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*Yale Law Women  
Proudly Presents...*

**THE TOP TEN  
FAMILY FRIENDLY  
FIRMS  
of 2017**

## MESSAGE FROM THE TOP TEN COMMITTEE

Yale Law Women is proud to present our twelfth annual Top Ten Family Friendly Firms Report. We produce this list to monitor trends in family friendliness among law firms ranked in the Vault 100, raise awareness of gender disparities within the legal profession, highlight progress being made in the industry, and identify areas for improvement. Family friendliness and work-life balance is increasingly important to young lawyers, and 79% of our classmates rated family friendliness as “important” or “extremely important” to their decisions to interview with or accept offers from law firms.

By producing this report, we hope to spur a broader conversation within the legal profession about the role of gender in family and the workplace, and encourage further advocacy in an otherwise opaque area of law firm culture. Although families and workplaces are changing, women still bear the brunt of caregiving burdens and disproportionately manage childcare needs. In particular, we hope this report inspires more men to make use of family friendly policies, so that family friendliness will one day cease to be a “women’s issue” and instead become a consideration for all attorneys.

At the same time, we recognize that not everyone who identifies as a woman plans to raise children, and that everyone has different family caregiving needs. In future years, we plan to expand our focus on gender equality, and we look forward to sharing new insights.

To create our Top Ten List, Yale Law Women invited all firms listed in the 2017 Vault Law 100 to participate in our survey of family friendly policies. We collected data on family accommodations and parental leave, as well as indicators of gender equality such as partnership promotions and composition of leadership committees. Our survey aimed to capture not only the policies on paper, but also their actual use by attorneys at each firm.

All data collected reflect policies and statistics from the 2016 calendar year and only include U.S. office locations. Firm responses to our survey were weighted based on the results of a concurrent survey conducted of Yale Law School alumni of all genders currently working at Vault 100 firms. These alumni were asked about the importance of several family friendly policies and practices. For more information on our methodology, please see our Report Methodology on page 15.

The 2017 Top Ten Family Friendly Firms are those that received the highest overall score in our analysis of the survey results.



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# THE TOP TEN FAMILY FRIENDLY FIRMS

*of 2017*

**ARNOLD & PORTER KAYE SCHOLER**

**CLEARY GOTTLIEB STEEN & HAMILTON LLP**

**JENNER & BLOCK LLP**

**KING & SPALDING**

**MORRISON & FOERSTER**

**MUNGER, TOLLES & OLSON LLP**

**O'MELVENY & MYERS LLP**

**ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE LLP**

**PROSKAUER ROSE LLP**

**SIMPSON THACHER & BARTLETT LLP**

\* Firms listed in alphabetical order.

# FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

There are many different criteria one can use to assess a law firm's family friendliness. The following pages discuss five categories of policies that contribute to the culture and family friendliness of a firm: (1) the availability and use of **part-time and flexible full-time** work schedules, (2) the availability and use of caregiver and other **family leave**, (3) **gender equity** among the partnership and leadership of a firm, (4) the structure and expectations surrounding **bonuses and billing** at a firm, and (5) **parental and other family accommodations** that are provided by firms for attorneys.

Whenever the data permits, we award category honors to the highest-achieving firms on each of these categories of family friendliness. We also discuss the importance of each policy category, featuring comments from our alumni and statistics regarding the availability and use of various policies and practices across the law firms who responded to our survey.

Across this report, firm responses are reported in the aggregate, and responses from individual firms are kept confidential.

# PART-TIME & FLEX-TIME

## Category Honors

Highest Percentage of Associates on Part-Time Schedules:

**HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP**  
**SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS LLP**  
**PERKINS COIE LLP**

*All surveyed law firms allowed their attorneys to work part-time schedules in 2016 (although some firms require attorneys to have worked a certain amount of time, usually 1 to 2 years, before being eligible to work part-time). Beyond the availability of part-time schedules, our alumni rated the usage of part-time schedules as an important measure of family friendliness.*

Highest Percentage of Attorneys Promoted to Partner in 2016  
Who Have Worked Part-Time or Flexible Full-Time Schedules:

**ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE LLP\***  
**MORRISON & FOERSTER\***  
**MUNGER, TOLLES & OLSON LLP\***

*Our alumni rated this measure as one of the most important measures contributing to a firm's family friendliness. It identifies firms that allow attorneys to advance their careers despite having worked on alternate work schedules.*

\* denotes a 2017 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

## PART-TIME & FLEX-TIME | *Why it Matters*

Many attorneys seek part-time schedules, where they work fewer hours for lower pay, or flexible full-time opportunities, where they use technology to telecommute or work nonstandard hours to conform their schedules to the demands of their personal and family needs. Alumni ranked the availability and use of part-time and flex-time policies as the most important category of policies in assessing a firm's family friendliness. Unfortunately, attorneys who use alternate work schedules often face diminished opportunities for advancement, so it is especially important to track how a firm promotes and supports its attorneys working part-time or flex-time.

Technology has helped make alternate work schedules possible—but alumni noted that the same technology that enables attorneys to telecommute also allows attorneys to conceivably be working or be reached at any moment. Thus, without a shift in partner and client attitudes about work-life balance, technology may make life harder, not easier, for attorneys seeking to prioritize family obligations.

## PART-TIME & FLEX-TIME | *According to Alumni*

"I think my firm encourages both men and women to take [time off] . . . . But sometimes it feels that the only appropriate reason to take vacation time, or work from home, or leave work early, is for children. Not all of us have children, but we still have family, friends, significant others, hobbies, volunteer obligations, and other commitments. The fact that I don't have children doesn't mean that I'm totally available to work every weekend to eternity."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## PART-TIME & FLEX-TIME | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms surveyed:

- 5% of associates worked on part-time schedules
  - Of those working part-time, 84% were women
- 3% of partners worked on part-time schedules
- 5% of attorneys promoted to partner in 2016 had previously worked or were currently working part-time or flexible full-time schedules when promoted
- 93% of firms allow attorneys to work on flexible full-time schedules

# FAMILY LEAVE

## Category Honors

Greatest Number of Weeks Offered to Associates for Caregiver Leave:

**ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE LLP\***

**WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI**

**WINSTON & STRAWN LLP**

*Our alumni rated the number of weeks allowed for caregiver leave after the birth or adoption of a child as one of the five most important measures in assessing a firm's family friendliness.*

Highest Percentage of Men Associates  
and Partners Taking Caregiver Leave:

**LINKLATERS LLP**

**JENNER & BLOCK LLP\***

**MINTZ LEVIN**

*Because women are more likely to bear caregiving burdens, alumni noted the importance of encouraging men to take leave as well. This category recognizes firms with the highest rates of men taking caregiver leave.*

\* denotes a 2017 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.



## FAMILY LEAVE | *Why it Matters*

Parental, family, and personal leave are critical to workplace family friendliness. Although all the law firms we surveyed offer some paid leave, a firm's written policy doesn't reveal the cultural norms around taking leave. Thus, our survey looks not only at weeks of paid leave provided, but also examines the use of leave by attorneys.

Many law firms adhere to an emerging industry norm of offering 18 weeks for primary caregivers and 4 weeks for secondary caregivers. But eligibility for leave varies. For example, some firms adopt different policies for maternity and non-maternity leave. This may be partially attributed to the medical need for women giving birth to recuperate, but the difference between these firms' maternity and non-maternity leave generosity also suggests an expectation that mothers will be the primary caregivers for their children. 80% of firms that answered our survey create gender-neutral primary and secondary caregiver leave, with some firms giving significantly more leave to primary caregivers and others giving equal leave to all caregivers.

## FAMILY LEAVE | *According to Alumni*

"Officially, the firm is 'extremely family friendly.' In actual fact, the managing partner of my office equates facetime with professional dedication. . . . No one at all works part-time, and when I gave an assignment to an associate who had just returned from maternity leave, she looked SHOCKED when I told her that if she was up late with the baby and needed an extra day or two to complete the project, just to please let me know."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## FAMILY LEAVE | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms surveyed:

- 61% of firms offer primary caregiver leave of at least 18 weeks
- 50% of attorneys taking some amount of caregiver leave were men
- 80% of firms had gender-neutral caregiver leave policies
- 42% of firms offered paid caregiver leave for events other than the birth or adoption of a child (e.g., elder care or long-term illness in the family)

# GENDER EQUITY

## Category Honors

More than 50% of Attorneys Promoted to Partner in 2016 Were Women:

**PERKINS COIE LLP**

**STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP**

**SIMPSON THACHER & BARTLETT LLP\***

*Maintaining gender parity in promotions slowly moves the dial on women in leadership law firms. Our alumni highly valued gender equity in firm leadership.*

Executive or Management Committee Consisted of  
at Least 40% Women:

**LATHAM & WATKINS**

**MORRISON & FOERSTER\***

*Executive and Management Committees make management and strategic decisions for the firm and provide overall long-range planning. Our alumni rated the percentage of women on a firm's executive committee as one of the most important measures of family friendliness.*

At Least 25% of Equity Partners Were Women:

**WILMERHALE**

**ROPES & GRAY LLP**

*Our alumni rated the percentage of women equity partners as one of the most important measures of family friendliness.*

\* denotes a 2017 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

## GENDER EQUITY | *Why it Matters*

Gender equity in leadership is crucial to measuring a firm's family friendliness. Family friendly policies should create a positive feedback loop, as better policies retain talented attorneys with family obligations. These attorneys go on to partnership and leadership positions that allow them to continue reforming firm practices around work-life balance, in turn making it easier for the next generation of talented associates to succeed at the firm while balancing their family needs. Likewise, poor policies can create a negative feedback loop, making it increasingly difficult for firms to retain attorneys who want or need to prioritize family obligations.

Of course, not all attorneys who have significant non-work obligations are women, and not all women have significant non-work obligations. Even so, alumni indicated that the presence of women as members of leadership makes a significant difference for family friendliness, both because of the policies adopted when leadership is more diverse and because of the signaling effect to young women associates.

## GENDER EQUITY | *According to Alumni*

- "There are more and more women partners being made, and women are included in the highest echelons of firm leadership and have been for some time. These women aren't just there to create the appearance of gender balance—they are true leaders. I would not be surprised to see one of them become the chair or managing partner of the firm within the next decade."—  
**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## GENDER EQUITY | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms surveyed:

- 45% of associates were women
- 23% of partners were women
- 35% of attorneys promoted to partner in 2016 were women
- 23% of attorneys serving on executive or management committees were women
- 36% of attorneys serving on compensation and hiring committees were women
- 19% of heads of practice groups were women
- 19% of partners in charge of offices were women

# BONUSES & BILLING

## BONUSES & BILLING | *Why They Matter*

As the central unit of firm revenue, the billable hour is very important to attorneys. Our alumni rated the average number of billable hours worked as one of the five most important factors in determining a firm's family friendliness. Many firms require attorneys to bill a certain number of hours to clients per year; many others have no formal policy but require a minimum hours threshold for bonus eligibility. Still others report that the firm does not track their attorneys' billable hours—but while this may sound attractive for attorneys trying to balance work and personal life, alumni tell us that ambiguity about billable hours can lead to attorney uncertainty, informal rules, and internal competition.

## BONUSES & BILLING | *According to Alumni*

"My firm] has made great strides in this area. . . . Not only do we offer 4 weeks of paid parenting leave at full pay (following the normal disability period at full pay), and not only are billable hours expectations pro-rated to account for leave time, but we have a new policy of adjusting the billable hours expectations so that parents returning from family leave are only expected to meet 80% of the normal billable hours target during the 6-month period following a return from leave."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## BONUSES & BILLING | *By the Numbers*

Not all firms responding to our survey reported the number of billable hours that their attorneys worked in 2016. Of the firms reporting these figures:

- Associates on average worked 1748 billable hours in 2016
- Partners on average worked 1542 billable hours in 2016
- 57% of firms required full-time associates to work a minimum number of billable hours to receive a bonus; for those firms, the median minimum was 1950 hours
- 36% of firms counted mentoring or time spent serving on committees as partially or fully billable

# PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION

## PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION | *Why it Matters*

Our alumni indicated, that in addition to parental leave and part-time/flex-time work schedules, it is critical to have other policies and practices geared toward making the workplace itself friendlier to the needs of attorneys with families. We surveyed firms on the availability of backup or primary childcare services, the ease of using personal or sick days to care for a sick family member, health and wellness programs, and infertility treatment.

In addition, we looked at the steps firms take to include or welcome back individuals who have moved in and out of the workforce. Many firms have formal policies of allowing their attorneys to take several years of leave and rehire them later, or have created committees or programs designed to address work-life balance issues.

## PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION | *According to Alumni*

“Law practice is demanding and hard work, and there are times when it is challenging to balance the demands of work and the demands of family, but in my experience lawyers at the firm recognize that there are two sides to this balance and work to help lawyers balance competing demands as best as we can.”—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms surveyed:

- 20% of firms offered some kind of onsite childcare support, and 38% of firms offered a childcare option within two miles of the office
- 48% of firms allowed their attorneys to take several years of leave with the option to return to the firm (e.g., through an “on-ramp/off-ramp” program)
- 79% of firms had a committee dedicated to questions of work-life balance
- 86% of firms had coverage for infertility care for both men and women

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS

We surveyed the Yale Law School student body to get student feedback on family friendliness at large law firms. 79% of students who responded to the survey rated family friendliness and work-life balance at firms as “Important” or “Extremely Important” to their choices to interview with or accept offers from firms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS | *Terms to Know*

The terms and phrases below are either mentioned in this report or may be mentioned to students as they evaluate which law firms to interview with or accept offers from. A firm’s policies related to these terms may have an impact on a firm’s family friendliness.

**BILLABLE HOUR:** Law firms make money by billing their clients by the hour for their services; billable hours refer to the time a lawyer works on a project that is charged to the client.

**EQUITY PARTNER:** A lawyer who has become an owner of the firm and who shares in the profits of the firm.

**EXECUTIVE OR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:** This committee makes management and strategic decisions for the firm and provides overall long-range planning.

**LOCK-STEP COMPENSATION MODEL:** A pay structure in which law firms compensate associates in the same class year with the same base salary.

**MERIT COMPENSATION MODEL:** A pay structure in which law firms compensate associates based on their individual performance rather than their class year.

**NON-EQUITY PARTNER:** A partner who does not share in the profits of the firm and is not a firm decision-maker. Non-equity partners may or may not be eligible for promotion to equity partner, depending on the firm.

**ON-RAMP/OFF-RAMP PROGRAM:** A program through which law firms allow their attorneys to take several years of leave with the option to return to the firm.

**VAULT LAW100:** An annual prestige ranking of the 100 most prestigious law firms, as rated by currently practicing lawyers at peer firms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS | *Questions to Ask*

When deciding between offers from law firms or while on callback interviews, students of all genders might want to ask attorneys or recruiters these questions to gauge how much a firm values work-life balance, supports families, and promotes gender equity.

- Does the firm have a face time requirement or offer the option to work remotely?
- Does the firm promote associates who have taken advantage of alternative work schedules?
- Do men at the firm take advantage of the firm's work-life balance benefits?
- Are partners at the firm a part of a dual income family?
- Do associates or partners at the firm have young children?
- Is there gender parity on the firm's Executive Committee?

# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Consistent with previous years, Yale Law Women invited firms ranked in the 2017 Vault Law 100 to participate in this survey. We had a participation rate of over 50%, and we are grateful to the attorneys and staff who helped fill out our survey. All data collected reflect statistics from the 2016 calendar year and only include U.S. office locations.

Survey questions fell into several broad categories:

- Billable Hours and Compensation
- Leadership and Promotions
- Part-Time and Flex-Time Policies
- Parental & Family Accommodations
- Gender Equity

In addition to examining formal policies available at these law firms, the survey investigated how firms implemented those policies and whether attorneys used them. Survey questions focused on three inquiries: *whether* attorneys used these policies; *which* attorneys availed themselves of these policies by gender and position; and *how* attorneys used these policies.

Firm responses were weighted based on a concurrent survey of more than 350 Yale Law School alumni of all genders currently working at Vault 100 firms. These alumni were asked about the relative importance of each category of family friendly policies and practices, and were asked to rate the importance of several specific measures and policies.



# TOP TEN COMMITTEE

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We would like to thank the entire Top Ten Committee for their outstanding work designing, executing, and analyzing this year's survey.

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