



ELON POLL

Young Attorney State of Profession Survey 2021

Survey of North Carolina Attorneys under 45
November 23- December 3, 2021

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 **ELON** POLL**About This Survey**

The Elon University Poll conducted a survey of 812 licensed North Carolina attorneys under 45 years of age. The survey was conducted via direct emails from November 23 to December 12, 2021.

The overall results have a confidence of +/- 3.3 percentage points. Unless otherwise noted, results reported below are percentages (%) and sample sizes (N). Due to rounding, summed percentages sometimes differ from 100%.

This survey asked attorneys about views of the profession as well as salary and career information.

For highlights and interpretation of the key findings from this survey, please see the press release associated with this report.

Topline Results

Views of Legal Profession and System

Pride in Being an Attorney

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"I am proud to be an attorney in North Carolina."

	No.	%
Strongly agree	452	55%
Somewhat agree	254	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	96	12%
Somewhat disagree	18	2%
Strongly disagree	2	0%
N=	822	100%

Attorneys and Society

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"Being an attorney allows me to help make society a better place."

Strongly agree	286	35%
Somewhat agree	378	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	102	12%
Somewhat disagree	47	6%
Strongly disagree	9	1%
N=	822	100%

Would you do it again?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"If I could give advice to a younger version of myself, I would encourage myself to pursue a legal career."

Strongly agree	214	26%
Somewhat agree	220	27%
Neither agree nor disagree	113	14%
Somewhat disagree	172	21%
Strongly disagree	103	13%
N=	822	100%

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Views of NC Legal System

Which of the following statements comes closest to your views about the North Carolina legal system?

The state's legal system needs major changes.	279	34%
The state's legal system needs moderate changes.	390	48%
The state's legal system needs minor changes.	132	16%
The state's legal system needs no changes.	11	1%
N=	812	100%

Interest in Running for Office

How interested are you in running for elected political office, whether at the federal, state, or local level?

Not at all interested	383	47%
Somewhat interested	333	41%
Very interested	87	11%
I have run for elected office	18	2%
N=	821	100%

Employment and Compensation

Employment Status

Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

Not currently employed	12	2%
Employed outside the legal profession	72	9%
Practicing law part-time	31	4%
Practicing law full-time	707	86%
N=	822	100%

Job Satisfaction

Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?

Very satisfied	403	50%
Somewhat satisfied	318	39%
Not very satisfied	67	8%
Not at all satisfied	22	3%
N=	810	100%

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Job Type

Which of the following best describes your current role?

Attorney at a small firm (2-10 attorneys)	197	24%
Attorney at a moderately sized firm (11-50 attorneys)	97	12%
Attorney at a large firm (more than 50 attorneys)	137	17%
In House	94	12%
Clerkship	25	3%
JD Preferred	41	5%
Other	147	18%
Solo practitioner	72	9%
N=	810	100%

Practice Region

Where do you practice?

Research Triangle (Raleigh, Durham and/or Chapel Hill)	255	35%
Triad (Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and/or High Point)	86	12%
Charlotte Metropolitan Area	150	20%
Eastern NC (e.g. Wilmington, Greenville, Fayetteville, or another nearby town)	82	11%
Western NC (e.g. Asheville, Boone, Hendersonville, or another nearby town)	62	8%
Another part of NC	16	2%
Practicing out of state	86	12%
N=	737	100%

Considered Leaving Legal Practice

Have you ever considered leaving the practice of law?

Yes	453	61%
No	285	39%
N=	738	100%

Long Term Practice Intention

Do you plan to practice law for the rest of your working career?

Yes, definitely	167	23%
Yes, probably	460	62%
No	111	15%
N=	738	100%

 **ELON** POLLSalary

What is your current annual, base salary?

Mean: \$104,586

10th Percentile: \$55,000

25th Percentile: \$67,500

50th Percentile: \$87,500

75th Percentile: \$137,500

90th Percentile: \$187,500

(Note: Percentiles calculated using midpoints of categories below)

Less than \$40,000	17	2%
\$40,000-\$49,999	56	7%
\$50,000-\$59,999	88	11%
\$60,000-\$74,999	140	18%
\$75,000-\$99,999	185	23%
\$100,000-\$124,999	100	13%
\$125,000-\$149,999	76	10%
\$150,000-174,999	43	5%
\$175,000-\$199,999	34	4%
\$200,000-\$249,999	31	4%
\$250,000 or more	22	3%
N=	792	100%

Note: For reference, the [Bureau of Labor Statistics reports](#) mean total income for occupational category “lawyers.” The population within the BLS category is not the same as the population in this survey.

Sign On Bonus

How much was your sign on bonus?

None	716	89%
Less than 5% of base	43	5%
More than 5% base	42	5%
N=	801	100%

End of Year Bonus

Last year, how much was your end of year bonus?

None	490	62%
Less than 5% of base	131	16%
5%-10% of base	74	9%
More than 10% of base	102	13%
N=	797	100%

 **ELON** POLLBenefits

Which of the following benefits are provided by your current employer? Please select all that apply. (Number and percent indicating benefit is offered)

401k match	459	58%
Health insurance	647	81%
Student loan payments	58	7%
Remote work	488	61%
Unlimited or generous paid time off	391	49%
Paid parental leave	320	40%
Low billable hour requirements	297	37%
Continuing education support	488	61%
Professional development experiences	414	52%
N=	796	100%

Compensation Satisfaction

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your total compensation, including benefits and bonuses?

Very dissatisfied	87	11%
Somewhat dissatisfied	184	23%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	92	11%
Somewhat satisfied	252	31%
Very satisfied	192	24%
N=	807	100%

Non-monetary Benefits

How satisfied or dissatisfied would you be to trade a portion of your compensation for non-monetary benefits?

Very dissatisfied	223	28%
Somewhat dissatisfied	203	25%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	238	30%
Somewhat satisfied	103	13%
Very satisfied	32	4%
N=	799	100%

Demographics

NC Law School

Did you attend a law school in the state of North Carolina?

Yes	566	69%
No	255	31%
N=	821	100%

Graduation Year

When did you graduate from law school?

Less than 2 years ago	137	17%
2-4 years ago	164	20%
5-10 years ago	381	46%
10+ years ago	140	17%
N=	822	100%

Legal Experience

How many combined years of legal experience do you have?

Less than 2 years	139	17%
2-4 years	188	23%
5-10 years	354	44%
10 or more years	129	16%
N=	810	100%

Age

How old are you?

Under 35	470	57%
35 to 44	352	43%
N=	822	100%

 **ELON** POLLRace

Which of the following best describes your racial and ethnic background? Please select all that apply or feel free to self-identify.

White (Non-Hispanic)	670	86%
Black	63	8%
Other	44	6%
N=	777	100%

Gender

Gender		
Male	424	53%
Female	381	47%
N=	805	100%

LGBTQIA

Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQIA community?

Yes	70	9%
No	730	90%
Prefer not to answer	16	2%
N=	816	100%

Question Order

[Format: mnemonic for programming Question Text]

- consent Are you willing to participate in this survey?
- attorneyyesno Are you a licensed attorney in North Carolina? (screener)
- intro_profession To start, we are interested in your views of the legal profession.
- prof_proud To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I am proud to be an attorney in North Carolina."
- prof_society To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Being an attorney allows me to help make society a better place."
- prof_career To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "If I could give advice to a younger version of myself, I would encourage myself to pursue a legal career."
- change_open Which of the following statements comes closest to your views about the North Carolina legal system?
- intro_cand With this next set of questions, we're interested in your views on running for elected office.
- run_interest How interested are you in running for elected political office, whether at the federal, state, or local level?
- encourage_run Has anyone ever encouraged you to run for elected office?
- who_encourage Who has encouraged you to run for elected office? Please select all that apply.
- whynotrun Below you'll find a list of reasons why many people are hesitant or reluctant to run for elected office. Please indicate how relevant each of the following reasons is to you and your own interest in running for office.
- typeoffice How much does serving in the following positions appeal to you personally?
- intro_jobs These next few questions have to do with your current employment.
- employed Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?
- job_sat Overall, how satisfied are you with your current job?
- job_tenure How many combined years of legal experience do you have?
- employ_type Which of the following best describes your current role?
- practice_where Where do you practice?
- practiceareas What practice areas do you work in? Please select all that apply.
- practice_leave Have you ever considered leaving the practice of law?
- practice_forlife Do you plan to practice law for the rest of your working career?
- salary What is your current annual, base salary?
- bonus_signon How much was your sign on bonus?
- bonus_end Last year, how much was your end of year bonus?
- benefits Which of the following benefits are provided by your current employer? Please select all that apply.
- comp_sat How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your total compensation, including benefits and bonuses?
- trade How satisfied or dissatisfied would you be to trade a portion of your compensation for non-monetary benefits?
- Additional demographics



Methodological Information

Mode:	Email
Population:	North Carolina Attorneys under age 45
Dates in the field:	11/23/21-12/3/21
Sample Size:	812
Confidence Interval	+/- 3.3%
Weighting Variables (NC):	None

Procedure

The Elon University Poll used an email list of attorneys obtained from public records. Respondents were given an opt-out link, and respondents who did not start surveys after the first emails received one reminder email. In total, we sent emails to 10,792 email addresses. Responses were anonymous; we did not collect information linking individual responses to contact information.

Surveys were conducted online via Qualtrics. Interviews were included in the final dataset if respondents spent a minimum length of time on the interview and particular sections, and if a respondent progressed through the entire survey. Some attorneys in our email list were over the age of 44; their responses are not included in this survey. Our sample was based on attorneys who had been admitted to the NC Bar for less than 11 years. Attorneys under 45 with more than 11 years since admission to the NC Bar are omitted from this sample. Some attorneys have more than 11 years of legal experience, largely due to initial bar membership from other states.

The Elon University Poll supports transparency in survey research and is a charter member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative, which is a program promoting openness and transparency about survey research methods and operations among survey research professionals and the industry. To the best of our understanding, all information about the Elon University Poll that we release to the public conforms to reporting conventions recommended by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls.

Typically, we calculate weights to reflect U.S. Census or other population level characteristics. We were unable to identify any official source for demographics related to this survey's population. Therefore, results presented above are unweighted.

Elon University fully funds the Elon University Poll. The poll operates under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, led by Dean Gabie Smith. The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Connie Ledoux Book, president of the university, fully supports the Elon University Poll as part of its service to the community. Because of this generous support, the Elon University Poll does not engage in any contract work. This permits the Elon University Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

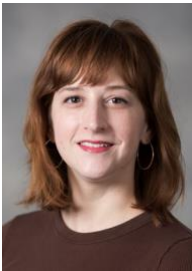
The Elon University Poll is an academic, non-partisan survey research organization. We do not engage or work with any political candidates or parties. We employ best practices to ensure the results are not biased.

About the Elon University Poll

The Elon University Poll conducts statewide, regional, and national surveys on issues of importance to North Carolinians as well as other states. Information from these polls is shared with media, citizens and public officials to facilitate informed public policy making through the better understanding of citizens' opinions and attitudes.



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[Kaye Usry](#) is Assistant Director of the Elon University Poll and Assistant Professor of Political Science & Policy Studies at Elon University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests are in American politics and political psychology.



[Owen Covington](#) is Director of the Elon University News Bureau. A native North Carolinian, Owen Covington joined the staff of Elon University in 2016 after spending 17 years in the field of journalism as a reporter and editor for daily and weekly news outlets in North Carolina and Kentucky. As director of the Elon University News Bureau, Covington oversees the promotion of Elon and its students, faculty and staff both through stories told across Elon's media channels as well as through interactions with state, national and international media. He is involved in media relations, including responding to requests from print, digital and broadcast media outlets, and works to promote content generated by a variety of Elon news sources.

For more information on the Elon University Poll, visit elon.edu/elonpoll

If you have specific questions about this poll, you can reach the directors of the poll via email (jhusser at elon dot edu & kusry at elon dot edu).

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