

Women in the Law

Top Law Firms Named for Working Moms; 62% Allow Full-Time Telecommuting

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By [Debra Cassens Weiss](#)



A bad economy may be hurting law firms, but it's opening up more flex-time opportunities for male as well as female lawyers.

[Working Mother](#) magazine reports on the trend in a story accompanying its [list of the top 50 law firms](#) for women. Nearly all of its top 50 firms offer reduced-hour schedules, 62 percent offer full-time telecommuting and 42 percent have written flexible-schedule policies. Eight percent of the lawyers at the top firms work reduced hours, compared to 5 percent nationwide, the story says. And 20 percent of the equity partners at the top firms are female, compared to 16 percent nationwide.

Several large law firms on [last year's list](#) didn't make it this year, including one law firm that has since dissolved: Heller Ehrman. Two other law firms that missed this year's list, Arnold & Porter and [Bingham McCutchen](#), were on [Fortune magazine's list](#) of 100 best places to work. Arnold & Porter also made a list of the nation's [10 most family-friendly law firms](#) compiled by Yale Law Women.

Other law firms on Working Mom's 2008 list that didn't make this year's list are: [Baker & McKenzie](#); Bricker & Eckler; [Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton](#); [Cravath, Swaine & Moore](#); Farella Braun + Martel; Fenwick & West; [Hogan & Hartson](#); [Hunton & Williams](#); Kutak Rock;

[Morgan, Lewis & Bockius](#); [Patton Boggs](#); [Shearman & Sterling](#); and [Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom](#).

The story identifies these work-life strategies that its winning firms are using to “survive and thrive”:

- Reduced hours. At Minneapolis-based Lindquist & Vennum, lawyers can work only 60 percent of their usual schedule and still retain health benefits. The tactic is an alternative to layoffs. New York City-based Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman is also trying to keep jobs by switching lawyers in some practice groups to 90 percent schedules.
- Hourly paychecks. Law firms such as Pillsbury and Alston & Bird are paying some of its lawyer moms by the hour.
- Secunding. Littler Mendelson has hired a reduced-hour contract lawyer to send to clients to cover lawyers’ maternity leaves.
- Alternative billing: Law firms such as Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe are exploring alternatives to the billable hour.
- Pro bono. Some law firms are sending lawyers to nonprofits, while paying them less money, in an attempt to avert layoffs.

A [press release](#) lists the top 50 firms, along with their base location and number of lawyers. They are:

Alston & Bird; Atlanta – 933
Andrews Kurth; Houston – 425
Arent Fox; Washington, D.C. – 340
Bass, Berry & Sims; Nashville, Tenn. – 254
Chapman and Cutler; Chicago – 225
Covington & Burling; Washington, D.C. – 771
Davis Polk & Wardwell; New York City – 680
Debevoise & Plimpton; New York City – 570
Dorsey & Whitney; Minneapolis – 623
Drinker Biddle & Reath; Philadelphia – 687
Foley Hoag; Boston – 250
Folger Levin & Kahn; San Francisco – 61
Fox Rothschild; Philadelphia – 466
Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz; New York City – 57
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson; New York City – 539
Frost Brown Todd; Cincinnati – 376
Gibbons P.C.; Newark, N.J. – 230
Goodwin Procter; Boston – 941
Gray Plant Mooty Law Firm; Minneapolis – 165
Hanson Bridgett; San Francisco – 162

Holland & Hart; Denver – 441
Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn; Detroit – 239
Ice Miller; Indianapolis – 260
Jenner & Block; Chicago – 484
Katten Muchin Rosenman; Chicago – 653
Latham & Watkins; Global. – 1,714
Lindquist & Vennum; Minneapolis – 187
Littler Mendelson; San Francisco. – 722
Lowenstein Sandler; Roseland, N.J. – 276
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips; Los Angeles – 389
McGuireWoods; Richmond, Va. – 854
Miller & Chevalier Chartered; Washington, D.C. – 96
Morrison & Foerster; New York, N.Y. – 976
Munger, Tolles & Olson; Los Angeles – 219
Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg; Chicago – 199
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe; New York City – 815
Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison; New York City – 530
Perkins Coie; Chicago – 720
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman; San Francisco – 929
Quarles & Brady; Phoenix – 499
Shook, Hardy & Bacon; Kansas City, Mo. – 511
Sidley Austin; Chicago – 1,598
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett; New York City – 821
Smith Moore Leatherwood; Greenville, S.C. – 181
Step toe & Johnson; Washington, D.C. – 465
Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox; Washington, D.C. – 99
Vinson & Elkins; Houston – 704
Weil, Gotshal & Manges; New York City – 1,394
WilmerHale; Boston – 1,085
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati; Palo Alto, Calif. – 670

The list was based on a 2008 questionnaire of law firms with more than 50 lawyers that submitted applications to the magazine.