

THE LEGAL STAFFING REPORT

Attract | Onboard | Retain

HIRING AND EMPOWERING
SOLUTIONS®

A LETTER FROM MOLLY



Dear Legal Leaders,

I wrote this guide to help you navigate the complexities of legal hiring, attract the best candidates, and, most importantly, retain them for long-term success. Think of this as the ultimate "dating guide" for hiring, onboarding, and keeping the perfect match for your law firm.

Let's dive in and transform the way you hire, onboard and retain top legal talent.

In your corner,

Molly McGrath

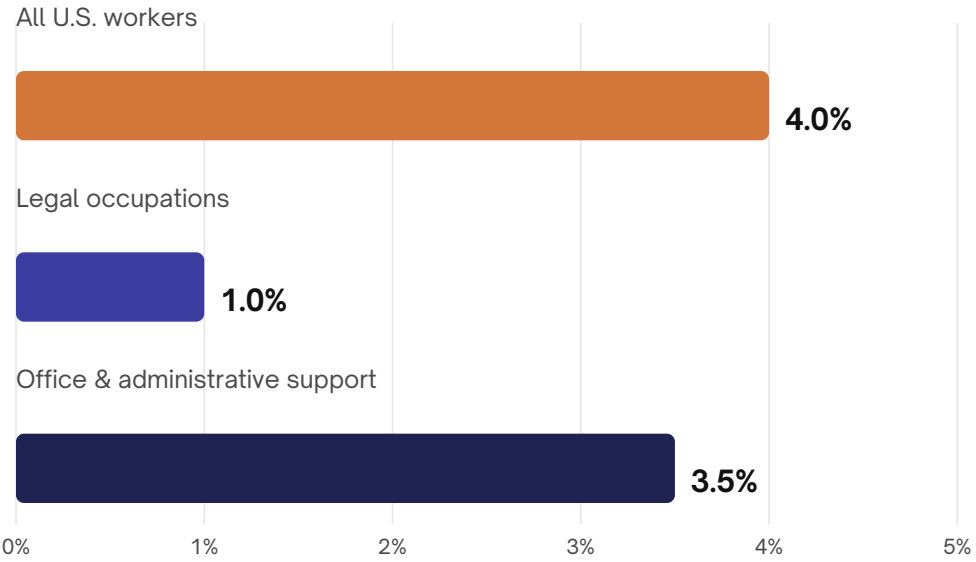
Founder, Hiring & Empowering Solutions®

THE STATE OF THE LEGAL HIRING LANDSCAPE

The legal job market is more competitive than ever. Firms are vying for top talent while candidates have more options than ever before. With thousands of job postings circulating at any given time, firms must differentiate themselves in order to attract high-quality candidates.

Key statistics:

- As of September 2026, the **unemployment rate** for legal occupations is 1.0%, compared with 4.0% for all U.S. workers.



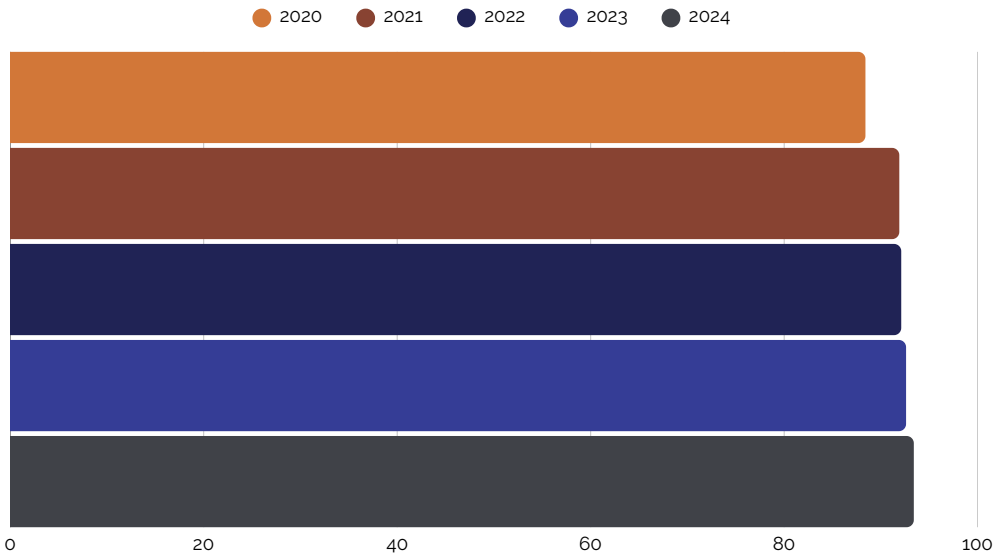
Unemployment rate, Sept. 2026. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (CPS)

- As of January 9, 2026, **Indeed's** data indicates that legal job postings in the U.S. have risen by 21.9% compared to the pre-pandemic baseline (February 1, 2020), reflecting increased demand for legal professionals.

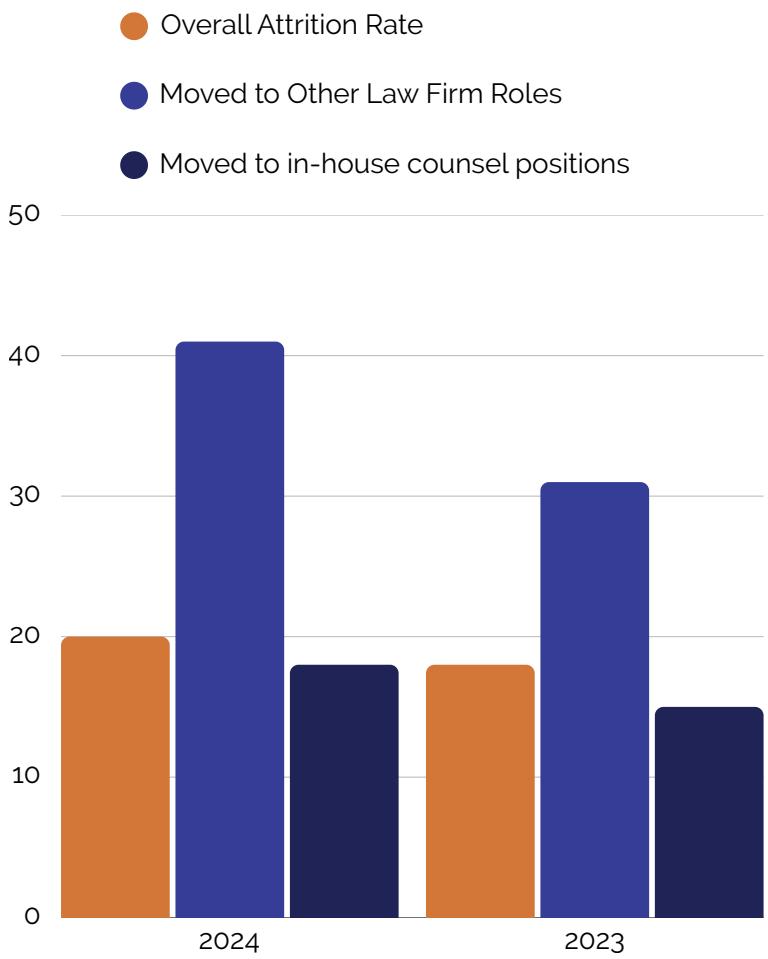


THE STATE OF THE LEGAL HIRING LANDSCAPE

- **Law Graduate Employment at Record High:** Law graduate employment is at a record high—NALP reports the Class of 2024 reached a 93.4% overall employment rate, along with the highest bar admission–required job placement rate NALP has ever recorded.



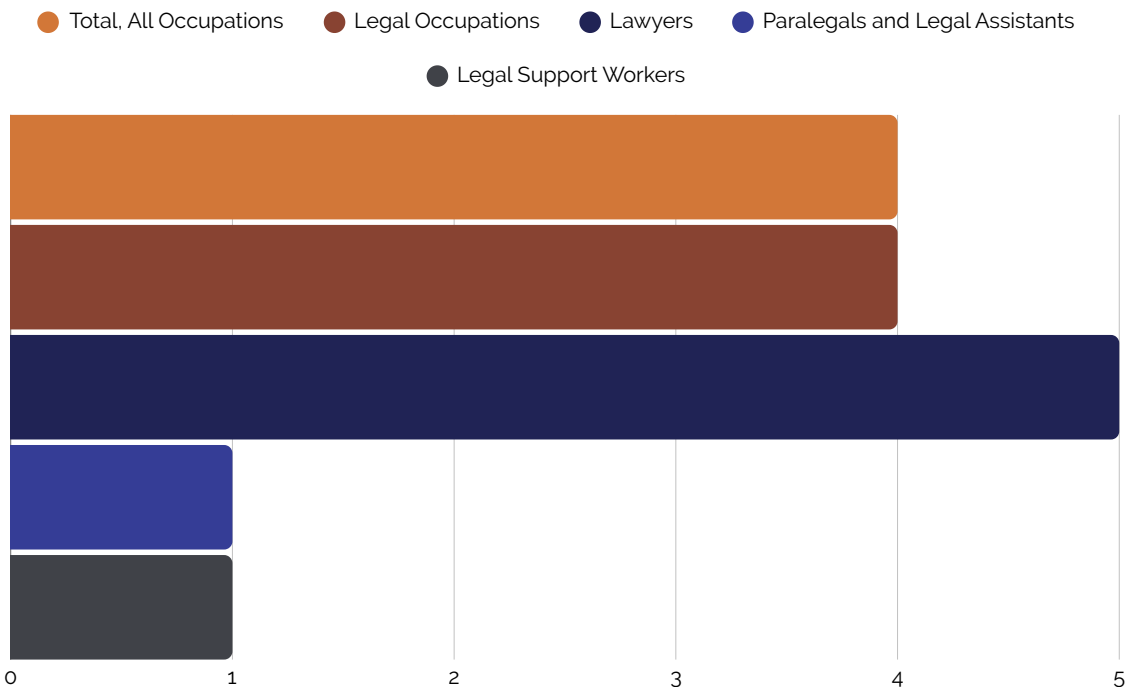
- **Associate Retention & Turnover Trends (2024):**
  - Overall associate attrition rate stood at 20%, up slightly from 2023's 18%, but still well below 2021's historic high of 26%.
  - Associate hiring rose in 2024, with entry-level hires outpacing laterals (55% vs. 45%), mainly driven by the largest firms.
  - Departing associates most often moved to other law firm roles or in-house counsel positions, and both increased in 2024 (41% vs. 31% in 2023; 18% vs. 15% in 2023).



Source: NALP Foundation

THE STATE OF THE LEGAL HIRING LANDSCAPE

- **Projected Job Openings:**
    - **For Lawyers:** The **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics** estimates 35,600 job openings for lawyers per year from 2024 to 2034, underscoring the industry's ongoing hiring challenges.



Percent change in employment, projected 2023-33
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

    - **Paralegal & Legal Assistant**: Job growth for **paralegals and legal assistants** is projected to show little or no change from 2024 to 2034.
        - Despite this, **37,300 openings** are expected annually, primarily due to workforce transitions and retirements.

The legal hiring landscape remains highly competitive, but firms that implement strategic hiring and retention practices can attract and retain top talent more effectively.

Top 10% of Legal Podcast



Episode #290

The House Rules of Engagement

Top Episodes:

- Episode 238: Why Can't My Employees Just Do Their Job
- Episode 253: Firing People is Part of Growing and Running a Law Firm
- Episode 257: Revamping Time Off Requests: A Call for Better Communication in Law Firms



Tune in!

With national podcaster and host, Molly McGrath

ARE YOU *SICK* OF LEGAL RECRUITERS WHO MAKE YOU DO THEIR JOB—AND CALL IT A 'SERVICE'?

Law firms turn to legal recruiters expecting a seamless hiring process, yet many find themselves encountering the same roadblocks they were trying to avoid. The most common frustrations we hear from firm owners and managing partners include:

- Resume Dumping: Recruiters only send resumes without managing the hiring process.
- Lack of Communication: Weeks can go by without an update—no clarity, no feedback, just them left in the dark.
- Superficial Screening: Recruiters fail to ask critical questions about salary expectations, culture, or turnover history.
- High Costs, Low Value: Traditional recruiters often charge between 20% to 30% of a candidate's first-year salary, often without delivering a hire that truly fits the firm's needs.



So, do law firms actually hate recruiters? **Not exactly.**

What they *hate* is wasting time, energy, and money on recruiters who don't treat hiring like the high-stakes process it is.

WHY WE ***DON'T*** BURN YOU OUT LIKE EVERY OTHER LEGAL RECRUITERS



WHY FLAT FEE RECRUITING IS THE SMARTEST CHOICE

We get it—most law firms dread recruiters. That's why we do things differently: **flat-fee pricing**, *split into 4 payments* with extreme accountability on our end, with a **6-month guarantee** and a **custom 6-month coaching and KPI onboarding plan** to set your new hire up for long-term success.

A flat fee retained search offers a more committed, results-driven approach. Why? Because when a firm invests in hiring upfront, recruiters work ten times harder to deliver results.

Think of it this way: If an attorney took on a client without a retainer, would they be as invested in the case? The second money is exchanged, integrity and accountability are in full force. The same principle applies to hiring—when recruiters have skin in the game, they work harder to find the right candidate, not just any candidate.

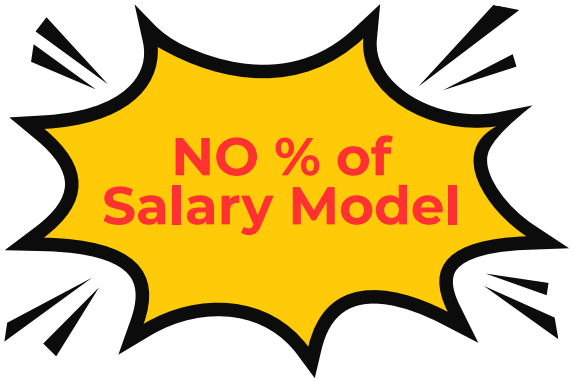
At Hiring & Empowering Solutions®, we go beyond the standard recruitment model by:

WHAT SETS US APART?

FLAT FEE

6-MONTH GUARANTEE

6-MONTH ONBOARDING PROGRAM



Conducting phone and video interviews before presenting candidates. Asking critical, powerful questions to uncover hiring challenges.

Bringing 30+ years of legal consulting expertise to every placement. Offering an industry-leading six-month guarantee—unlike the standard 90-day coverage offered by most recruiters.

A flat fee retained search isn't just about finding a candidate—it's about ensuring long-term success for both the hire and your law firm.

THE SMART HIRE SOLUTION® PROCESS: A STEP-BY STEP GUIDE

Step 1: Crafting Magnetic Job Postings



We go far beyond a quick intake call to review remote status, salary, or benefits. **We listen deeply for the things your job requirements can't tell us**—your tone, team dynamic, and the unspoken expectations that shape your culture.

We capture the heartbeat of your firm. This is EQ-first hiring, where we attract human beings, not human doings. Because top talent isn't looking—they're waiting to feel seen.

"The best candidates don't need a new job. They need a new vision for where they belong."

Our custom job descriptions magnetize aligned talent—people who *fit*, not just people who qualify.

Step 2: Comprehensive Screening & Interviewing

Your time is your greatest asset. That's why **we do all the heavy lifting**—from resume reviews to multi-layer interviews—so you only meet the top 1%, pre-vetted for skill, professionalism, and alignment, who are truly worth your time.

- **We review the resumes.** You stay focused on revenue-producing activities.
- **We conduct our signature 5-Minute EQ Interview.** Our experts extract red flags and green lights in minutes.
- **We handle the strategic video interviews.** We record them and send them to you. We assess energy, executive presence, and communication before they land in your inbox.
- **We conduct deep background checks** (criminal + social) before your firm's name is even mentioned.
- **We provide a proven 32-question framework** to uncover mindset, beliefs, and emotional intelligence—no fluff.
- **We run real talent hiring assessments,** a proven approach that helps business owners make smarter hiring decisions, unlock team potential, and drive measurable growth.

"We don't guess. We guide. We replace gut feelings with proven frameworks and data-driven confidence."

THE SMART HIRE SOLUTION® PROCESS: A STEP-BY STEP GUIDE

Step 3: Making the Offer & Closing the Deal

Great candidates have options. We help you become the obvious one.



We co-create a **WIN/WIN offer** package that honors your compensation philosophy and their expectations. You'll never again lose top talent in the offer stage because of unclear positioning or missed details.

"Hiring should feel exciting—not like a negotiation battle."

We eliminate the stress of offer creation and walk you through how to confidently secure your ideal hire.

Step 4: Structured Onboarding & Integration

Hiring is only the beginning. The real ROI happens after the offer letter is signed.

That's why we deliver our customized 6-month onboarding and accountability program. We help you nurture and retain talent by guiding your team through clear communication, collaboration, and review cycles.

- **"Communication: The Definition of Success" Training** to align your team around how to work together, not just with each other.
- **Customized 30/60/90/120/150/180-day review system** to assess performance, values alignment, and next-level goals.
- **Our exclusive 180-Day Replacement Guarantee**—because we believe in the power of the right hire, and we stand behind it. If they don't work out, we keep recruiting until someone sticks—guaranteed for the full 180 days.

"Onboarding isn't paperwork. It's partnership."

THE SMART HIRE SOLUTION® PROCESS: A STEP-BY STEP GUIDE

Step 5: Retention—We Help You Keep the Ones Worth Keeping

Hiring is half the equation. Retention is where most firms lose traction—and talent.

We go beyond hiring by embedding retention rituals into your culture, so your best people stay, grow, and thrive.



"Retention isn't about keeping people—it's about keeping them aligned, engaged, and evolving."

We Aren't Just a Recruiting Firm. We're Your Strategic Partner

With 28+ years of law firm management consulting, coaching, and legal-industry leadership, we don't just help you hire—we help you build a team that stays, scales, and sells your vision from the inside out.

If HR fills a seat, we fill a gap. The one between where your firm is and where it's meant to go.

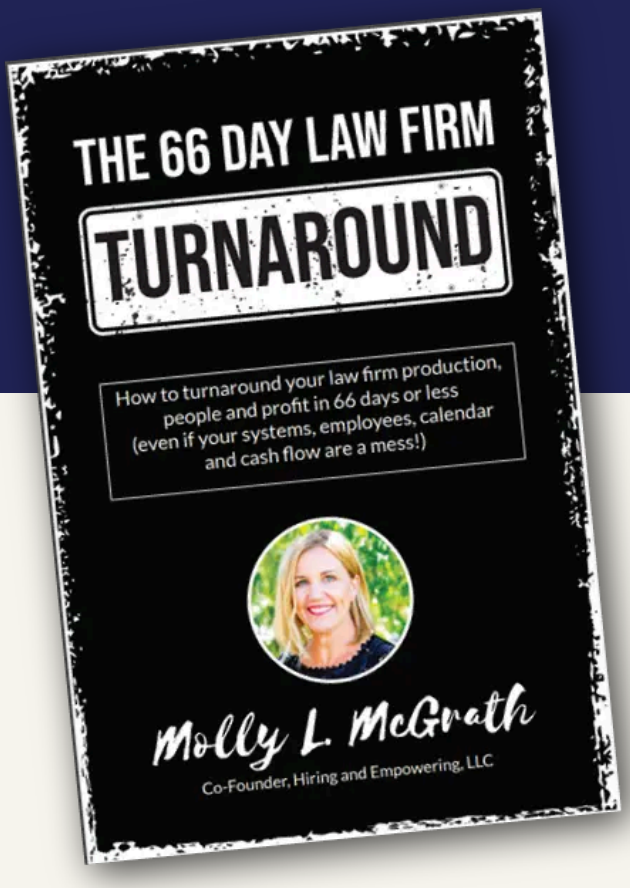
Teach | Show | Do | Go | Grow

THE SMART HIRE SOLUTION®
CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION PROCESS:



TURN AROUND YOUR PEOPLE, PROCESS, PRODUCTIVITY & PROFIT IN 66-DAYS OR LESS, GUARANTEED!

Results-driven coaching & consulting for law firms.



Get Your Free Copy

RISE OF CONTRACT AND OVERSEAS LEGAL STAFFING: 24/7 CASE WORK

Let's face it—traditional, full-time hires aren't always the most efficient or cost-effective route. With rising overhead, unpredictable case volume, and the constant pressure to stay lean without sacrificing client service, law firms are rethinking their staffing models.

That's why more and more innovative firms are turning to *contract and overseas support*, including high-performing professionals through **VirtuStaff,** to fill critical gaps, extend coverage, and boost profitability without burnout.

Overseas Positions and Average Pay Rates:

- **Virtual Legal Assistants** – $8–$12 per hour
- **Paralegal Support** – $10–$15 per hour
- **Client Intake Specialists** – $7–$10 per hour
- **Case Managers** – $12–$18 per hour
- **Billing and Collections Support** – $8–$12 per hour

With the right support system, you can cover more ground, speed up turnaround times, and free your attorneys to focus on strategy—not spreadsheets.

This isn't about outsourcing for the sake of it. It's about building a smarter, more agile team—one that delivers consistent results and keeps your firm moving forward, no matter what's on the docket.







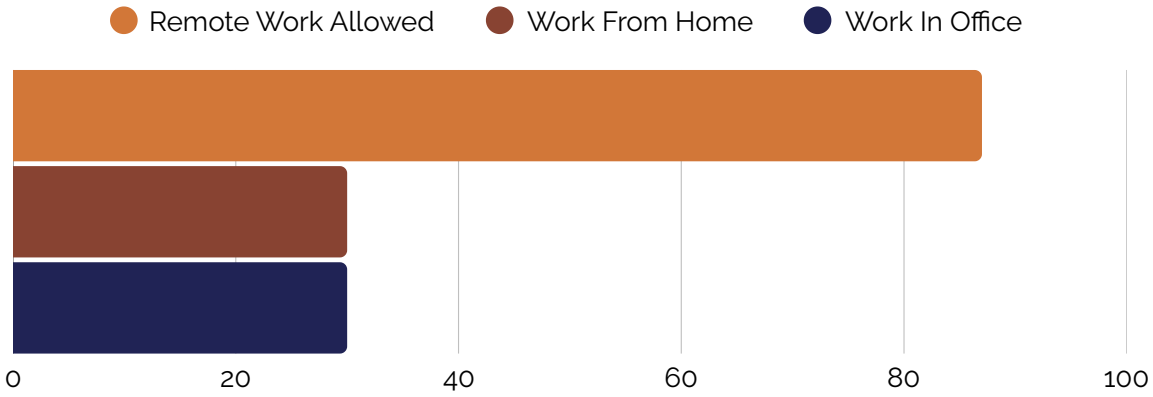


RISE OF CONTRACT AND OVERSEAS LEGAL STAFFING: 24/7 CASE WORK

Flexible Work is No Longer a Perk—It's a Competitive Edge

I've said this before, and I'll say this again: remote and hybrid work arrangements are here to stay, and the firms that embrace them are winning the talent game.

According to the **American Bar Association**, 87% of lawyers reported that their workplaces permit remote work. Approximately 30% of lawyers work from home almost all the time, while another 30% are in the office nearly full-time.



The takeaway? Flexibility is no longer optional.

If your firm is still treating it like a temporary pandemic policy, you're already behind.

The firms embracing remote and hybrid models aren't just keeping up—they're outpacing the competition in hiring, retention, and performance.

Top candidates want to know they'll be trusted to do their work, not micromanaged by outdated expectations. And when firms give that trust, they get loyalty, productivity, and a team that's actually excited to show up (virtually or otherwise).

This isn't about compromising on standards. It's about evolving with the industry and meeting legal professionals where they are.

LAW FIRM OWNERS, DO ANY OF THESE THOUGHTS CROSS YOUR MIND?

- **Is it possible to have a 100% remote team?**
- **Can I find qualified VAs with legal experience?**
- **How do I navigate overseas recruitment & regulations?**
- **I don't want to go through endless applications and resumes that don't meet my needs.**
- **I'm worried about communication, training, or data security.**

VIRTUSTAFF
BUILDS HIGH-PERFORMING VA TEAMS FOR LAW FIRMS **READY TO DOMINATE.**

Scan me

VIRTUSTAFF

Unleash VA Power: Recruit, Onboard, Train, Coach, and Empower – your law firm growth starts here!

THE VIRTUSTAFF HIRING PROCESS:

When you hire through **VirtuStaff**, you're not just getting a virtual assistant. You're gaining a high-performing team member aligned with your culture, KPIs, and vision without the overwhelm of doing it all yourself.

We handle everything: sourcing, screening, onboarding, training, and ongoing support—so you can finally scale your firm with confidence.

Here's How it Works:

Step 1: Clarify Your Needs

We begin with a **customized strategy session** to understand your firm's unique DNA. We get clear on your:

- Core values and firm culture
- Communication preferences
- Role-specific KPIs and metrics
- Existing workflows and pain points

Whether you're hiring for client care, intake, marketing, or administrative support, we map out the traits and skills needed to deliver measurable impact.

Step 2: Recruit + Vet

We source qualified, English-speaking professionals and
rigorously vet them for:

- Relevant skills and industry experience
- Communication and presence
- Cultural and time zone alignment

You'll only meet with the top candidates who are worthy of your time. No resume piles. No guesswork.

GLOBAL TALENT. LOCAL RESULTS.
ZERO HIRING REGRET.

SAVE UP TO 70%
COMPARED TO U.S.-BASED HIRES

THE VIRTUSTAFF HIRING PROCESS:

Step 3: Interview + Select

We organize and facilitate your interviews, equipping you with:

- Personality and work style assessments
- Interview feedback
- Our expert hiring recommendation based on your firm's goals

You stay in control of the final decision, without the stress of starting from scratch.

VIRTUSTAFF
builds high-performing VA teams for law firms ready to dominate.

Step 4: Onboard + Train

Once you say yes, we facilitate a seamless onboarding process. Your new hire is enrolled in our 12-week Law Firm Admin Bootcamp + Academy to ensure they're trained in productivity, leadership, and law firm systems from day one.

Step 5: Support + Guarantee

Our relationship doesn't end at placement. You get our 90-Day Replacement Guarantee

- Ongoing support and check-ins
- 12-week performance alignment coaching
- Clear KPIs, role clarity, and tools for success

If your hire isn't the right fit, we'll keep recruiting until someone sticks. We're not done until you have the right person in the right seat.

We get it. Overseas hiring can be a concern. Let VirtuStaff do it for you.

You don't need more hours in the day.
You need a VirtuStaff.

YOU DON'T NEED MORE HANDS... YOU NEED THE RIGHT HANDS.

Introducing VirtuStaff:
Recruit, Onboard, Train, Coach, and Empower

What if you could have a trained, loyal, full-time team member at a fraction of the cost... without sacrificing quality?

That's exactly what VirtuStaff delivers.

- **We don't just hand you a resume. We match your law firm with law firm-trained professionals who become an extension of your team.**
- **Our virtual hires are skilled in client communication, intake, billing, admin support, calendaring, CRM, and more—and they're supported by our systems of onboarding, training, and performance accountability.**
- **Save Up to 70% Compared to U.S.-Based Hires**

VIRTUSTAFF
BUILDS HIGH-PERFORMING
VA TEAMS FOR LAW
FIRMS **READY TO DOMINATE.**

You don't need more hours in the day.
You need a VirtuStaff.

Why Work With Us?

At Hiring & Empowering Solutions®, we don't just fill positions—we build thriving legal teams. Our Smart Hire Solution® goes far beyond traditional staffing. With a flat-fee structure, we handle everything from job ads to interviews, onboarding, training, and retention, ensuring your new hire becomes a valuable, profit-generating asset to your firm.

- ***Flat fee.*** *No wasted time. Just results.*
- *A* ***customized hiring, onboarding, and retention system*** *tailored to your firm.*
- *A* ***180-day placement guarantee****—because we believe in long-term success.*

Ready to transform your hiring process?

Let's build your dream team!

Schedule a free consultation today and take the guesswork out of hiring.

HIRING & EMPOWERING SOLUTIONS®

www.hiringandempowering.com