



LEGAL & COMPLIANCE COMPENSATION REPORT: 2025 TRENDS



WELCOME

This report reflects compensation insights drawn from Cardea Group's proprietary network and accumulated search intelligence, built through nearly two decades of specialized work across the buy-side, specifically within legal and compliance.

The data presented is representative of trends within our direct network and search activity, not an exhaustive market survey. Individual firm structures, strategies, and compensation philosophies will naturally vary.

Our goal is to provide directional benchmarks and context to help hiring managers make more informed, confident decisions as they build and refine their teams and plan for compensation discussions internally.



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LEGAL IN HEDGE FUNDS

Role	Median Base Salary	25th Percentile Base Salary	75th Percentile Base Salary	Median Total Cash Compensation	25th Percentile Total Cash Compensation	75th Percentile Total Cash Compensation
General Counsel	\$300,000	\$275,000	\$350,000	\$750,000	\$550,000	\$1,000,000
Deputy and Senior Leadership	\$250,000	\$236,250	\$312,500	\$425,000	\$350,000	\$650,000
Manager and VP	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$275,000	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$562,500
Associate	\$155,000	\$145,000	\$237,500	\$210,000	\$175,000	\$300,000



LEGAL IN PRIVATE EQUITY

Role	Median Base Salary	25th Percentile Base Salary	75th Percentile Base Salary	Median Total Cash Compensation	25th Percentile Total Cash Compensation	75th Percentile Total Cash Compensation
General Counsel	\$300,000	\$250,000	\$325,000	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$955,000
Deputy and Senior Leadership	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$325,000	\$625,000	\$400,000	\$887,500
Manager and VP	\$250,000	\$220,000	\$300,000	\$440,000	\$300,000	\$650,000
Associate	\$152,500	\$130,000	\$225,000	\$175,000	\$170,000	\$300,000



COMPLIANCE IN HEDGE FUNDS

Role	Median Base Salary	25th Percentile Base Salary	75th Percentile Base Salary	Median Total Cash Compensation	25th Percentile Total Cash Compensation	75th Percentile Total Cash Compensation
Chief Compliance Officer	\$250,000	\$235,000	\$300,000	\$550,000	\$400,000	\$800,000
Deputy and Senior Leadership	\$225,000	\$187,500	\$275,000	\$375,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
Manager and VP	\$200,000	\$160,000	\$250,000	\$275,000	\$210,000	\$350,000
Analyst and Associate	\$140,000	\$125,000	\$170,000	\$170,000	\$140,000	\$200,000



COMPLIANCE IN PRIVATE EQUITY

Role	Median Base Salary	25th Percentile Base Salary	75th Percentile Base Salary	Median Total Cash Compensation	25th Percentile Total Cash Compensation	75th Percentile Total Cash Compensation
Chief Compliance Officer	\$250,000	\$240,000	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$700,000
Deputy and Senior Leadership	\$225,000	\$175,000	\$255,000	\$350,000	\$237,500	\$462,500
Manager and VP	\$186,250	\$155,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$190,000	\$325,000
Analyst and Associate	\$145,000	\$130,000	\$175,000	\$170,000	\$150,000	\$220,000



VARIANCE DRIVERS



Experience and credentials set the baseline, but fund strategy, background, and location ultimately shape total compensation.



Mid-level private credit and private equity legal roles command strong packages, reflecting significant transaction exposure and deal complexity.



In-house talent earns a premium, rewarded for operational fluency and sound judgment built inside the fund environment.

Credential Premium: Attorneys as CCOs

Category	Median Base	Median All-In	Share of Sample
Attorney	\$275,000	\$600,000	64%
Non-Attorney	\$250,000	\$375,000	36%

Key Takeaway: Across investment funds, a notable majority of CCOs attended law school. While base salaries remain relatively comparable, total compensation is substantially higher for CCOs who are barred attorneys.

FACTORS INFLUENCING COMPENSATION

Timing Equity or Carry Awards

Stage	Typical Role	AUM Range	Equity/Carry Prevalence	Rationale
Early Stage	Compliance Associate / Officer	<\$1B	Rare	Focus remains on salary and bonus; scope is narrow and executorial.
Scaling Stage	Senior Officer / Deputy CCO	\$1–5B	Occasional	Firms begin offering phantom equity or deferred comp to retain key talent.
Institutional Stage	CCO / GC-CCO	\$5B+	Common	Equity or carry aligns senior compliance leadership with firm performance.
Mature Platforms	CCO / Partner	\$10B+	Standardized	Long-term participation reflects enterprise-level decision-making and retention priority.

Key Takeaway: Equity and carry are less about seniority on paper and more about proximity to decision-making. When a compliance leader begins directly impacting investment or strategic outcomes, not just overseeing process, that’s when equity participation becomes both appropriate and strategic.

Fund Strategy Differences

Fund Type	Average All-In Trend	Key Drivers of Pay	Typical Bonus Profile	Cardea Insight
Hedge Funds	Competitive, but increasingly stable	Real-time trading exposure, portfolio oversight, heavy marketing review	Bonuses often discretionary, tied to fund performance and AUM growth	Compensation is steady but less front-loaded; volatility has narrowed as funds mature.
Venture Capital	Lower base, higher long-term upside	Smaller teams, lean infrastructure, heavy deal diligence	Bonuses modest; long-term value often tied to carry participation	Pay structures emphasize alignment with long-term fund performance over short-term cash.
Private Credit	Among the highest total packages	Transaction-heavy workflow, direct lender oversight, documentation intensity	Bonuses highly variable (often 40–60% of base at mid-level; 70–100% of base for senior level)	Credit strategies command premiums due to uptick in market activity, deal volume and regulatory scrutiny.
Private Equity	High all-in with structured incentive frameworks	Complex fund structures, frequent fundraising, active deal support	Bonuses predictable, structured around fundraises and fund performance	PE firms tend to reward consistency and retention, often layering deferred comp and carry at senior levels.

Key Takeaway: Fund strategy sets the tone for total compensation. Hedge and private equity roles offer stable, structured pay environments. Private credit commands a premium. Venture capital remains leaner on cash but richer in long-term incentives.





NEW HIRES IN LEADERSHIP

As firms scale, hiring shifts from coverage, to capacity, to leadership.

The first inflection point typically occurs around \$1B, when firms bring compliance in-house, and again near \$5B, when leadership and specialization emerge.

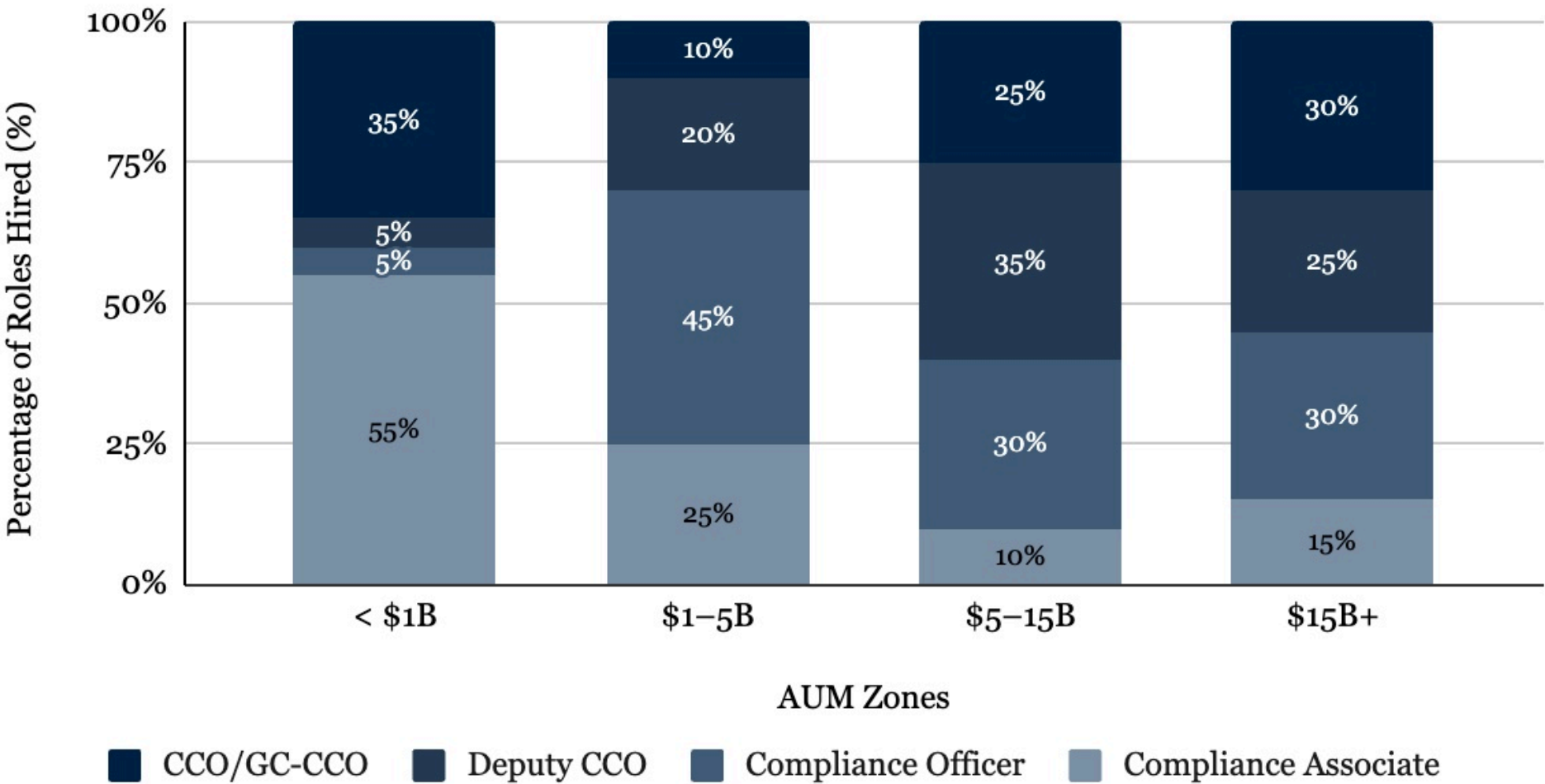
AUM Zone	Typical Team Composition	Most Common Incremental Hire	Hiring Objective
Zone 1: Emerging (<\$1B)	GC/CCO dual hat or outsourced compliance	Compliance Associate (often first internal hire)	Build internal control, reduce vendor reliance
Zone 2: Scaling (\$1–5B)	GC/CCO + Associate	Compliance Officer or Deputy CCO	Expand bandwidth, institutionalize oversight
Zone 3: Institutional (\$5–15B)	GC + CCO + Deputy + Analyst/Associate	Deputy CCO or Compliance Specialist (Marketing/Testing)	Add specialization, reinforce judgment layer
Zone 4: Mature (\$15B+)	Fully built legal & compliance team	Designated CCO or Legal/Compliance Counsel	Strengthen leadership, succession, or global coverage

General Trends:

- Below \$1B = Coverage hires (execution support)
- \$1–5B = Structure hires (independence + oversight)
- \$5B+ = Leadership hires (judgment + enterprise influence)

Most Common Compliance Hires by AUM

Based on Cardea Group Proprietary Search and Placement Data (2025)





NEW HIRE COMPENSATION BY LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Total Cash Compensation	CCO (Non-Attorney)	CCO (Attorney)	General Counsel
High Estimate	\$650,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,500,000
Low Estimate	\$450,000	\$500,000	\$650,000

Data presented from searches launched for functional leadership roles in funds ranging from \$1B to \$20B AUM.

DRIVERS OF RETENTION & RESIGNATION

The following data reflects themes consistently cited in Cardea Group's proprietary network and search work.

While individual motivations vary, growth, influence, compensation, and cultural alignment emerge as the strongest predictors of retention and resignation across the buy-side.

TOP 3 REASONS PEOPLE STAY



Upward Mobility

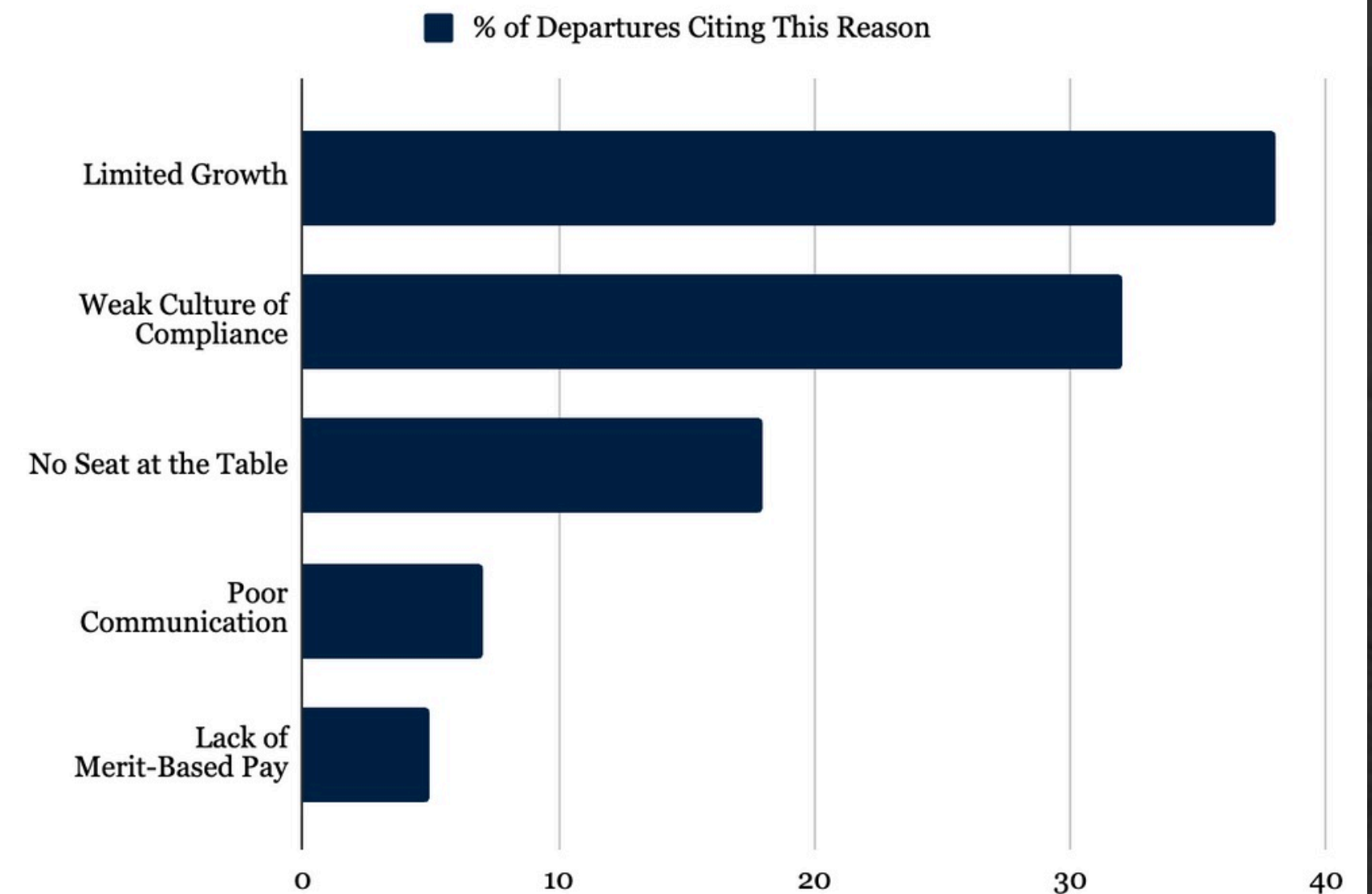


Mentorship



Culture

Reason for Resignation



INSIGHT FIRST, PARTNERSHIP NEXT.

We're glad to share our market data and compensation insights to help you see the landscape more clearly.

When you're ready for deeper perspective, benchmarks built around your peer set, or guidance on your next key hire, reach out. We look forward to partnering with you.

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