

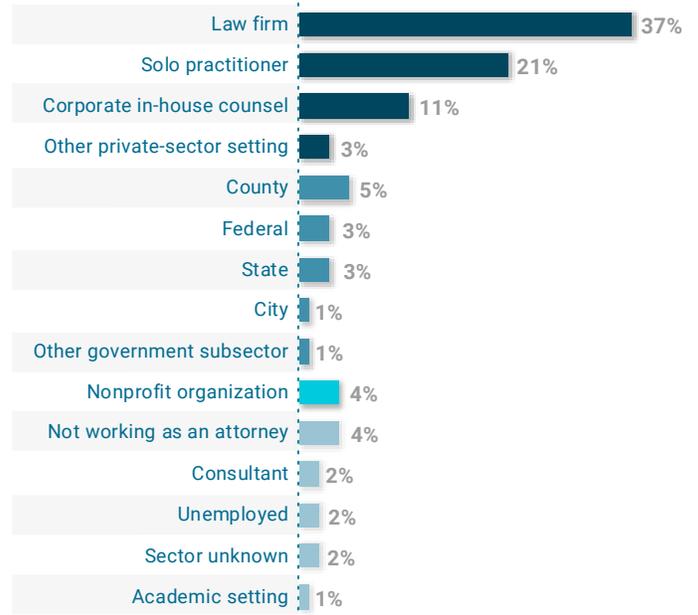


Where Do California Attorneys Work?

Bar Briefs 1 and 2 provide an overview of the demographics of the legal profession in California. This Brief describes employment patterns of California's active, licensed attorneys.

Most Attorneys Work in the Private Sector

Nearly three out of four (71 percent) California attorneys work in the private sector, with more than one in three (37 percent) working in law firms and one in five working as solo practitioners. Public-sector employment is a distant second, with 13 percent of attorneys working in government—the largest share in county government, followed by federal, state, and city agencies. These patterns are similar to attorney employment nationwide, where 20 percent are self-employed (solo practitioners) and 17 percent work in government.



Note: Sums of subtotals within sectors may not equal the sector totals due to rounding.



Smaller Firms Dominate the Legal Landscape

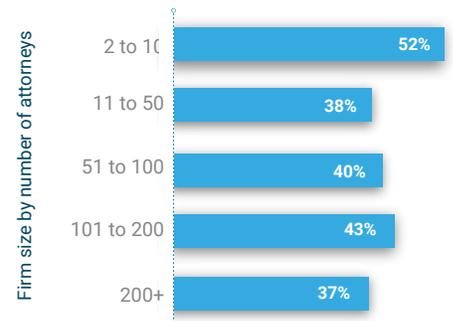
Looking more closely at law firms, the largest share of attorneys are found in small firms of between two and ten attorneys. Given that roughly one in five attorneys in California works as a solo practitioner, approximately one in three of all attorneys in the state works either as a solo practitioner or in a small firm.

Smaller Firms Mean Many Partners

Overall, 44 percent of attorneys who work at law firms are partners. Looking at attorney rank by law firm size, more than half of all attorneys at the smallest firms (served by 2-10 attorneys) are partners at those firms.



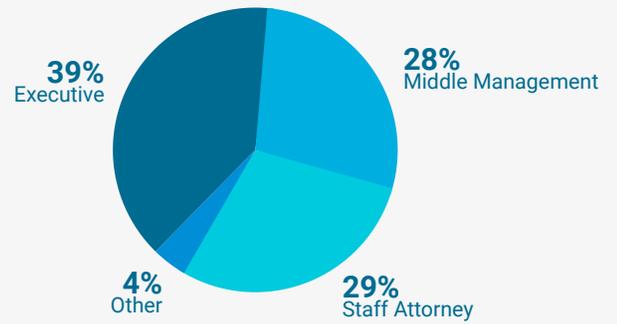
Percent of attorneys who are partners by firm size



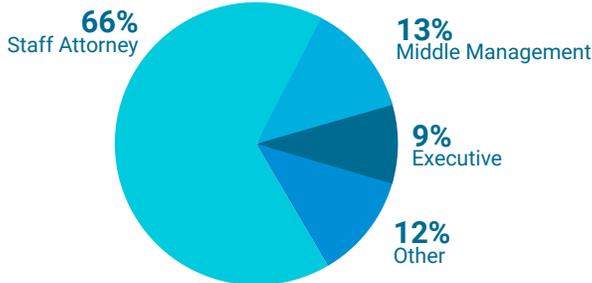
Attorneys in Corporations Work Across All Levels

Corporate in-house attorneys make up approximately 11 percent of all attorneys in California. These attorneys are directly employed by the businesses and organizations they represent. Attorneys working in these firms are relatively evenly distributed among executives, middle management, and staff attorneys.

Corporate In-House Attorneys



Government Sector



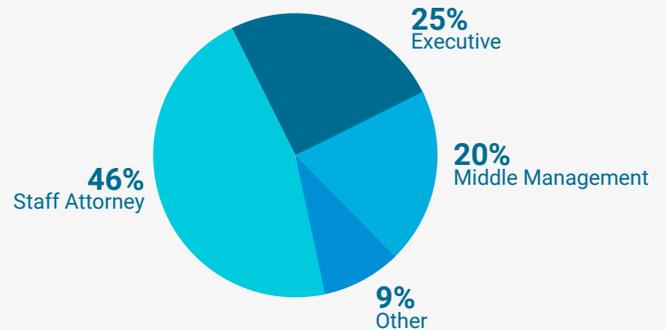
Staff Attorney Roles Dominate in Government Sector

In government employment, about two out of every three attorneys work as staff attorneys; comparatively few work in executive and middle-management positions. The wide range of roles in government includes prosecutors, public defenders, and legislative aides, as well as agency and committee staff.

Nonprofit Organizations Offer Leadership Opportunities

Although only a small share of all attorneys work in nonprofit organizations, nearly half who do so serve in executive or middle management roles. These organizations provide direct and indirect legal services and advocate for specific issues such as child welfare, housing, civil liberties, environment, and human rights.

Nonprofit Organizations



Analysis based on survey responses from 93,200 active attorneys licensed by the State Bar.

What the Data Show

- ✓ Almost three-quarters of licensed attorneys work in the private sector.
- ✓ Private practice is dominated by a large number of small law offices.
- ✓ Corporate in-house attorneys are more likely to work in executive and middle-management roles, while government attorneys are concentrated in staff roles.



Taken together, these employment profiles provide the State Bar, policymakers, and other stakeholders with insights into the employment patterns of attorneys. This information will be valuable for supporting the advancement and regulation of the legal profession.