



Feature

The Legal State of Texas

Attorney jobs in Texas are plentiful; The Lone Star State sits in the hot bed of controversy regarding illegal immigration and deportation of convicted aliens. Houston, Texas is the fourth largest city in the United States and boasts some great law firms to work for that range in size from two attorneys to over 400 hundred; many larger firms have offices around the world. Some firms are older and have been established before the 1900s giving them a steeped tradition of practicing law before many cities were built. Although they helped develop many types of law they are forward moving and represent Fortune 500 companies as well as small businesses. Texas has some great law schools to recruit from and many employers seek second year law students for interviews.

The legal job outlook for Texas is always growing and expanding to different areas. Real estate has always been a great practice area for attorneys to work in, businesses are being developed and land is needed to help those businesses grow. Immigration has been on the forefront since Texas borders Mexico. Intellectual property has seen growth due to law suits being filed regarding ideas for designs being copied or stolen and marketed without permission from the creator. The practice of energy law has seen this field become one of the best for attorney jobs in Texas because of pollution laws and our countries ability to harness renewable energy for consumers.

Depending on your experience your salary will vary. Smaller firms will pay less, many starting at \$50,000; larger firms who have more clients tend to pay more, some start at \$125,000 and range up to \$160,000. Summer associates can usually make \$62,000; again, it depends on the firm's size and their client list. There are many benefits that are offered with larger firms, some have sign-on bonuses and holiday bonuses. Many have insurance, 401ks, and paid parking. Some other perks include paid CLE classes and relocation expenses. Some firms even pay bar association fees. Government jobs are based on GS levels and those are determined by experience as well.

The top practice legal areas in Texas are corporate, most business aspects being found in Dallas and Houston. Corporate revolves around bankruptcy and administrative issues. Energy counsel is one of the best attorney jobs in Texas; oil and gas exploration always keeps this area at the forefront. Real estate is always booming in Texas, laws regarding construction are constantly being used to propel growth; Dallas, El Paso and Houston see the most progression. Intellectual property is different for each region, electronics all the way to space exploration can be practiced, and even patents fall under this category.

Another top practice area for attorney jobs in Texas is international law; Texas is exploring global businesses as well

as Latin American businesses. Agricultural law is a staple of Texas. Cattle, farming, and now a rise in wine production has brought this type of law back to common practice, and El Paso and San Antonio have seen the biggest demand. Employment law is always a front runner for practicing. Job descriptions are changing and employee handbooks need constant updating. Dallas and Houston have seen the most growth in employment so right now those areas are requiring experienced attorneys. Governmental law has seen a rise in zoning and federal laws regarding local law enforcement. Educational law is always a popular practice area since immigration and student rights are often used as political issues. Healthcare is also an important issue because of immigration, HMO's coverage and laws regarding hospital procedures are being written to help hospitals; San Antonio often dominates this area.

Houston is the largest city in Texas. With a population of two million people it is a metropolis and it is called home by some of the biggest law firms in the state. Houston has branches to many corporations such as BP, and LDH Energy. Corporate attorney jobs in Texas are very popular and often sought after since one could become house counsel or a staff attorney. These positions require an attorney to work in close contact with other departments in drafting contracts for other business ventures. Energy law is also an area where an attorney can work with other energy companies all over the world. Some experience is required, usually a minimum of 5-8 years and knowledge of EPA standards are a must. Salary is dependent upon experience and many attorneys who work for energy companies enjoy stock options.

Dallas is the second largest city and branches to many businesses such as Progressive Insurance. Healthcare is also a practice area that has many legal positions available. Real estate is always a booming business with land ownership laws being challenged every day.

San Antonio has seen a rise in labor and employment law. This is usually coupled with employee benefits. Since San Antonio



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has a large population like Dallas, attorney jobs in Texas are becoming available to meet the demands of a growing city.

Austin has many tax attorney jobs listed. Some are in-house positions and some require working with other companies involving public finance. El Paso law firms work with the United States Department of Homeland Security which deals with border security and bio-defense.

In conclusion, attorney jobs in Texas are plentiful if you know where to look. Environmental law, corporate, bankruptcy, and immigration are the fastest growing practice areas. Experience is required for many of the higher paying legal positions. What you know can set you apart and give you an edge when seeking a change of scenery if you are planning to move to Texas.

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