

Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.

2021 VAULT PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS



#22 BEST MIDSIZE FIRM TO WORK FOR

TOP 150 UNDER 150

MIDSIZE QUALITY OF LIFE

- #16 Technology & Innovation
- #19 Compensation
- #19 Diversity
- #19 Transparency
- #20 Wellness (tie)
- #21 Associate/Partner Relations

- #22 Satisfaction
- #23 Selectivity
- #24 Firm Culture

REGIONAL

- #30 Boston

PRACTICE AREA

- #6 IP Boutiques



THE SCOOP

One of the most reputable firms in Boston, Wolf Greenfield has made a name for itself as an IP powerhouse. With just under 100 attorneys, Wolf Greenfield is known for its work in patent litigation on technology matters. The firm has kept to the East Coast with one office in Beantown and one in the Big Apple.

IP Roots

Wolf Greenfield was founded in 1927 by patent attorney Ezekiel Wolf in Boston. In its first decades, clients included famed electrical engineer Andrew Alford and radio pioneer Reginald Fessenden. The firm is no stranger to making history, and over the years has had its hand in some of the most important IP developments. In 1961, the firm successfully argued *Aro Manufacturing Co. v. Convertible Top*, now known as the seminal Supreme Court case covering the doctrine of permissible repair. A few decades later, in the much different technological era of 1998, the firm's lawyers crafted the winning argument in the landmark State Street case, which set the stage for software patents and the patentability of business methods.

Got Science?

Wolf Greenfield focuses on eight main practice areas: biotechnology, chemical and material technologies, electrical and computer technologies, litigation, mechanical technologies, pharmaceutical, post-grant, and trademark and copyright. The firm files thousands of patent and trademark applications each year. And its bench has deep experience—more than 90 percent of the firm's professionals have backgrounds in engineering or science and more than 50 percent of attorneys previously worked as engineers or scientists.

VAULT'S VERDICT

As an IP boutique, it's no surprise that Wolf Greenfield values a technical background. In addition to normal associate recruiting, the firm has a technology specialist program where it hires Ph.D. grads and pays for the cost of their part-time law programs. Beyond tech-savviness, Wolf also looks for top grades, work experience, and personality fit. The firm has a laid-back culture, and attorneys frequently socialize outside of work. Associates report a "horizontal" relationship with partners, meaning they feel they are treated like teammates and equals. Partners are willing to share their challenging, substantive client work, and associates appreciate the chances they have to stretch their skills. Associates also feel there is a decent level of transparency achieved through biannual reviews, regular town halls, and an annual meeting with the Executive Committee. The annual billable-hours requirement is a reasonable 1,800 hours, and associates are enthusiastic with the flexibility offered. They also appreciate the firm's workflow coordinators who help keep workloads balanced. Pro bono hours count towards bonus eligibility but not the base hours requirement. Associates are satisfied with their compensation—although it's below market for more senior associates—because of the work-life balance they receive in exchange. Associates feel partnership is an attainable goal in addition to other options, like staying at the firm as counsel or non-equity partner or exiting to an in-house position.

FIRM INFO

CONTACT INFO

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LOCATIONS

Boston, MA • New York, NY

MAJOR DEPARTMENTS

Biotechnology • Chemical & Materials Technologies • Electrical & Computer Technologies • Litigation • Mechanical Technologies • Pharmaceutical • Post Grant Proceedings • Trademark & Copyright

**See firm website for complete list of practice areas and industries.*

THE STATS

No. of attorneys: 95
No. of offices: 2

President and Managing Partner:

Timothy Oyer

Recruiting Chair:

John Van Amsterdam

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

Lindsay L. Howard
Sr. Manager of Legal Recruiting and Professional Development
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OUR SURVEY SAYS

GETTING HIRED

Hiring Process

- “We’re looking for people with a passion for technology and who are also fun to work with. Beyond that, we have a very wide range of personalities and hire from a broad range of schools and backgrounds. I don’t think we have particular ‘feeder’ schools. We do have a large contingent from Suffolk University Law School because some of our technology specialists go there at night while working at the firm.”

Interview Questions

- “Questions related to communication, legal, and technical knowledge. [We] will often ask, ‘Why IP’ and ask the applicant to explain a technical concept for a lay person.”

Lateral & Clerk Integration

- “I think our process is great. We spread all of the training and HR stuff over a few days so the new person can get integrated with the group’s substantive work as quickly as possible.”

ASSOCIATE LIFE

Firm Culture

- “Everyone socializes together fairly often (particularly in the summer)! Partners will join too, and the firm’s gatherings provide a good opportunity to meet ... other associates and get to know partners at the firm. Firm social outings range from drinks and dinner to our annual trip to Thompson Island (in the Boston harbor) for games and a clam bake.”

Associate/Partner Relations

- “I think many shareholders care a great deal about the associates and make concerted efforts to foster their development through mentoring and opportunities. There are close working relationships between shareholders and associates, particularly on small case teams where an associate/partner pair do the vast majority of the work.”

Hours

- “My work is currently balanced; the firm employs workflow coordinators for the larger groups that monitor our workloads and modify as needed. Flexibility in where/when I work is extremely high. [The] ours requirement is lower than other comparable firms.”

Quality of Work & Technology

- “The work is incredibly interesting and complex and is exactly the type of work I love to do—really detailed analysis of technical issues that relate to patent cases.”
- “I feel as if I am trusted with projects and tasks that go well beyond my level, including arguing a summary judgment hearing and putting on witnesses at an ITC trial.”

Training & Mentoring

- “Amazing training: weekly [practice group] specific trainings for junior associates, monthly general trainings for all junior associates, [and] biweekly case law trainings for [the] entire firm. Also, two meetings per month on admin and interpersonal skills. Mentoring is okay but not heavily structured. Individual attorneys [are] very willing to give feedback and include juniors on training opportunities.”

Wellness

- “To me the most important part of our wellness efforts is that we keep the workload manageable so people have time for a life outside of work. The firm also provides access to counseling services and exercise programs.”

Career Outlook

- “I think promotion to partner is a very real possibility. The firm also has counsel roles and has significant experience in placing associates [in] in-house positions with clients.”

PRO BONO & DIVERSITY

Pro Bono Commitment

- “The firm actively encourages people to do pro bono work and is great about both suggesting pro bono opportunities to people and letting people bring in their own pro bono cases. I do a lot of complex litigation in federal court challenging immigration detention policy and the firm gives me all the support I need in terms of paralegal support, legal research tools, junior associate staffing, etc.”

SUMMER PROGRAM

- “My summer associate experience was great. I had a lot of substantive work, including short-term and long-term assignments, but the workload was never overwhelming. The firm hosted many events throughout the course of the summer that offered a chance to get to know everyone better in a less formal setting.”