Houston Chapter
of the
Association of Legal Administrators
2026 Compensation and Benefits Survey

USER INSTRUCTIONS

SCOPE AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The compensation survey relates to legal personnel employed in the **HOUSTON AREA ONLY for salaries in effect as of May 1, 2026**. Survey data is intended to include information on **direct employees only** and not those of third-party contractors, leased employees or independents, or part-time employees.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Please read the Job Descriptions carefully. Several of the jobs described will differ from one or another mainly in degree of responsibility. The appropriate job description used in your response should be based upon *responsibility* rather than *job title*, since titles may vary from office to office. For instance, Director of Administration/Executive Director, Administrator/Director of Administration and Office Manager all have differing levels of responsibility. Regardless of the title used in your office, match the person to the most accurate description. Where a person has more than one job responsibility, be sure that the employee is reported only once. **If no job description listed on the survey matches a person's job functions by at least 80%, omit that person from your response.**

ENTERING YOUR SALARY DATA

Instructions for initial login are located below in the "Log In" section. Upon login, you will be required to enter the number of attorneys in your office. This year we'll be asking for your Houston Office attorney account and national attorney count. **Survey results will be grouped by your HOUSTON OFFICE attorney count, and the national attorney count will be for informational purposes.** If you are not prompted to enter the number of attorneys in your Houston office only upon login, contact any of the committee members as this information is necessary to properly classify your data. Instructions for setting up additional users in your firm or legal department to assist with the data entry are located below in the "User Maintenance" and "User Rights" sections.

On the salary input screen, indicate whether the position is exempt or non-exempt by clicking on the appropriate check box. Many of the positions have been set to exempt as a default in the system, e.g., attorneys, senior level managers, etc. You can change a defaulted exempt position to non-exempt in the edit entry mode as explained below. Finally, a few positions, e.g., the legal secretary, paralegal and billing coordinator, have been set to non-exempt and may not be changed to exempt.

An "exempt" position is one that is exempt from state or federal overtime regulations; i.e., is ***not*** paid overtime. For exempt employees, the system will require a bonus amount be entered.

Exempt employee bonuses should not include signing bonuses, starting bonuses, or any other discretionary bonuses coincidentally paid during the year.

A "non-exempt" position is one that is subject to state or federal overtime regulations; i.e., ***is*** paid overtime. **Do not include signing bonuses, starting bonuses or other discretionary amounts paid during the year.**

Each employee in the appropriate positions should be listed separately. Entering each individual salary separately will produce the most accurate statistics. Instructions for entering multiple salaries from an Excel spreadsheet are shown below.

In entering your salary data, **DO NOT include any part-time employees**. Compensation should be reported for each job at the annual base salary in effect as of **May 1, 2026**. To determine the annual salary, multiply the payroll rate frequency as follows:

Hourly rate paid x 2,080 hours (if employee works 40 hour week)
Hourly rate paid x 1,950 hours (if employee works 37.5 hour week)
Hourly rate paid x 1,820 hours (if employee works 35 hour week)
Actual weekly salary by 52 weeks
Actual bi-weekly salary by 26 weeks
Actual semi-monthly salary by 24 weeks
Actual monthly salary by 12 months

NOTE: If you have a standard workweek other than those listed above, make the appropriate adjustment(s). **DO NOT include any part-time employees in your figures**.

List each employee's base annual salary rounded to the next whole number. **Commas and decimals should not be included.**

COMPLETION OF THE SURVEY

Once you have entered all of your data, you are done! No confirmation will be sent stating all your data has been saved. You should confirm the data you entered by selecting Export Survey Salary Entries under User Options – what appears on the report is what is in the survey for your company. If necessary, you can edit an entry as described below; if not, you are finished. There is no need to "send" your information as it is automatically saved as you enter data.

SURVEY DEADLINE

The tentative **deadline** for entering all salary and benefits data is **Friday, July 31, 2026, if not sooner.** You will receive an email from the Survey Administrator reminding you that the data entry period will close approximately two days prior to the deadline. Once the period is closed, it will be too late for you to participate and enter your data. Therefore, **do not procrastinate**.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey results will be reported separately for all positions based on the following firm size categories. Again, the "firm size" is based on the number of attorneys in your Houston office only.

1-14 Attorneys
15-29 Attorneys
30-49 Attorneys
50-99 Attorneys
100+ Attorneys

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

INDEX OF SYSTEM INSTRUCTIONS

LOG IN

USER OPTIONS

Enter Survey Salary Data
Import Salary Data from Excel
Edit a Salary Survey Entry
Export Survey Salary Entries
Retrieve Survey Reports

PARTICIPATING MEMBER OPTIONS

Export Positions
User Maintenance
User Rights

LOG IN

Begin by opening your internet browser. Log on to www.houstonalasurvey.org. This brings you to the Participant Login screen of the survey.

Enter your username and password as provided by the Survey Administrator and click ***LOGIN***. If this is your first login for the current survey year, you will be prompted to change your password. Your password may be any alpha/numeric password, but you will be responsible for remembering the new password. After changing your password, you will be brought back to the login screen; login using your username and new password.

NOTE: If this is your first time logging on to the survey, you will be prompted to enter the number of attorneys in the Houston office of your firm.

The survey is best viewed if your screen resolution is set to 1024 x 768.

USER OPTIONS

Enter Survey Salary Data

At the ***User Options*** box, use the drop down to select the ***Enter Survey Salary Data*** option.

Below the **User Options** box will appear a **Select Job Category** box. Use the drop down to select the category of the position you would like to report. The survey defaults to the first position listed within the selected category. Use the drop down to the right of the position to select a different position.

NOTE: Job categories are alphabetical in the system. Positions within each category are also alphabetical.

The position description will appear below the selected position. To the right of the description are the fields to enter survey salary data.

First, identify whether the position is **exempt** or **non-exempt** by clicking on the appropriate check box. Certain positions may default exempt or non-exempt automatically. If you need to override the default, do so in **Edit a Salary Survey Entry** (see below). Additional entries for the same position will default to your original selection.

Hitting the ***TAB*** key will move the cursor in the **Base Annual Salary** field. You are ready to key in the data. The survey is configured with low and high ranges of salaries for each position. If the salary you enter is not within the configured range, you will receive a message stating that the figure you entered is outside the parameters and requesting you to verify the figure. You then have the option to proceed with the salary you entered (***OK***) or go back and correct your mistake (***CANCEL***). Use the ***TAB*** key or the ***ENTER*** key to move to the **Bonus** field and enter bonus data.

To save the information entered, simply hit the ***ENTER*** key (or use your mouse to click on ***SAVE***).

Your saved entry will appear above the data entry fields. The prompt will return to the Base Annual Salary field which is highlighted blue and ready for your next salary for that position. You may continue entering data for the selected position or use the **Previous Position** or **Next Position** to move within the positions in the selected category. You may also select a new position by using the pull down. If you hit ***ENTER*** at this point, an additional entry will be added with the salary from your previously saved entry. While you must be careful not to hit ***ENTER*** accidentally, when you have a number of non-exempt employees in the same position at the exact same salary, you may hit ***ENTER*** rather than retype the entire entry.

To enter data for a different category of positions, simply select the new category and begin the above process again.

Edit a Salary Survey Entry

At any time during the survey open period, you may edit any of your saved entries. To do so, select the category and position that contains the entry you would like to edit. Your saved entries will appear above the data entry fields; click on ***EDIT*** to the right of the entry you would like to edit.

The following screen will show the entry with an option to update salary data below it. Make the necessary change(s) and use your mouse to click on the ***UPDATE*** button.

To delete the entry, use your mouse to click on the ***DELETE*** button.

Export Survey Salary Entries

At any time during the Survey Open Period, you may export the salary entries you have entered to an Excel file. Once in Excel, the data may be viewed, sorted, saved or printed as desired. You should carefully review this exported file to confirm all salaries were entered correctly.

To export the survey data you have entered, select **Export Survey Salary Entries** from the **User Options** drop down. This will take you to a file download dialogue box where you must save the file on your computer or cancel the request.

Select ***SAVE*** and a Save As dialogue box will open. Select the location where you would like the file saved, modify the file name if you desire and select save.

Select ***CANCEL*** to return to the salary survey.

Retrieve Survey Reports

After the survey period is closed, there will be a "quiet" period during which the system combines all the data, makes the calculations, and prepares the information for reporting. When the reports are ready for review, and after the committee has received your firm's payment for the survey, you will be notified by email from the Survey Administrator that your can logon and retrieve reports for this year's survey.

When you are notified that the reports are ready, you may retrieve reports under User Options by selecting **Retrieve Survey Benefit Report** or **Retrieve Survey Salary Report**. You must first select the **year**. This is what we refer to as the full canned reports. You will have access to previous years' data and will be able to search for historical data in addition to current year data (assuming your firm paid for prior years' reports). You can save (pdf format only), print or email a copy of these reports.

There is also the **Report Generator** which allows you to search by position category (e.g., attorneys), position title and firm size. This is a great way to share results with others in your organization on specific job positions without having to print the entire canned report. You must first select the **year**. As stated above, historical data is available. Once you have selected the search options, select **Get Report**. The results will be displayed to the screen and you can save (pdf format only), print or email the results.

PARTICIPATING MEMBER OPTIONS

Export Positions

You may export the list of positions in the survey to Excel. To do so, select **Export Positions** from the **Participating Member Options** menu. A file download box will open giving you the option to save the download on your system or cancel your download request.

Select ***SAVE*** and a Save As dialogue box will open. Select the location where you would like the file saved, modify the file name if you desire and select save.

Select ***CANCEL*** to return to the benefit survey.

User Maintenance

This section enables Participating Members to set up additional users in their firms or legal departments. Selecting **User Maintenance** from the **Participating Member Options** menu brings you to a screen displaying all users currently set up for your organization. At the beginning of the Open Period, only one user from each firm will be set up in the system, the Participating Member. To create a user, follow the steps by entering data in the required fields: username, first name, last name, password, confirm password, user type and company. When complete, click on ***CREATE USER***, and the new user will then display in the user listing for your organization.

If necessary, you may edit a user at any time by clicking on the ***EDIT*** button to the right of the user. Doing so will bring you to an Update User screen. Make the desired changes and ensure all required fields are complete. Click ***UPDATE*** to save your changes. You will receive a message that the User Successfully Updated, and you will be back at the list of all users.

User Rights

Once a user is created, you may choose what survey rights you would like to user to have. **The system automatically defaults to full rights.**

To change user rights and/or user access, select **User Rights** from the **Participating Member Options** menu. You will see a table listing the users in rows and the specific rights assigned to

each user in columns to the right of the user's name. Above the table, you will see a field for the survey year. You can assign user specific rights by year.

Select the survey year for which you would like to assign rights, and begin assigning specific rights by clicking on the box below each access right you would like the user to have.

Read Survey Data – this will allow the user to view survey data entered by users in your company.

Write Survey Data – this will allow the user to enter survey data for your company.

Read Salary Report – this will allow the user to retrieve the results of the salary survey, including viewing and printing survey reports.