

## 2021 Forecast: In-Demand Practice Areas and Jobs

By Megan M. Usovsky, Esq.

Robert Half Legal



Law firms and corporate legal departments are adjusting to new realities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and many are making changes to the way they operate and deliver legal services.

So what does the job market look like for 2021, and which practice areas are expected to see increased demand in the year ahead? The [2021 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide](#) offers the latest insights into employers' hiring plans.

### Four practice areas generating demand for legal services

While the COVID-19 has presented many challenges, the crisis also has generated demand for legal services in certain practice areas, including:

- **Contracts** — As businesses adopt measures to minimize risk and ensure business continuity, they are seeking legal advice regarding current agreements, obligations and leases. Legal teams also will be focused on revising client contracts as the transition from LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) to a new baseline rate goes into effect at the end of 2021.
- **Litigation** — Many companies are seeking guidance from outside counsel in areas related to the COVID-19 crisis, such as employment, general liability and insurance matters. Court closures during the pandemic have resulted in a backlog of cases. As courts reopen, legal professionals with commercial litigation, intellectual property and family law expertise also are seeing rising demand for their services.
- **Healthcare** — Hospitals, medical providers, insurance companies and drug manufacturers are seeking legal counsel as they tackle litigation, compliance, insurance defense, payment disputes and patient privacy matters.
- **Privacy, data security and information law** — With more employees now working from home indefinitely, data security experts are needed to help safeguard proprietary information and corporate assets. Another priority for many companies is data privacy. As regulations become more complex, there is greater demand for specialists who can help companies navigate the latest laws regarding consumer privacy.

## **Employers seek specialized skills**

Most law firms and corporate legal departments are taking a cautious approach to hiring, prioritizing business-critical positions. Candidates who possess the specific skills and experience to make an immediate impact will have an advantage over professionals who need additional time and training to grow into a role.

To address workflow gaps, employers are hiring legal professionals with specialized skills on a temporary or project basis. Whether you're looking to increase your earnings or land a new role, now is the time to think ahead, expand your expertise and future-proof your career.

*Megan Usovsky is a St. Louis-based business development director with Robert Half Legal, a premier legal staffing service specializing in the placement of attorneys, paralegals, legal administrators and other legal professionals with law firms and corporate legal departments. Based in Menlo Park, Calif., Robert Half Legal has offices in major North American and global markets and offers a full suite of legal staffing and consulting solutions. For more information, please contact [Megan.usovsky@roberthalflegal.com](mailto:Megan.usovsky@roberthalflegal.com).*