

brightflag

# 2025 Corporate Legal Operations Compensation Report

MARCH 20, 2025

# Introduction

Now in its fourth year, Brightflag's annual report is the authoritative source for corporate legal operations compensation benchmarks and analysis.

That last word—analysis—is a critically important one. As a statistician by training, the phrase “lies, damned lies, and statistics” resonates with me. There are other sources of legal operations compensation data, including websites like Glassdoor and community-driven initiatives, but none provide the necessary context that makes the data both trustworthy and actionable. Our report does, which is what makes it uniquely valuable.

For example, too many people continue to assess compensation through the lens of job title. This is a mistake; legal operations compensation is not correlated with job title. Our report makes this clear and gives you helpful frameworks to understand what does and does not drive compensation, and how much a particular role should pay.

As in past years, this report is about more than compensation; it's also a snapshot of corporate legal operations at a point in time—the geographic breadth, the vertical penetration, and the career paths professionals are taking in it are all on display.

This year's survey ran from January 14 through February 21. Respondents self-selected to participate, which means they are not a statistical sample and this report may not be representative of corporate legal operations generally. And because participation was anonymous, it was not possible to verify the correctness of the data.

Nevertheless, we believe this report is an insightful, valuable, and—most importantly— accurate view into corporate legal operations demographics and compensation.

Although we received responses from all six inhabited continents, the compensation benchmarks themselves exclude those from outside of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Compensation is too different outside of these geographies, and there were too few responses in each country to draw statistically significant conclusions.



  
**Kevin Cohn**  
Brightflag

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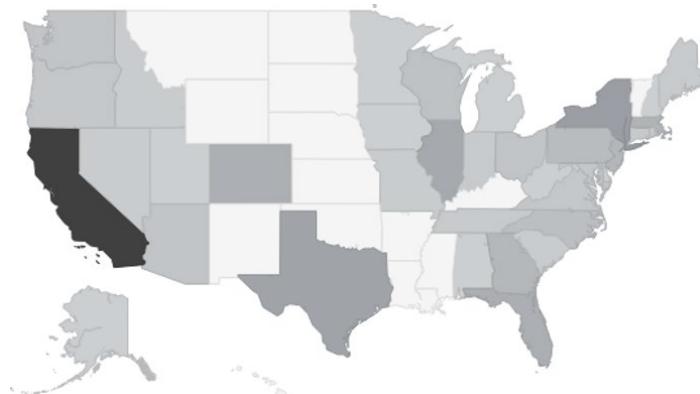
## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

# Geography & Vertical

Legal operations continues to expand into new geographies, with this year's survey setting a record for countries represented at 18. There was participation from 37 US states (including the District of Columbia), about the same as last year.

By all accounts, the United States (and California in particular) continues to be the center of the legal operations world: 81% of respondents work in the United States, and 18% in California. However, both of these metrics are down from last year's report, where 84% of respondents worked in the United States and 20% in California.

There are likely two factors at play here. The first is organic geographic expansion of the profession: new legal operations positions are being created in more varied places. The second is the degree to which people and jobs are relocating from higher-tax states (such as California) to lower-tax states. For example, the percentage of respondents who work in Florida (in which there is no personal income tax) more than doubled compared with last year.



*Shading represents each state's share of respondents (darker is higher).*

One thing that doesn't appear to be changing is the concentration of legal operations positions within technology companies: for the third year in a row, about one-third of respondents work at technology companies. (Note: The first survey, in 2022, didn't ask respondents in which industry they worked.) In fact, the distribution of respondents by industry is unchanged from last year: the same number of industries are represented (more than 17) in almost precisely the same proportions. Financial services is the second-most common industry (11%), followed by healthcare (10%) and manufacturing (9%).

## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

# Department Size & Experience

Last year's report surmised that legal operations roles within the smallest corporate legal departments were being eliminated in response to budgetary pressure, and at the same time, there was a flight to more experienced professionals within medium- and larger-sized legal departments. This year's report reinforces this hypothesis.

When reading the tables below, remember they're showing the year-over-year changes in respondent demographics, rather than the year-over-year changes in the number of legal operations positions. The absolute number of positions continues to increase across virtually all department sizes and experience cohorts.

Department size	2024 report	2025 report	Change
<10 people	19%	18%	-5%
10–50 people	40%	42%	5%
51–100 people	14%	15%	7%
101–500 people	17%	18%	6%
501–1,000 people	3%	2%	-33%
>1,000 people	5%	4%	-20%

Experience	2024 report	2025 report	Change
<5 years	9%	6%	-33%
5–10 years	26%	28%	8%
11–20 years	38%	35%	-8%
>20 years	28%	31%	11%

## SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

# Organizational Structure

This report skews towards heads of legal operations: 58% of respondents are their organization's head of legal operations (defined as the most senior legal operations professional in the organization), about the same as last year.

A larger percentage of heads of legal operations say that they report to the Chief Legal Officer or General Counsel: 74%, compared with 68% last year. A further 21% report to an Associate/Deputy General Counsel or practice head.

More legal operations professionals are managing people this year compared with last year: 68% of heads of legal operations (60% in 2024) and 32% of legal operations professionals in other roles (28% in 2024). Overall, 53% of respondents are people managers.

**58%**

of respondents are their organization's head of legal operations

**53%**

of respondents have people management responsibility

**74%**

of heads of legal operations report to the CLO or General Counsel

## UNDERSTANDING COMPENSATION

# Key Drivers

Legal operations compensation is not correlated with job title. This was one of our first findings in 2022 and it has remained true every year, including this year.

To illustrate this, consider the three most common job titles from this year's survey:

- “Legal Operations Manager” total cash compensation ranges from \$58,000 to \$227,000.
- “Head of Legal Operations” total cash compensation ranges from \$124,000 to \$468,000.
- “Director, Legal Operations” total cash compensation ranges from \$72,000 to \$358,000.

The last two bullets also serve to dispel the myth that a “Director” title means higher compensation than a “Head of” title. Sometimes it does, but frequently it does not. Simply put, you should not (indeed, cannot) use job title to gauge compensation.

Within the United States, location and industry have minor impacts on compensation.

What the data shows is that:

- For head of legal operations roles, the main driver of compensation is legal department size: the larger the department, the higher the compensation.
- For all other legal operations roles—including middle management ones—the main driver of compensation is years of experience.

It is a point of frustration for many legal operations professionals—and for us—that compensation for other legal operations roles is not more consistent from organization to organization and from subspecialty to subspecialty. This will come in time as the profession matures and job responsibilities become more clearly defined.

**\$240k**

earned annually, on average, by the top 25% of legal operations professionals, unchanged from last year

**\$226k**

earned annually, on average, by heads of legal operations, up 18% from last year

## UNDERSTANDING COMPENSATION

# Bonus & Equity

There are three components to compensation:

- **Base salary:** Guaranteed cash compensation typically paid every two weeks in the United States and every month elsewhere.
- **Bonus:** Variable cash compensation that may be earned in whole, in part, or not at all. It's typically paid quarterly or annually based on achievement of individual, departmental, and/or company objectives.
- **Equity:** In private companies, equity typically is granted as stock options (a right to purchase shares at a set price), whereas in public companies equity is granted as restricted stock units (RSUs) that become liquid upon vesting.

In this report, “total cash” means base salary plus bonus and “total compensation” means base salary plus bonus plus equity.

Respondents were asked to enter the annual value of their equity at the time it was granted to them. If you've ever been granted equity, you probably know that the realized value may or may not match the value at the time of grant. This is why we separate total cash from total compensation: the former is frankly much more important for most people. And, this year's report shows that legal operations professionals are receiving meaningfully less equity value: 24% of base salary, compared with 36% last year.

Role	Receive a bonus	Bonus % of base salary	Receive equity	Equity % of base salary
Heads of legal operations	79%	19%	51%	24%
Other legal operations roles	71%	14%	41%	24%
All respondents	76%	17%	46%	24%

# COMPENSATION BENCHMARKS

## Heads of Legal Operations

Department size: <10 people

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$104,000	\$120,000	\$123,000
Median	\$150,000	\$154,000	\$171,000
75th percentile	\$170,000	\$190,000	\$210,000
Maximum	\$277,000	\$332,000	\$520,000

Department size: 10–50 people

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$130,000	\$140,000	\$148,000
Median	\$159,000	\$175,000	\$183,000
75th percentile	\$188,000	\$216,000	\$261,000
Maximum	\$265,000	\$358,000	\$480,000

Department size: 51–100 people

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$153,000	\$171,000	\$194,000
Median	\$189,000	\$230,000	\$250,000
75th percentile	\$269,000	\$348,000	\$409,000
Maximum	\$335,000	\$415,000	\$790,000

Department size: >100 people

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$146,000	\$167,000	\$167,000
Median	\$210,000	\$243,000	\$266,000
75th percentile	\$243,000	\$306,000	\$365,000
Maximum	\$360,000	\$473,000	\$540,000

## COMPENSATION BENCHMARKS

# Other Legal Operations Roles

Experience: <5 years

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$58,000	\$58,000	\$58,000
Median	\$84,000	\$84,000	\$84,000
75th percentile	\$96,000	\$99,000	\$100,000
Maximum	\$195,000	\$224,000	\$224,000

Experience: 5–10 years

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$79,000	\$89,000	\$89,000
Median	\$105,000	\$120,000	\$129,000
75th percentile	\$133,000	\$133,000	\$154,000
Maximum	\$253,000	\$316,000	\$680,000

Experience: 11–20 years

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$112,000	\$121,000	\$121,000
Median	\$128,000	\$143,000	\$145,000
75th percentile	\$178,000	\$196,000	\$211,000
Maximum	\$224,000	\$269,000	\$381,000

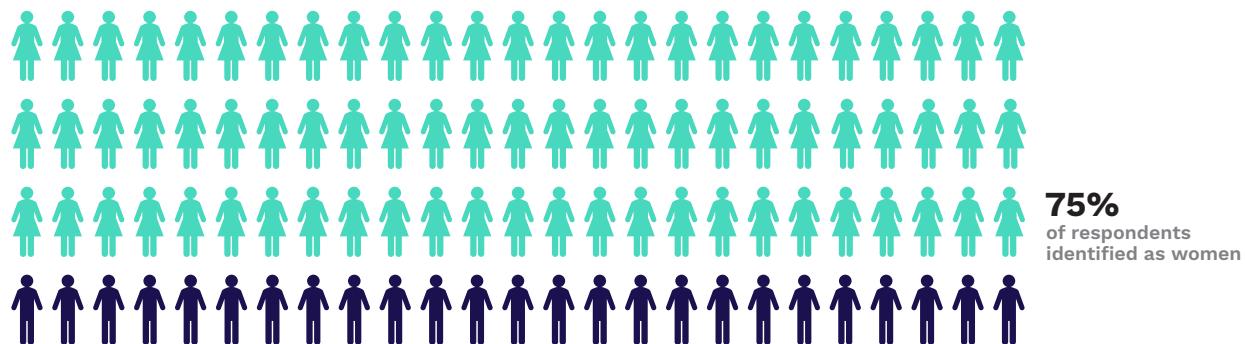
Experience: >20 years

	Base salary	Total cash	Total compensation
25th percentile	\$106,000	\$116,000	\$121,000
Median	\$125,000	\$136,000	\$164,000
75th percentile	\$159,000	\$183,000	\$183,000
Maximum	\$260,000	\$325,000	\$350,000

## ADDITIONAL DRIVERS OF COMPENSATION

# Gender Identity

Women's dominance in legal operations representation continues, with three-quarters of respondents to this year's survey identifying as women.



Nevertheless, pay equality continues to be elusive and is largely unchanged from last year.

On average, women in heads of legal operations positions earn 24% less than men in similarly-sized legal departments. Women in other legal operations roles fare modestly better (but still not well), earning 17% less than men with similar years of experience. There are only two subsegments in which women out-earn similarly situated men.

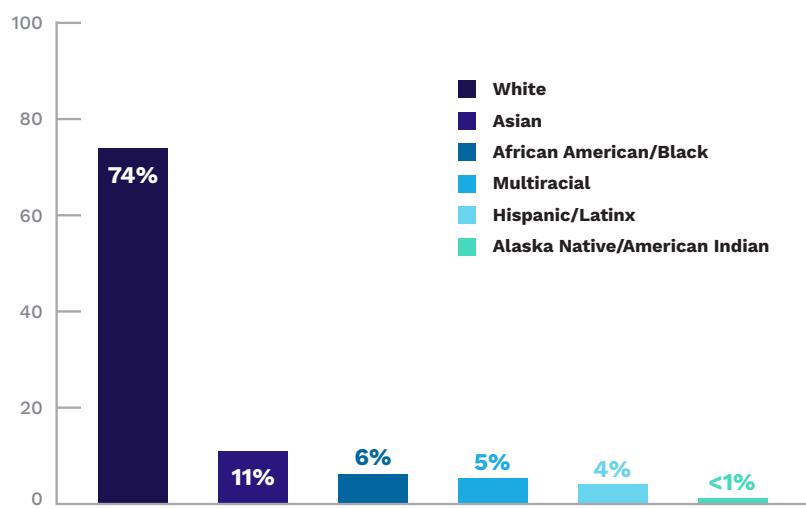
Heads of legal operations		Other legal operations roles	
Department size	Not men : men	Experience	Not men : men
Overall	\$0.76	Overall	\$0.83
<10 people	\$1.38	<5 years	Too little data
10–50 people	\$0.82	5–10 years	\$0.72
51–100 people	\$0.66	11–20 years	\$0.89
>100 people	\$0.83	>20 years	\$1.09

Table shows total compensation earned by gender-underrepresented respondents for every \$1.00 earned by men.

## ADDITIONAL DRIVERS OF COMPENSATION

# Ethnicity

Nearly three-quarters of respondents to this year's survey identified as white, a slight increase over last year. The next most common response was Asian (11%), followed by African American/Black (6%), multiracial (5%), and Hispanic/Latinx (4%).



There is no evidence of pay inequality with respect to ethnicity. Non-white legal operations professionals out-earn similarly situated white professionals in every segment, although it should be noted the disparity is small if you exclude heads of legal operations working in departments of more than 100 people.

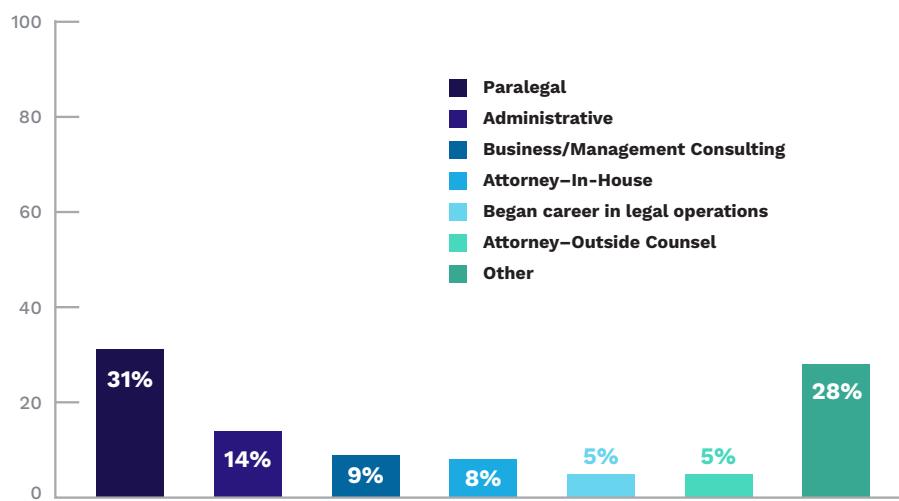
Heads of legal operations		Other legal operations roles	
Department size	Non-white : white	Experience	Non-white : white
Overall	\$1.27	Overall	\$1.06
<10 people	\$1.07	<5 years	Too little data
10–50 people	\$1.15	5–10 years	\$1.14
51–100 people	Too little data	11–20 years	\$1.01
>100 people	\$1.36	>20 years	\$1.04

Table shows total compensation earned by non-white respondents for every \$1.00 earned by white respondents.

## ADDITIONAL DRIVERS OF COMPENSATION

# Professional Background

Paralegal remains the most common career path to legal operations. Together with administrative roles, this professional background accounts for 45% of respondents, about the same as last year. This path is the growth engine of legal operations. Only 13% of respondents were attorneys prior to entering legal operations.



**\$1.31**

Total compensation earned by respondents admitted to practice law for every \$1.00 earned by those not admitted to practice law

**\$0.65**

Total compensation earned by respondents with a paralegal/administrative background for every \$1.00 earned by those with other backgrounds

Respondents who are admitted to practice law earn 31% more on average than those who are not, up significantly from last year's report (10%) but in line with 2023's findings. Approximately 20% of respondents are admitted to practice law, compared with 14% last year.

On the other hand, having a paralegal/administrative background is negatively correlated with compensation. Respondents with this background earn 35% less than those with other professional backgrounds. This is a regression from last year's report (25%). The survey did not ask participants about their educational achievement, but public data suggests professionals with paralegal/administrative backgrounds are less likely to hold a bachelor's or post-graduate degree, which may hamper their earnings potential.

# The Top-Compensated Respondents

Legal operations is more than a job title and more than a job function; it's the CLO or General Counsel's right hand, and the top-compensated respondents to this year's survey prove that the pinnacle of legal operations is high, and highly lucrative.

Three people with no more than 10 years of experience can be found among the top-compensated respondents (including the top two)—an unusual occurrence. All three work at technology companies, and as you can see, an outsized portion of their total compensation comes from equity. Remember that this value may or may not be realized in full.

Role	Department size	Experience	Total cash	Total	Geography	Underrepresented gender and/or ethnicity
Head of	51–100 people	5–10 years	\$265,000	\$790,000	US (West)	Yes
Other	10–50 people	5–10 years	\$230,000	\$680,000	US (West)	No
Head of	51–100 people	11–20 years	\$390,000	\$615,000	US (West)	Yes
Head of	101–500 people	>20 years	\$468,000	\$540,000	US (East)	Yes
Head of	10–50 people	>20 years	\$332,000	\$520,000	US (West)	Yes
Head of	10–50 people	5–10 years	\$240,000	\$480,000	US (East)	Yes
Head of	101–500 people	>20 years	\$473,000	\$473,000	US (West)	Yes
Head of	51–100 people	>20 years	\$375,000	\$450,000	US (East)	Yes
Head of	101–500 people	>20 years	\$358,000	\$448,000	US (West)	Yes
Head of	>1,000 people	>20 years	\$320,000	\$445,000	US (West)	Yes



## About Kevin Cohn & Brightflag

Kevin has extensive experience building cloud workflow, productivity, and analytics companies. Prior to joining Brightflag, Kevin was Chief Operating Officer at Atypon, a publishing software company (acquired by Wiley), and Senior Vice President of Operations at Smartling, a language translation technology and services platform (acquired by Battery Ventures). A Member of the Advisory Board of Legal Operators, Kevin is a passionate advocate for the development of the legal operations industry and the professionals working in it. Kevin also serves as an independent board director of Fundraise Up, a technology company used by impactful nonprofits to engage more donors and increase revenue with digital fundraising tools.

Brightflag's e-billing and matter management platform provides complete visibility into legal work and helps in-house teams control costs. The intuitive AI-powered platform makes teams more productive by eliminating time-consuming tasks related to invoicing, reporting, and matter management. The company serves a global community of legal professionals from offices in New York, Ireland, and Australia.

# Appendix

## Open Positions with Pay Transparency

Many countries and US states have pay transparency laws that require certain employers to include a base salary range in their job postings.

We reviewed all corporate legal operations jobs posted on LinkedIn from January to February 2025. Approximately 50% contained base salary ranges; they appear below. Only first-party postings are included.

These postings provide a partial view into current market conditions. Note that openings may not have been filled and hires may not be compensated in line with published ranges. Also, because the postings containing base salary ranges represent only a portion of all postings, they may not be representative of the market at large.

## Open Positions with Pay Transparency

Job title	Company	Base salary low	Base salary high
Associate Director, Contracting Technology	Eli Lilly and Company	\$122,000	\$179,000
Associate, Legal Operations	Metropolitan Transportation Authority	\$85,000	\$90,000
Chief Operating Officer	Stanford University	\$250,000	\$350,000
Contracts & Legal Operations Specialist	Pendo	\$65,000	\$80,000
Contracts and Legal Operations Manager	Structure Therapeutics	\$141,000	\$170,000
Director, Contracts Management and Legal Operations	Kailera Therapeutics	\$175,000	\$230,000
Director, Legal Operations	Ameren	\$136,000	\$210,000
Director, Legal Operations	Bloom Energy	\$193,000	\$277,000

Job title	Company	Base salary low	Base salary high
Director, Legal Operations	CyberArk	\$184,000	\$255,000
Director, Legal Operations	Spartan Investment Group	\$125,000	\$200,000
Director, Legal Operations, Outside Counsel & External Provider Management	Walgreens	\$136,000	\$231,000
Director, Legal Operations, Strategic Planning & Process Management	Walgreens	\$136,000	\$231,000
Director, Legal/GA Operations	Gap Inc.	\$148,000	\$197,000
Global Proposal Program Manager, Legal Operations	Databricks	\$135,000	\$207,000
Head of Legal Response Operations	TikTok	\$147,000	\$270,000
Lead Legal Operations Specialist	Transamerica	\$96,000	\$110,000
Legal Operations	Pano AI	\$118,000	\$167,000
Legal Operations Analyst	Cloud Software Group	\$74,000	\$134,000
Legal Operations Analyst	Datadog	\$70,000	\$100,000
Legal Operations Analyst	Tech Mahindra	\$100,000	\$110,000
Legal Operations Analyst	Total Quality Logistics	\$49,000	\$69,000
Legal Operations Assistant	Matura Farrington	\$80,000	\$120,000
Legal Operations Associate	Anduril Industries	\$90,000	\$135,000
Legal Operations Associate	Sidecar Health	\$80,000	\$95,000
Legal Operations Associate	Verkada	\$90,000	\$175,000
Legal Operations Associate	Via	\$70,000	\$80,000
Legal Operations Business Analyst	Aristocrat	\$62,000	\$116,000
Legal Operations Business Management	Freddie Mac	\$80,000	\$120,000
Legal Operations Coordinator	Campari Group	\$100,000	\$125,000
Legal Operations Coordinator	Farm Credit Administration	\$75,000	\$90,000
Legal Operations Coordinator	Hexure	\$48,000	\$55,000
Legal Operations Director	Harris County	\$140,000	\$155,000
Legal Operations Lead	Affirm	\$115,000	\$170,000
Legal Operations Lead	Notion	\$150,000	\$185,000
Legal Operations Manager	Amplitude	\$121,000	\$203,000
Legal Operations Manager	Apogee Therapeutics	\$130,000	\$145,000
Legal Operations Manager	Biz2Credit	\$90,000	\$130,000
Legal Operations Manager	Calm	\$102,000	\$155,000
Legal Operations Manager	Double Good	\$75,000	\$110,000

Job title	Company	Base salary low	Base salary high
Legal Operations Manager	JBS	\$120,000	\$130,000
Legal Operations Manager	KBRA	\$110,000	\$130,000
Legal Operations Manager	PubMatic	\$100,000	\$115,000
Legal Operations Manager	Rula	\$149,000	\$166,000
Legal Operations Manager	Teleport	\$119,000	\$149,000
Legal Operations Manager	Tools for Humanity	\$160,000	\$190,000
Legal Operations Manager	Unio Health Partners	\$60,000	\$105,000
Legal Operations Manager	Verdani Partners	\$75,000	\$85,000
Legal Operations Manager	Vuori	\$123,000	\$148,000
Legal Operations Manager	Whatnot	\$165,000	\$230,000
Legal Operations Manager	World	\$160,000	\$190,000
Legal Operations Manager, Corporate Solutions Technology	Genesys	\$101,000	\$187,000
Legal Operations Manager, Spend & Vendor Management	Coinbase	\$149,000	\$175,000
Legal Operations Principal, Compliance	Via	\$110,000	\$135,000
Legal Operations Program Manager	Snap	\$121,000	\$214,000
Legal Operations Project Manager	In-N-Out Burger	\$77,000	\$87,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Adtalem Global Education	\$49,000	\$86,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Arch Capital Group	\$62,000	\$90,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Axos Bank	\$48,000	\$52,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Elastic	\$89,000	\$169,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Fivetrans	\$123,000	\$148,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Great River Energy	\$73,000	\$85,000
Legal Operations Specialist	HARTBEAT	\$70,000	\$90,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Palantir	\$90,000	\$110,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Scout Motors	\$120,000	\$140,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Tempus AI	\$70,000	\$100,000
Legal Operations Specialist	The Clorox Company	\$72,000	\$162,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Umbra	\$85,000	\$120,000
Legal Operations Specialist	Under Armour	\$68,000	\$93,000
Legal Operations Technology Manager, Contracts	PayPal	\$83,000	\$188,000
Legal Operations Technology Specialist	Health Care Service Corporation	\$68,000	\$143,000
Legal Systems Specialist	Milliman	\$61,000	\$119,000

Job title	Company	Base salary low	Base salary high
Legal Technology Manager	Emergent BioSolutions	\$118,000	\$142,000
Manager, Legal Operations	Metropolitan Transportation Authority	\$100,000	\$120,000
Manager, Legal Operations	Yum! Brands	\$139,000	\$164,000
Manager, Legal Operations, Reporting & Communications	Walgreens	\$103,000	\$164,000
Program Manager, Legal Operations, Innovation & Tech	Netflix	\$130,000	\$380,000
Project Manager, Legal Operations	Solventum	\$106,000	\$130,000
Senior Director, Legal Operations	Empower	\$153,000	\$222,000
Senior Director, Legal Operations	Qualcomm	\$214,000	\$322,000
Senior Legal Operations Associate	Rivian and Volkswagen Group Technologies	\$95,000	\$126,000
Senior Legal Operations Specialist	Alto Pharmacy	\$140,000	\$175,000
Senior Legal Operations Specialist, Billing & Vendor Management	Procore	\$81,000	\$112,000
Senior Manager, Legal Operations	Booking Holdings	\$167,000	\$204,000
Senior Manager, Legal Operations	H1	\$120,000	\$145,000
Senior Manager, Legal Operations	L3Harris Technologies	\$112,000	\$238,000
Senior Manager, Legal Operations	Otsuka Pharmaceutical Companies	\$128,000	\$183,000
Senior Manager, Outside Counsel & Legal Operations	Abbott	\$127,000	\$255,000
Senior Program Manager, Legal Matter Management	Uber	\$112,000	\$137,000
Senior Program Manager, Legal Operations	Snowflake	\$135,000	\$189,000
Senior Project Manager, Legal	Uber	\$124,000	\$137,000
US Legal Operations Associate Director	Ferring Pharmaceuticals	\$137,000	\$196,000



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