

Paralegals Connect Newsletter

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Paralegals Connect was established in 2013 and we have grown significantly since that time. We now have five groups which are all dedicated to providing valuable information and support to succeed in the legal industry. Our groups provide support at every stage of your paralegal career.

Currently, our groups have approximately 12,500+ combined active members worldwide. We have become the largest paralegal networking group worldwide!

We invite you to join all five of our groups and become part of our worldwide Paralegal Family.

www.ParalegalsConnect.com

Who We Are

Paralegals Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParalegalsConnect/>

Our first and largest group created for paralegals and paralegals-in-the-making to interact with other paralegals worldwide and provide valuable information to succeed in the paralegal industry.

Paralegals Connect: Study Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup/>

A group created for those attending a paralegal school or studying for a Paralegal Certification Exam and post questions about your legal studies.

Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect/>

A group designed for Virtual and Freelance Paralegals and those intending to break free of their 8-5 to go out on their own.

Paralegals Connect Employment Board

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PCEmploymentBoard/>

A group designed for those seeking legal employment or internships, and for those seeking to hire legal professionals for their firm.

LSAT Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LSATConnect/>

A group designed for those studying for the Law School Admission Test.

Meet our Admins

<http://www.paralegalsconnect.com/meet-our-admins.html>



Crystal Cornett

Crystal founded Paralegals Connect in 2013. Crystal has been a paralegal since 2004 and currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas.



Eunice Colón

Eunice has been a paralegal since 2004 and currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas.



Kira Muren

Kira has been a paralegal since 2013 and currently practices civil litigation in Frederick, Maryland.



Katy Rodriguez

Katy has been a paralegal since 2014 and her firm specializes in Business Law & Litigation, Corporate Law, Oil, Gas & Mineral Law, Bankruptcy, and Creditor's Rights Litigation in the Permian Basin and Fort Worth areas of Texas.

We would like to thank our Affiliates because they are the ones that make it possible to print and distribute our Newsletter to our members, various paralegal schools, and large firms across the country.

Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliates that can offer our paralegals, legal assistants, future paralegals, and future attorneys the skills and services that will help them succeed in their careers. We strive to provide information to the latest resources, education, and cost-effective opportunities that will enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of our members.

Becoming an Affiliate with our groups offers worldwide viability to approximately 12,500+ combined group members in the legal industry.

*Only official Affiliates are permitted to advertise within our Groups.

To Become an Affiliate with Paralegals Connect, please contact

Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com for additional information.

<http://www.paralegalsconnect.com/become-an-affiliate.html>

Meet our Affiliates

<http://www.paralegalsconnect.com/official-affiliates.html>



With NCA Search, paralegals can find defendants and witnesses quickly and easily. NCA Search gives you access the USPS National Change of Address (NCOA) database with same business day turnaround. We also search the Proprietary Change of Address (PCOA) database and provide carrier feedback electronically. Use NCA Search when the subject has moved from his last known address and is not appearing in other databases or to help validate his last known address before hiring a process server to attempt it.

Go to www.ncasearch.com to learn more.

local and nationwide service of process

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ARMENHYL provides local and nationwide Service of Process. We look forward to being a quality resource for the Paralegals Connect community!



Discount Legal Plan give you immediate access to top-notch criminal defense attorney's in our nationwide network. Our attorney's will protect your Constitutional Rights while we guide you through America's complex criminal justice system. Get immediate assistance with the ArrestSOS App! Our ArrestSOS mobile app provides you with simple legal help at the push of a button. Download our free ArrestSOS mobile app today through the Google Play or Apple iTunes store. Want more information? Our Legal Plan Underwriters are always available "live" to chat with you and provide more information. Simply visit our website at <https://www.discount-legal-plan.com/> & click on "Let's Talk" and begin speaking with one of our experts today. To join our team of associates email us at info@discount-legal-plan.com.



Your Paralegal Career Begins Here!

Center for Advanced Legal Studies (CALs) is a private, nationally accredited paralegal college. Established in 1987, our focus is providing exceptional paralegal education to our students and dedicated career services for our graduates.

Specialized Paralegal Training

"100 percent of our resources are devoted to paralegal education and training."

Your Success is Our Priority

- + Expect smaller classes and more attention from instructors.
- + Your personal needs will be addressed with classes designed around your lifestyle.
- + Courses are designed to educate, prepare, graduate, and secure employment.
- + 100 percent of our resources are devoted to paralegal education and training.
- + Practicing attorneys and experienced paralegals teach law specialty courses.
- + Real world skills are emphasized to meet employers' needs.
- + Financial Aid is available for those who qualify. (FAFSA School Code: 026047)








Attend Class Online or On Campus

- + **Online** - Complete your program in the most interactive online classroom available. See and talk with your professor and classmates in real-time while attending class on your computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet. We bring the classroom to you.
- + **On Campus** - If a classroom setting is your preference, we've got you covered. Classroom instruction provides traditional in-person lecture and increased opportunity for teamwork and collaboration. Weekday and Saturday classes are available.

Securing Employment after Graduation

- + Career Services. We offer a multitude of services to help graduates begin their careers.
- + Resume Review. Professional guidance in preparing your resume for today's hiring managers.
- + Employer Connections. Leverage our relationship with hundreds of law firms and employers.
- + Personal Focus. You receive personal attention; not a bulletin board or a web job bank.
- + Available Externships. Gain real world experience before you graduate.

Accreditation, Memberships & Associations

-  Council on Occupational Education
-  Higher Education Coordinating Board
-  Texas Workforce Commission
-  American Association for Paralegal Education
-  National Federation of Paralegal Associations
-  National Association of Legal Assistants
-  Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas

Curriculum

Paralegal Certificate

Essential Paralegal Skills
 8 months . 24 semester hours
\$9,300

If you already have a college degree or are working toward your first college degree, this program is perfect for you!

Core Courses

- Introduction to Law and Ethics
- Interviewing and Investigation
- Legal Research and Writing
- Corporate and Business Law
- Civil Procedure
- Computers and the Law

+ 2 Electives chosen from

- Personal Injury*
- Family Law*
- Intellectual Property
- Real Estate

* Recommended for those continuing on to AAS Degree Paralegal Program



AAS Degree Paralegal Program

Comprehensive Paralegal Skills
 22 months . 62 semester hours
\$23,550 (\$14,350 after Paralegal Certificate)

Our Paralegal Degree Program includes all 24 semester hours completed in the certificate program plus an additional 18 to 21 semester hours of law specialty courses. These electives provide students with the opportunity to study some of the most interesting and exciting areas of law.

This program meets or exceeds the law specialty requirements suggested by various state and national paralegal authorities.

Core Courses (included in certificate)

- Introduction to Law and Ethics
- Interviewing and Investigation
- Legal Research and Writing
- Corporate and Business Law
- Civil Procedure
- Computers and the Law
- Personal Injury
- Family Law

General Education

- English Composition I
- English Composition II
- General Psychology
- American Government I
- Introduction to Speech Communication
- Anatomy & Physiology I

Advanced Electives

- + 6 Electives including Externship (7 w/o Externship)
- Wills, Trusts and Probate
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Real Estate
- Intellectual Property
- Immigration Law
- E-Discovery
- Advanced Civil Procedure
- Advanced Research and Writing
- Oil and Gas Law
- Externship

Other Requirements: Business Math

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LIMITED LICENSED LEGAL TECHNICIANS HELPING TO BRIDGE THE ACCESS-TO-JUSTICE-GAP



The words “equal justice under law” are engraved on the front of the Supreme Court of the United States. Yet every day in every state in the United States this motto is being violated in that our justice system is inaccessible to millions of Americans because they are not able to afford an attorney. In far too many instances, this lack of access to counsel causes many Americans to forfeit basic rights. In a report recently released by The National Center for State Courts, in almost 75% of civil cases that are filed in the United States, one or both parties are not represented by counsel. The assistance offered by private law firms via pro bono legal assistance and legal aid clinics does not even put a dent in this crisis that is growing larger every day.

This crisis of the distance between the legal needs of Americans and the options that are available to them to meet those needs is what has become known as the Access-To-Justice-Gap. Research has shown that it is not just millions of Americans who are being affected by this gap, but our court systems are also being negatively affected. Problems such as cases on dockets that would probably have settled and never been tried if the parties were represented by counsel or cases taking much longer to try because pro se litigants do not understand the simple processes involved in moving a case through the court system.

As of today, 38 states have created Access to Justice Commissions or Task Forces to study this ever-

growing problem and make determinations or offer solutions as they pertain to the issue in their state. Through these task forces and commissions, several forms of non-lawyer assistance have been formed such as courthouse navigators and facilitators in Arizona, New York, and California and legal document preparers in Arizona, California, and Nevada.

The State of Washington chose to help bridge the Access-To-Justice-Gap in their state by creating a paraprofessional known as a Limited Licensed Legal Technicians or LLLT. An LLLT is a non-lawyer who can engage in the limited practice of law. To date, these LLLTs are only licensed to practice in family law. (In July 2017 the LLLT Board submitted a request to the State Supreme Court to expand their practice to include Estate and Health Care Law but were denied the request in April of 2017.) LLLTs are limited in what they can do for their clients, in that unlike an attorney they are not allowed to represent their clients in court, negotiate settlements on behalf of their clients or prepare any documents that have not been preapproved by the Limited License Legal Technician Board.

The process of becoming an LLLTs is not an easy task. According to the Washington State Bar Association website, there are three key requirements to be licensed as a legal technician: education, examination, and experience. Those three key requirements include:

- Associate degree or higher;
- 45 credit hours of legal studies at an American Bar Association (ABA) approved law school or a paralegal program approved by either the ABA or the LLLT Board;
- Pass three exams:
 1. Paralegal Core Competency Exam (PCCE);
 2. LLLT Practice Area Examination; and
 3. LLLT Professional Responsibility Examination.
- Perform 3,000 hours of substantive law-related work under the direct supervision of an attorney prior to licensing.

The Admissions Policies are very similar to the policies governing attorneys applying for admission to the State Bar in that a Certificate of Good Standing and a Certificate of Good Moral Character are required prior to being issued a license. After being issued a license, LLLTs are also subject to the continuing legal education rules and malpractice insurance requirements like those that apply to attorneys. The Washington State Bar has also adopted a set of Rules of Professional Conduct that pertain to LLLTs.

To date, there are 31 Limited Licensed Legal Technicians in the State of Washington and several have opened their own solo practices.

The concept of LLLTs does not seem to be catching on with other states as fast as some paralegals would like. In 2015, the Utah Supreme Court adopted a recommendation to authorize Licensed Paralegal Practitioners, or LLPs. The LLP practice area in Utah will be larger than the scope of practice afforded to LLLTs in Washington. An LLP will be allowed to assist with cases involving temporary separation, divorce, parentage, cohabitant abuse, civil stalking, custody and support, name changes, cases involving forcible entry and detainer and debt collection matters in which the dollar amount at issue does not exceed the statutory limit for small claims cases. They will be allowed to help clients choose, fill out, file and complete service of legal forms; review and explain court orders or other party's documents;

advocate for a client in a mediation; and complete settlement agreements after a negotiation.

The LLLT program has not been in existence long enough yet to know if there has been any progress in bridging the gap – but most people believe that in time LLLTs will begin to accomplish what they were initially created to do. Many state bar associations have expressed an interest in various forms of paraprofessionals to assist in bridging the gap and are keeping a close eye on the State of Washington. As the position proves positive and helpful in Washington, it is predicted that more and more states will follow suit and create some form of paraprofessional to assist lower income Americans navigate through the court systems. Only 3 states have definitively said they will NOT use paraprofessionals: Montana, Illinois, and Virginia.

Limited Licensed Legal Technicians are at the forefront in helping to bridge the Access-To-Justice-Gap. Through them more Americans, regardless of their wealth status, have access to counsel which will prevent the loss of basic rights. This will ensure more Americans “equal justice under law” -- just as it is engraved on the front of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Article By:

Donna R. Pevey is a paralegal with the firm of Jeffery P. Reynolds, P.A. in Jackson, Mississippi. She has been working in the legal field for over 25 years as a legal secretary, legal assistant, and as a Paralegal. After working as a legal secretary for over 20 years she decided to go to college as a personal challenge, not to change careers. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with an Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies from Hinds Community College in 2014.



5 Tips for Launching Your Freelance Virtual Paralegal Career



Are you fed up working in an office environment? Tired of the gripes when asking for time off? Wish you could swap rush-hour traffic for the commute to your couch? Do you often daydream about being your own boss but haven't the slightest clue where to begin?

Don't worry, you're not alone. More people today are seeking ways to take control of their career and improve their work-life balance. Many entrepreneurial paralegals have found success in a freelance career as a virtual paralegal—working remotely for attorneys, doing the same work as on-site paralegals. Let's face it, we spend most of our waking hours already connected to a virtual world, why not make a living while we're at it?

The legal industry is gradually moving away from the brick-and-mortar tradition and into virtual practice. Firms are launching virtual law offices to deliver real-time services to their clients. Attorneys are shifting billable work to well-qualified virtual paralegals to improve their bottom line. They're saving on office space, equipment, supplies, and training; not to mention, insurance, and taxes. Check out the American Bar Association's cost-efficiency breakdown in "Comparative Client Cost of Lawyer Alone and of Lawyer Plus Paralegal" and an excerpt on "Shifting Work to Paralegals" from *Paralegals, Profitability, and the Future of Your Law Practice* (2003) by Arthur G. Greene and Therese A. Cannon.

Whether you're an experienced paralegal or new to the field, you must first decide if you have the drive and ambition to jumpstart a freelance virtual career. It takes a great deal of persistence and creativity to succeed in the face of adversity. Virtual work isn't for everyone, but it can be for anyone willing to put forth the time and energy needed to thrive on their own. The pressure of running your own business

means hustling to get and keep clients to maintain a steady income stream. Communication can be challenging having no face-to-face interaction and with information lost in textual translation. At the end of the day, attorneys are paying for your knowledge and expertise, so don't count on someone holding your hand and walking you through your work.

If you can overcome the obstacles, freelancing as a virtual paralegal can be highly profitable, intellectually stimulating, and professionally gratifying. Ultimately, you have control over your career and your work-life balance. You have the freedom to set your own schedule and work as much or as little as you want (and can afford, I suppose). You decide when you take personal days and vacation. You also have final say in who you work with and in what areas of law or specialty. You control your destiny, not an employer. Be patient and open to new possibilities.

Here are five tips to consider before launching your freelance career as a virtual paralegal:

I. PREPARE YOURSELF.

Make sure you have solid education, training, and experience as a paralegal before venturing out on your own. You will need to prove you have the specialized skills and know-how to independently get the job done. Keep in mind, most firms require at least five years of on-the-job experience. Focus on developing virtual skills and freelancing capabilities to get you where you want to be in your career. Identify your most marketable skills and those you need to improve. Are you computer savvy and adaptable to new technology? Do you have

excellent oral and written communication skills? Are you well organized and able to multitask to meet competing deadlines? Can you work independently with minimal supervision and no training? It's important to update your skills regularly to make yourself more marketable to potential clients. Take advantage of every opportunity to diversify your skill base, industry expertise, and technology prowess.

2. DO YOUR RESEARCH.

Study the market for your services. Determine which businesses will find your services useful and which can afford to pay the rates you want. Explore who's hiring virtual paralegals and what practice areas are the most lucrative. Typically, solo attorneys and smaller law firms hire virtual paralegals to keep overhead costs low. Though, corporate legal departments and non-traditional industries are starting to hire virtual paralegals to work in estate and trust departments, real estate and title insurance companies, hospitals and healthcare organizations, and professional trade associations. Research opportunities through your state bar and paralegal associations. Review job boards in newspapers, industry publications, social media groups, and professional networks (like LinkedIn Jobs). Consider joining marketplace websites (such as Upwork or Freelancer) to bid on jobs posted by potential clients. Keep your eye on popular practice areas, including technology and e-discovery, litigation, immigration, bankruptcy, and healthcare/biotechnology.

3. DEFINE YOUR GOALS & DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN.

Get clear on why you want to start freelancing as a virtual paralegal. Explore what motivates and inspires you. Realize what tasks you enjoy doing and those you can't stand doing. Evaluate your competition and what makes your services different. Establish what you want to achieve by setting clearly defined, measurable goals. It's important to take inventory of where you are in relation to your goals and explore your options for moving forward. Develop an action plan for implementing strategies to meet your personal, professional, and financial goals.

4. DETERMINE YOUR VALUE.

Virtual paralegal rates vary based on education, work experience, and level of specialization. First, think of what you think you're worth and what clients would pay for your services. Then, double it. People tend to sell themselves short and doubling it avoids that. Second, price yourself based on the

value you deliver to your clients, not what your competitors are charging. Don't forget to consider your costs of doing business. The U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) provides information on "How to Estimate the Costs of Starting a Business from Scratch" (by Caron Beesley, updated December 29, 2017).

5. PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD.

Build your reputation by getting your name out there. Attend networking events, industry conferences, and business seminars to mingle with potential clients. Spruce up your resume and create an online portfolio with examples of what you can deliver. Leverage your professional networks and social media groups to search job prospects and market your services. Be sure you're presenting only your professional side to the public—keep personal profiles private unless you don't mind potential clients snooping!

Article By: Amanda DeVincenzo, M.P.P.A.



Amanda DeVincenzo is a freelance virtual paralegal and career coach. She spent the last 20 years working in a variety of paralegal and administrative roles in the private and public sectors. She earned an associate degree and certificate in paralegal studies from Southwestern College; a bachelor's degree in sociology from University of Oregon; and a master's degree in public policy and administration from Northwestern University.

Amanda started DeVincenzo Consulting to provide on-demand virtual paralegal services to sole practitioners and boutique law firms across the U.S. As a veteran paralegal, she's passionate about sharing her knowledge and expertise with fellow paralegals. In her coaching programs, she helps clients set achievable goals, explore career options, increase knowledge and skills, develop productive marketing strategies, and stay motivated in pursuing their dream career.

You can reach Amanda at:
Amanda@DeVincenzoConsulting.com
<https://m.facebook.com/DeVincenzoConsulting/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/devincenzoconsulting>

AVOIDING THE UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE OF LAW (UPL)



The **unauthorized practice of law (UPL)** is a topic that paralegals must thoroughly understand and respect. According to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) Model Disciplinary Rules and Ethical Considerations, adopted in April of 1997, §1.8, “A paralegal shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of law.” Unfortunately, unauthorized practice of law incidents appear in the news fairly frequently.

The fundamental premise is that all paralegals are aware of the tasks they can and cannot do. Paralegals are prohibited from (1) establishing the attorney-client relationship, (2) giving legal advice, and (3) appearing in court on behalf of a client. As ethical paralegals, we are expected to make correct and ethical decisions. Paralegal responsibilities are continually increasing. We must maintain ongoing confidence from both the legal community and the public by demonstrating our ethical responsibilities to our profession.

Here is a sample list of tasks that a paralegal can perform, when properly delegated and supervised by an attorney:

- Act as liaison between clients and counsel
- Attend depositions, hearings, real estate closings or meetings
- Conduct legal research
- Create template forms and training materials
- Draft legal documents including contracts and general correspondence
- Gather documents to prepare trial exhibits
- Interview clients
- Maintain calendar with important dates and deadlines
- Notarize documents (if a notary)
- Organize and maintain files
- Prepare deposition questions and outlines
- Respond to subpoenas
- Summarize interrogatories

A paralegal CANNOT provide legal advice! Interpreting a case for a client, however, does not constitute giving legal advice. Ethical Consideration 3-5 of the ABA Model Code states: “Paralegals may be authorized to communicate a lawyer’s legal advice to a client so long as they do not interpret or expand on that advice.”

Ethics is at the core of avoiding the unauthorized practice of law. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines ethics as “moral principles that govern a person’s behavior or the conducting of an activity.” Let’s review a few areas where ethical behavior and paralegal work coincide:

Demonstrating Competency.

Competence comes with experience and with paralegal education.

NFPA Model Disciplinary Rules and Ethical Considerations, § 1.1 states: A paralegal shall achieve and maintain a high level of competence: EC-1.1 A paralegal shall achieve competency through education, training, and work experience.

https://www.paralegals.org/files/Model_Code_of_Ethics_09_06_rev12-9-14.pdf

The National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Paralegals, Section IV, outlines specific educational standards to be used when recognizing a paralegal. Work experience standards are set at a minimum of three years of law-related experience under the supervision of an attorney, including at least six months of in-house training as a paralegal, or two years of in-house training as a paralegal.

<https://www.nala.org/about-paralegals/professional-standards>

Identifying Conflict of Interest.

Paralegals must disclose any conflict of interest that presents itself – business or personal. Paralegals

should keep a log of all clients, matters, and other involved parties with which they have worked.

This log will serve as a helpful resource and reminder of former clients when changing employment.

Maintaining Confidentiality.

Paralegals must protect all confidential information, ranging from not sharing the name of a high-profile movie star seeking services to properly securing a file containing trade secrets.

Securing Social Media Venues and Computers.

Using an encrypted email system is paramount. Utilize firewalls. Be aware of indiscreet, casual communications on Facebook, Twitter, or even when writing a blog.

In summary, a paralegal is held to “a standard of care common to paralegals doing the work in question.” If a paralegal is negligent, the paralegal will most likely lose his/her job. A fine or imprisonment can be imposed for criminal activity. Certification can be revoked. All paralegals, whether working in-house, as a freelance paralegal, or as an independent contractor, should aspire to the highest ethics. Avoid the unauthorized practice of law.

Article By: Jackie Van Dyke, M.P.S., CP

Jackie is a certified paralegal, professor in paralegal studies, copy editor, published author, writing coach, and paralegal student mentor. She formerly worked as a senior trademark paralegal for an international nonprofit corporation. She can be reached at jvandyke@thewritingparalegal.com



Looking for a Paralegal Position?

What to Expect and How to Land Your Dream Job



Whether you're just starting out as a paralegal or have a solid career under your belt, what can you expect during your job search? What factors can boost your marketability and help you land the job of your dreams?

Growing demand for paralegals

It's an ideal time to be looking for a paralegal job. Not only is the hiring market for paralegals strong today, it's projected to continue to expand in the coming years. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employment for paralegals and legal assistants is expected to grow 15 percent by 2026.¹

As law firms and corporate legal departments focus on operational and cost efficiencies, they're seeking paralegals who are capable of performing a broad range of tasks, including duties typically managed by junior-level lawyers. Paralegals are participating actively in client meetings, heading discovery and legal support teams and playing key roles in trial preparation. Hybrid or blended paralegal/legal secretary positions are also on the rise.

Paralegals with expertise in hot practice areas – including litigation, commercial business, real estate, and healthcare – have a clear hiring advantage.

Boost your marketability

Beyond experience in high-growth practices, employers are actively recruiting paralegals with other key skills and qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree and certificate of completion from an ABA-approved paralegal education program.
- Strong communications skills, collaboration, problem-solving and decision-making capabilities.
- Advanced technical skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office, litigation support and eDiscovery software, billing and case management programs.

Uncovering job opportunities

As you begin your job search, cast a wide net to identify openings. Examine job boards and other online platforms, such as LinkedIn, that regularly post available jobs by industry. Tap career resources offered by professional paralegal associations. Check law firm and company websites in your area to learn about jobs leads.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Paralegals and Legal Assistants; available online at: [bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm)

As you proceed, broaden your professional network and communicate regularly with your contacts to learn about available positions. Attend legal association events; take advantage of pro bono opportunities to extend your network and enhance your experience and skills.

You may also want to consider using a staffing agency that specializes in placement of legal support professionals. A recruiter should understand which organizations are hiring paralegals and capabilities required; they can help you market your skills and often direct your resume to employers whose attention you might not be able to attract on your own.

Throughout your research, identify positions that spark your interest and align with your qualifications. Then customize your application materials to show why you deserve strong consideration.

Target your resume

When responding to job openings, remember that the key purpose of your resume is to secure an interview. Because it's your initial touch point with employers, craft your resume to make an immediate, positive impression:

- For each position you target, tailor your resume to show how your skills, knowledge and experience can meet the employer's needs.
- Keep your resume brief and concise.
- Think "at-a-glance" format. Use mostly bullets followed by just a few words, plenty of white space, consistent font size and style. Avoid crazy colors and graphics that distract from your content.
- Incorporate keywords pulled directly from the job description in your resume. Hiring managers – and any software used to screen resumes – will be looking for these phrases.
- Use active rather than passive verbs to describe your experience and skills.

Acing the interview

If your resume is successful, the next important step is an interview. In face-to-face, telephone and video interviews, the interviewer will be looking to answer three key questions – Can you do the job? Do you really want

the job? Will you fit in with the organization's culture? So, prepare accordingly.

Before the interview, rehearse answers to common questions, such as: What skills can you bring to the job? What is your most significant professional accomplishment? Also, use the interview to learn more about the company. Prepare questions to ask to reinforce your interest in the job and help you determine if it's right for you.

Know what you're worth

Before you receive a job offer, know what you're worth by arming yourself with compensation data for paralegal jobs in your area. The Robert Half Legal Salary Guide reports average starting salaries for U.S.-based paralegals with 4-6 years' experience at the midpoint of \$61,000 in 2019. Get the latest salary data for a wide range of paralegal and legal support jobs. Download a complimentary copy of the Robert Half Legal Salary Guide or access the salary calculator at roberthalflegal.com/salary-center.

One last tip – as you explore opportunities to advance your career, stay focused and positive to increase your chances of landing a paralegal position that suits both your personal interests and professional goals.

Article By: **Jamy J. Sullivan, JD** **Executive Director, Robert Half Legal**

Jamy J. Sullivan is executive director of Robert Half Legal, a premier legal staffing and consulting solutions firm with locations in major North American and international markets. She holds a J.D. from Capital University Law School and a B.A. from The Ohio State University and has more than 15 years' experience in legal staffing, training, leadership, and consulting services. She can be reached by email at: jamy.sullivan@roberthalf.com.



Job Searching and Social Media



Love it or hate it social media is here to stay, and it can hurt or enhance your career depending on how you use it. By implementing the following tips to your social media account, you will help improve your job search and career.

If you are anti-social media, then you may ask, “Why should I use social media in my job search? What is the point?” Social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, LawLink etc., allows you to network with other paralegals, legal professionals, and attorneys beyond your immediate professional circle. It also provides a platform to distribute and discuss information on trending topics and issues in the field. Lastly, for job seekers, it may allow recruiters to view your profile(s) and perhaps invite you for an interview for an open position.

Now that we are all on board with the benefits of using social media, here are some of my best tips for utilizing social media to improve your job search:

No matter what social media platform, ALWAYS maintain a professional image including having a professional profile picture Do this especially if you are actively seeking. Employers research potential candidates, so you may want to Google yourself to check out what they will be viewing!

Use your real name

Employers can get a little suspicious when they see different names. This may bring up red flags and detour them from extending an interview.

Show your personality in a positive light in all interactions

Would you hire a “Negative Nancy”? I wouldn’t. Just be positive! Think twice about what you post, and always do so through a professional filter.

Let everyone know you are seeking

Word of mouth is sometimes your best marketing tool. Let everyone know you are seeking employment. You may not know who knows who and who is looking to hire.

Change your settings to private on Facebook

Lock the past down when job searching. Just remember your current profile and/or cover photo will be visible.

Anything that is set to “public” can be viewed, even after you have set your FB to private. All profile pictures can be viewed if they remain public in the profile picture folder

Review all post & pics of “tags”

You cannot control what others post, but you have the option to remove yourself if you feel that their tag is inappropriate.

Utilize your network to evaluate any opportunities

Be proactive, especially on LinkedIn and Facebook—JOIN GROUPS! Contact professionals that are in the niche you are desiring and strategically inquire about opportunities or even conduct an informal interview.

Good luck in your job search!

Article By: Laura Preusse, M.S., Director of Career Services at Center for Advanced Legal Studies

Laura has a background in public education. She has taught general business, computer, and career related courses. Ms. Preusse developed a passion for teaching and coaching job search strategies and resume development within in the Houston unemployment community with affiliations Between Job Ministries and Texas HR Pros in Transition. Previous employment includes working as a freelance resume writer and career coach; Director of Career Services for a small nonprofit school; and a Career Advisor at The Art Institute of Houston with a 100% placement rate for consecutive quarters in the Interior Design Program. In January 2018, Ms. Preusse accepted her current position as Director of Career Services at Center for Advanced Legal Studies (CALs). During her brief tenure, she has inspired designed and developed virtual workshops on employment seeking strategies to students, graduates, alumni and the public, and continues to pursue enhancing the CALs’s Alumni community. With innovation, collaboration, and technology she looks forward to bringing more visibility to assist CALs graduates in overcoming employment obstacles. You may connect with Ms. Preusse via <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurapreusse/> or laura@paralegal.edu.



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