

2020 Economics of Law Practice
Attorney Income and Billing Rate Summary Report



Contents

Economics of Law Practice in Michigan

2020 Attorney Income and Billing Rate Summary Report

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2020 Economics of Law Practice in Michigan

2020 Attorney Income and Billing Rate Summary Report

The survey was conducted in 2020 and requested 2019 income and 2020 billing rate information

The State Bar of Michigan Economics of Law Practice Survey provides Michigan attorneys with a resource that allows access to the most current law practice economic information available. The survey results are provided as a service to members of the State Bar of Michigan.

The survey has two primary objectives:

- To provide timely, relevant, and accurate information to inform and guide the practical management decisions of Michigan attorneys
- To track and illustrate changes and trends within the legal profession

The survey monitors and reports on several points of information useful to attorneys:

- Attorney income
- Prevailing average hourly billing rates by several indicators including fields of practice, judicial circuit, and geographic location
- Time allocated to billable and non-billable professional activities
- Management practices
- Perceptions regarding current and future economic circumstances related to the practice of law

The key finding report contains information pertaining to attorney income and billing rates. It is produced as an early and separate report to provide attorneys with this target information as quickly as possible, as it is the most requested information from all attorneys. All other information will be contained in the full 2020 Economics of Law Practice Summary Report that will follow.

Methods and Measures

The 2020 Economics of Law Practice Survey was conducted in 2020. In 2020 45.9 percent of active members were private practitioners and 54.1 percent were non-private practitioners. Based on the proportions of both groups of active members an electronic survey was emailed to approximately 18,888 private practitioners and 22,241 non-private practice members of the State Bar of Michigan, inviting their participation. 2,983 completed questionnaires were returned by private practitioners (a 15.8 percent response rate) and 1,337 completed questionnaires were returned by non-private practitioners (a 6.0 percent response rate). Questionnaires were tabulated by Dr. James McComb, an independent consultant statistician. **The economic data provides measures of central tendency and spread.**

To help interpret the information presented in the surveys the following is a brief description of statistical terms of measures of central tendency (median and mean) and measures of dispersion (spread).

Mean—The mean (also called the average) is calculated by adding the values of all responses then dividing by the number of responses. Example: Three responses (30, 1, 2) are reported. The average or mean is calculated by adding $30+1+2=33$ and then by dividing by $3 = 11$.

Median—The median is the middle value in a series or distribution of values (50th percentile, which is initially rank-ordered from low to high or vice versa). By definition half of the numbers are greater, and half are less than the median. Example: Three responses (30, 1, 2) are reported. The median is the middle number of the order of distribution (1, 2, 30), or 2. By comparison, the average of this distribution as shown above is 11. Use of the median as a statistical metric of central tendency reduces the effects of ‘outliers’

(extremely high or low values, such as the data point of 30 in the previous example) while the average does not. Median values are utilized throughout the survey results to denote the measure of central tendency.

Percentiles—In addition to the median, four other percentile values are used in the survey results to reveal the spread of a particular data distribution. The percentiles include:

- **25th percentile**—Also referred to as the “lower quartile.” One-fourth of the values are less, and three-fourths are more than this value.
- **Median or 50th percentile**—Half of the values are less, and half are more than the “median” value.
- **75th percentile**—Also referred to as the “upper quartile.” Three-fourths of the values are less, and one-fourth are more than this value.
- **95th percentile**—Ninety five percent of the values are less, and five percent of the values are more than this value.

Note of clarification: Extreme values were excluded due to their unrepresentative qualities. Forty-seven cases where private practitioners reported gross income over \$2,000,000 and two cases in non-private practitioners were not included in the salary distributions because they were not typical of the population and skewed the distributions.



I 2019 Attorney Income

Table 1—2019 Reported Attorney Gross Income—Private Practitioners

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Sole Practitioner, office outside of home	592	75,000	144,500	192,098	250,000	512,000
Sole Practitioner, working out of home office	301	20,000	50,000	86,582	105,000	283,000
Sole Practitioner, sharing space	122	63,000	125,500	152,910	200,000	400,000
Managing Partner	195	200,000	300,000	438,053	540,000	1,300,000
Equity Partner/Shareholder	544	180,000	280,000	365,089	440,000	1,000,000
Non-Equity Partner	165	140,000	195,000	228,774	275,000	500,000
Of Counsel	63	65,000	125,000	138,993	175,000	340,000
Senior Associate	137	99,000	120,000	148,464	158,000	350,000
Associate	314	65,000	92,000	121,138	125,000	287,742
Arbitrator/Mediator	12	13,340	107,500	140,682	254,000	393,000
Assigned Counsel	2	163,000	169,000	169,000	175,000	175,000
Other	74	67,000	120,000	189,983	225,000	560,000
Total	2,521	80,000	150,000	223,496	285,000	670,000

Table 2—2019 Reported Attorney Gross Income—Non-Private Practitioners

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Academia	56	64,750	78,000	95,277	107,000	215,000
Federal Government	74	95,000	135,750	130,025	162,000	181,400
Governmental Relations	5	118,549	140,000	304,710	200,000	1,000,000
In-House Counsel	289	110,000	150,000	163,886	200,000	325,000
Judge	68	145,000	150,000	148,936	153,000	190,000
Law School	11	50,000	60,000	83,273	120,000	160,000
Legal Service Agency	101	54,000	63,000	69,882	78,000	105,000
Local Government	187	64,804	84,000	86,543	107,000	133,000
Military	4	106,000	125,000	119,004	132,008	134,015
Non-Law Related	33	61,000	84,000	120,352	120,000	400,000
Non-Profit Org	58	60,000	74,500	82,209	90,000	174,000
Other Judiciary	77	75,000	91,000	90,063	104,000	140,000
Retired	22	16,000	85,000	133,935	140,000	612,000
State Government	163	75,000	100,000	103,338	121,222	150,000
Total	1,148	71,002	100,000	116,786	148,000	226,000

II Attorney Hourly Billing Rates

Table 3—2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Practice Classification

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Sole Practitioner, office outside of home	630	200	250	268	300	433
Sole Practitioner, working out of home office	345	150	225	227	300	400
Sole Practitioner, sharing space	128	225	250	265	300	400
Managing Partner	236	250	300	327	398	560
Equity Partner/Shareholder	605	250	330	349	425	620
Non-Equity Partner	183	275	350	358	435	568
Of Counsel	70	265	350	341	412	600
Senior Associate	157	200	253	248	300	450
Associate	360	190	250	250	300	388
Arbitrator/Mediator	12	188	250	267	350	600
Assigned Counsel	2	150	163	163	175	175
Other	111	-1	175	179	315	465
Total	2,839	200	267	286	350	546

Table 4—2020 Reported Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Years in Practice—Private Practitioners

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
<1	4	195	238	252	309	368
1 to 2	75	190	217	233	265	350
3 to 5	145	195	242	242	275	365
6 to 10	325	200	250	285	310	413
11 to 15	333	225	280	297	350	475
16 to 25	554	230	300	315	367	546
26 to 30	285	245	297	337	400	620
31 to 35	266	225	300	310	365	565
>35	779	225	295	317	367	600
Total	2,766	225	275	305	350	550

Table 5—2020 Reported Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Firm Size in a Single Location—Private Practitioners

	Number	Percent
1	1,097	38.0
2	297	10.3
3	199	6.9
4 to 6	329	11.4
7 to 10	226	7.8
11 to 20	205	7.1
21 to 50	257	8.9
> 50	277	9.6
Total	2,887	100.0

Table 6—2020 Reported Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Office Location—Private Practitioners

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Ann Arbor area	143	260	300	362	400	785
Battle Creek area	13	250	280	275	300	318
Bay City/Midland/Saginaw area	50	200	243	237	250	383
Detroit, not downtown	72	200	250	267	325	435
Downtown Detroit & New Center area	172	218	308	343	445	630
Flint area	76	200	250	267	288	500
Grand Rapids area	331	245	300	312	375	545
Jackson area	30	200	232	249	300	400
Kalamazoo area	73	225	263	284	330	465
Lansing area	141	217	265	284	345	450
Livingston County	35	225	250	401	275	300
Mid-Michigan area (not Lansing)	30	180	238	245	300	350
Mount Clemens area	62	205	275	293	317	450
Muskegon area	38	175	228	261	292	533
Northern Michigan, Lower Peninsula	57	185	225	215	250	317
Oakland County (north of M-59)	78	225	283	299	350	550
Oakland County (south of M-59)	730	245	300	320	375	575
Other metro areas	14	200	229	250	263	500
Out of state	135	250	335	352	400	650
Out state, Lower Peninsula	19	200	215	226	275	350
Remainder Macomb County	57	233	275	297	325	450
Remainder Wayne County	97	215	250	291	298	400
Southfield	98	265	339	350	400	615
Traverse City area	60	218	250	255	293	360
Upper Peninsula	38	190	225	231	250	383
Southeastern Michigan	55	200	250	245	300	350
Western Michigan	63	200	250	272	300	465
Total	2,767	225	275	305	350	550

Table 7–2020 Hourly Billing Rates by Field of Practice

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Administrative Law	74	250	296	306	375	500
Appellate Law	119	200	300	307	400	545
Arbitration/Mediation	84	250	305	331	398	590
Auto (not lemon) Law	34	300	425	419	500	750
Auto No Fault	139	170	250	315	450	750
Bankruptcy, Creditor	56	250	298	304	350	465
Bankruptcy, Debtor	104	218	250	278	300	400
Business/Commercial Litigation	383	265	310	341	395	565
Civil Litigation	445	225	300	324	375	600
Civil Rights	83	225	305	332	400	550
Collections, Creditor	68	200	250	250	283	350
Collections, Debtor	17	100	250	226	325	400
Condemnation Law	7	260	350	366	500	500
Construction Law	80	250	300	307	375	435
Consumer Law (including lemon law)	29	220	300	336	425	600
Contracts	172	240	298	302	355	500
Corporate and Business	435	250	300	327	375	600
Criminal (Misdemeanor)	221	185	250	238	275	400
Criminal (Felony)	199	200	250	264	300	450
Drivers License Revocation Restoration	23	200	250	350	350	450
Elder Law	92	238	250	268	300	400
Election Law	9	225	250	298	300	635
Employment Law (plaintiff)	76	281	350	345	400	525
Employment Law (defense)	106	250	310	318	365	500
Entertainment Law	7	200	350	359	495	800
Environmental Law	24	200	373	332	448	495
Family Law	543	200	250	268	300	400
Foreclosure, Debtor	3	220	350	307	350	350
Foreclosure, Lender	18	215	225	235	250	330
General Civil	127	200	250	275	300	500
Health & Hospital Law	54	230	300	337	425	505
Immigration Law	49	250	300	302	350	550
Indian Law	10	200	325	301	350	508
Insurance Law (plaintiff)	34	350	400	454	550	750
Insurance Law (defense)	136	155	180	207	225	380
Intellectual Property	98	290	368	377	445	595
Labor and Employment	75	200	275	288	375	500
Landlord/Tenant (commercial)	24	200	250	279	350	415
Landlord/Tenant (residential)	45	175	200	201	225	300
Libel, Slander and Defamation	4	283	395	410	538	650
Marijuana Law	15	200	300	307	415	565

Table 7–2020 Hourly Billing Rates by Field of Practice

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Medical Malpractice (plaintiff)	38	350	575	621	900	1,500
Medical Malpractice (defendant)	59	175	200	205	225	275
Municipal Law	95	165	200	224	250	400
Veterans and Military Law	2	200	225	225	250	250
Other Civil law	73	225	265	285	350	565
Other Professional Liability	22	220	325	318	400	500
Personal Injury (defendant)	86	160	180	196	200	300
Personal Injury (plaintiff)	164	300	400	439	500	750
Probate Litigation	127	250	300	301	350	450
Guardianship & Conservatorship	104	200	250	243	300	350
Probate, Trust Administration	261	250	275	297	325	445
Probate Estate Planning, Wills, and Trusts	577	225	250	288	300	430
Product Liability	20	245	308	341	450	638
Property Damage	6	165	260	304	450	550
Public Benefits	5	150	175	208	265	350
Real Estate	461	240	270	286	325	445
Schools and Education	19	175	250	251	305	520
Securities Law	22	245	325	388	580	675
Tax Law	86	250	350	361	435	585
Workers' Compensation (employee)	19	250	250	310	400	600
Workers' Compensation (employer)	14	115	128	139	155	250
Total	6,581	225	275	300	350	525

Table 8–2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rate by County

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Alcona	5	175	200	190	200	200
Alger	3	135	175	187	250	250
Allegan	62	217	275	285	325	420
Alpena	8	187	200	208	224	300
Antrim	20	202	250	238	268	338
Arenac	2	150	240	240	330	330
Baraga	4	238	250	256	275	300
Barry	11	250	300	302	350	400
Bay	49	200	250	257	280	455
Benzie	27	200	250	239	267	350
Berrien	38	217	267	289	325	490
Branch	12	200	218	229	269	300
Calhoun	45	230	250	270	300	425
Cass	17	225	250	263	300	405
Charlevoix	21	192	250	229	250	300

Table 8–2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rate by County

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Cheboygan	7	175	250	229	250	300
Chippewa	9	180	185	188	200	233
Clare	14	150	250	233	300	375
Clinton	59	200	250	260	300	400
Crawford	7	157	250	243	250	497
Delta	12	181	195	236	275	465
Dickinson	7	200	250	299	300	650
Eaton	80	200	250	254	300	358
Emmet	22	225	250	268	300	505
Genesee	130	216	250	277	317	500
Gladwin	5	150	200	200	250	300
Gogebic	1	350	350	350	350	350
Grand Traverse	66	210	250	262	300	400
Gratiot	14	217	300	268	300	375
Hillsdale	15	200	250	235	267	300
Houghton	13	237	250	275	300	395
Huron	5	200	200	225	275	300
Ingham	198	210	275	301	350	546
Ionia	19	200	250	254	300	400
Iosco	2	125	213	213	300	300
Iron	4	192	197	208	225	250
Isabella	23	183	250	249	300	350
Jackson	46	200	250	254	300	400
Kalamazoo	125	220	267	286	350	465
Kalkaska	5	175	210	208	275	300
Kent	403	250	305	324	375	550
Keweenaw	3	250	250	287	360	360
Lake	7	153	200	202	250	360
Lapeer	33	200	250	268	300	500
Leelanau	37	240	250	268	300	370
Lenawee	32	208	250	260	300	450
Livingston	88	232	252	353	305	400
Luce	2	140	178	178	217	217
Mackinac	7	150	183	195	250	250
Macomb	673	217	280	311	350	550
Manistee	11	210	225	248	285	350
Marquette	27	193	237	240	250	383
Mason	12	200	223	222	250	333
Mecosta	7	225	250	265	300	385
Menominee	2	250	250	250	250	250
Midland	27	200	250	280	300	550

Table 8–2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rate by County

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
Missaukee	4	242	250	263	283	317
Monroe	40	200	250	285	280	431
Montcalm	14	200	258	297	325	863
Montmorency	5	173	185	185	200	220
Muskegon	80	213	275	275	329	463
Newaygo	15	230	275	324	390	863
Oakland	1,342	233	300	321	375	567
Oceana	14	183	228	226	250	325
Ogemaw	4	188	250	225	263	275
Ontonagon	1	177	177	177	177	177
Osceola	10	233	250	249	250	317
Oscoda	1	400	400	400	400	400
Otsego	9	200	200	241	250	450
Ottawa	221	250	300	307	360	475
Presque Isle	5	200	200	203	220	250
Roscommon	8	146	200	186	250	250
Saginaw	53	163	245	241	283	450
Sanilac	10	175	200	208	200	400
Schoolcraft	0
Shiawassee	18	192	218	265	350	600
St. Clair	27	200	250	259	300	450
St. Joseph	16	213	250	243	269	375
Tuscola	20	200	230	261	288	499
Van Buren	40	200	250	246	282	358
Washtenaw	302	248	296	331	383	615
Wayne	1,281	225	295	320	375	583
Wexford	11	175	233	232	250	328
Statewide Practice	37	250	340	326	410	545
Out of state practice	166	245	341	338	395	642
Total	6,337	225	275	305	350	545

Table 9–2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Circuit

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
1 Hillsdale	15	200	250	235	267	300
2 Berrien	38	217	267	289	325	490
3 Wayne	1,281	225	295	320	375	583
4 Jackson	46	200	250	254	300	400
5 Barry	11	250	300	302	350	400
6 Oakland	1,342	233	300	321	375	567
7 Genesee	130	216	250	277	317	500
8 Ionia, Montcalm	33	200	250	272	300	400
9 Kalamazoo	125	220	267	286	350	465
10 Saginaw	53	163	245	241	283	450
11 Alger, Luce, Mackinac, Schoolcraft	12	145	179	190	233	250
12 Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw	20	243	250	273	300	389
13 Antrim, Grand Traverse, Leelanau	123	217	250	260	300	395
14 Muskegon	80	213	275	275	329	463
15 Branch	12	200	218	229	269	300
16 Macomb	673	217	280	311	350	550
17 Kent	403	250	305	324	375	550
18 Bay	49	200	250	257	280	455
19 Benzie, Manistee	38	208	238	241	267	350
20 Ottawa	221	250	300	307	360	475
21 Isabella	23	183	250	249	300	350
22 Washtenaw	302	248	296	331	383	615
23 Alcona, Arenac, Iosco, Oscoda	19	175	200	233	275	450
24 Sanilac	10	175	200	208	200	400
25 Marquette	27	193	237	240	250	383
26 Alpena, Montmorency	13	173	200	199	220	300
27 Newaygo, Oceana	29	200	250	277	300	550
28 Missaukee, Wexford	15	200	250	240	250	328
29 Clinton, Gratiot	73	200	250	261	300	380
30 Ingham	198	210	275	301	350	546
31 St. Clair	27	200	250	259	300	450
32 Gogebic, Ontonagon	2	177	263	263	350	350
33 Charlevoix	21	192	250	229	250	300
34 Ogemaw, Roscommon	12	158	225	199	250	275
35 Shiawassee	18	192	218	265	350	600
36 Van Buren	40	200	250	246	282	358
37 Calhoun	45	230	250	270	300	425
38 Monroe	40	200	250	285	280	431
39 Lenawee	32	208	250	260	300	450
40 Lapeer	33	200	250	268	300	500
41 Dickinson, Iron, Menominee	13	200	250	263	250	650

Table 9–2020 Attorney Hourly Billing Rates by Circuit

	Number	25th Percentile	Median	Mean	75th Percentile	95th Percentile
42 Midland	27	200	250	280	300	550
43 Cass	17	225	250	263	300	405
44 Livingston	88	232	252	353	305	400
45 St. Joseph	16	213	250	243	269	375
46 Crawford, Kalkaska, Otsego	12	166	230	228	263	497
47 Delta	12	181	195	236	275	465
48 Allegan	62	217	275	285	325	420
49 Mecosta, Osceola	17	233	250	256	250	385
50 Chippewa	9	180	185	188	200	233
51 Lake, Mason	19	173	220	215	250	360
52 Huron	5	200	200	225	275	300
53 Cheboygan, Presque Isle	12	188	223	218	250	300
54 Tuscola	20	200	230	261	288	499
55 Clare, Gladwin	19	150	250	224	300	375
56 Eaton	80	200	250	254	300	358
57 Emmet	22	225	250	268	300	505
84 Statewide Practice	37	250	340	326	410	545
85 Out of State Practice	166	245	341	338	395	642
Total	6,337	225	275	305	350	545

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