

MIDSIZE **HOT LIST**



A SPECIAL REPORT

We asked our readers to nominate law firms with between 51 and 150 attorneys that have used their creativity and skill to stay competitive in courtrooms and at deal tables across the U.S. The 20 firms we highlight this week have held their own, often against much larger firms, charting winning courses in high-stakes matters that led to key victories in 2015. Above all, these firms embody lawyering at its essence—working hard to understand and serve their clients' needs.

NOSSAMAN

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Nossaman



GEORGE JOSEPH

FIRM FACTS:

- **Year founded:** 1942
- **Headquarters:** Los Angeles
- **Total attorneys:** 147
- **Partners:** 91
- **Associates:** 43

Rebuilding infrastructure has become a top priority nationwide, but it comes at a time when government agencies can least afford it. Nossaman has become a significant force for helping solve that quandary by crafting public-private partnerships to get the job done.

The California firm boasts that it has been “at the forefront of the infrastructure practice area for decades,” with “the largest and deepest public-private partnership legal advisory practice in North America.”

Managing partner George Joseph pointed to the firm’s recent work for the Michigan Department of Transportation in putting together the first freeway lighting partnership in the nation. The \$125 million project, Joseph says, “will have a very positive impact in the Detroit region, and keep area highways well-lit and safe.” The project calls for improvements throughout the system and 15,000 lights across bridges, tunnels and roadways. Inadequate street lighting in Detroit has gotten national attention.

“This transaction marks the beginning of what we see as a trend of agencies being interested in budget-neutral projects,” Joseph said. “They can receive new or upgraded services or facilities by using the partnership tool in manner that doesn’t increase annual outlays.”

Nossaman has also worked on infrastructure projects in Arizona, California, Maryland and North Carolina. But that’s not the only practice area that has grown in the last year, Joseph said. “We also made significant hires in the environment and land use, water, health care, public policy and public pensions groups and expanded our presence in Seattle, Texas and Washington, D.C.”

The firm also differentiates itself from other midsize firms with a formal “client satisfaction interview program,” which it began in the 1990s. The purpose of these interviews, according to the firm, is to find out from the client, “How is Nossaman doing?” and “How can Nossaman improve?”

—TONY MAURO