Where do Northeastern law graduates work?

One of the OAP’s first steps was to determine whether Northeastern law graduates, when compared to practicing lawyers from other law schools, tend to gravitate toward specific practice areas. Based on our preliminary findings, the answer appears to be “yes.”

There are 6,444 living Northeastern law graduates; our alumni/ae database contains current employment information on 4,939 (76.6%). A breakdown by practice setting is presented in Figure 1.

One of the best sources for comparative data on the legal profession is the After the JD study[^1], a national sample of lawyers who graduated from law school in 2000. To compare Northeastern law’s breakdown by practice setting with the profession as a whole, we contrast the After the JD sample with Northeastern law graduates who graduated within five years of 2000. In total, we assessed data on...

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[^1]: See Ronit Dinovitzer, et al., After the JD II: Second Results from a National Study of Legal Careers (American Bar Foundation, 2009) [known as “AJD Wave II”].
1,718 Northeastern law graduates in the classes of 1995 through 2005. As shown in Figure 2, many Northeastern law graduates do, in fact, tend to gravitate toward public interest (defined as legal aid, public defender and nonprofit advocacy organizations) and public service (defined as jobs in federal, state and local government) careers. In total, 32% of Northeastern law graduates go into these fields, compared to 19.7% nationally. Although private practice is the largest source of employment for both Northeastern and After the JD lawyers (47.8% and 55.0%, respectively), Northeastern law graduates are:

• 30% more likely to work in federal, state or local government
• More than three times as likely to work in the public interest/legal aid sector

In summary, Northeastern law appears to be distinctive in at least one post-graduate outcome: practice setting.

As we mine the relationship between legal education, career paths, personal and professional satisfaction, and lawyers’ broader impact on society, we look forward to sharing our findings with the Northeastern community, the academy and the profession.

If you would like to learn more about the OAP, or if you are interested in participating in the project — for example, attending a focus group, being interviewed or hosting an event to review interim findings — please contact OAP Administrator Claudia Zickell at c.zickell@neu.edu or (617) 373-5149.