Robert Half Legal Releases Annual Salary Guide

Average Starting Salaries for Legal Jobs in Canada Projected to Rise 3.1 Per Cent in 2017

TORONTO, Oct. 6, 2016 /CNW/ - Starting salaries for legal professionals in Canada are expected to increase 3.1 per cent overall in 2017, according to the just-released 2017 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide. First-year associates at small law firms and lawyers with one to three years of professional experience at small-to-midsize law firms should see greater-than-average salary gains. Among legal specialists, litigation support/eDiscovery directors are expected to see the most significant gains in annual base compensation.

Robert Half Legal is a legal staffing and consulting solutions firm specializing in attorneys, paralegals and other highly skilled legal professionals. The company's annual Salary Guide is based on extensive research, as well as local and national employment data gathered from Robert Half Legal offices throughout North America.

"Law firms are expanding lucrative practice groups to capitalize on emerging business opportunities while companies are augmenting internal teams to meet rising demand for legal services," said Charles Volkert, senior district president of Robert Half Legal. "Legal professionals with experience in high-demand practice areas and sectors, such as corporate transactional law, real estate and intellectual property, are in short supply and they are receiving multiple job offers."

Volkert noted that work-life balance and a defined career path are more important than ever to job seekers. "To recruit and retain top talent, law firms and legal departments are offering competitive salaries and enhanced benefits packages that include telecommuting options, flexible hours and training opportunities," he said.

Lawyer Positions
According to Robert Half Legal, average starting salaries for lawyers at law firms are expected to increase 3.4 per cent in 2017. Starting salaries for lawyers with one to three years' experience at a small-to-midsize law firm (10 to 35 lawyers) are expected to increase 4.5 per cent from 2016, to the average range of $77,250 to $115,250 annually. First-year associates at small law firms (up to 10 lawyers) are expected to earn between $55,000 and $72,500, a 5.2 per cent increase over 2016 projections.

Corporate lawyers are expected to see average compensation gains of 3.3 per cent over 2016 levels. Starting salaries for in-house counsel with four to nine years' experience at large companies ($250 million or more in revenue) are projected to rise 3.9 per cent, to the range of $151,000 to $260,000 annually.

Legal Support Positions
Overall, salary increases of 3 per cent are expected for law firm law clerks in 2017. At small-to-midsize law firms, law clerks with four to six years' experience should see average starting salaries rise by 3.7 per cent, to the range of $53,500 to $64,750 annually.

Legal assistants at law firms can expect average starting salaries to increase 2 per cent next year. The greatest gains in starting salaries are expected for legal assistants with 12-plus years' experience and one to two years' experience at midsize law firms. These positions should see salaries in the range of $56,500 to $65,250 and $36,000 to $41,250 per year, respectively, a 2.7 per cent increase from 2016.

Legal Specialist Positions
On average, starting salaries for legal specialists are predicted to rise 4.1 per cent. Litigation support/eDiscovery directors with 10-plus years' experience should see the greatest gains, with starting salaries increasing by 7.8 per cent, to the annual range of $112,000 to $134,000.

Other key findings from the 2017 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide include:

- Compliance directors with 10-plus years' experience can expect base compensation to increase 5.2 per cent on average, to the range of $181,500 to $254,000 annually.
- Contract managers can expect average starting salaries to rise by 5.3 per cent, to the range of $73,250 to $106,500 per year.
- Compensation for lease assistants is projected to increase 6 per cent, to the annual range of $44,250 to $48,750.
- Law firm administrators/office managers at large law firms (more than 75 lawyers) can expect average starting salaries of $78,000 to $110,750 annually, a 3 per cent increase from 2016.
- Senior/supervising law clerks with seven-plus years' experience at small companies (up to $25 million in revenue) are expected to earn starting salaries of $54,500 to $71,250 annually, a 3.5 per cent increase from 2016 projections.
- Legal assistants with three to six years' experience at large companies can anticipate starting salaries of $47,500 to $61,250 annually, a 2.8 per cent increase from last year.

About the 2017 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide
The 2017 Salary Guide is available for download at roberthalf.com/legal/lawyer-salary-center and includes projected starting salary ranges for more than 100 positions in the legal field. This information is derived from the thousands of full-time and project placements handled nationwide by Robert Half Legal's recruiting and staffing professionals. Continuing or ongoing salaries are not reported as a number of factors, such as service time and work ethic, make ongoing pay difficult to measure. Bonuses, incentives and other forms of compensation, including benefits and retirement packages, also are not taken into account.

Robert Half Legal's annual Salary Guide is used extensively by law firms and corporate legal departments to determine appropriate compensation levels for employees. In addition, job seekers, academic institutions, legal associations and government agencies rely on the guide for current data on salaries and trends in the legal field.

About Robert Half Legal

Robert Half Legal is the premier provider of legal staffing and consulting solutions for law firms and corporate legal departments. With North American and global locations, Robert Half Legal provides a customized approach, including managed review, legal project management and eDiscovery services, to help organizations handle constantly changing workloads. The company offers in-demand expertise across practice areas as well as highly skilled legal professionals on a temporary, project and full-time basis. More information about our full suite of legal staffing and consulting solutions can be found at **roberthalf.ca/legal**. Follow @**RobertHalf_CAN** on Twitter and visit **roberthalf.ca/blog** for more workplace news, trends and advice.

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