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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Entry-Level Law Firm Recruiting Activity Holds Steady, With More Offers Made Prior to OCI

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NALP today released its *Perspectives on 2022 Law Student Recruiting* report, available at www.nalp.org/perspectivesonrecruiting. Industry data indicate that the 2022 law firm recruiting season was an interesting one, being both robust and competitive, albeit possibly tinged by the threat of an economic recession. At a high level, the data indicates that an overwhelming majority of U.S. law firms either maintained or increased their recruiting activities compared with last year, a fact that is made notable as the 2021 recruiting cycle was itself particularly strong compared to prior years. However, despite sustaining a heightened level of activity for a second year in a row, fewer offers were made for students to join summer 2023 programs, with the number of offers decreasing by nearly 2% compared with those made for the 2022 program. In most years, a 2% decrease would not be overly remarkable, but recall that summer 2023 2Ls are in the Class of 2024, which had an entering class size that was almost 12% larger than the Class of 2023.

“What is clear is that the entry-level job market in the private sector is currently not growing fast enough to absorb the additional students in the Class of 2024 and that unless there is a strong 3L hiring market this year — which seems unlikely given recent trends — a greater percentage of these students may need to look at other market segments for employment after graduation,” writes NALP Executive Director Nikia L. Gray in the report.

The report also highlights the continued prevalence of pre-OCI offers (or “precruting”). Firms reported making more early offers than ever before — 3,145 offers total, representing 23.3% of all offers to 2Ls for summer 2023 programs. This is nearly twice the number of early offers made in 2021.



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“It has become clear that the recruiting days of yore are not returning and that the developments born out of the pandemic are our new recruiting normal. However, as an increasing number of reports issued these past few weeks have announced falling partner profits, softening hours, and excess capacity at law firms mingled with projections of record rate increases and bullish growth for 2023, the only solid prediction one can make about the upcoming recruiting cycle is that it won’t be dull,” she adds.

Key Findings: Fall 2022 Recruiting

- Most interviews continued to take place virtually during the fall 2022 recruiting cycle. Overall, 93% of screening interviews and 77% of callback interviews were virtual in format.
- In total, 23% of all offers made by law firms were early offers made prior to the start of on-campus interviewing (OCI), an increase of 11 percentage points from fall 2021. This is the highest figure measured since NALP began tracking early offers. Just over one-third (34%) of offices reported making early offers.
- Early offers remain heavily concentrated in the Northeast region, where 55% of offices reported precruiting activity. The median and average number of early offers made in the Northeast were 11 and 43, respectively. That compares to medians of 2-4 offers and averages of 5-7 offers across all other regions.
- Over 81% of law offices reported visiting the same number or more law schools in 2022 as compared to last year and over 69% reported conducting relatively the same number or more screening interviews.
- In fall 2022, 52% of callback interviews resulted in offers for summer 2023 positions, a decline of 6 percentage points from fall 2021, but well within the pre-pandemic range of 51-54% reported from 2014-2019.
- Overall, 46% of law offices reported making more offers for summer associate positions for summer 2023 as compared to summer 2022 and 44% reported making fewer offers.
- The median number of offers extended by law offices to second-year students for summer 2023 programs was 9 offers, down from a median of 10 offers for summer 2022.



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- In fall 2022, 21% of offices reported that they reached out to schools to solicit more 2L candidates after the completion of the school's OCI program, down from 28% last recruiting cycle.
- Just 14% of offices recruited 3Ls in fall 2022, a decline of 8 percentage points from the figure of 22% in fall 2021.

Key Findings: Summer 2022 Programs and Outcomes

- The average 2L summer program class size in 2022 was 13, up from 12 in 2021.
- The offer rate coming out of summer 2022 programs remained near historic highs, with 97% of 2L summer associates receiving an associate offer. The acceptance rate to those offers was at an all-time high of 89%.
- Overall, approximately 350 of the 5,500 2L summer associates accepting associate jobs had been 1L diversity fellows at their firm during the summer of 2021 – just over 6%.
- The offer rate to 1L summer associates to return for a second summer also reached a historic high of 94%. The acceptance rate to those offers was 73%. Firms reported that overall, 55% of all 1L summer associates were diversity fellows.

Read the full report at www.nalp.org/perspectivesonrecruiting.

About NALP

NALP is an association of more than 3,000 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. What brings NALP members together is a common belief in three fundamental things. First, all law students and lawyers should benefit from a fair and ethical hiring process. Second, law students and lawyers are more successful when supported by professional development and legal career professionals. Third, a diverse and inclusive legal profession best serves clients and our communities. That's why NALP members work together every day to collect and publish accurate legal employment data and information, and champion education and ethical principles for recruiting, professional and career development, and diversity and inclusion. For more than 50 years, NALP has played an essential role in the success of our members and the lawyers and law students they serve. NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at www.nalp.org/pressreleases. For additional information, contact NALP at info@nalp.org or call (202) 835-1001.