



Feature

## The Legal Job Market in Boston

The legal market in Boston is huge, with over 600 attorneys specializing in over 15 areas. The major law firms in the city include Feinberg & Alban, PC that deals with personal injury; Conforto Law Group, that deals with employment and labor laws; McDermott Will & Emery, LLP; and The Law Offices of SRIS, PC; that bring together attorneys from Virginia and Maryland to handle various types of cases; and Business Law, PC that deals with business laws and litigation issues. Others include Davis, Malm & D’Agostine, PC; Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP; A&L Goodbody, Lowenstein Sandler, PC; Murtha Cullina, LLP; Nixon Peabody, LLP; and many other law firms.



### Cost of Living in Boston

Boston is the largest city in New England, but it is smaller in comparison with other large US cities. Boston has the highest concentration of colleges in the US. This city has one of

the highest housing costs in the country. The high cost of housing is responsible almost entirely for the high cost of living in the area. Students take up many of the available apartments, and it may be difficult to find housing if one is relocated or needs cheap housing in Boston. You can choose to live in the city, the inner suburbs, or the outer suburbs. Living in the city is the most expensive, followed by the inner suburbs, and lastly, the outer suburbs, which are relatively affordable. Landlords also require advance monthly payments before prospective tenants can move in, and this may cut into the budget of families who are relocating, or visitors who need housing in Boston

### Quality of Life in Boston

Boston enjoys a high standard of living. The mayor’s office is in touch with the local community and has made a number of proposals for legislation to improve the quality of life. What really deters people from living in Boston is the high cost of living. Those who earn a more average income may find Brookline and Somerville ideal places to live, while those who can afford somewhat more might enjoy Allston, Brighton and West Roxbury. These areas offer more diversified house sizes, and superior schools. The Boston Latin School, which is one of the best performing and most prominent schools in MA, is found in the Boston suburbs. Boston has four seasons in a year, though sometimes winter and summer can extend longer than the other two seasons. Temperatures can reach 70F in January, while snow can fall in April. It is usually cold in the winter but cold snaps are typically not prolonged.

Boston features many cultural attractions. The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Museum of Fine Arts, and galleries at Newbury Street, are some of the chief attractions in the city. The nightlife is vibrant, but clubs and bars close down at 2 a.m., while public transportation shuts down at 12.45 a.m. Recreational activities are plentiful and varied. Visitors can enjoy downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, sailing, or just plain hanging out on the beach. Swimming pools, parks, beaches, forest preserves, and skating rinks are available for those who prefer alternative means of recreation.

### Prominent Practice Areas

Boston attorneys offer a wide range of services to their clients. The most prominent areas of practice include corporate litigation, family law, personal injury claims, intellectual property rights, employment and labor laws, benefits and compensation plans, and others.



The median salaries for attorney jobs in Boston vary according to the field where one is specialized. The averages for attorneys practicing litigation and appeals are \$59,300; those in general practice receive \$71,000; attorneys dealing with intellectual property rights and patents receive \$89,900; while those engaged with construction, real estate or land use receive \$61,000 per year. Attorneys that specialize in labor, employment benefits, and ERISA issues get \$79,700. Those dealing with corporate or business mergers and acquisitions get \$92,500; while those involved with personal injury and wrongful death earn the lowest salaries — \$47,300 annually.

### The Massachusetts Bar Exam

Attorney jobs are open to those who have taken the Massachusetts Bar exam. This exam is a prerequisite



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for attorneys who want to practice law in Boston. In order to qualify for this exam, a candidate must have graduated from law school with a juris doctorate degree. Many attorneys feel that the Massachusetts Bar exam is an easy one compared to those of other states like California, whose exam is considered to be the hardest in the country. This may explain the large number of legal licenses awarded to attorneys who practice legal services in Boston. The passing score for the Massachusetts Bar Examination (MBE) is 270, and the majority of test-takers typically pass, with the average percentage of candidates who pass ranging between 62% and 89% in a given year.

## Job Outlook

People involved in law jobs in Boston will likely enjoy increased job security and opportunity, as the legal field is projected to generally grow in the coming years, as the

demand for attorneys specialized in corporate mergers, product liability and medical malpractice increases. Many opportunities exist for firms and attorneys who wish to pursue private practice. The demand for attorney services will continue to grow due to the increasing population of Boston and thus the need for legal services.

Despite the projected growth of the legal field in Boston, competition is expected to continue as different firms set up offices in Boston, and individuals open up their own practices. Qualified law school graduates may need to work harder in order to make partner or be promoted to senior positions. Individuals going into private practice have to ensure that they create a solid client base in order to survive the competitive market in Boston for their first few years, and may need to work for other firms initially in order to support themselves.

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