



# **2009 SALARY SURVEY SUMMARY**

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### **Comments on Results:**

This report is a summary of findings from the year 2009 salary survey of Wisconsin paralegals. The responses are based on 2009 salaries and information received from the respondents.

We received a 29% response to the survey, which is a slight decrease in responses from last year. As in the previous years, a large portion of the responses were received from the Milwaukee Chapter, 53.5%.

This report will compare figures to years past, and will provide findings based on the questions asked in the survey. It will not, however, tag a “typical” paralegal, as there are too many variables between counties and types of employers. It is easy to determine though, as in previous years, the majority of the respondents were females in private law firms, using the title “Paralegal”. What is interesting to note is the average age of respondents is higher this year and have a longer career length than in past years.

Thank you to all who participated this year in our online survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.

## COMPARISON FINDINGS

### Comparison of Findings – Most Popular Answers:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Sex – Female	91.6%	94.1%	93.5%
Age	41 – 50	41 – 50	51 – 60
Position – Full Time	90.1%	92.4%	90.7%
Title – Paralegal	80%	78.9%	78.5%
Type of Employer:			
Private Law Firm	57.9%	55.3%	52.1%
Corporation	21.1%	26.1%	26.4%
Insurance Company	15.1%	8.1%	10.0%
Government Agency	2.6%	7.5%	7.8%
Freelance/Independent	3.3%	-----	3.5%
Work Experience	15+ years	6-10 years	16+ years
Number of Attys. Work With	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 3
Classified as Salaried/Exempt	52%	44.5%	(Tied) 47.1%
Received a bonus	74.5%	55.6%	52.8%
Overall Full Time Salary	\$47,600	\$48,470	\$45,108
Milwaukee Average F/T Salary	\$51,100	\$51,421	\$51,640
Fox Valley Average F/T Salary	\$42,460	\$43,334	\$42,872
Madison Average F/T Salary	\$50,430	\$51,047	\$49,853
La Crosse Average F/T Salary	\$35,120	\$37,456	\$33,576
Racine/Kenosha Average F/T Salary	\$41,450	\$44,875	\$44,286
At-Large Average F/T Salary	\$44,100	\$46,087	\$48,418
Billing Rate	\$100+/hour	\$100+/hour	\$120+/hour

## SALARY INFORMATION

### Based on Average Full Time Salary:

Statewide: \$45,108

#### By Experience:

0-2 years:	\$40,129
3-5 years:	\$44,172
6-10 years:	\$47,540
11-15 years:	\$52,492
More than 15 years:	\$54,616

#### By Employer:

Law Firm:	\$47,433
Corporation:	\$50,526
Insurance Co.:	\$54,363
Government Agency:	\$44,532
Freelance/Independent:	\$ 2,500

#### By Gender:

Female:	\$49,759
Male:	\$45,929

#### By Legal Education:

None:	\$50,773
Certificate:	\$51,136
Associate Degree:	\$43,733
Bachelors Degree:	\$50,063
Masters Degree:	\$48,760
Law Degree/JD:	\$ No Responses
Other:	\$56,710

## **SUMMARY BILLABLE DATA**

### **Average Hourly Billing Rate:**

#### Milwaukee Chapter:

Under \$50:	6.6%
\$51 - \$75:	5.3%
\$76 - \$100:	16.0%
\$101 - \$120:	6.6%
More than \$120:	22.6%

#### Fox Valley Chapter:

Under \$50:	0.0%
\$51 - \$75:	8.6%
\$76 - \$100:	8.6%
\$101 - \$120:	13.0%
More than \$120:	4.3%

#### Madison Chapter:

Under \$50:	0.0%
\$51 - \$75:	8.3%
\$76 - \$100:	0.0%
\$101 - \$120:	25.0%
More than \$120:	25.0%

#### La Crosse Chapter:

Under \$50:	0.0%
\$51 - \$75:	44.4%
\$76 - \$100:	22.2%
\$101 - \$120:	0.0%
More than \$120:	0.0%

#### Racine/Kenosha Chapter:

Under \$50:	14.2%
\$51 - \$75:	14.2%
\$76 - \$100:	0.0%
\$101 - \$120:	14.2%
More than \$120:	0.0%

At – Large:

Under \$50:	9.0%
\$51 - \$75:	9.0%
\$76 - \$100:	27.2%
\$101 - \$120:	18.1%
More than \$120:	9.0%

**Average Number of Total Hours Billed Per Week:**

Milwaukee Chapter:

Under 20:	4.0%
20 - 25:	10.6%
26 - 30:	6.6%
31 - 40:	24.0%
40 or more:	4.0%

Fox Valley Chapter:

Under 20:	4.3%
20 - 25:	13.0%
26 - 30:	0.0%
31 - 40:	8.6%
40 or more:	0.0%

Madison Chapter:

Under 20:	0.0%
20 - 25:	0.0%
26 - 30:	8.3%
31 - 40:	41.6%
40 or more:	16.6%

La Crosse Chapter:

Under 20:	11.1%
20 - 25:	11.1%
26 - 30:	0.0%
31 - 40:	44.4%
40 or more:	0.0%

Racine/Kenosha Chapter:

Under 20:	0.0%
20 - 25:	14.2%
26 - 30:	0.0%
31 - 40:	0.0%
40 or more:	14.2%

At – Large:

Under 20:	18.1%
20 - 25:	27.2%
26 - 30:	9.0%
31 - 40:	18.1%
40 or more:	0.0%

## **SURVEY SUMMARY**

As you can see by the above details, the economy has had an effect on the paralegal profession, and our members, as it has had on other professions. Salaries have decreased on the average of approximately 9% overall and the largest percentage of responses indicated that no salary increase was received in 2009. Receipt of annual bonuses is down approximately 3% over last year, but almost 23% from two years ago. The overall number of full-time paralegal positions also decreased this year by approximately 2%.

The majority of paralegals are employed in a litigation practice area and work for one to three attorneys. 67.8% of our respondents have completed their paralegal education at ABA approved programs. The largest percentage of our respondents obtained their current positions by referral, once again reinforcing the advantage of networking for job opportunities.

For paralegals entering the profession within the last twelve months, the highest percentage of respondents reported a starting salary of \$30,000 - \$40,000 per year. Interestingly, salary status is tied this year, with both hourly and salary (exempt vs. non-exempt) being equal, based on respondent's answers.

Employer paid benefits included health, dental and life/disability insurance plans. Many respondents indicated employer paid or partially paid retirement, profit sharing and stock purchase plans. There was a noticeable decline in employer paid professional membership and meeting dues.

Shared secretarial services and self-secretarial services are running fairly close to one another, which would be appropriate, given the increased computerization of the law practice. The majority of our respondents maintain private offices, but many more are now assigned to a cubicle, which coincides with the increase in respondents working for corporations/businesses, than in past years.