

3 More Firms Announce Associate Salary Raises

By Justin Wise

Law360 (July 16, 2021, 3:48 PM EDT) -- Crowell & Moring LLP, Cozen O'Connor and patent litigation boutique Tensegrity Law Group LLP became the latest law firms to announce new pay structures and raises for U.S. associates, Law360 learned Friday.

Crowell & Moring is implementing two new base compensation tracks for associates in New York, California and Washington, D.C., the firm confirmed. For those who choose a 2,000 billable hours target, they will be on a compensation track ranging from \$205,000 to \$365,000, a scale first adopted by Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP and mimicked by several other firms.

Associates and counsel who bill 1,900 hours will be on a slightly reduced scale ranging between \$185,000 and \$340,000. The new system, which includes billable credit for pro bono and diversity, equity and inclusion work, will go into effect on Sept. 1. The firm will also continue to give attorneys a "balanced hours" option, where they may choose to set a lower billable hour target, Crowell & Moring chair Phil Inglima said.

Inglima said that the general expectation is for first-year associates to start on the 2,000 billable hours track. The starting salary of \$205,000 under that system marks a \$25,000 increase from its previous level, he noted.

"No question there is a competitive aspect to it," Inglima said, noting the salary updates are part of an effort to attract and retain attorneys while ensuring they feel valued.

Cozen O'Connor, meanwhile, announced that starting salaries for all of its U.S. associates will be increased by \$20,000, according to a memo shared with Law360.

Firm leaders said that associates and counsel are also eligible for compensation adjustments both this year and next.

The firm is additionally planning to hand out special bonuses at or before the end of the year on top of the traditional end-of-year rewards.

"Department chairs have been given the flexibility to increase base compensation paid to the associates and counsel for the balance of 2021 in an amount up to the increase in starting salary," firm chairman and CEO Michael J. Heller and Vincent R. McGuinness, president and managing partner, said in the memo. They added that the special 2021 bonuses are "intended to thank you for your hard work during

these crazy times and also help bridge the gap in market compensation until we make further adjustments."

Cozen O'Connor intends to make "further adjustments" to compensation in spring 2022 to "reflect the market," the memo said. All associates and counsel were told they'd receive a message indicating their salary adjustment, which will be retroactive to July 1, by the end of the week.

Tensegrity announced a new base salary range surpassing the Davis Polk scale. The new scale, going into effect in August, sets first-year associates' salaries at \$210,000 and senior associates' at \$380,000, according to industry blog Above the Law.

Dozens of BigLaw firms and boutiques in June and July announced base salary raises, in what many legal consultants said was partly a response to the increasingly competitive recruiting market for associates. The salary bumps also followed a generally strong year for parts of the industry, with revenue jumping for some despite the pandemic.

--Additional reporting by Aebra Coe. Editing by Ellen Johnson.