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ANALYSIS

## Pay Climbs Steadily, Hiring Levels Return to Pre-COVID Form at Law Firm Summer Associate Programs

A trend of growth in New Jersey summer programs reflects to some degree the national trend, though it's not as pronounced.

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🕒 5 minute read

Law Firm Associates

**David Gialanella** [↗](#)

Hiring fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, and average compensation continued on its upward trajectory, at summer associate programs at New Jersey law firms and branch offices.

A group of 16 bellwether firms have brought on a total of 77 summer associates this year, according to a Law Journal survey. That's a slight increase from last year's total (74 hires). But it's a markedly higher total than the 61 New Jersey hires in 2020, and the exact same number of associates brought on at those same firms in 2019.

The 2022 total is made up of 16 1L students and 61 2L students—again the exact same totals as 2019.

Average hires per firm increased slightly, too, to 5.1. It's the only recent year in which average class size was more than five.

Meanwhile, this year's average weekly salary for 2Ls—\$3,352, among the firms that provided the compensation data—represents a 9.3% increase from last year's pay for 2Ls (\$3,066). The average has climbed steadily over the four-year period examined, from \$2,882 in 2020 and from \$2,660 in 2019.

## Summer Hiring at New Jersey Firms and Offices

FIRM	2022			2021			2020			2019		
	1L Hires	2L Hires	2L Salary	1L Hires	2L Hires	2L Salary	1L Hires	2L Hires	2L Salary	1L Hires	2L Hires	2L Salary
Archer & Greiner	2	5	\$2,700	1	9	\$2,400	1	7	\$2,265	3	5	\$2,265
Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi	1	5	\$2,800	1	3	\$2,600	1	0	N/A	1	1	\$2,400
Cole Schotz	1	4	\$3,200	1	4	\$2,700	0	5	\$2,700	0	4	\$2,700
Connell Foley	0	6	DNP	1	4	DNP	0	4	DNP	1	3	DNP
Day Pitney	0	3	DNP	0	3	DNP	0	0	N/A	0	6	\$2,900
Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath	2	2	DNP	1	1	DNP	1	3	\$3,173	1	3	\$3,173
Fox Rothschild**	0	6	\$3,430	0	5	\$2,730	0	5	\$2,808	2	4	\$2,765
Greenbaum Rowe Smith & Davis	2	2	\$2,400	0	0	N/A	0	3	\$2,043	0	3	\$2,400
Lerner, David	0	3	\$2,800	0	2	\$2,800	0	3	\$2,800	0	1	\$2,800
Lowenstein Sandler	2	14	\$4,135	2	14	\$3,950	3	15	\$3,700	3	12	\$3,300
McCarter & English	3	2	\$3,270	1	6	\$2,885	2	3	\$2,885	2	3	\$2,885
McElroy, Deutsch	0	0	N/A	1	1	DNP	2	5	\$2,115	1	6	\$2,115
Reed Smith	0	3	\$3,942	0	2	\$3,942	0	2	\$3,365	0	2	\$3,077
Riker, Danzig	0	3	\$2,400	1	3	\$2,400	1	4	\$2,400	0	3	\$2,400
Scarinci Hollenbeck	0	2	hourly	0	3	hourly	0	3	hourly	0	4	\$1,200
Sills Cummis & Gross	3	1	DNP	0	4	DNP	0	0	N/A	2	1	DNP
<b>1L and 2L Totals; Average Salary</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$3,352</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>\$3,066</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>\$3,066</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>\$2,660</b>
<b>Total Hires</b>	<b>77</b>			<b>74</b>			<b>61</b>			<b>77</b>		
<b>Average Hires Per Firm</b>	<b>5.1</b>			<b>4.9</b>			<b>4.4</b>			<b>4.8</b>		

\*DNP=did not provide. \*\*Fox Rothschild's 2L salary is a weighted average: The firm pays \$3,462 per week to 5 total associates in the Morristown and Princeton offices, and \$3,269 per week to 1 associate in the Atlantic City office.

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### National Picture

Some firms hired more liberally for this summer than they did last year. Greenbaum Rowe Smith & Davis, for instance, brought on four associates after suspending its program last year. And Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi has its largest summer class ever this year, the firm said, bringing on six associates, after having four last year.

Event

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Connell Foley also has six associates after hiring five last year.

“This year’s Summer Associate program at Connell Foley represents one of the firm’s largest classes to date,” a firm spokesperson said by email. “We are pleased to be offering a full schedule of assignments, training and activities — and we are especially looking forward to our incoming Fall class, which includes seven new associates across a variety of practice areas.”

Still, with some exceptions (chiefly Lowenstein Sandler, whose 16-associate summer class is largest by far), New Jersey summer programs tend to be smaller, and huge year-to-year variances have tended to be rare, even as some firms struggled with how to approach summer hiring earlier in the pandemic.

A trend of growth in New Jersey summer programs reflects to some degree the national trend, though it’s not as pronounced.

The American Lawyer [recently reported](#) that, according to a survey of Am Law 100 firms, average summer class sizes had grown by 26% for 2022. The numbers were based on a group of 10 Am Law 100 firms that responded to class size inquiries, the report noted.

Among the key factors driving aggressive summer recruiting at law firms are intense competition for talent and growing earnings.

As for the rise in pay among New Jersey summer associates, it mirrors a yearslong upward trend in new associate compensation, where even firms that cannot or will not be at the top of the pay scale have had to consider starting salary increases amid market resets.

For example, Cole Schotz’s 2L salary increased by 18.5% to \$3,200 per week. Administrative partner Glenn Kazlow confirmed that the change is tied to an increase in the firm’s first-year associate salary, which now sits at \$170,000.

“We continue to seek top tier talent and understand that we need to be market competitive to do so,” he said in an email.

Several other firms—Archer & Greiner; Chiesa Shahinian; Fox Rothschild; Lowenstein Sandler; and McCarter & English—also reported that weekly 2L salary had increased from last year.

## **Back to Normal?**

As many summer programs went fully remote in 2020, or were hybridized in 2021, a number of firms responding to this year’s survey reported implementing more in-person elements than in the past two years.

Archer & Greiner’s program, for example, “has been conducted primarily in-person, with remote working days available each week,” said partner and hiring committee chair Sarah Gribbin, who helps lead the program, in an email. “Archer’s attorneys have enjoyed getting to see and interact with the Summer Associates in the office several times a week. We have been encouraging the Summer Associates to visit as many Archer offices as they want to throughout the summer. Our Summer Associates have enthusiastically welcomed these in-person opportunities.”

The program, she added, “includes a number of in-person training sessions, observation opportunities and practice group presentations, with remote participation optional for each event. ... We also have hosted several in-person social events with several more scheduled.”

Gribbin noted that the firm last year increased the length of the program to eight weeks from seven weeks.

Fox Rothschild's 10-week program is hybrid, but "most summer associates are coming into the office every day," the firm said.

Lowenstein's 10-week program is three days in the office, two days remote, the firm said.

And Day Pitney's "is being conducted on a hybrid work model, with a combination of in-person and remote meetings and events, including shadowing opportunities, mentoring, work assignments, social events, practice meetings, pro bono projects, and DEI programming," the firm said. "The continuous commitment from our attorneys and staff have contributed to the success of the program."

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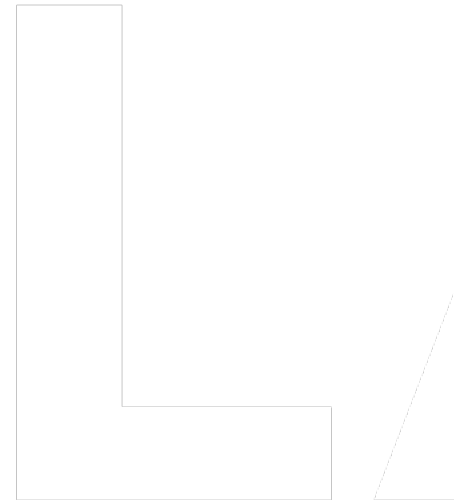
**Lowenstein Sandler**

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