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From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2022/05/30/pittsburgh-law-firms-increase-summer.html>

Summer associate ranks increase at most Pittsburgh law firms

May 30, 2022, 11:49am EDT **Updated: May 31, 2022, 8:34am EDT**

See Correction/Clarification at end of article

Burns White LLC has doubled the number of summer associates on board this year compared to 2021 while K&L Gates LLP upped the ranks by a third. Summer programs are underway or about to start at large and midsize law firms, as the majority return to an in-person influx of students.

Along with the experience of working with veteran attorneys and getting a feel for the firm's culture, with pay of course, most will receive a job offer in the fall when they return to campus for a final year of law school.

Based on information from a cross-section of Pittsburgh firms among the region's 15 largest, most have roughly the same number of summer associates as in 2021. But some made significant increases.



JAMES KUBUS

Sandrine Gibbons, a student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, is a Dickie McCamey Diversity Scholarship recipient and a summer associate at the firm.

Burns White has 10 summer associates firmwide this year, three in Pittsburgh, compared to five with two at its Strip District headquarters last year.

“Our summer program is slightly larger than previous years, including pre-pandemic,” Jessica Gangjee, the firm's chief legal talent and acquisition officer, said via email. “Our firm and many of our practice areas are actively growing and our summer program is part of that growth: It provides us with an opportunity to grow and develop talent from the early stages of a lawyer’s career.”

Burns White’s program began May 16 and doesn’t have an exact end date.

“Most of our summer clerks will wrap up their time with us at the beginning of August,” Gangjee said.

K&L Gates, which is the 40th-largest firm in the U.S. based on 2021 gross revenue, has 25 offices across the country and 89 summer associates, nine of whom are in Pittsburgh. That compares to 67 in 2021, seven of them local.

Leech Tishman just had one summer associates in 2021, at its downtown Pittsburgh headquarters. There are six in 2022, four here, one in Los Angeles and one in Chicago.

“As the firm has continued to grow, particularly with our recent expansion in New York City, our summer law clerk program has been scaled up to match the increased workload,” explained Mala Mason, director of marketing and business development. “We have been lucky enough to find some excellent students whose interests align with our needs within various practice groups. We are excited to bring our summer program back to what it resembled pre-pandemic.”

Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote PC has 11 summer associates. Six are in Pittsburgh and half of them are recipients of its diversity scholarship program.

“We have not only pledged \$150,000 over the next five years to Pitt, Penn State and Duquesne Law, but the scholarship comes with a summer associate position,” said James Kubus, associate

marketing director. "Last year, we had eight associates with five in Pittsburgh."

A few firms had slightly lower numbers than in 2021.

Reed Smith LLP, the largest law office in Pittsburgh and No. 28 nationally, has 51 summer associates firmwide, compared to 61 in 2021, with eight here both years.

Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC has 12 total with five in Pittsburgh in 2022, down from 14, six of whom were local, in 2021. It is the region's third-biggest firm and ranks among the 200-largest in the country.

Shari Boyle, director of marketing, said there's no reason in particular for the small decrease.

"We base the number of summer associates on both the needs of each local office and the availability of strong candidates in that same market," she said. "This summer, some of our offices increased, some decreased and in others we didn't bring in any summer associates at all."

And Babst Calland had two summers in Pittsburgh last year and one in 2022.

Correction/Clarification

Comments from Burns White in an earlier article were erroneously attributed; they were provided by Jessica Gangjee.

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