



**2008 National Utilization
and
Compensation Survey Report**

**Section 1
The Participants
Education and Experience**

March 2008

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NALA • 1516 S. Boston, #200 • Tulsa, OK 74119 • 918- 587-6828 • www.nala.org

Section 1
Participants Education and Experience

NALA
2008 National Utilization and Compensation Survey Report

Section 1
The Participants - Education and Experience
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**Section 1
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Summary Information

The data for this survey was collected from October 15, 2007 through February 15, 2008 via a web based survey form. Data from the survey form was compiled and analyzed electronically. Responses are anonymous, however, respondents were assigned a universal control number to control for submissions by those who are not paralegals. Respondents who were not NALA members could obtain the number from NALA Headquarters. Some results were not considered in the analysis where the numbers were unreasonable (billing rates in excess of \$200, salaries in excess of \$120,000, city population in excess of 8 million.). The number of rejected survey forms for data out of reasonable ranges was 49.

While the web based survey was much easier to complete by users and analyze, the sample size is smaller than that of previous paper-pencil surveys. NALA has conducted this survey every two years since 1986. The sample size for the 2007 survey is 1434; 2004 survey was 1350; the sample size for the 2002 survey was 2125. The geographic distribution of the respondents is remarkably similar as is the backgrounds. For details about sampling and sample size, see http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/project_ideas/Soc_participants.shtml, or <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>. With a population of 100,000 to 150,000 the sample is large enough for a confidence level of 99%, confidence interval of 3.3.

**Table 1.1
Participants Summary Information**

Total Number of Participants: 1434
Sex: 5% Male; 95% Female
Age: 42

Are you currently a member of NALA?

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	925	66%
No	470	34%

Have you received the CLA designation of the National Association of Legal Assistants?

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	955	67%
No	462	33%

Of those who have the CLA credential, 129 (13%) have achieved a CLA Specialty designation.

**Table 1.2
Regional Summary Breakdown of Participants**

Region Number	Description	Number	Percent
Region 1	New England/Mid East	57	4%
Region 2	Great Lakes	64	5%
Region 3	Plain States	197	14%
Region 4	Southeast	605	42%
Region 5	Southwest	289	20%
Region 6	Rocky Mountains	58	4%
Region 7	Far West	157	11%

The average population of the city for respondents was 544,897

Table 1.3
States Represented by Survey Participants

State	Number	Percentage
Alabama	24	2%
Alaska	2	0%
Arizona	74	5%
Arkansas	12	1%
California	93	7%
Colorado	17	1%
Connecticut	4	0%
Delaware	2	0%
District of Columbia	3	0%
Florida	244	17%
Georgia	23	2%
Idaho	3	0%
Illinois	18	1%
Indiana	8	1%
Iowa	67	5%
Kansas	1	0%
Kentucky	9	1%
Louisiana	12	1%
Maine	5	0%
Maryland	7	1%
Massachusetts	4	0%
Michigan	14	1%
Minnesota	8	1%
Mississippi	28	2%
Missouri	18	1%
Montana	1	0%
Nebraska	28	2%
Nevada	34	2%
New Hampshire	7	1%
New Jersey	13	1%
New Mexico	13	1%
New York	5	0%
North Carolina	81	6%
North Dakota	31	2%
Ohio	14	1%
Oklahoma	47	3%
Oregon	19	1%

	Number	Percentage
Pennsylvania	11	1%
Puerto Rico	0	0%
South Carolina	25	2%
South Dakota	24	2%
Tennessee	63	4%
Texas	155	11%
Utah	7	1%
Virgin Islands	1	0%
Virginia	49	4%
Washington	5	0%
West Virginia	35	3%
Wisconsin	10	1%
Wyoming	14	1%

General Educational Background

The questionnaire asked respondents to provide information about their educational background and experience. The following tables will summarize the findings and compare them with the findings of previous surveys.

**Insert Table 1.4
General Educational Degree Attained (N=1445)**

Response	Responses	Percentage
High School Diploma	230	16%
Associate Degree	516	36%
Bachelor's Degree	608	42%
Master's Degree	85	6%
Ph.D.	6	1%

**Table 1.5
Paralegal Educational Program Completed (N=1577)**

Education	Responses	Percentage
Undergraduate certificate	242	15%
Post baccalaureate certificate	205	13%
Associate Degree	540	34%
Bachelor Degree	122	8%
Master Degree	2	0%
Other	197	13%
None	270	17%

Table 1.6
General Educational Degree Attained
1991 Through 2008
Reported in Percentages of the Population

Response	2008	2004	2002	2000	1997	1995	1993	1991
High School Diploma	16%	18%	21%	27%	29%	31%	33%	32%
Associate's Degree	36%	33%	33%	28%	26%	26%	22%	27%
Bachelor's Degree	42%	44%	41%	40%	41%	40%	40%	38%
Master's Degree	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Doctorate	1%	1%	1%	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1.7
General Education and Paralegal Degree Compared

General Education	Type of Paralegal Program Completed		
	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
High School Diploma (n=230)	Undergraduate Certificate	59	26%
	Post Baccalaureate Degree	10	4%
	Associate's Degree	2	1%
	Bachelor's Degree	0	0
	Master's Degree	0	0
	Other	58	25%
	None	100	40%
Associate Degree (n=516)	Undergraduate Certificate	94	18%
	Post Baccalaureate Degree	6	1%
	Associate's Degree	356	69%
	Bachelor's Degree	0	0%
	Master's Degree	1	0%
	Other	51	10%
	None	49	10%

	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree (n=608)	Undergraduate Certificate	73	12%
	Post Baccalaureate Degree	162	27%
	Associate's Degree	155	26%
	Bachelor's Degree	116	19%
	Master's Degree	0	0%
	Other	70	12%
	None	104	17%
Master's Degree (n=69)	Undergraduate Certificate	11	13%
	Post Baccalaureate Degree	26	31%
	Associate's Degree	23	27%
	Bachelor's Degree	5	6%
	Master's Degree	0	0%
	Other	8	10%
	None	15	18%

The data describing the levels of general education were also analyzed in terms of age, years of experience and years with the current employer. Findings are as follows:

Table 1.8
General Educational Degree with Average Values of
Age, Years with Current Employer, Total Years of Experience

General Education	Age	Years - Current Employer	Total Years Experience
High School	45	10	23
Associate's Degree	41	8	17
Bachelor's Degree	40	7	15
Master's Degree	43	6	14
Ph.D.	44	3	14
Average	42	8	18

As has been shown in previous surveys, the findings show that those reporting a high school diploma as the highest level of general education are those who generally have been in the field longer than others and have been with their current employers longer than average.

Experience

The following tables provide information about the years of experience and years with current employers.

Table 1.9
Years with Current Employer
Average: 8 Years

Number of Years	Number	Percentage
1-5 Years	852	63%
6- 10 Years	344	26%
11-15 Years	149	11%
16 - 20 Years	101	8%
Over 20 Years	31	2%
Over 25 Years	42	3%

Table 1.10
Total Years Legal Experience
Average:18

Number of Years	Number	Percentage
1-5 Years	244	18%
6- 10 Years	261	19%
11-15 Years	244	18%
16 - 20 Years	314	23%
21-25 Years	187	14%
Over 25 Years	253	19%

These findings do not differ significantly from the findings of previous surveys. For example, in 2004, the average years with current employer was 8 and the average total years of legal experience was 18.

What title do these professionals prefer? We cannot answer that question from this survey but we can present the titles currently in use. Table 1.11 presents the findings of the 2008 survey. For comparison, the 2004 survey reported that 62% used the term “paralegal” and 30% used the term “legal assistant; the 2002 survey reported that 51% used the term “paralegal”; 41% used the term “legal assistant.” The 2000 survey reported 49% used the term “legal assistant;” 42% used the term “paralegal.”

Table 1.11
Job title/description of Current Position (N=1441)

Responses	Number	Percentage
legal assistant	253	18%
paralegal	1076	75%
legal secretary	0	0
law student/legal clerk	1	0
paralegal student intern	1	0
public sector/government	23	2%
real estate	9	1%
bookkeeper	3	0
runner/file clerk/receptionist	2	0
outside legal field	0	0
none	17	1%

Education and Experience Summary

The following table begins to put together the elements of legal assistant education, experience with compensation and billing rates. Detailed information describing billing rates and compensation are shown in other sections of this report.

Table 1.12
Experience, Compensation and Billing Rates by
Highest Educational Degree and Professional Credential 2008

Education	Total Years Experience	Years / Current Job	Annual Compensation	Hourly Billing Rate
High School (N=137)	23	10	52,848	108
Associate's Degree (N=280)	17	8	47,812	98
Bachelor's Degree (N=313)	15	7	48,681	101
Master's Degree (N=38)	14	6	50,292	112
Ph.D. (N=4)	14	3	63,750	154
CP Credential (N=514)	18	8	50,619	103
ACP Credential (N=68)	23	11	57,326	108
Average (N=1354)	18	8	50,182	103

We are including the same table from the 2004 survey for comparative purposes.

Table 1.13
Experience, Compensation and Billing Rates by
Highest Educational Degree and Professional Credential 2004

Education	Total Years Experience	Years / Current Job	Annual Compensation	Hourly Billing Rate
High School (N=159)	23	10	47,245	90
Associate's Degree (N=254)	16	8	45,066	87
Bachelor's Degree (N=323)	15	7	46,182	92
Master's Degree (N=34)	16	8	48,941	104
Ph.D. (N=3)	29	3	61,417	105
CP Credential (N=556)	18	8	46,550	90
ACP Credential (N=77)	20	10	50,645	100
Average (N=1406)	17	8	46,590	91

Chart 1.2 (1.12-13)
Compensation by Highest Educational Degree and Professional Credential 2008 and 2004

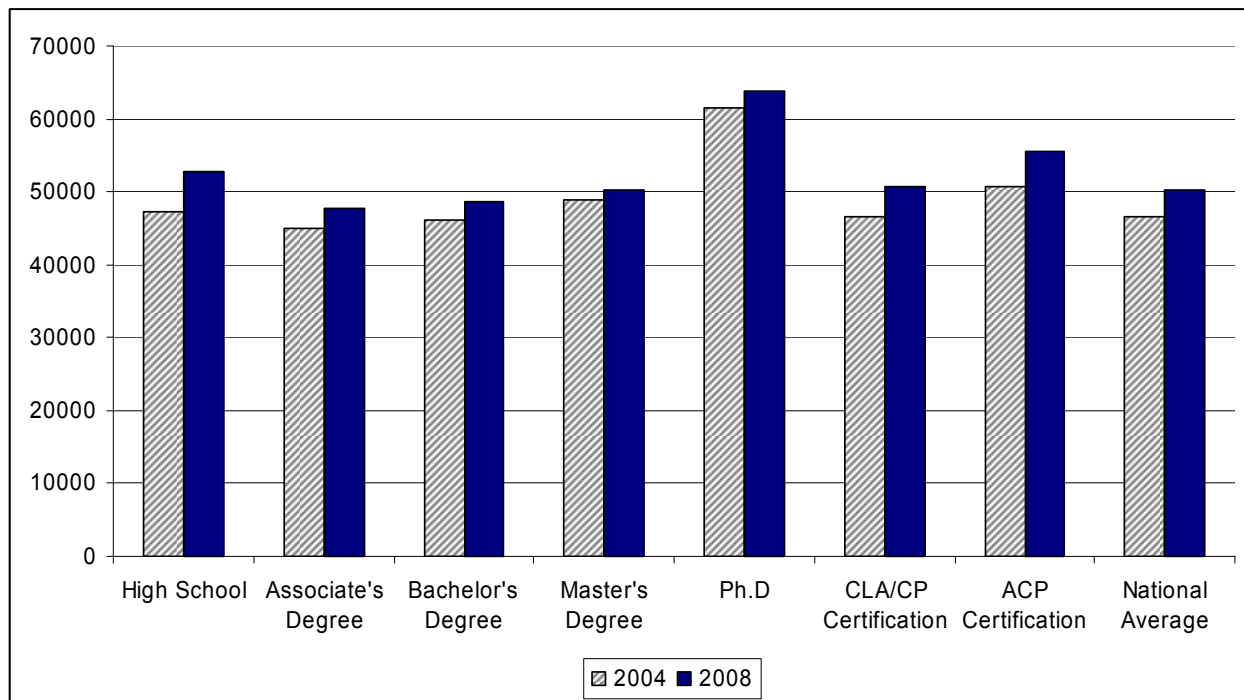
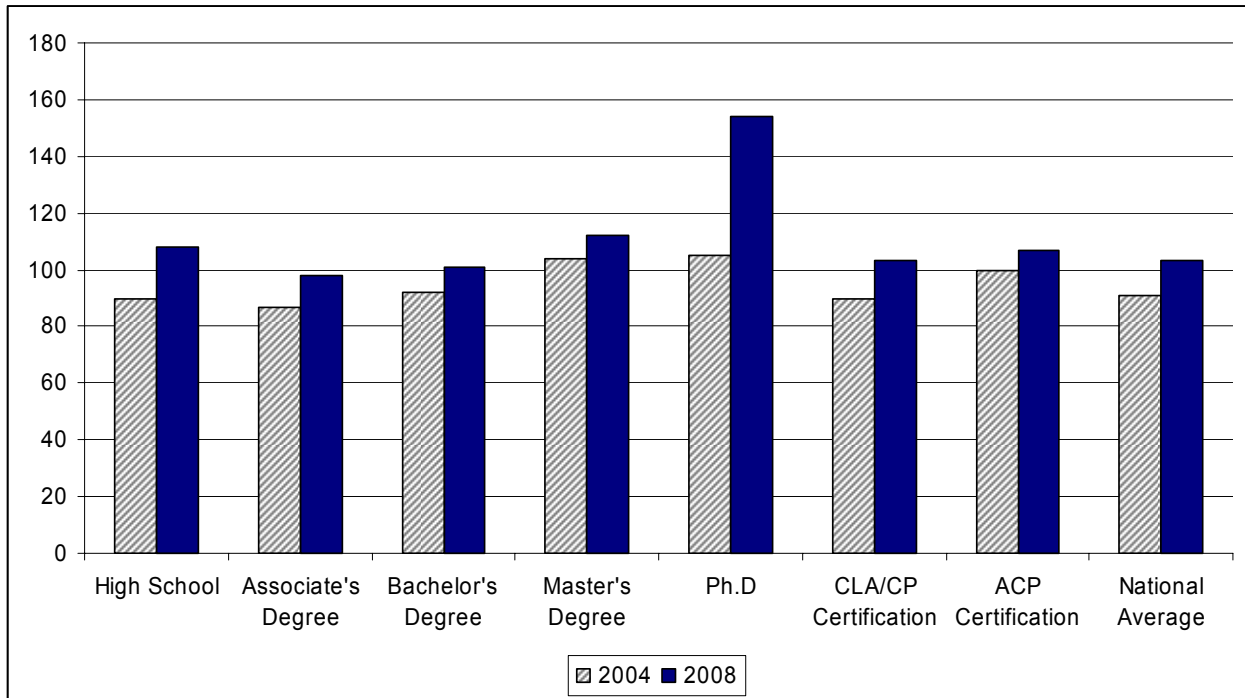


Chart 1.3 (1.12-13)
Billing Rates by Highest Educational Degree and Professional Credential 2008 and 2004



End of Section 1 of 4