow in Atlanta for the past year or so. That trend seems to be changing,



as several top Atlanta litigation practices are searching for junior to mid-level litigation associates.

To be considered for the top firms, strong credentials are a must, including large law firm experience, law review, and a federal judicial clerkship. Admission to the Georgia bar is required.

Explore law firm jobs in Atlanta by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**

State of the Market Report: North Carolina

by **Brie Mills**, General Manager, BCG Attorney Search

Hot Practice Areas

Corporate & Finance | **Intellectual Property** | **Real Estate**

Corporate & Finance

By far and away, the most opportunities for attorneys in North Carolina are in the corporate and finance practice areas. Almost every top law firm hiring right now is looking for mid-to-senior level attorneys with either sophisticated corporate experience—especially in mergers and acquisitions and capital markets—or complex financial transactions experience—particularly in asset-based financing and syndicated lending.

Intellectual Property

The IP market is very hot in North Carolina right now. The need for patent prosecutions and litigators hasn't slowed down. Even patent agents are in high demand across North Carolina—a trend not seen in many other markets currently. Most firms are looking for hard science technical backgrounds, especially electrical/mechanical engineering and computer science. There may be a few opportunities for candidates with backgrounds in life sciences such as biotech or pharmacology, but those attorneys will likely need a PhD to be most marketable.

Real Estate

The construction boom in North Carolina has led to real estate attorneys being a hot commodity in the state's legal market. Many firms (from biglaw to boutique) are looking for real estate attorneys who can handle the various facets of financing, structuring, negotiating and documenting these large-scale commercial development projects across the state. The need ranges from junior associates to do the low-level diligence work to partners with sustainable portable business to run the deals.

Steady and Slow Practice Areas

While there are always litigation opportunities across North Carolina, this practice area is

relatively slow, especially compared to other markets. Some firms are looking to grow their labor and employment practices by bringing on partners with business, but few firms have enough L&E work to sustain new hires. Bankruptcy also remains quite slow, but seems to be picking up slightly.

Explore law firm jobs in North Carolina by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Finance**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Real Estate**

State of the Market Report: Austin, Texas

by **Jennifer McNeil**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Traditionally Austin is a small legal market that is difficult to break into, especially for candidates relocating to Texas from other markets. However, the Austin market is growing, the city is thriving, and there are more attorney opportunities now than we have seen in the past. The legal market is especially strong for corporate attorneys. Now is a good time to consider a move to Austin or a lateral move within the city.

Healthy Practice Areas

Corporate | **Litigation** | **Intellectual Property** | **Employment**

Corporate

Corporate law is absolutely booming in Austin, particularly for junior to mid-level associates. The influx of tech companies and startups has created a need for a wide variety of corporate attorneys. Firms are particularly interested in associates with experience with M&A, venture capital, private equity, public financing, and SEC reporting. Big firm experience is a must.

Litigation

Litigation is a busy practice area throughout Texas and Austin is no exception. Big name firms in Austin require top credentials; they will only look at candidates from Top 25 schools with law review, moot court, mock trial, and other trial skills activities.

Intellectual Property

Several big name firms are looking for associates with technology transactions experience. They are looking for associates from 2 to 7 years of experience in intellectual property and technology experience. Simply a desire to practice in technology transactions will not do. Candidates must have actual experience in this practice area to get a second look from big Austin firms.

Employment

As the local economy grows, so does the need for employment law attorneys. Several Austin firms are looking for junior and experienced employment attorneys. Firms are looking for



attorneys with experience in employment litigation and counseling. Subject matter expertise in employment law is a huge plus.

Explore law firm jobs in Austin by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Employment**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**

State of the Market Report: Dallas, Texas

by **Jennifer McNeil**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

Dallas is by far the hottest legal market in Texas, if not the south. The economy is booming, especially for litigators. The market is also shifting considerably with the entrance of several Am Law 200 firms, as well as large firm mergers. Now is a good time to consider your next move in Dallas.

Healthy Practice Areas

Litigation | **Corporate** | **Real Estate**

Litigation

We have made more litigation placements in Dallas than any other city in the south. Dallas is the home to a number of the most prestigious trial boutiques in the country, as well as strong litigation groups in larger Am Law firms. There is a competitive market for junior to mid-level litigators with top credentials. Firms look for candidates who did well at a top law school (top 20% or higher), competed in trial advocacy competitions (mock trial, moot court, legal clinics), and participated in law review. There is a very strong preference for candidates with federal court clerkships. Dallas litigation boutiques are super attractive to associates because they provide real trial experience and training.

Corporate

Corporate is a strong market nationally, and Dallas is no exception. Most of the big firms in Dallas are focused on finding corporate associates with transactions experience, including M&A, private equity, and debt finance. Firms have a strong preference for lateral associates that were trained at nationally recognized firms.

Real Estate

Real estate associate hiring is picking up after several quarters of no activity. Several top Dallas firms are looking for real estate associates with transactions or debt finance experience. The need is strong. Firms are searching for junior to senior associates. Genuine experience in real estate is pivotal for Dallas firms. Firms are more flexible regarding class year.



Explore law firm jobs in Dallas by practice area:

- [Corporate](#)
- [Litigation](#)
- [Real Estate](#)

State of the Market Report: Houston, Texas

by **Jennifer McNeil**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

The legal market in Houston has been depressed over the past couple of years because of lower energy prices. The good news is that hiring has picked up considerably of late. Houston firms are growing and many national firms are opening new offices in the city.

Tax | Corporate | Litigation | Energy

Tax

Several very prestigious Houston firms are looking for tax attorneys, after several quarters of no tax associate searches. Firms are looking for mid-level tax associates with transactional tax experience. Firms strongly prefer tax associates that have law firm experience, as opposed to accounting firm experience. A top tax boutique is also looking for a counsel level tax attorney with tax planning and business transactions experience.

Corporate

While not as strong as Austin or Dallas, several Houston firms are looking for junior to mid-level corporate associates, preferably with M&A and capital markets experience.

Litigation

Litigation is not a strong practice area in Houston, though a few big firms are looking for mid-level litigators. Strong litigation candidates have experience from top tier law firms and/or a federal judicial clerkship.

Energy

Energy and oil & gas law is a weak practice area for lateral moves at this time.

Partner Searches

Firms in Texas are always happy to consider partner candidates with existing books of business. One firm in particular asked for our help growing their Houston office dramatically over the next couple of years. The firm seeks to leverage its top litigation practice by adding corporate, energy, healthcare, and intellectual property partners.



Explore law firm jobs in Houston by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Energy**
- **Litigation**
- **Tax**



SOUTHEAST

State of the Market Report: Florida

by **Jessica Portela**, Recruiter, BCG Attorney Search

While the Florida market remains strong in litigation, most other practice areas have either remained steady or seen a slight decline in new job openings. The majority of litigation openings have been related to insurance or financial litigation. Although there isn't much to celebrate with respect to new jobs, the good news is that a recent survey found Miami ranked number one for associate satisfaction with compensation and benefits.

**Litigation | Corporate | Real Estate | Intellectual Property |
ERISA/Employment and Tax/Trusts and Estates**

Litigation

As one of the most litigious states in the country, it is not surprising that the majority of legal jobs in Florida are litigation focused. Insurance litigation openings, both insurance defense and insurance coverage are growing. Although there are openings throughout the state, the majority of openings are concentrated in South Florida and the Orlando area. We are seeing litigation openings at both big firm and small to mid-sized firms as well as solo-practitioners.

Corporate

Contrary to the trend in other markets, Florida's corporate market seems to be slowing down. The majority of openings are still in Miami and to a lesser extent, Orlando. Of the firms that are hiring, they are looking for all ranges of attorney from junior to mid-level associates, and partners with business. The openings include a wide-range of corporate specialties including M&A, securities and private equity. Firms in this market tend to appreciate candidates with foreign language skills, particularly Spanish and Portuguese.

Real Estate

With an increase in development in Florida, the real estate market continues to be a strong legal market in Florida. A large number of firms are looking for real estate transactional associates with experience in development, leasing, resort issues, and lending and financing issues. The openings are also throughout the State, including in Miami and Orlando. We've seen an uptick for condominium and land-use lawyers as well.

Intellectual Property

Florida has seen a drastic decrease in the market for Intellectual Property attorneys this quarter. If there are openings, they are related to licensing or patent prosecution work requiring a science background, typically in electric engineering or life sciences. A few firms are looking for attorneys with technology transaction experience. Trademark and copyright work at Florida law firms remain slow too.

ERISA/Employment and Tax/Trusts and Estates

The trusts & estates legal market in Florida is also slowing down. While the new tax code has certainly created more legal work in this area, it has not resulted in a significant increase in jobs for tax lawyers. However, firms are always open to impressive candidates with an LL.M. in tax.

Explore law firm jobs in Florida by practice area:

- **Corporate**
- **Employment**
- **ERISA**
- **Intellectual Property**
- **Litigation**
- **Real Estate**
- **Tax**
- **Trusts and Estates**