



Congratulations to the National Association for Female Executives/Flex-Time Lawyers Best Law Firms for Women. These 50 winners exemplify best practices when it comes to supporting and advancing talented female lawyers. At these firms, women get top assignments, learn to become rainmakers and fill senior leadership positions. These leaders are committed to supporting the advancement of female attorneys: Every winning firm offers internal networking groups for women lawyers as well as business development and networking training.

They also believe in flexible schedules: All 50 firms offer reduced hours for lawyers, and these attorneys are eligible for bonuses based on the same consideration as their full-time colleagues. We salute these progressive firms for their leadership in developing innovative programs and policies to help female attorneys thrive.

ARENT FOX

Female Equity Partners **17%** Female Nonequity Partners **38%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Washington, DC–based firm takes a progressive approach to its flexible working arrangements. Lawyers choosing a reduced-hours schedule are able to work 80% or less of the standard required billable hours. Last year, 16 female associates, two female counsel and two female nonequity partners worked reduced hours. The three-office firm has an outstanding record of promoting lawyers working reduced hours and a long history of equal partnership consideration for lawyers working full-time and part-time. The firm also offers a generous 18 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, and women lawyers often return to work on a reduced-hours basis. Of the six lawyers on the firm’s committee to decide equity-partner promotion, two are women. Women are experiencing the benefits of this firm’s commitment to them: Since 2006, 44% of attorneys promoted to partner firmwide have been women.

BAKER & MCKENZIE

Female Equity Partners **19%**
Female Nonequity Partners **31%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **11%**

WHAT WE LOVE Telecommuting is very much a part of this Chicago-based firm’s approach to work life balance. Just ask Liz Stern, a partner at the firm’s Washington, DC, office, who works full-time but telecommutes on Fridays so that she can spend more time with her two sons, Alex, 17, and David, 11—Liz was elected managing partner of the office last year. The firm, with nine offices in the States and 58 worldwide, also takes a progressive approach to work schedules. Pamela Dayanim, a new partner in the Washington office, works full-time but takes time each morning to drop her kids at school, and also makes a point of leaving work each day at 6 p.m. so she’s home for dinner. She often works later in the evening, but this flexible arrangement suits her. The firm’s commitment to adapting to the realities of modern family life has certainly paid off for its women lawyers—the North American offices’ new partner class for 2011 is about 80% female.

BALLARD SPAHR

Female Equity Partners **25%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **13%**

WHAT WE LOVE Aware that an increasing number of clients place a high priority on diversity in their legal counsel, this Philadelphia-based firm has actively initiated several programs to retain and promote women lawyers, including Ballard Women, which aims to increase the visibility and marketing of the firm’s female lawyers and to provide mentoring for female associates by female partners. The firm also has a Work Life Balance Group that brings together lawyers—men and women, working full-time and reduced-hours schedules—who provide mutual resources and support for one another around the issues of work life balance. The firm supports flexible work schedules by paying flextime lawyers the same as full-time lawyers. In addition, lawyer moms and dads who use flexible work schedules are still eligible for partnership. Of the seven lawyers promoted to equity partner in 2010, three were women, and two of this firm’s 13 offices are managed by female partners.

BENESCH, FRIEDLANDER, COPLAN & ARONOFF

Female Equity Partners **13%**
Female Nonequity Partners **23%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **10%**

WHAT WE LOVE This six-office firm with headquarters in Cleveland is committed to providing innovative and personalized work arrangements for its women attorneys. Last year 20% of them—both associates and partners—used a reduced-hours schedule, ranging from 55% to 80%. The partner track is open to lawyers working reduced hours, and in 2010 a lawyer working a 55% schedule was promoted to partner. Women have a strong voice in the firm’s management, and a woman chairs the firm’s largest practice group, Corporate and Securities. New parents (yes, moms *and* dads) are offered 26 weeks of job-guaranteed time off following childbirth, with 13 weeks paid for associates and 26 weeks paid for partners. The firm recently added nursing rooms—private rooms equipped with a refrigerator, sink, desk and Internet access.

CHAPMAN AND CUTLER

Female Equity Partners **18%** Female Nonequity Partners **23%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE It's always comforting to know your boss has your back. Tim Mohan, the chief executive partner at this Chicago-based firm, makes work life balance a personal as well as a business imperative. His wife is a lawyer working an alternative schedule at another firm; they have a young child and another one on the way. Flexibility, access to development opportunities and mentoring are the cornerstones of his approach. Recently, the mentoring program was revamped with cross-practice-area and cross-gender mentoring groups that ensure every female associate access to the firm's rainmakers and policymakers. In 2010, the firm also revamped the associate bonus system, to reward not just billable-hour productivity but also contributions to recruiting, training and leadership. The new system means that "you can be successful and valued here while still having flexibility and work life balance," says Julie Kelly, an associate working an alternative schedule.



Debevoise & Plimpton's
Margaret Davenport

COVINGTON & BURLING

Female Equity Partners **22%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **9%**

WHAT WE LOVE A champion of alternative work schedules, this Washington, DC-based firm has a special alternative-schedule advisor in each of its eight offices, and associates working flexible schedules are eligible for partnership. Says regulatory partner Grail Sipes: "As a working mother on a part-time schedule, I can attest that the firm is extremely supportive of these alternative arrangements and affords individual attorneys tremendous flexibility in making their schedules work." Covington & Burling also provides many benefits that promote work life balance, including a generous 18 weeks of paid birth/adoption leave, lactation rooms, domestic partner benefits and emergency backup child and elder care. Another big perk: The Washington office offers a full-service child-care center, Covington Kids, for children from infancy to preschool, right across the street.

DRINKER BIDDLE & REATH

Female Equity Partners **14%** Female Nonequity Partners **30%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **10%**

WHAT WE LOVE Not only is this Philadelphia-based firm committed to allowing each lawyer to create her own career path to success through flexible work arrangements, but also, last year, Drinker Biddle converted from a traditional associate structure to a competency-based levels structure. With the former system, associates worked hard and were rewarded, but without any guarantee of communication regarding their progression. Under the new levels structure, however, there is full transparency about what associates are expected to achieve in order to advance. And transparency and flexibility seem to work for women: They reside on every firm committee, with several women on the two most important—management and allocation. One of the firm's largest rainmakers is a woman, and the headquarters office is managed by a female partner.

DEBEVOISE & PLIMPTON

Female Equity Partners **17%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **11%**

WHAT WE LOVE Part of the lore of this New York City-based firm, founded in 1931, is its long history of supporting women. Its part-time-work program has been in place for more than 40 years, and in 1995, for the first time, a reduced-hours associate—Margaret Davenport—was promoted to partner. The firm was among the first to introduce an innovative reduced-hours compensation structure: Instead of using an arbitrary hours standard, it compensates reduced-hours lawyers based on the relationship of their hours to the working pace of the firm's full-time lawyers; the hours standard is adjusted every six months. More recently, Debevoise & Plimpton established a progressive primary child-care leave policy, giving a total paid-leave benefit of 20 weeks. Its policies continue to translate to success for its women lawyers: In 2010, 66% of the firm's new partners and all of the new associates hired were women.

DORSEY & WHITNEY

Female Equity Partners **19%** Female Nonequity Partners **23%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **13%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women are thriving across the board at this 100-year-old Minneapolis-based firm, which boasts a female managing partner—one of only a handful of women in the country leading top law practices. Of the firm's 43 newly admitted partners in the past three years, 22 were women. A key factor in recruiting and retaining women lawyers is the significant number of women associates who have been promoted to partner in recent years. All of this translates to more effective role models for the firm's younger women lawyers. The firm, which has 13 offices nationwide, has created a methodology to track the allocation of work to its female lawyers and lawyers of color to ensure they are receiving the work opportunities necessary to build expertise. Bonuses are awarded for partners' contributions to diversity efforts.

FAEGRE & BENSON

Female Equity Partners **21%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Minneapolis-based firm has women in every leadership role—as members of the management committee, group head, administrative partner and committee chair. Some of this can be attributed to the electoral policy changes instituted two years ago, when the firm created a nominating committee with an intentionally diverse composition that rotates every year. So far, it's been a big success: In its second election, two women, one a woman of color, were proposed by the committee and then elected by secret ballot. The firm is also formally dedicated to incorporating flexibility into its culture. For example, high-level partners are encouraged to use flex policies. The firm recently launched Full-Flex, in which lawyers working flextime are not required to be in the office at all, are paid the same as full-time lawyers and are eligible for partnership.



Faegre & Benson partner Leslie Fields and daughter Anna Howard, 13

FARELLA BRAUN + MARTEL

Female Equity Partners **18%**
Female Nonequity Partners **67%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **24%**

WHAT WE LOVE This two-office San Francisco-based firm is dedicated to creating a nonstigmatized flex program, and reduced-hours attorneys are treated as full participants. Indeed, flexibility is ingrained in the culture, and 46% of the firm's female attorneys are working some form of reduced hours—ranging from 60% to 90% of a full-time schedule. In addition, eight full-equity partners out of 12 work reduced hours. The firm is committed to nurturing women leaders in roles both internal and external. Women are represented in every facet of leadership at the firm: Two women partners sit on the firm's five-member strategic advisory board, the equivalent of a board of directors, and the St. Helena office's managing partner is a woman. Stephanie Skaff, a partner in Farella's business litigation and intellectual property and technology groups and a mother of two young children, described the firm's culture this way: "The firm has a commitment to creating a pipeline to leadership for women. Nearly every leadership role that I hold or have held—both inside and outside the firm—resulted in large part from the recommendations, contacts and active mentoring provided by more senior partners at the firm. In turn, I have committed to myself to passing along the same types of opportunities to more junior women at Farella."



Finnegan women partners in management

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER

Female Equity Partners **14%**
Female Nonequity Partners **32%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **6%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women have a prominent voice at this Washington, DC-based firm, which is led by a female managing partner. More than half of the firm's practice group leaders are women, and the nine-member management committee includes three women. Finnegan's multifaceted approach to mentoring means that all associates are provided with mentoring. A Women's Forum, created in 2006, fosters internal mentoring, networking and educational opportunities specifically for the firm's female attorneys. A favorable approach to pro bono work allows attorneys to decide which pro bono initiatives are important to them; the firm then credits 80 hours a year toward a lawyer's billable-hours goal. The firm's first pro bono partner, Christine Lehman, is a working mom who chairs the pro bono committee. Moms are offered 18 weeks of paid parental leave; dads, 12 weeks.

FOX ROTHSCHILD

Female Equity Partners **17%**
Female Nonequity Partners **27%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE From the start of lawyers' careers at this Philadelphia-based firm, processes are in place to help women thrive professionally. A formal mentor program assigns each incoming associate a more senior attorney, and training and administrative support are provided for both mentors and mentees on a monthly basis. Many leadership roles at this 16-office firm are held by women. A woman co-chairs the Partnership Advancement Committee; another chairs the litigation department. Women working reduced-hours schedules have also taken on leadership roles, such as serving as office managing partner, and many have been elected to partnership. Eighty-six percent of female lawyers returning from maternity leave in 2010 worked reduced hours for a time, and the firm's chief talent officer works directly with each returning attorney to ensure a mutually beneficial transition.



Fox Rothschild partners Jennifer Schwartz (left) and Marilou Watson

FREDRIKSON & BYRON

Female Equity Partners **29%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **10%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women are thriving at this Minneapolis-based firm, where 20% of the overall business development budget is aimed at women-only training and networking. The chairperson of this six-office firm is a woman. Of the three lawyers who sit on the executive committee, one is a woman, and the chair of the committee responsible for deciding equity partner promotion is a woman. The professional and financial benefits for the firm's women lawyers are significant: Of the 138 equity partners in 2010, 40 were women. The progressive flextime policy means flextime lawyers—who aren't required to be in the office at all—are eligible for partnership at the same rate, and for bonuses based on the same consideration, as their full-time colleagues.



Fredrikson & Byron partner Teresa Thompson and daughter Kiera, 7

FRIED, FRANK, HARRIS, SHRIVER & JACOBSON

Female Equity Partners **19%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **3%**

WHAT WE LOVE This New York City-based firm's thriving Women's Initiative promotes the professional goals of its women attorneys and encourages firmwide sensitivity to issues that uniquely impact women in the workplace. Dinners enable women partners and counsel to share personal stories of how Fried Frank helped them advance, while quarterly discussion groups facilitated by female and male partners create open communication between women attorneys and firm leadership. Working mothers find Fried Frank to be an especially supportive environment that allows them to meet their personal and professional aspirations. For example, Valerie Ford Jacob is the chairperson of this seven-office firm and head of the capital markets corporate practice. Dixie Johnson, co-head of the enforcement and regulation practice, praises the firm's family-friendly policies: "We have an environment that helps working parents feel it's possible to take care of our families, our clients and our colleagues. We are all such achievers that we will make it happen if it's possible—and I am happy to say it is."

FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI

Female Equity Partners **18%**
Female Nonequity Partners **45%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **13%**

WHAT WE LOVE This 90-year-old Houston-based firm, with 16 offices worldwide, aims to create a gender-neutral work environment where men and women support one another. The firm has a long history of supporting women and hired its first female lawyer back in 1956. Fulbright & Jaworski has a standing committee made up of male and female lawyers devoted to retaining and advancing women lawyers. Its goals—for women to become significant leaders in the firm, to be involved in premium work and business opportunities and to be able to meet their family obligations while achieving career success—are woven into the fabric of the firm and are reflected in the numbers: Three of the seven executive committee members are women. The partners-in-charge of the New York and London offices are women. And 48% of the firm's associates and 49% of the firm's senior associates are women.

GODFREY & KAHN

Female Equity Partners **18%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **6%**

WHAT WE LOVE Although this Milwaukee-based firm has six offices nationwide and more than 170 lawyers, it prides itself on creating a supportive, progressive culture that cares. Its alternative work schedules are customized to meet the needs of each lawyer, and it demonstrates continued willingness to accept nontraditional work arrangements, including telecommuting, job-sharing and annualized-hours arrangements. From the moment a lawyer arrives at the firm, her professional and personal development is supported through one-on-one advising and formal training programs. Mentoring programs are aimed not only at teaching skills but also at helping with work life issues.

GIBBONS

Female Equity Partners **16%**
Female Nonequity Partners **23%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE There are three formal mentoring programs for women at this Newark, NJ-based firm, which has built a reputation of supporting women in a demanding profession. All associates are paired with a director who helps them integrate into firm life and identify opportunities for growth; all associates are placed in associate mentoring groups; and the firm's mentoring circles create more support networks where women can share ways of balancing work and family needs. This focus on helping women establish, maintain and nurture close relationships with other women has translated into success for women at the highest levels of the firm: In 2006, the firm elevated five women attorneys—two of them part-time employees—to director and counsel positions, the first time an entire new director/counsel class was made up solely of women. Since 2006, every new class of directors and counsels has been 30% to 50% women.



Godfrey & Kahn litigation associate Tristan Breedlove

GOODWIN PROCTER

Female Equity Partners **12%** Female Nonequity Partners **29%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE A culture of respecting and supporting women's leadership permeates this Boston-based firm, led by Regina Pisa, its first woman chair and managing partner. Passionately committed to the advancement of women, she established and fully supports the firm's partner-led Women's Initiative, an engine of ideas and innovative approaches to the firm's structural evolution. For example, historically, bias in how law firms assign associates work has negatively impacted women. To ensure consistency and fairness, this nine-office firm now employs six former lawyers—currently all women—who act as confidential intermediaries between associates and partners and help women associates plan their careers and obtain assignments. The firm also has a progressive approach to flexible work schedules. Lawyers can reduce their schedules to as low as 60%. Some women choose to work five days a week and leave early every day; others might work four days and take one day off; still others might choose to work hard for a week on a deal or a case and then take the next week or two off.

GRAY PLANT MOOTY LAW FIRM

Female Equity Partners **26%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **17%**

WHAT WE LOVE Minneapolis-based Gray Plant Mooty has created a firmwide culture of trust, respect and support for its women attorneys, including its working moms. The culture is lived and breathed from the top down: A working-mom attorney was named managing officer in 2007, the first woman to hold that position in this three-office firm's 140-year history. That same year, a woman was named executive director. In addition, 33% of its lawyers are women, and 31% of its practice groups are chaired by women. As part of its commitment to providing a balanced work life environment, the firm has one of the lowest billable-hours requirements in a major legal market. And the firm doesn't just pay lip service to its parental leave policy; all eligible associates who are expecting or adopting a child are actively encouraged to take advantage of this benefit.



Gray Plant Mooty shareholder Sarah Duniway and her family

HANSON BRIDGETT

Female Equity Partners **27%**
Female Nonequity Partners **32%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **18%**

WHAT WE LOVE Recognizing that work-location flexibility helps its lawyers balance work and personal needs, this San Francisco-based firm enthusiastically supports the option of telecommuting, through technology systems that allow attorneys to set up workstations at any remote location and through an IT support system that provides round-the-clock assistance. The four-office firm offers a unique and highly successful mentoring program, in which attorneys select their own formal mentors, rather than having one assigned to them. Every year the associates choose a Mentor of the Year, who receives an all-expense-paid trip to Hawaii. Women are consistently gaining key leadership roles at the firm: In the past two years, two of the three nonequity partners promoted to equity partner were women, and one of the women was working a reduced-hours schedule. Ten associates were elevated to senior counsel in the same time period; six were women, including four working mothers. Other perks: an on-site exercise room, locker room, on-site yoga and regular massages.



Hanson Bridgett senior counsel Annette Mathai-Jackson and daughter Aleah Frances, 1

HOLLAND & HART

Female Equity Partners **23%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **17%**

WHAT WE LOVE Denver-based Holland & Hart prides itself on its diversity and is committed to fostering and attracting diverse lawyers, including women. The 15-office firm has a history of progressive policymaking. For example, it has had a reduced-hours policy in place since 1986, when that kind of policy was virtually unheard of—and the attorneys at this firm actually use it. Because the firm recognizes that lawyers who work less than full-time are just as committed to the firm as their peers, attorneys working reduced hours are eligible for partnership and for management positions. Women have historically thrived in leadership roles at the firm, and in the last 20 years, three women have acted as managing partner and chair. The firm also offers complete health- and life-insurance benefits to same-sex domestic partners of employees.

HOLLAND & KNIGHT

Female Equity Partners **15%** Female Nonequity Partners **22%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **10%**

WHAT WE LOVE Each year, this Miami-based firm selects a group of talented women lawyers to participate in its Rising Star program—a dynamic and intensive yearlong program of leadership, marketing, management, skill development and professional mentoring. Graduates of the program have become leaders within the firm, and some have gone on to high-level positions at large companies. The unique program reflects the 21-office firm's commitment to the advancement of its women lawyers. And this long-standing core value has made a difference: Women occupy or have occupied almost every level of management. Seven women serve on the 24-member committee charged with governing the firm, and for ten years, the committee was chaired by a woman. The firm's 200-member real estate section is led by a woman.

Holland & Knight partner and Women's Initiative chair Tammy Knight



Honigman partner Tara Mahoney and daughter Ryen, 1



HONIGMAN MILLER SCHWARTZ AND COHN

Female Equity Partners **17%**
Female Nonequity Partners **35%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **9%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Detroit-based firm continues to invest in attracting and supporting women lawyers. The firm has established a formal process for requesting and monitoring alternative work schedules. Last year, both lawyers promoted to equity partner were women. The five-office firm recently retained a nationally renowned consultant to analyze its diversity practices and identify areas of improvement. As a result, the firm completely reworked its associate and nonequity partner evaluation process. Evaluations are now based on identified core competencies and clearly establish the benchmark goals required to become equity partner. The firm boasts a wide array of support networks—from affinity groups organized around common interests (a few: parents; wine; arts; cultural diversity) to a buddy system that assigns a junior attorney to associates to answer any question, no matter how “dumb.”

HUNTON & WILLIAMS

Female Equity Partners **17%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **9%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Washington, DC-based firm first established its reduced-hours/flexible-work program 20 years ago. Then, in 2007, the 18-office firm expanded its policy to create a gender-neutral program. As part of its long-standing commitment to flexibility and work life balance, the firm also offers a unique program that allows lawyers to take off up to five years to focus on personal demands. During that time, the lawyer can do no work at all or may take on discrete projects as schedules permit. Over the past two years, two female partners have been elected office managing partners, in New York City and Raleigh, NC. The firm's second-largest office, in Washington, DC, also has a female managing partner. A nice perk: Recognizing how difficult it can be to keep up with personal errands when working long hours or traveling, the firm offers a concierge service.

JENNER & BLOCK

Female Equity Partners **17%**
Female Nonequity Partners **25%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **10%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Chicago-based firm, one of the few large firms with a female managing partner, is at the forefront of having women attorneys in leadership positions. In 2010, the firm promoted six women associates to partner—50% of the new partner class. Also in 2010, the firm's diversity and hiring committees recommitted to attracting more women law students, and the initiatives proved successful: Women make up 51% of the firm's 2011 summer class. The four-office firm offers a flexible reduced-schedule program designed to allow working mothers the opportunity to adjust their schedules at any time throughout the year, as well as a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave for associates and 21 weeks for partners.



Jenner & Block partner Kenyanna M. Scott

KATTEN MUCHIN ROSENMAN

Female Equity Partners **18%** Female Nonequity Partners **31%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **5%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women occupy leadership roles at all levels of this Chicago-based seven-office firm, and today's firm leaders, both men and women, actively promote the women leaders of tomorrow. For example, in partnership with Akina, a national consulting, training and coaching firm that is entirely women-owned, the firm provides its women attorneys with specialized business development training, including one-on-one coaching for select high-potential women partners. To promote work life balance, all attorneys can pursue a flexible schedule, including those moving toward income or equity partnership. For primary caregivers returning from maternity or adoption leave, the firm offers a 60/60/80 program to ease the transition back to work. The three-month program consists of a 60% work schedule for the first two months and an 80% work schedule for the third month. Participants' billable-hours targets are reduced to reflect the reduced work schedule.

KRAMER LEVIN NAFTALIS & FRANKEL

Female Equity Partners **15%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE Behind a pledged commitment to the retention and promotion of women at this New York City-based firm, three out of five lawyers promoted to partner in 2010 were women. All associates have access to leadership and management training, and last year 80% of the firm's female associates participated in the training. The firm's progressive approach to flextime means reduced hours do not impact election to partnership. Though there's no formal flex policy, the firm allows attorneys to arrange their work schedules around their personal schedules. The firm offers a very generous 26 weeks of fully paid maternity leave, and last year 45% of women attorneys returning from maternity leave opted for a reduced-hours schedule.

LITTLER MENDELSON

Female Equity Partners **27%** Female Nonequity Partners **44%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **4%**

WHAT WE LOVE This San Francisco-based 50-office firm launched the Women's Leadership Initiative in 2008 to ensure that women attorneys achieve positions of power and influence. The aim of this program, led by Littler attorneys with the assistance of outside consultants, is to teach women how to move into leadership positions. The firm's commitment to female power is reflected in the numbers: Women make up 38% of the nominating committee, 25% of the board of directors and 24% of the managing shareholders committee. In addition, firmwide, 31% of all practice group leaders are women. And the future looks increasingly rosy: Last year, more than half (60%) of the lawyers promoted to equity partner were women.

LATHAM & WATKINS

Female Equity Partners **16%**
Female Nonequity Partners **30%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **5%**

WHAT WE LOVE The culture at this global firm, with ten offices in the United States and 20 offices worldwide, is collegial, and the management style is consensus based. Recognizing the value of teamwork, the firm invites associates to participate in the committee system through which it's managed, providing them with an exceptional opportunity for leadership and management training. Women fill many leadership roles: The chair of the committee responsible for deciding equity partnership is a woman, and 19 other women sit on the 51-member committee; additionally, three of the firm's 14 managing partners are women. The firm also supports both reduced-pace schedules and annualized hours for those who wish to use them. And each and every associate working a reduced-pace schedule is paired with a coordinator who serves as a resource.

LINDQUIST & VENNUM

Female Equity Partners **20%**
Female Nonequity Partners **24%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **14%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Minneapolis-based firm provides leadership opportunities for its women attorneys through its Millennia Leaders program, which offers intensive leadership training for women followed by monthly meetings, plus a network of businesswomen for future relationships. The firm also has a partnership training program for all associates and nonequity partners and retains an external coaching firm to assist senior associates and nonequity partners (over a two-year period) with developing and implementing business plans, increasing marketing skills and balancing work life issues. Women in top spots include the managing partner at the Denver office, the two women who sit on the firm's seven-member executive committee and the six women who sit on the 23-member committee responsible for deciding equity partnership.

Littler
shareholder
Natalie Pierce
and daughter
Rachel, 2



MANATT, PHELPS & PHILLIPS

Female Equity Partners **18%** Female Nonequity Partners **25%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE A flexible, progressive approach informs this Los Angeles–based firm’s forward-thinking programs. Women lawyers report a highly hospitable environment where they are able to set their own schedules, subject only to client needs and demands, and report that they don’t feel judged when they make choices to spend time with family. The firm supports varying work schedules that allow attorneys to work outside traditional models—reduced-hours schedules, annualized hours, flextime, telecommuting—while staying on track for partner. The firm’s Women’s Initiative links female lawyers across the eight nationwide offices into a single supportive community, and the intranet connects women across time zones. Of the top ten rainmakers at the firm, three are women.



Cover mom and McGuireWoods partner Kim Cacheris and daughters Madison, 11, and Gabrielle, 9

McGUIREWOODS

Female Equity Partners **11%**
Female Nonequity Partners **21%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **6%**

WHAT WE LOVE The firm supports its women lawyers through a variety of initiatives, ranging from new, firmwide rainmaker training exclusively for women to generous parental-leave benefits. The Richmond, VA–based firm’s written reduced-hours and flextime policies mean lawyers can work a minimum of 60% of billable-hours targets and remain eligible for partnership, raises and prorated bonuses. Lawyers can choose to work reduced hours or flex-time at any point in their careers and for a variety of reasons, not necessarily child-related. The 19-office firm offers a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and also allows new-mother associates to take a six-month return-to-work ramp-up: They have a 20% reduction in their billable-hours target with no change in pay, regardless of the amount of parental leave taken.

MORRISON & FOERSTER

Female Equity Partners **19%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **21%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women hold key leadership positions at this San Francisco–based 15-office firm: A woman is managing partner, and a woman is chair of the committee that decides equity partnership. Not only does the firm offer a progressive reduced-hours policy for all its lawyers, but almost a quarter of lawyers (21%) opt to take advantage of this policy. Lawyers working reduced hours are still eligible for bonuses and equity partnership, and benefit from an administrator who is responsible for making sure they’re getting quality assignments. The firm also sponsors office-specific events for women attorneys that range from social gatherings to lunch-meeting discussions of topics of particular interest to women. The popular Women on Wednesdays series highlights the firm’s women partners, with the goal of providing career advice and showcasing successful women. The firm offers a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave.

NEAL, GERBER & EISENBERG

Female Equity Partners **15%**
Female Nonequity Partners **44%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **13%**

WHAT WE LOVE Since its inception in 1986, this Chicago-based one-office firm has had attorneys working reduced hours, and by 2010, 35% of women attorneys and 43% of women partners were taking advantage of the reduced-hours option. Women hold key leadership positions across the firm: Half of the firm’s committees are chaired or co-chaired by women, and almost 20% of practice group leaders are women. In 2010, the firm rolled out Women Attorney Networking Teams to provide women lawyers with increased opportunities to network internally and build meaningful personal and mentoring relationships with colleagues. The Women’s Network, established five years ago and guided by a cross-section of the firm’s women, draws its inspiration from the theme “Lift as We Climb,” which serves as a reminder to reach out and help others along the path to personal and professional achievement.

Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg associate Stephanie B. Vasconcellos and son JJ, 1





Nilan Johnson Lewis shareholders Amanda Cialkowski (left) and Cynthia Arends

NILAN JOHNSON LEWIS

Female Equity Partners **37%** Female Nonequity Partners **82%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **2%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women regularly comprise the majority at this Minneapolis-based firm, where 52% of all the attorneys are women, and women hold four out of five of the firm's senior administrative roles. Last year, all three of the associates promoted to shareholder positions were women and mothers, and one was elected shareholder while working on a reduced-hours schedule and just two weeks before she gave birth to her third child. Another noteworthy statistic: 53% of the firm's shareholders are women—almost three times the national average. The firm actively sets out to do things differently and to support policies geared toward retaining and promoting women, whether through its progressive approach to flextime or through its active mentoring program, which is chaired by a female shareholder. Currently, 60% of the firm's mentors are women, and all new associates are assigned a shareholder mentor to guide and support them through their associate years. The firm has an intranet page in the spirit of Facebook, which allows employees to share their "status" with all their colleagues. This up-to-the-minute list of who's working from home or off-site and who's arriving later or leaving earlier allows employees to remain visible even when they're not present and effectively snubs the "face time" and "bed check" pressures often associated with law-firm life. The firm has effectively created a culture where it's acceptable to have a life while succeeding in a legal career.

ORRICK, HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE

Female Equity Partners **17%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE This New York City-based 24-office firm created a diversity committee back in 1990, one of the first in a major law firm, and in 2003 created a Women's Initiative to focus exclusively on women's issues. Each year the partner in charge of the initiative meets with the chair of the firm and the executive committee to discuss progress and priorities. One of the initiative's priorities is to enhance women's business development skills. In 2010, the firm began a yearlong intensive business development program for women partners, which centers around developing and implementing business plans with measurable results. The firm has a progressive alternative work-schedule policy overseen by a partner who actively works with participants to ensure that their arrangements are successful.

PAUL HASTINGS

Female Equity Partners **15%**
Female Nonequity Partners **15%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Los Angeles-based firm maintains high standards in leadership diversity: Women fill nearly 30% of firm management positions, and two of the five lawyers deciding equity partners are women. In 2009, the 18-office international firm launched its official Women's Initiative, which aims to sponsor women's organizations globally, expand women's attorney networks, increase promotion of women leaders and curate an ongoing series of women-focused professional development events. In 2010, the firm launched an innovative video series, "Profiles on Diversity," to showcase its diverse leadership; the first series focused on the women in the employment practice in Los Angeles. The firm offers a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and ten weeks of paid paternity leave.



Paul Hastings L.A. partner Jennifer St. John and sons Jack, 5, and Dalton, 8

PAUL, WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON & GARRISON

Female Equity Partners **20%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE Almost half of the counsel at this New York City-based firm are women, and women may well pass the 50% mark soon. As part of the firm's ongoing efforts to promote the advancement of its female attorneys, every woman associate and counsel in the firm's U.S. offices joins a networking group led by a woman partner. The seven-office firm offers a progressive alternative schedule program. Reduced-hours schedules are available from the time a lawyer joins the firm and are an option for all associates and counsel for any reason, regardless of family status or requirements. Lawyers working reduced hours are eligible for bonuses and for partnership. In addition, the firm not only offers a generous 18 weeks of paid parental leave but has an innovative transition program, in which associates and counsel receive up to three months of fully paid full-time child care at a Bright Horizons center one block from the New York City office. Returning moms also automatically have the option to work reduced hours for up to a year.

PERKINS COIE

Female Equity Partners **16%** Female Nonequity Partners **28%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **19%**

WHAT WE LOVE To ensure that no attorney falls through the cracks at this international firm based in Seattle, every associate has a designated mentor to assist in career development. The 17-office firm also has a successful alternative schedule program. Both men and women take advantage of the flex options, which contributes to the options' credibility and success. The firm is committed to providing leadership opportunities for women, and three of the four key leadership impact committees are chaired by women, including the partner compensation committee and the executive committee. The managing partner of the firm's largest office is a woman, and in the last two years, 35% of the newly promoted partnership classes were women. The firm continually strives to identify and train future women leaders. For example, its Women's Forum circulates an annual survey of all women attorneys to identify those interested in serving in leadership positions.



Perkins Coie partner Julia Markley at the Partner Planning Conference with kids Gus, 6, and Zorina Markley Johnson, 2

PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN

Female Equity Partners **18%**
Female Nonequity Partners **22%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **26%**

WHAT WE LOVE All partners and counsel at this New York City-based firm are invited to participate in a six-week business development program that includes a series of one-on-one coaching activities to help attorneys achieve business development objectives and goals. Understanding that "one size does not fit all" when it comes to business development, the program teaches authentic, professional tactics for how to create conversations, events and alliances that lead to new business. The 14-office international firm is proud of its responsiveness to working mothers' concerns. For example, when women attorneys were reporting that most business networking events take place in the evenings, when they have important family obligations, and voicing an interest in social networking options, the firm brought in a social media coach to teach a four-part course on social-networking basics. The firm also has a progressive and popular alternative schedule program, offering flextime, reduced hours, annualized hours and full-time telecommuting while maintaining lawyers' eligibility for bonuses and partnership.

QUARLES & BRADY

Female Equity Partners **20%** Female Nonequity Partners **49%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE Appreciating that diverse perspectives lead to more sophisticated client service, this Milwaukee-based firm is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace. Women benefit from the progressive culture and the commitment to make diversity a part of the firm's infrastructure: The managing partners at five of this firm's eight offices—including the largest—are women. Women hold 40% of all leadership roles at the firm, and three women serve on the 12-person executive committee. The firm prides itself on its mentoring program, and not only offers mentors to all new associates but also ensures that every minority associate is assigned a second mentor. The firm also extends insurance coverage and applicable policies to domestic partners and their children.

SEYFARTH SHAW

Female Equity Partners **13%** Female Nonequity Partners **29%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women attorneys at this Chicago-based firm tout its "culture of flexibility," which enables them to lead and excel. In 2010, 75% of partner promotions were women. The firm has five national practice departments, and two are led by women. Women attorneys also hold leadership roles on the firm's most influential committees: executive, compensation, hiring and administrative. The firm, with 12 offices worldwide, also recognizes that not all talented lawyers want to be partners and has developed a nonpartnership track to provide more flexibility in career options. The firm offers a progressive alternative schedule program backed up by robust technology and a 24-hour national help desk to make telecommuting easy and effective, prorated annualized hours and unlimited vacation days and sick days.

SHOOK, HARDY & BACON

Female Equity Partners **24%** Female Nonequity Partners **22%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **9%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Kansas City, MO–based firm with nine offices worldwide seeks out cutting-edge solutions to meet the needs of women attorneys. In 2010, the firm initiated its Success Profile Project, which includes revising its mentoring program to include mentoring circles, revamping the orientation process and developing sample evaluations for associates that can be viewed on the firm’s intranet site. The firm has a women’s management council, made up of women partners, whose aim is to support its women lawyers in developing the necessary legal skills, mentoring relationships and marketing opportunities to support their promotion into partnership. The firm’s alternative-work-schedule policy allows attorneys working reduced schedules to stay on track for partner, and a partner at the firm works with them to help with scheduling and career development. The firm also provides training for attorneys on how to successfully manage their reduced schedules.

SIDLEY AUSTIN

Female Equity Partners **22%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE One item on partners’ annual evaluations at this Chicago-based firm asks them to detail their personal efforts to strengthen the firm’s gender diversity. These assessments contribute to partner compensation decisions. This is just one way this international firm, with 17 offices worldwide, holds its lawyers accountable for the success of its women’s initiatives. Nearly 45% of its associates are women, as were 50% of the class of lawyers promoted to partnership in the United States in 2010. The firm has a progressive reduced-hours program, and 20% of women lawyers and 24% of women partners worked on a reduced-hours basis in 2010 while remaining on partnership track, retaining all benefits and maintaining bonus eligibility.

SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM

Female Equity Partners **18%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE As part of a strategy to create a wide range of robust programs to support women attorneys, this New York City–based firm, with 23 offices worldwide, is rolling out a mentoring program for all junior associates. The program, which extends mentoring relationships from one year to at least three, provides associates with formal and informal training and continuous feedback and offers resources to help achieve successful cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring relationships. The firm also offers a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and, through a program launched in 2006—since replicated by other firms—allows working parents to leave for up to three years while maintaining their ties to the firm.

STEPTOE & JOHNSON

Female Equity Partners **17%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **7%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Washington, DC–based firm is widely recognized as a democratic, collegial firm. Key aspects of its culture help lawyers participate in the life of the firm and its decision-making. For example, important decisions are made through the vote of the partners, with each partner accorded a single vote. This means firm leadership has to engage with all partners as it sets its course. Women play important leadership roles within the firm. In 2010, they held three of the eight elected positions on the executive committee, the firm’s governing body. A woman leads the elected compensation committee, the firm’s chief diversity partner is a woman, and women serve as department heads, deputies and practice group leaders. They’re also significant rainmakers.

Sidley Austin’s Elizabeth McCloy and daughter Elizabeth



THOMPSON HINE

Female Equity Partners **17%** Female Nonequity Partners **32%**
Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Cleveland-based firm, with seven offices nationwide, works to promote women’s professional growth and their well-being. Two mentoring programs are in place to make sure women are getting the support they need to be successful. A “mother-to-be” mentoring program pairs each expectant mother with a mentor who provides one-on-one counsel regarding transitioning to a leave of absence, arrangements for a flexible schedule, work life balance and all of the issues surrounding the return to work. Participants in the firm’s 360 Degree Mentoring Program meet monthly in mentoring circles comprised of women lawyers at various stages in their careers—from first-year associates to the most senior partners—to discuss a wide range of topics, from work life balance issues to rainmaking skills. In 2010, women accounted for approximately 22% of the firm’s executive committee and 31% of the firm’s practice group leaders.

VINSON & ELKINS

Female Equity Partners **20%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE This Houston-based firm, with 14 offices worldwide, has an external women's initiative advisory board made up of leaders from academia, philanthropic entities, government and business. This support helps the firm's women's initiatives thrive. The board monitors progress, advises on programs and provides a report card biannually. One recent initiative consists of six hour-long seminars designed to enhance and accelerate the leadership skills of midlevel women associates, with topics ranging from "stepping up to leadership" to "building a strategic network" and "managing complicated conversations." The feedback was so overwhelmingly positive that plans are under way to launch the series in the firm's London, Asia and Middle East offices. Five women sit on the 20-member committee responsible for equity partner compensation.

Wilmer Hale Women's Leadership Initiative event



WILMER CUTLER PICKERING HALE AND DORR

Female Equity Partners **24%** Lawyers Working Reduced Hours **8%**

WHAT WE LOVE Women are thriving at this Washington, DC-based firm, which has 12 offices worldwide. The chair of the committee responsible for deciding equity partner is a woman, and the percentage of women promoted to partnership has increased steadily since 2009. In 2009 and 2010, 40% and 56%, respectively, of partner promotions were women. This year the firm also announced the election of the first woman co-managing partner. The firm recognizes that certain issues predominantly affect women attorneys, including the historical lack of women mentors at the upper levels of the profession and the unique obstacles faced by women in trying to build client relationships and develop business. In response, it focuses on providing internal and external networks of women attorneys, business development training for women lawyers and career advancement and training programs tailored to meet their needs. The firm offers a generous 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and up to 12 consecutive months of parental leave. It also offers a three-month paid sabbatical to partners after ten years of service.

Methodology

The Application The 2011 National Association for Female Executives/Flex-Time Lawyers Best Law Firms for Women application includes nearly 500 questions on workforce; time off and leaves; child care; flexibility; leadership, compensation and advancement of women; and development and retention of women. It surveys female presence, roles, policies, programs and usage rates.

The Scoring The Working Mother Research Institute creates a scoring algorithm based on the previous year's benchmark results, which then determines the winners. All applicants receive feedback showing how they compare to other applicants; however, the names of applicants that do not make the list are kept confidential. Firm profiles are culled from the survey applications and reflect 2010 data.

How to Apply Registration for the 2012 National Association for Female Executives/Flex-Time Lawyers Best Law Firms for Women is now live at wmmsurveys.com. Law firms are eligible to apply if they have 50 or more U.S. lawyers.

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