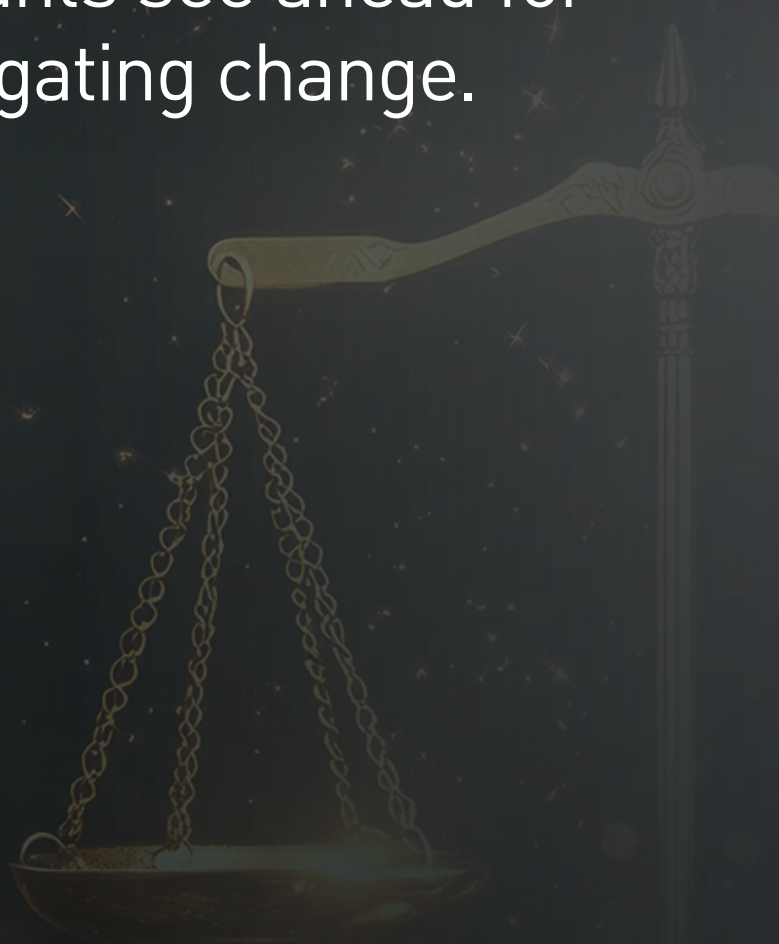


2026 FORECAST · NORTH AMERICA

Legal Executive Trends

What our consultants see ahead for legal leaders navigating change.



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LEGAL TEAMS ARE EVOLVING

- Regulation, privacy and AI governance skills in demand.
- Commercial, business focused, leadership and client experience highly valued.
- Steadying of unpredictable market conditions, early indicators of strong hiring signals and greater talent mobility.

Legal talent demand remains strong. In-house teams seek **regulatory and compliance specialists**, while law firms continue hiring in **litigation, immigration, capital markets, and IP**. Intellectual property, data privacy, and employment expertise are also highly sought.

Anna Jacobs

Senior Partner & Head of
U.S. Legal & Professional
Services Practice



In financial services, demand for attorneys with **regulatory compliance, data privacy, and AI expertise is growing.** Private credit and digital assets stand out.

Compensation remains decisive, but **candidate experience and speed-to-offer** will separate winners from runners-up.

Jennifer Pettigrew Tuesta

Senior Partner of U.S. Legal & Professional Services Practice



Law firms are redefining leadership. On the business services side, expect more **specialized roles in client growth and intelligence and practice management, including content strategy and competitive insights.**

Executives will need to be **data-driven and AI-aware**, as technology adoption accelerates and focus on profitability continues to increase.

Megan McArdle

Principal of U.S. Legal &
Professional Services Practice



AI is reshaping the legal market. Not replacing attorneys, but changing how they work. Firms value lawyers who can **work alongside AI tools and pivot to higher-value tasks.**

Partner and group moves draw attention, but **associate and counsel transitions remain active** across M&A, Private Equity, Real Estate, Intellectual Property, Bankruptcy, and Labor & Employment.

Stephanie Morris

Principal of U.S. Legal & Professional Services Practice



LOOKING AHEAD

Roles that could gain traction in 2026:

- GC/CLO with **compliance and AI governance**.
- Expanded **Legal Ops and data leadership**.
- Law firm **commercial C-suite roles** tied to growth and technology (CMO, BDO, Practice Management).

General Counsel, wearing many hats, measured on the “four plates”— Effectiveness, Efficiency, Protection, Enablement—driving Legal Ops and analytics adoption.

EXPECTED SALARY TABLES 2026

	Privately Held Companies (Annual Revenue: US\$100M- \$500M)			Public Companies (Annual Revenue: US\$100M- US\$500M)		
	MIN	MID	MAX	MIN	MID	MAX
General Counsel	285	350	450	350	425	550
Annual Bonus	100K-1.5M+			200K-2M+		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, Stock options/RSUs					
Deputy General Counsel	250	315	400	275	345	475
Annual Bonus	60K-150K+			150K-200K+		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, Stock options/RSUs					
Associate / Assistant General Counsel	225	300	385	250	325	400
Annual Bonus	50K-150K+			100K-200K+		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, Stock options/RSUs			Cash bonus, equity		
Senior Counsel/Managing Counsel	200	250	295	225	275	325
Annual Bonus	40K-100K			50K-125K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus			Cash bonus, equity (occasionally)		
Legal Counsel	175	200	225	190	220	250
Annual Bonus	25K-70K			40K-80K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus					

	Corporate & Investment Banking Legal (Sell-Side)		
	MIN	MID	MAX
MANAGING DIRECTOR	325	400	500
Annual Bonus	200-450K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, equity		
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	300	325	375
Annual Bonus	200-450K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, equity		
DIRECTOR	260	310	350
Annual Bonus	200-450K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, equity		
VP	220	255	300
Annual Bonus	200-450K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus, occasionally equity		

	Buy-Side Legal (Private Equity, Asset Management, Hedge Funds)		
	MIN	MID	MAX
MANAGING DIRECTOR	325	450	500
Annual Bonus	350-1M		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash, Carried Interest		
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	250	400	450
Annual Bonus	250-600K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash, Carried Interest		
DIRECTOR	200	250	350
Annual Bonus	200-450K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash, Carried Interest		
VP	200	225	300
Annual Bonus	100-250K		
Long-term Incentives & Package	Cash bonus		

What will define legal leadership success in 2026?

At Page Executive, we identify commercially minded legal leaders who create value, strengthen governance, and guide teams through complexity.

Connect with our Legal Practice experts today.



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