

## LGBT Representation Among Lawyers in 2017

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The overall percentage of openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) lawyers reported in the NALP Directory of Legal Employers (NDLE) in 2017 increased to 2.64% compared with 2.48% in 2016 (see Table 1, "Reporting of Openly LGBT Lawyers — NALP Directory of Legal Employers 2017"). Increases were seen across all lawyer types and ranged from not quite 0.1 percentage point for partners to about 0.2 percentage points for associates, counsel, and non-traditional track attorneys. Over 40% of offices reported at least one LGBT lawyer among partners and associates. The percentage of offices reporting LGBT counts has been relatively stable at about 88-90% of offices since 2008.

The overall count in 2017 of 2,664 LGBT lawyers is up by almost 10% from 2016. Over a longer span of time, the number now is almost 2.5 times larger than 15 years ago. In the 2002-2003 NDLE, the number of openly gay lawyers reported was just over 1,100 — less than 1% of the total lawyers represented. It took until 2012 for the overall percentage to exceed 2%. A retrospective on the overall trends is shown in Table 2, "Reporting of Openly LGBT Lawyers -Selected years 2004-2016"].

The presence of LGBT lawyers continues to be highest among associates, at 3.45%, as shown in Table 2, and is up from the figure of 3.24% reported in 2016. Openly LGBT associates are also better represented at large law firms — with firms of 701+ lawyers reporting 3.96% openly LGBT associates. In 2017, openly LGBT partners are best represented at the smallest firms, at 2.34%. It should be noted, however, that percentages in this category are subject to larger fluctuations because of the relatively small number of lawyers accounted for. In particular, the overall number of lawyers in this firm size declined from 2016 to 2017, but the number of LGBT lawyers did not, and in fact increased, so the overall percentages increased from 1.98% to 2.97%; the figures for partners increased from 1.88% to 2.34%. Firms of 701+ lawyers reported 2.19% openly LGBT partners, very close to the 2.15% figure for 2016. Before 2016 this figure had hovered at about 2% since 2011.

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are wide geographic disparities in these numbers, and in fact about 56% of the reported openly LGBT lawyers are accounted for by just four cities: New York City, Washington, DC, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. These same four cities accounted for about 39% of the not quite 101,000 lawyers included in these analyses. Thus the percentage of openly LGBT lawyers in these cities is correspondingly higher — about 3.8% overall (and highest in San Francisco specifically at 5.9%) compared with the 2.64% nationwide figure. In these same four cities, the percentage of openly LGBT summer associates is also higher — about 5.7% compared with 4.66% nationwide.

The percentage of LGBT lawyers has generally been trending upward over the 15-year period in which NALP has been compiling these figures, and small increases from 2016 to 2017 occurred across all lawyer types. However, the percentage of openly LGBT summer associates declined by about 0.2 percentage points, with declines coming in firms of 251-500 and 501-700 lawyers. Though whether or not the 2017 figures suggest a longer term leveling in these figures is not known, they nonetheless continue to suggest that there is still potential for some growth of the presence of LGBT associates at these firms. The overall figure for summer associates was 4.66%, compared with 4.86% in 2016. In firms of more than 700 lawyers, it has exceeded 5% in the four most recent years. In firms of 251+ lawyers as a whole, the figure was about 4.9% compared with just under 2% at the smaller firms. This is also consistent with Class of 2016 findings that LGB graduates going into private practice are more likely to take a job in a firm of 251+ lawyers than were graduates taking jobs in private practice as a whole.

Openly LGBT	ALL FIRMS		FIRMS OF 100 OR FEWER LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 101-250 LAWYERS	
	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total
Partners	880	1.99%	51	2.34%	150	1.90%
Associates	1,438	3.45	28	2.28	89	2.04
Other lawyers	346	2.32	11	1.48	46	2.35
All lawyers	2,664	2.64	117	2.97	285	2.01
Summer associates	287	4.66	6	2.84	16	2.94
Openly LGBT:	FIRMS OF 251-500 LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 501-700 LAWYERS		FIRMS OF 701+ LAWYERS	
	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total
Partners	154	1.72%	106	1.75%	419	2.19%
Associates	163	2.57	201	3.60	957	3.96
Other lawyers	63	2.30	32	1.59	197	2.56
All lawyers	380	2.11	339	2.48	1,573	3.08
Summer associates	30	3.65	39	4.30	196	5.33

Note: Figures for openly LGBT lawyers are based on 957 offices/firms reporting counts, including zero, in all lawyer categories; figures for openly LGBT summer associates are based on 666 offices/firms with a summer program and reporting counts, including zero. Overall, LGBT counts, including zero, cover 100,850 lawyers and 6,156 summer associates.

**Table 2. Reporting of Openly LGBT Lawyers — Selected years 2004-2016**

	2004		2008		2012		2016	
	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total	# Reported	% of Total
Partners	429	0.79%	670	1.27%	718	1.58%	825	1.89%
Associates	815	1.33	1,209	2.19	1,169	2.69	1,304	3.24
All lawyers	1316	1.07	2,050	1.71	2,105	2.07	2,431	2.48

Note: Figures were first reported out in a full table starting in 2004. All figures were compiled from the NALP Directory of Legal Employers for the year specified. For 2004, the 'associates' category included senior attorneys and staff attorneys. Total lawyer counts for offices/firms reporting LGBT counts in the Directory for these years are:

2004 - 122,964  
2008 - 123,151  
2012 - 101,512  
2016 - 98,093

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