



*Yale Law Women  
Proudly Presents...*

**THE  
FAMILY FRIENDLY  
FIRMS  
of 2016**

Yale Law Women produces its annual Family Friendly Firms List to monitor trends in family friendliness among law firms, draw attention to gender disparities within the legal profession, highlight progress being made in the industry, and identify areas for improvement. To create this Family Friendly Firms List, Yale Law Women reviewed NALP data for 68 law firms. Specifically, we collected data on each firm’s policies relating to part-time, parental leave, gender equity, billing requirements, professional development, and pro bono policies. All data reflects statistics from the 2015 calendar year and only includes U.S. office locations. For more information on our methodology, including how we compiled the list of firms and offices to review, please see our Report Methodology on page 19.

The 2016 Family Friendly Firms scored the highest overall in our data analysis of these various metrics.

This report’s appendix reflects manual data entry by members of the Family Friendly Firms Committee. All data can be verified at <http://nalpdirectory.com/>. We have made our best efforts to report data accurately, but please notify us of any errors at [ylw@yale.edu](mailto:ylw@yale.edu).

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# THE TOP TEN FAMILY FRIENDLY FIRMS

*of 2016*

*(in alphabetical order)*

**ARNOLD & PORTER**

**FOLEY HOAG**

**FOLEY & LARDNER**

**GOODWIN PROCTER**

**K&L GATES**

**MINTZ LEVIN COHN FERRIS GLOVSKY & POPEO**

**MORRISON & FOERSTER**

**O'MELVENY & MYERS**

**VINSON & ELKINS**

**WILMERHALE**

## **TOP FIVE FIRMS IN CALIFORNIA**

**FOLEY & LARDNER** (Los Angeles)  
**MORRISON & FOERSTER** (Los Angeles)  
**MORRISON & FOERSTER** (San Francisco)  
**O'MELVENY & MYERS** (Los Angeles)  
**SIMPSON THACHER & BARTLETT** (Los Angeles)

## **TOP FIVE FIRMS IN NEW YORK**

**AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD**  
**ARNOLD & PORTER**  
**DEBEVOISE & PLIMPTON**  
**FOLEY & LARDNER**  
**WILMERHALE**

## **TOP FIVE FIRMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**ARNOLD & PORTER**  
**HOGAN LOVELLS US**  
**K&L GATES**  
**VINSON & ELKINS**  
**WILMERHALE**

**Yale Law Women congratulates the 2016 Family Friendly Firms!**

# 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 policy categories that contribute to a firm's culture: the availability and use of **part-time and flex-time** schedules; the availability and use of **parental leave; gender equity** among the partnership, counsel, and associates of a firm; the structure and expectations surrounding **bonuses and billing** at a firm; and **professional development opportunities** that are provided by firms.

Within these sections, we award category honors to the highest-achieving firms on specific measures of family friendliness that we selected based on the results of our Alumni Survey and NALP data availability. We also discuss the importance of each policy category, featuring comments from our alumni and statistics regarding the availability of various policies and practices across the law firms that we analyzed.

"The real marks of being family friendly are humane hours overall and a proactive approach to fostering the careers of all attorneys, including attorneys with young children and families."—ALUMNI COMMENT.

"Policies are less important than the attitudes of individual lawyers on flexibility. . . . The best accommodations often need to be made on an ad-hoc, day-to-day basis. The willingness to try to find ways to help each individual lawyer balance work and family is, to me, the most important aspect to consider in determining family friendliness."—ALUMNI COMMENT.

# PART-TIME & FLEX-TIME

## Category Honors

**ARNOLD & PORTER\***

**FOLEY & LARDNER\***

**GOODWIN PROCTER\***

**MINTZ LEVIN COHN FERRIS GLOVSKY & POPEO\***

**MORRISON & FOERSTER\***

*Our alumni ranked the availability and use of part-time schedules as the most important measure of family friendliness. Although part-time and flexible schedules are widely available and used with some frequency, our alumni noted that women attorneys disproportionately use these programs.*

*To determine which firms had the most family friendly policies regarding part-time and flex-time policies, the committee considered the following factors, weighted according to the results of the Alumni Survey: 1) whether part-time is allowed; 2) whether part-time is available to entry level employees; 3) the percentage of part-time associates; 4) the percentage of part-time partners; 5) whether there is a minimum percentage of full-time hours that part-time attorneys must work; 6) whether part-time attorneys are given bonus consideration; 7) whether part-time attorneys are compensated for working additional hours; 8) whether associates can be promoted to partner while working part-time; and 9) whether, in the past five years, any attorneys have made partner who have worked, or are currently working, alternative schedules.*

\* denotes a 2016 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

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

Alumni ranked the availability and use of part-time and flex-time policies as the most important category in assessing a firm's family friendliness. Whether and how a firm promotes attorneys working part-time or flex-time is especially important. Many attorneys seek flexible full-time opportunities, where they work nonstandard hours or use technology to telecommute, or part-time schedules, where they work fewer hours for lower pay, to balance the demands of work and of their personal lives. Unfortunately, attorneys who use alternative work schedules often face financial penalties and barriers to advancement within firms. Alumni noted that attorneys who are working part-time schedules often are not respected or given the same opportunities as attorneys working full-time.

In many ways, technology has increased the flexibility and availability of alternative work schedules. Yet, alumni noted that because technology allows it, clients often expect their lawyers to be available at all times. Thus, partner and client attitudes about work-life balance are important to ensure that technology makes life easier, not harder, for attorneys seeking to prioritize personal obligations.

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

"Flexibility that allows one to get home for dinner, attend school functions, get children to school, or get elderly parents to the doctor mid-day is key to family friendliness."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"[My firm] allows part-time schedules, but in my limited experience these seem to have been utilized exclusively by female attorneys with small children and the part-time restrictions do not appear to be honored (the attorneys are asked to work over and above the part time schedule, negating the benefit of going part time while still suffering adverse bonus consequences, etc.)."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

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

Of the firms reviewed:

- 3% of associates worked on part-time schedules
  - 3% of men associates and 4% of women associates worked part-time
- 91% of offices allowed attorneys to work on part-time schedules, and 8% of offices reviewed part-time requests on a case-by-case basis
- At least 65% of offices had attorneys who made partner in the last 5 years who have worked or are currently working alternative schedules

# PARENTAL LEAVE

## *Category Honors*

**COVINGTON & BURLING  
DEBEVOISE & PLIMPTON  
FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER  
HOGAN LOVELLS US  
WILMERHALE\***

*Our alumni rated the number of weeks of paid parental leave that attorneys receive as an important measure of family friendliness, as well as whether attorneys actually made use of the firm's parental leave policy over the past year. They noted that in many firms parental leave is officially available and allowed, but its use often is discouraged.*

*To determine which firms had the most family friendly policies regarding parental leave, the committee considered the following factors, weighted according to the results of the Alumni Survey: 1) the weeks of paid maternity leave; 2) the weeks of paid paternity leave; 3) whether one or more attorneys made use of the parental leave policy in the last 12 months; 4) whether the parental leave policy covers children and dependents of same-sex domestic partners; and 5) whether the parental leave policy provides time off for the adoption of a new child.*

\* denotes a 2016 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

## PARENTAL LEAVE | *Why it Matters*

Parental, family, and personal leave are critical to workplace family friendliness. Although all the large law firms we analyzed offer some paid leave, a firm's written policy doesn't necessarily reveal its cultural norms around taking leave. Alumni report that how—and whether—attorneys actually use a firm's leave policy is extremely important to evaluating family friendliness. Alumni also noted the significance of paid parental—and not just maternal—leave. Having men regularly leave work when they have a child combats the perception that children only affect women's careers and helps neutralize the gender disparity in parental leave.

Many law firms adhere to an emerging industry norm of offering 18 weeks of paid leave for primary caregivers and 4 weeks for secondary caregivers. But eligibility for leave varies. Some firms adopt different policies for maternity and non-maternity leave. This difference may be partially attributed to the medical need for women giving birth to recuperate, but it also suggests an expectation that mothers will be the primary caregivers for their children. Other firms create gender-neutral "primary" and "secondary" caregiver leave. Some firms that use this model give significantly more leave to primary caregivers, and others give equal leave to all caregivers.

## PARENTAL LEAVE | *According to Alumni*

"Every woman who has made partner during my time at the firm has taken maternity leave before and/or after she made partner, and many have worked on flex time schedules. This sets an example for young women that the career path works, and sets a firm-wide practice of respecting leaves and flex time schedules."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"I think the single most important question is whether there is equal paternity leave and whether the men actually take it. When men routinely take paternity leave, it not only evens out everyone's record as they come up for partnership, but it sensitizes men to the demands of childcare, which encourages them to share more of the load in their own households and makes them more understanding of the pressures other colleagues face as they try to balance work and home life."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## PARENTAL LEAVE | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms reviewed:

- 83% of offices offered at least 12 weeks of paid parental leave for women
- 11% of offices offered at least 12 weeks of paid parental leave for men
- The most common number of weeks of paid parental leave that was offered to female attorneys was 18 weeks
- The most common number of weeks of paid parental leave that was offered to male attorneys was 4 weeks

# GENDER EQUITY

## Category Honors

**FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER**  
**GOODWIN PROCTER\***  
**K&L GATES\***  
**MINTZ LEVIN COHN FERRIS GLOVSKY & POPEO\***  
**ROPES & GRAY**

*Alumni highly valued gender equity in firm leadership, particularly equity in the number of women partners at a firm. Alumni noted a trend at many firms: while associate numbers for men and women are roughly fifty-fifty, the percentage of women attorneys drops at every higher level, most dramatically at the partner level. Maintaining gender parity in partner promotions each year slowly moves up the dial on women in leadership at large law firms.*

*To determine which firms had the best gender equity, the committee considered the following factors, weighted according to the results of the Alumni Survey: 1) percentage of partners who are women; 2) percentage of associates who are women; and 3) percentage of counsel who are women.*

\* denotes a 2016 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

## GENDER EQUITY | *Why it Matters*

Gender equity in leadership is crucial to measuring the family friendliness of a firm. Family friendly policies should create a positive feedback loop. With better policies, firms retain talented attorneys with family obligations. Those attorneys go on to partnership and leadership positions that allow them to continue reforming firm practices around work-life balance, making it easier for the next generation of talented associates. Likewise, poor policies can create a negative feedback loop, making it increasingly difficult for firms to retain attorneys seeking to balance work with personal commitments.

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 partners, practice managers, and members of leadership committees makes a significant difference for family friendliness. Diverse leadership not only encourages firms to adopt more inclusive policies, but also creates a powerful signaling effect to young women associates that women at the firm have a path to partnership.

## GENDER EQUITY | *According to Alumni*

“The real question is whether women have been able to develop their skills and their practices at a firm and whether there is a path to success for them not just in theory, but in reality.”—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

“In my opinion, [my firm] has a strong orientation toward pro-family policies and practices. The firm especially reinforces its pro-family policies by making partners out of the part-time program, which we have done often recently. Relatedly, perhaps, we have made high numbers of women partners out of the associate ranks. That sends a powerful message: one can succeed and still be a caregiver.”—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

“I think the biggest indicators of being family friendly [are] whether women are being made partners and whether people are using alternative hours structures.”—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## GENDER EQUITY | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms reviewed:

- 45% of associates were women
- 21% of partners were women

# BONUSES & BILLING

## *Category Honors*

**CADWALADER WICKERSHAM & TAFT**

**FOLEY & LARDNER\***

**GUNDERSON DETTMER**

**IVINS PHILLIPS & BARKER**

**WILMERHALE\***

*Alumni rated the number of expected and actual billable hours required by a firm to be an important measure of family friendliness. They paid particular attention to the average annual associate billable hours worked in the last year, and to a firm's minimum billable hour expectation.*

*To determine which firms had the most family friendly policies regarding billable hours, the committee considered the following factors, weighted according to the results of the Alumni Survey: 1) whether a firm had a minimum billable hour expectation; 2) if so, the level of that minimum billable requirement; 3) the average associate hours worked last year; 4) the average associate hours billed last year; 5) whether billable credit was given for pro bono work; 6) whether there was a maximum number of pro bono hours that may be counted towards a billable requirement; and 7) whether a pro bono hour was equivalent to a billable hour for bonus consideration.*

\* denotes a 2016 Top Ten Family Friendly Firm.

## 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 by attorneys as one of the 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 attorneys to exceed a minimum hours threshold for bonus eligibility. Still others do not track their attorneys' billable hours. While this may sound like a panacea for attorneys trying to balance work and personal life, alumni tell us that ambiguity about billable hours can increase attorney uncertainty, unspoken rules, and internal competition. Alumni also spoke about the importance of receiving billable credit for non-client work, like practice development, training programs, and committee work.

## BONUSES & BILLING | *According to Alumni*

"I think the ability to log time/get credit for internal firm work is important. I find that I do a lot of committee work (more than many men I know) and I do not get as much credit for it. I sort of get a pat on the head. I don't think people realize how much time I spend doing these things and it takes away from my availability for billable work and my time with my family."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"[T]he billable hours expectations make it inherently unfriendly to people who value things outside of work, like their children. I would also ding [my firm] for not allowing things like practice development and training to count toward billable hours—some associates spend a great deal of time on practice development, in particular, for which they receive no credit at all, leaving them with the need to bill 2,000 hours on top of the hundreds of hours they're devoting to practice development. Not counting all those hours in the office toward the billable requirement is definitely not family friendly, in my opinion."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## BONUSES & BILLING | *By the Numbers*

Not all firms reported the number of billable hours that their attorneys worked in 2015. Of the firms reporting these figures:

- Associates worked 1,842 billable hours on average in 2015
- 49% of offices required full-time associates to work a minimum number of billable hours; for those firms, the median minimum was 1,950 hours

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## *Category Honors*

### **DEBEVOISE & PLIMPTON FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER FRIED FRANK HARRIS SHRIVER & JACOBSON**

*Alumni noted the importance of receiving billable credit for training hours—and therefore having those hours count toward bonus eligibility. Alumni also recognized the importance of using upward reviews to evaluate supervising partners and expressed the need to receive effective formal mentoring.*

*To determine which firms had the best policies regarding professional development, the committee considered the following factors, weighted according to the results of the Alumni Survey: 1) whether the firm had a formal evaluation program in place; 2) whether the firm used upward reviews to evaluate and provide feedback to supervising lawyers; 3) whether there was a rotation system for junior associates; 4) whether the firm had a coaching/mentoring program; and 5) whether the firm gave billable hours credit for training time.*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | *Why it Matters*

Professional development programs and guidance help lawyers build important skills in marketing, communication, and business development. They are especially important to ensure that all attorneys are positioned to assume leadership roles during the course of their careers. We analyzed whether firms have coaching and mentoring programs, whether they use upward reviews, and whether they give billable hour credit for training time.

These programs can be especially important for attorneys who otherwise face barriers to accessing the resources and networks that are key to professional success. Women are substantially underrepresented in equity and leadership positions at top law firms. Professional development programs help ensure that women attorneys have the skills critical to their advancement and performance, thus helping to equalize opportunities to advance into equity and leadership positions.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | *According to Alumni*

"[Business development] training is . . . very important. Many women in many firms (and other jobs) [] find it more difficult to develop business (and therefore progress through the ranks) given that so many clients are men. Facilitating that process is another key to success."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"[I]t's the informal mentorship in my experience that makes a difference, and that requires having people of similar characteristics as associates to make friendships and bonds (i.e., have more female partners and there are more people for female associates to connect with)."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms reviewed:

- At least 48% of offices used upward reviews to evaluate and provide feedback to supervising lawyers
- 100% of offices had a coaching/mentoring program

# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

## PRO BONO | *Why it Matters*

While not expressly related to family friendliness, a firm's commitment to pro bono work can indicate its commitment to diversity and public service. Firms that value diversity in their ranks may also be committed to serving the legal interests of diverse and historically underserved populations. Many pro bono services engage the firm and its attorneys with historically marginalized communities, members of which may still be underrepresented in the legal profession. A strong pro bono program uses the firm's power and resources to represent these communities and their interests.

## PRO BONO | *According to Alumni*

"The firm is open in its support of LGBT lawyers and LGBT pro bono causes. It seeks to put women and minorities in leadership position and supports them."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"Part-time associates are not eligible for bonus consideration and the firm has a floor of billable time (above part-time levels) before pro bono work counts, so part time associates are effectively discouraged from doing pro bono work. The financial penalty to working parents is huge."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

## PRO BONO | *By the Numbers*

Of the firms reviewed:

- 87% of offices gave billable hour credit for pro bono work
- 84% of offices counted pro bono hours equivalent to a required hour for bonus consideration

## FIRM CULTURE | *Why it Matters*

In addition to a firm's formal policies, alumni stated that a firm's culture is equally important when assessing whether a firm is family friendly. While not discounting the value of having formal family friendly policies in place, alumni noted that these policies mean less if firm culture makes attorneys reluctant to take advantage of them, or if attorneys are discouraged from using the policies.

When assessing a firm's culture, it is important to evaluate whether a firm is supportive of its attorneys' lives outside of the firm and whether family demands are openly recognized as important. Alumni stated that when a firm and its leadership embrace family values, attorneys feel more comfortable making use of policies like parental leave and flex-time. Alumni noted that when a firm feels collegial, rather than competitive, that culture fosters an environment where attorneys step in to cover for colleagues who have other obligations. It is important for firms to focus not only on developing family friendly policies, but also on working to ensure that the policies are understood, widely used, and supported by the firm.

## FIRM CULTURE | *According to Alumni*

"[My firm's] maternity and paternity leave policy is in line with other law firms; that's not a problem. The firm culture is such that the people take it. The firm sends around birth announcements whenever an attorney or staff member has a child. News of children is celebrated here so I have never felt like I had to hide my family."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"I don't think the firm requires minimum hours or relies much on billable hours for evaluations, but there is just a lot to do and it is impossible to succeed without putting in a lot of hours. I think that culture, more than any policy, is what makes the firm not very family friendly."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

"More important than formal policies . . . is people's attitudes. The people I work with all have families that they prioritize. I feel entirely comfortable telling the partners I work with if I can't attend a 5pm meeting because I need to be home to take care of my daughter."—**ALUMNI COMMENT.**

# STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

We conducted a survey of the Yale Law School student body to get the next generation's perspective on family friendliness at large law firms. Sixty-seven percent of students who responded to the survey rated family friendliness and work-life balance at firms as "Important" or "Extremely Important" to their decision to interview with or accept offers from firms.

"Family-friendly policies are important for their own sake, but they are also key for gender equity."—**STUDENT COMMENT.**

## STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS | *Terms to Know*

The terms and phases below are mentioned in this report or may be mentioned to students as they decide which law firms to interview with or accept offers from. A firm's policies related to these terms may impact its family friendliness.

**BILLABLE HOUR:** Law firms make money by billing their clients per 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.

**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 in accordance with 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. Depending on the firm, non-equity partners may or may not be eligible for promotion to equity partner.

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

## STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS | *Questions to Ask*

While on callback interviews or when deciding between offers from different firms, students 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 made use of alternative work schedules?
- Do men at the firm make use of the firm's work-life balance benefits?
- Are many partners at the firm a part of a dual-income family?
- Do many associates or partners at the firm have young children?
- Is there gender parity on the firm's Executive Committee?

# REPORT METHODOLOGY

In previous years, Yale Law Women invited firms ranked in the Vault Law 100 to participate in a survey regarding family friendly policies to obtain data for the Top Ten Report. This year, we revamped our initiative to incorporate publicly available NALP data, rather than surveying firms to obtain data.

We reviewed and analyzed NALP data for 68 different law firms. We collected NALP data, where available, for every firm that attended Yale Law School's Fall Interview Program ("FIP") in 2015 and/or successfully recruited at least one YLS student in 2013 or 2014 from FIP. On NALP's website, firms report data for specific office locations, on a firm-wide basis, or both. For each firm that we reviewed, where available, we pulled data from the firm's offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and the registering office(s) that attended FIP. We also pulled firm-wide or multi-office data for each firm if it was available. Where there was not a firm-wide or multi-office entry, we created a multi entry by aggregating the data from the specific offices.

The data we analyzed fell into several broad categories:

- Billable Hours
- Gender Equity
- Part-Time and Flex-Time Policies
- Parental & Family Accommodations
- Professional Development

We then weighted the NALP data based on the results of a concurrent survey of Yale Law School alumni currently working at the Vault Law 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 specific family friendly policies and practices.

We created the final Top Ten Family Friendly Firms list by analyzing our data on the NALP firm-wide entries and the multi-office entries that we created. We generated the Top Five lists for New York, Washington, D.C., and California by analyzing office-specific data. The category honors were determined by analyzing the NALP firm-wide entries or the multi-office entries that we created.

# FAMILY FRIENDLY FIRMS COMMITTEE

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

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